

Editorial

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The current April issue of the International Journal of Music Business Research contains four articles, so there will be no book review this time.

In the first article, “Indie Agility or Major Might: Evaluating the Internationalisation Strategies of Canadian Recording Artists in the Early 2020s”, Gordon Dimitrieff and Chelsea Masse from the University of Antwerp in Belgium examine the question of whether signing with an indie or a major label offers better career prospects for recording artists. The conventional assumption that a major label is more likely to enable an international career is put to the test. Using music consumption and audience data from Chartmetric, the authors show that indie labels are in no way inferior to major labels when it comes to building an international career and even have advantages, even if it is easier to start a career with the help of major labels. However, this advantage quickly disappears, and then indies can certainly deliver what Universal, Sony and Warner promise their artists.

“Down, and Under Pressure: The Decline of the New Music Economy in Australia 2000–2024” is Tim Kelly’s second contribution to the journal, following his article “Down, and Under Pressure: The Decline of Local and Non-Anglo Best-Selling Recording Artists in Australia 2000–2023”, which was published in October 2024. This time, the focus is on the influence of music streaming on new music released in Australia between 2000 and 2024. Based on sales figures for the Australian phonographic industry published by the Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA), Kelly shows that sales and chart positions for newly released music declined significantly during the observation period. This is because back catalogue music has become more relevant in the music streaming economy as a whole, making it more difficult for new music to compete with tried-and-tested hits.

The third article, “Sound Matters: An Experimental Study of Vocal Performance and Economic Behaviour” by Björn A. Kuchinke and Jürgen Rösch from the Bauhaus University in Weimar, Germany, poses the question of whether subtle differences in the vocal performance of pop stars can influence the economic decision-making process. What does that mean? There is a study by Robert J. Oxoby from 2009 in which AC/DC songs performed by different vocalists—Bon Scott and Brian Johnson—are compared using game theory. While Oxoby tried to clarify which of the two artists was the ‘better’ performer using game theory with a wink, the two authors are concerned with the more serious question of whether the interpretation of a song has an impact on economic decision-making, e.g., when music is used in advertising or as background music in a shop. Although Kuchinke and Rösch are unable to replicate the results of Oxoby’s experiment, they can nevertheless show that it does matter who interprets a song when economic decisions are made. In doing so, they make an interesting contribution to how AI-generated songs function economically and what role voice deep fakes could play in this.

In the latest article, “‘Sorry, we’re closed’: Measuring the effects of a real-life experiment on motivations for visiting pop concerts” by Kevin Belzer, Martijn Mulder and Erik Hitters from Erasmus University of Rotterdam in the Netherlands explores how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the music event market in the Netherlands and what strategies small event organisers in particular have chosen to bring audiences back to concert venues after the pandemic.

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>. Peter Tschmuck is a Professor at the Department of Popular Music of the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, Austria, with a focus on music business and industry research. He is the author of ‘Creativity and Innovation in the Music Industry’ (2nd edition, Springer, 2012) and has co-edited ‘Music Business and the Experience Economy: The Australasian Case’ (Springer, 2013). In July 2021, the second edition of ‘The Economics of Music’ was published by Agenda Publishing, UK. He also writes on the music business/industry in his blog <https://musicbusinessresearch.wordpress.com> and has organised the annual international conference ‘International Music Business Research Days’ since 2010. He was the founding President of the International Music Business Research Association (IMBRA) in 2015 and is currently the association’s Treasurer (Tschmuck@mdw.ac.at).

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