

# Streaming helps boost 2018 music industry sales

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Riding high on the music industry's return to crescendo

Worldwide music sales rose by nearly 10 percent in 2018, a fourth consecutive year of growth fuelled by online streaming, according to figures released on Tuesday by an industry body.

Revenues reached \$19.1 billion last year, the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, which represents the recorded [music industry](#) worldwide, said in its Global Music Report 2019.

"We are now much more optimistic," said IFPI chief executive Frances Moore, describing the period prior to recent growth as a "mourn-fest" when "we only had bad years".

However, the overall growth of 9.7 percent in sales masks a discrepancy within the industry, with streaming buoyant—accounting for almost half of revenues—while downloads and physical purchases continued to drop.

The streaming sector, which includes subscription fees and advertising income, grew by 34 percent to reach \$8.9 billion in 2018.

There were 255 million users of paid streaming services at the end of year, according to the report.

But paid downloads fell by 21.2 percent and physical sales of music were down by 10.1 percent.

Despite the growing presence of paid streaming services, piracy remains a problem with an estimated 120 million online users illegally ripping music from streams each month, Moore said.

"They are hacking and downloading the music... at the price of the stream, and very often they are not paying at all," he said.

"And whole discographies can be downloaded with bittorrent and other forms," Moore added.

Marked regional disparities exist within the positive global growth

picture.

For a second year running, Latin America saw the largest increase, with total sales up 16.8 percent.

In North America, where the transition from physical to digital [music](#) formats is well advanced, sales also jumped, by 14 percent last year.

However, in Europe sales rose a miniscule 0.1 percent.

Meanwhile, the IFPI's annual singles chart saw rising Cuban-American star Camila Cabello, Canadian rapper Drake and Briton Ed Sheeran top of the pile.

In the album rankings, the soundtrack of smash hit musical movie "The Greatest Showman", South Korean boyband BTS and US star Lady Gaga were the biggest sellers.

Vinyl, an increasingly popular format for audiophiles and nostalgic listeners, also saw sales grow for the 13th consecutive year.

It now represents 3.6 percent of the [industry](#)'s total turnover.

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