

Editorial

Peter Tschmuck¹

The current issue of International Music Business Research (IJMBR) contains two articles on Australia, as well as an article on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on musicians in the Spanish Basque Country. The first article, by Fabian Cannizzo, Catherine Strong and Shelley Brunt, all from the School of Media and Communication at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) in Melbourne, Australia, takes a closer look at the working conditions of employees in small and micro enterprises in the music industry. Although there have been many studies on working conditions in major music companies and on Do-It-Yourself careers, this area of research has received only little attention. In particular, the article looks at how music managers in small and micro businesses deal with employees who have to take time off, for example, due to maternity leave or burnout, and what chances these people have of returning to work after a period of absence. Thirty-nine interviews and three facilitator-led focus group sessions were conducted to answer the research question, including nine music business managers in Melbourne. A structured questionnaire was used to inquire about managers' experiences with women and non-conforming people after re-entering the job. It also asked about the specific needs of these groups and the reintegration strategies adopted. It also asked whether the strategies actually adopted were the same as those that would have been desirable and, if not, why not.

The main finding of the study is that the music managers interviewed are well aware of the problems associated with career breaks. However, they do not seek to address the disadvantages faced by these individuals; instead, the problems are "normalised" and seen as part of a high-risk professional profile. *"In other words, when acting as responsible business people, not everyone can be helped, and hence workers must learn to help themselves."* Responsibility is shifted to third parties, such as politicians, legislators, trade unions or other interest groups, to deal with and to solve the problems of these individuals.

Tim Kelly of the University of Technology in Sydney addresses a different aspect of the Australian music industry in his article. In *"Down, and Under Pressure: The Decline of Local and Non-Anglo Best-Selling Recording Artists in Australia 2000–2023"* Kelly examines how the domestic repertoire in the Australian Recording Industry Association's (ARIA) top 100 single and album charts changed between 2000 and 2023.

Contrary to numerous studies that have observed an increase in local repertoire in the charts of many countries and described this as "glocalisation" of the recorded music market, this trend cannot be confirmed for Australia. On the contrary, the share of Australian and non-Anglo acts in the ARIA charts has fallen significantly in favour of US and UK artists. He also highlights that the representation of Indigenous artists in Australia is low and stable over the observation period. The author attributes this development to the music streaming boom and the standardisation of algorithmically generated playlists by streaming services, which puts Australian artists at a disadvantage. It is therefore the task of cultural policy in Australia to counteract this process of homogenisation and to set incentives for representation in the Australian music charts.

In the third and final article of the October 2024 issue of IJMBR, Gaizka Insunza Aranceta, Izaskun Alavarez-Meaza und Aitor Basañez Llantada from the University of the Basque Country in Bilbao, Spain, looks at how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the activities and incomes of Basque musicians. The impact of the pandemic on future expectations and satisfaction with life circumstances were also investigated. To this end, a survey was conducted in June 2021 among musicians organised in the Basque advocacy group MUSIKARI. The results show that the income situation of Basque musicians was already poor before the pandemic, and many survived only

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with multiple job-holding. The pandemic has massively worsened their living and income situation, and only half of the respondents were eligible for state support. As a result, many musicians in the Basque Country had to rely on their savings or the help of friends and family to make ends meet. Interestingly, the pandemic affected the living and income situation of the respondents regardless of their demographic characteristics. However, there were differences in the assessment of future expectations and general satisfaction, with male respondents being much more optimistic than women and younger respondents being more confident than older ones.

The October 2024 issue of the IJMBR is rounded off by a book review of Juan González-Castelao on "*Orchestra Management Handbook: Building Relationships in Turbulent Times*" by Travis Newton, which was published in 2022 by Oxford University Press.

The IJMBR is aimed at all academicians around the world, from students to professors, from all disciplines and with an interest in music business research. Interdisciplinary papers will be especially welcome if they address economic- and business-related topics in the field of music. We look forward to receiving as many interesting papers as possible. Please submit your articles at the journal's webpage: <https://www.editorialmanager.com/ijmbr/default1.aspx>.