# Artists Protesting Political Parties' Unauthorized Use of Music Highlight Legal Framework Challenges



Pop musicians have frequently raised objections to their songs being used by political parties without permission. Recently, the band D:Ream, known for their 1997 hit "Things Can Only Get Better," stated they would deny any request from Sir Keir Starmer's Labour Party to use their track for an upcoming General Election. This follows a pattern where artists have protested the unauthorized use of their music by politicians.

In the past, former Prime Minister Theresa May made headlines by dancing to Abba’s "Dancing Queen" at a Conservative Party conference in 2018. Similarly, Liz Truss faced backlash from M People in 2022 for using their song "Moving On Up," and Boris Johnson was criticized by Friendly Fires for using their track "Blue Cassette" in 2021. Other notable incidents include musician Johnny Marr banning former Prime Minister David Cameron from liking The Smiths, and the Arctic Monkeys causing embarrassment to both the Liberal Democrat and Labour parties.

In the U.S., Donald Trump has faced numerous complaints from artists like Steven Tyler, The Rolling Stones, and Neil Young for using their music at rallies without consent. Conversely, country singer Lee Greenwood has permitted Trump to use his song "God Bless the USA."

UK copyright law mandates that permission must be obtained from copyright holders to use music publicly, especially in political campaigns. However, even when a license is acquired, conditions such as prohibiting "derogatory use" can restrict the use of music closely associated with political announcements. Political parties often face challenges in obtaining necessary permissions and must navigate these legal frameworks carefully.