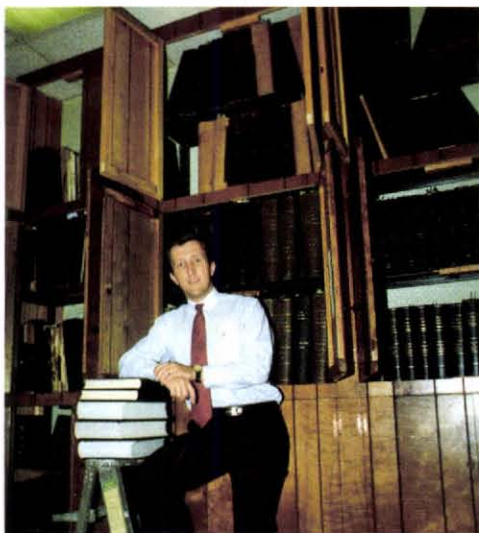


# The Music Industry's Century-Long Drama

Over the past century, *The Music Trades* has produced 2,684 issues totaling over 200,000 pages. The complete set of back issues fill 80 feet of shelving in our offices and weigh well over a ton. Within this substantial bulk of paper resides the only complete and unbroken chronicle of the music industry. During the past 100 years, *Music Trades* has stood alone as the only organization to have consistently and accurately detailed all significant industry developments, running the gamut from the invention of the player piano to the debut of MIDI. Our pages have also been enlivened by portraits of the individuals behind the events.

This special Centennial issue represents an effort to distill 100 years of reporting, and 200,000 pages, into a single volume. For the better part of a year, our staff has spent hours each day sifting through back issues, old files, and photographs in an effort to piece together the important events of the past. Fortunately, the colorful and engaging nature of the music industry made the arduous task far more enjoyable.

The history of the music industry is more than just a litany of evolving products, business practices, and economic fluctuations. It is the dramatic saga of inspired individuals who dedicated themselves to enriching the world through music. As with any drama, it is also filled with uplifting triumphs and heart-rending disasters that reveal the best in human nature. Efforts to make instruments more affordable at the turn of the century inspired remarkable ingenuity, prompting the industry to pioneer mass production methods and installment selling techniques. Behind the creation of public school music programs in the early twenties lay a sincere and egalitarian belief that all children should be exposed to music. During the Great Depression of the thirties, the industry rose to the challenge, displaying courage and integrity in the face of great adversity. More recently, the dizzying array of technological breakthroughs have reflected mankind's restless urge to pursue a "better way."



Brian Majeski with a few of the 2,684 back issues of *The Music Trades*.

Unfortunately, due to space limitations, we have been unable to include all the individuals, companies, and organization that played a role in the industry's drama. Lacking any empirical means for gauging the "importance" of various individuals and events, our editing process was by necessity, subjective. Nevertheless, we feel that this issue effectively recounts, in broad strokes, the major developments and social forces that shaped the industry during the past century.

Tracing 100 years of music industry history through the pages of *Music Trades*, we have been struck by two constants amidst a torrent of change. One being the ceaseless lament of retailers and manufacturers that: "Business isn't like it used to be." For some inexplicable reason, every generation seems convinced that it has to work much harder than its predecessors.

The other constant has been a presence of creative individuals who have enriched the industry with their singular vision and leadership. Design innovations, marketing breakthroughs, and extraordinary organizations are not inevitable; they are the result of individual initiative. In Chapter Eleven, "Individuals Who Made A Difference," we chronicle the stories of the exemplary talents who dramatically altered the course of industry events.

For 100 years, *The Music Trades* magazine has been supported by the retailers and manufacturers of the music industry. In this Centennial issue, we pay tribute to all those, past and present, who have contributed to the industry, and made our existence possible. On a more personal level, we dedicate this issue to three individuals: John C. Freund, who first recognized the need for a trade paper serving the music industry; my grandfather, John F. Majeski Sr., who effectively guided *Music Trades* through the worst economic debacle in U.S. history; and my father, John F. Majeski Jr., who elevated the publication to its current prominence.

Brian T. Majeski  
Editor