

# Music Trades Goes Global

**M**onths before the first issue of *The Music Trades* was mailed in 1890, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Idaho all gained statehood, bringing the union up to a total of 41 states. Surveying the expanding nation, our founding editor John C. Freund said, "What glorious opportunities await the ambitious man of action." The music industry he addressed at the time was heavily concentrated along the Eastern Seaboard and the handful of companies that operated further inland, like D.H. Baldwin in Cincinnati and Lyon & Healy in Chicago, were referred to as "the western branch of the trade." Our circulation records from that era have long since perished, but based on a review of early issues, we suspect that our readership west of the Mississippi was limited, to say the least. Armed conflict between the U.S. Cavalry and various Native American tribes was just one of the many impediments that hampered the sale of musical instruments in that vast stretch between the Mississippi River and the Pacific Ocean.

As the U.S. population expanded and migrated westward, Freund's early predictions of "opportunity" were realized. Retailers and manufacturers sprang up across the country, and *The Music Trades* expanded its geographic reach to bring them news and analysis. In the past 50 years, our reach has continued to expand beyond U.S. borders into Europe, Asia, and South America. Industry execs around the world have an intense interest in what happens in the U.S., home to the largest and most influential music market, and in increasing numbers, they turn to *The Music Trades* for insight.

This issue, with its first-ever sales ranking of top retailers outside the U.S., signals a new chapter in our efforts to serve a truly global market. Two years ago, we initiated a digital edition with a translation feature that made it possible to read our content in Czech, Chinese, Russian, and most of the world's other languages. To say that we have been gratified and overwhelmed by the response would be something of an understatement.

One of our primary editorial efforts has been to provide hard sales data to help guide decisions in an increasingly competitive market. Our annual Industry Census, which tracks unit and dollar sales of all major product categories, has long been one of our best read issues in the U.S. However, we were startled to see that it also garnered more than 90,000 page views in Russia alone. Our quarterly Import Tracker column, which quantifies the volume and origin of imported products flowing into the U.S., has been another popular feature. Now it receives thousands of page views in China. Our Global Issue,

which ranks sales volumes of the world's top suppliers and markets, has found a ready audience in the four corners of the globe.

The copious page view count has been accompanied by the constant repetition of a single request: "Why don't you provide similar quantitative analysis for other markets around the world?" With this issue, we offer our response. Sales rankings of leading retailers, along with profiles, provide a unique look at how and where business is done. We thank our readers for providing the impetus for this project. And we also thank dozens of retailers, distributors, and manufacturers for providing us with the data and insights that made compiling this ranking possible.



In our rankings, we provide sales estimates of 208 retailers from 26 countries. Although the roster accounts for a little over a third of global music products sales, we acknowledge that it is not complete. Countries where insufficient sales data was available, most notably Italy, were excluded. And given the scope of the globe, we suspect some retailers may have been overlooked. However, we view this as a long-term undertaking and are confident that we can refine and sharpen the data in the coming years.

The most visible impact of globalization is the varied country of origin designations found on commonly sold products. It's not unusual for even a small m.i. store to offer items from more than a dozen different countries. A less obvious but equally significant byproduct of globalization is the convergence of business practices. As value-conscious consumers prod suppliers and retailers alike to become more efficient, they look far and wide for workable strategies. Our goal at *The Music Trades* is to be one of the first places they look, whether they are in Argentina, Azerbaijan, or Australia. To echo the words of our founder, it's a big world with a lot of opportunity.

**Brian T. Majeski**  
Editor

brian@musictrades.com