

MMR

MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

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Artist-signature Guitars

Have their Own Narrative – One that Can be Helpful to Retailers



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MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

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Why Try to be Like Everybody Else?



by Christian Wissmuller

In Victoria Wasylak's excellent profile of Lexington, Massachusetts' guitar dealer, The Music Emporium (page 64), co-owner Joe Caruso says of the Boston areas' Guitar Center locations: "They didn't put us out of business – they helped our business. Too often, every store is the same, they're all carrying the same stuff. There's too much homogeneity in the retail world."

This philosophy and approach to business in the MI realm is, of course, not necessarily "new," but it seems to me it deserves amplified (no pun intended) attention in today's current climate – one in which each monthly *MMR* dealer survey, regardless of the topic, is populated with tens (sometimes hundreds) of responses that, in part, bemoan the inability of traditional brick-and-mortar stores to compete with big box or online retailers.

Later in that same article, when explaining how The Music Emporium decided to enter the electric guitar market after decades of established success as *the* region's source for all things "fretted and acoustic," Caruso adds, "We didn't want to do Fender, we don't want to do Gibson, don't want to do PRS, because everybody had those. Why try to be like everybody else? All these small builders we could represent that don't have a home – we could be that sort of place. We could be the place to go to find so many cool, obscure lines that players may have heard about, but no one carries them."

Read Victoria's feature to learn the details of how this strategy has paid off handsomely for The Music Emporium, but for now, suffice to say: it worked and it's working. Again, it's a lesson some retailers might want to remind themselves of and reevaluate as an already competitive, difficult marketplace becomes ever more so.

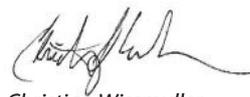
I'm a Gibson guy. That said, a quick glance at my collection reveals that I'm also an Ampeg

(Dan Armstrong), Guild, Fender, Teisco, Goya, Rick-enbacker, Gretsch, Epiphone, and "New York Pro" (don't ask – it was a gift. Looking around online just now, they seem to have left us. I do play that guitar a lot! R.I.P.) guy. But a place like Caruso's – one that stocks *none* of my "favorite brands" – represents the type of store I'd seriously consider making the drive to rather than just another dealer that has all the guitars I know.

I think of the brands profiled in our August 2017 "The Class of 2017" feature – Michael Kelly, PureSalem, Sire, Wallace Detroit, Chapman, DiPinto, Relish, Prestige – and *those* (and plenty more like them out there) are the brands I haven't so often held in my hands, plugged into an amp, and played. Those are the types of guitars I'm excited to see at trade shows and the types of guitars I'd hop in the car and make the trek to check out if a nearby dealer happened to stock them.

With one of the major industry trade shows upon us, I'd advocate for paying serious attention to some of the smaller, lesser-known companies exhibiting (not that you should ignore the big names, of course). As The Music Emporium has demonstrated, offering appealing gear that *isn't* available online or at the larger retailers is one solid strategy to distinguish your business and to not only survive in today's market, but to thrive.

Speaking of Summer NAMM, for those readers planning to make the trip to Nashville: drop by our booth (#800) and say hello!



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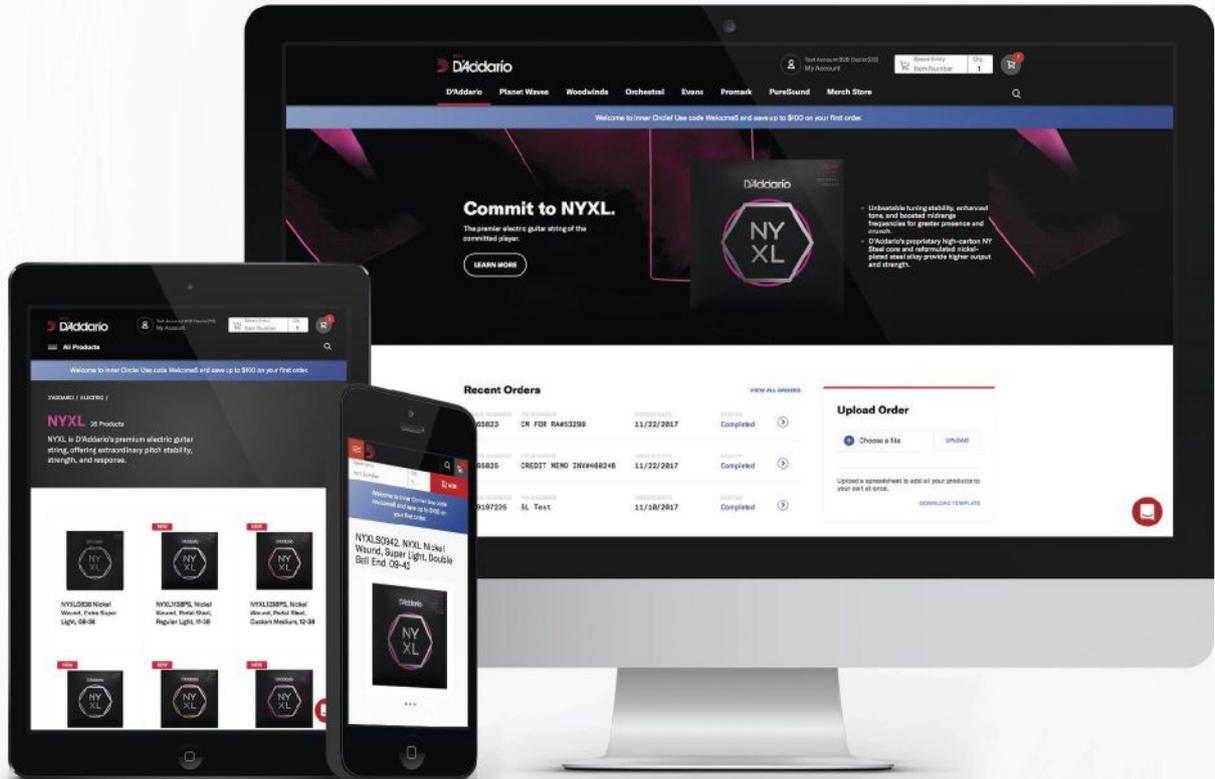
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Industry News

Gibson Files for Bankruptcy Protection

Nashville-based Gibson Brands – the corporation behind Baldwin Piano, Wurlitzer, Gibson Pro Audio, and (most significantly) Gibson Guitars – filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on Tuesday, May 1.

The petition notes that Gibson currently has up to \$500 million in debt and that, going forward, operations will be focused on the MI side of the business, “unburdened by the challenges experienced by... separate, primarily non-U.S. consumer electronic business.”

A statement released by Gibson Brands, Inc. on May 1, notes that, “The Company has reached a ‘Restructuring Support Agreement’ with holders of more than 69.0% in principal amount of its 8.875% Senior Secured Notes due 2018, and its principal shareholders, that clears the pathway for the continued financing and operations of the musical instruments business as well as a change of control in favor of those noteholders.”

Further on in the statement, CEO Henry Juszkiewicz is credited with declaring, “Over the past 12 months, we have made substantial strides through an operational restructuring. We have sold non-core brands, increased earnings, and reduced working capital demands. The decision to re-focus on our core business, musical instruments, combined with the significant support from our noteholders, we believe will assure the company’s long-term stability and financial health. Importantly, this process will be virtually invisible to customers, all of whom can continue to rely on Gibson to provide unparalleled products and customer service.”

Juszkiewicz holds a 36 percent stake in Gibson. An agreement with secured noteholders would help the company repay bank loans as it goes through a “change of control” transaction, according to the company’s filing.

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Yamaha Guitar Group Acquires Ampeg

Yamaha Guitar Group, Inc., the newly formed U.S. subsidiary of Japan-based Yamaha Corporation, has announced the acquisition of the Ampeg brand from LOUD Audio, LLC., a portfolio company of Transom Capital Group.

The addition of Ampeg to Yamaha Guitar Group’s portfolio alongside the Yamaha and Line 6 brands adds an iconic selection of bass amps, cabinets, and pedals to the solutions already available to bass guitarists through Yamaha bass guitars and Line 6 wireless and modelers.

With roots that go back to New Jersey in the 1940s, the same decade that Yamaha started making guitars, the seeds of the Ampeg brand were planted when Everett Hull and Stanley Michaels began designing pickup and amplification systems for upright basses. In the early 1960s, Ampeg was the first company to incorporate reverb into a guitar amp and in 1969 they introduced the most powerful amplifier ever made – the 300-watt SVT, an amp that has graced the backlines of almost every tour and festival imaginable in its 49-year history.

“We couldn’t be more excited,” said Marcus Ryle, co-president of Yamaha Guitar Group. “Ampeg is arguably the most recognized bass amp brand in the world. They can even be credited with having invented the first bass amp. We are honored to take the baton in continuance of that legacy.”

“There is enormous respect for Ampeg within Yamaha,” added Shoji Mita, Yamaha Guitar Group co-president.



“Both Yamaha and Ampeg have histories in the guitar market that stretch back over seventy years, so we see the two brands as great companions for one another. We intend to maintain the outstanding quality and commitment to tone that the Ampeg brand has long-exemplified.”

Ampeg has remained a leader in bass amplification throughout their history, most recently under the stewardship of LOUD Audio, LLC. Both LOUD and Yamaha are working carefully to ensure a smooth transition.

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Reverb Doubles Size of Chicago Headquarters

In late May, Reverb.com unveiled its new 10,000 square foot office expansion. The new space, which more than doubles the size of the company’s



Roscoe Village headquarters, will accommodate the music marketplace’s continued growth. This year, Reverb estimates it will increase headcount by 50 percent and close the year with approximately \$600 million in sales.

“In the last five years, Reverb has connected countless musicians with their

dream gear, helped brick-and-mortar music instrument retailers find new streams of revenue, enabled motivated music lovers to build their

own online businesses, and more – but we’re far from finished,” said David Kalt, founder and CEO at Reverb. “As we continue to expand internationally, grow new offerings – like Reverb LP, our new record marketplace – and more, we’ll continue to add to our team, and this new space supports and is a tribute to that growth.”

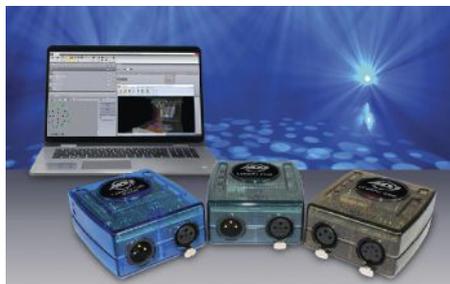
ADJ Now Distributing Compu Show DMX Lighting Control Software

ADJ Products LLC has announced they will now take over the development, support, and sales for the Compu Show lighting control software previously offered by Elation Professional for the past 10 years.

As the need for more DMX universes on shows with larger fixture and pixel counts continue to grow, this powerful, proven and stable software control system is ideal to fill those

demands and support ADJ's growing professional caliber lighting portfolio.

ADJ USA's national sales manager, Alfred Gonzales, explains: "As ADJ's fixtures have evolved, we felt it was important to grow our DMX software line as well. Our existing myDMX control software has been a very successful product worldwide for ten years, but we felt we need-



ed to offer something with more power and possibilities. Compu Show is a proven system that offers lighting designers powerful features and flexible control options to allow them to make the most of their lighting rigs and fully realize their creative vision."

Over recent years, ADJ's equipment range has expanded to include bigger, more powerful and more versatile lighting fixtures. Now, with the introduction of Compu Show, the range also includes a flexible software solution capable of controlling large rigs comprised of these advanced fixtures.

All three Compu Show models are only available from ADJ USA and ADJ Mexico. They will be available for distribution at the beginning of June 2018.

Roland Piano Featured on Animal Planet's 'Tanked'

Animal Planet reality program "Tanked" recently aired an episode where Las Vegas-based firm Acrylic Tank Manufacturing (ATM) built a fish tank that is also a working baby-grand piano with a Roland RD-2000 88-key Stage Piano as the keyboard aspect of the buildout.

ATM worked closely with keyboard wholesaler Piano Action, who advised on the design and demonstrated the RD-2000. The episode premiered on the network on Friday, May 18, 2018, and is currently streaming as part of Animal Planet's On Demand roster. The management of The Pianoworks was thrilled with the results. Shannon Fitzpatrick, property manager, The Pianoworks, stated, "I think you guys did a great job. You nailed it."

Michael Kuskin, owner of The Pianoworks, remarked, "This really represents the history of this building and this community, and it's something that everyone can enjoy. This is a dream come true."

Glass Entertainment Group Associate Producer Matt Farabaugh added, "After extensively researching pianos, The Pianoworks Owner Michael Kuskin and I chose the Roland RD-2000 Stage Piano.



We were looking for a high-quality keyboard at an affordable price point, and the RD-2000 far exceeded our expectations. When we first got hands on it, we were impressed by many of its features, its great design, and high quality sound. We think it not only helped our episode and kept our client happy, but it brought a new level of quality to the tank."

Korg Sponsors MEISA's Hofstra Music Industry Conference

April 6th marked the Music and Entertainment Student Association's (MEISA) fourth annual Music Industry Conference hosted at Hofstra University in New York. Korg USA sponsored the cause by providing a variety of gear for their artist showcase including VOX and Blackstar combo amps and a Korg Grandstage piano.

Up and coming solo artist Josh Metzler performed his newest single "Titanic," followed by appearances from hip-hop artist Marcaux and pop sensation KarmaRe.



"Korg USA's participation and donation of instruments and equipment allowed the performers to put on a memorable show," explains Kylee Schmoyer, vice president of MEISA. "We're excited to have established this relationship and appreciate their support for local musicians and students," Schmoyer concludes.

In addition to the musical performances, MEISA also held an Entrepreneurs in the Music Industry panel that featured a collection of influential names in the music and media industries. Korg USA's artist relations specialist David Ungar joined the roster of names to talk about his role within the company for students and attendees alike.

"As a local music distributor, it was an honor to not only support a local university, but also the up and coming artists who supported MEISA's event," says Morgan Walker, senior marketing manager for Korg USA. "We have a great relationship with Hofstra's music department and look forward to future opportunities to enhance the student's educational experience," Walker explains.

Taylor Guitars Launches ‘The Ebony Project’

Taylor Guitars has launched an engrossing digital experience called The Ebony Project.

The eight-part story takes people on a virtual journey to the African country of Cameroon to learn more about Taylor’s efforts to improve the ebony trade after purchasing a sawmill there in 2011. The experience blends incredible footage of the Congo Basin Rainforest with written storytelling, video interviews, and photos, offering a deeper appreciation for the people and effort involved in sourcing ebony used for musical instruments.

For centuries, ebony has been a highly relied-upon wood for makers of stringed musical instruments because of its durability and aesthetic appeal. As a company that relies on African ebony and other tropical tonewoods to craft its guitars, Taylor recognizes that it has a responsibility to be an ethical steward of these natural resources in order to support their sustainability for future generations.

The Ebony Project traces Taylor’s path toward more sustainable ebony sourcing practices, from its decision to co-purchase the Crelicam ebony sawmill with Spanish wood supplier Madinter to the upgrading of the milling operation to the pursuit of groundbreaking research on ebony’s ecology, which has led to an innovative com-

munity planting program that aims to put thousands of ebony trees in the ground over the next several years. Along the way, The Ebony Project focuses on the importance of providing Taylor’s Crelicam colleagues with the tools and training to improve their economic livelihood and create a more sustainable future for their families and their local communities.



Taylor Guitars co-founder Bob Taylor serves as one of the main storytellers in the videos featured on The Ebony Project. His perspective on what he has learned in Cameroon sheds light on the complexities of sourcing and processing ebony in Cameroon, and the importance of helping our Cameroonian colleagues, who are important partners in the ebony supply chain, improve the quality of their lives through better ebony processing capability at the mill.

Taylor’s work in Cameroon was recognized by the U.S. government with the Secretary of State’s 2013 Award for Corporate Excellence (ACE). The annual award recognizes U.S.-owned businesses that play vital roles around the world as good corporate citizens in supporting sustainable development, respect for human and labor rights, environmental protection, open markets, transparency, and other democratic values. Visit taylorguitars.com/ebonyproject.

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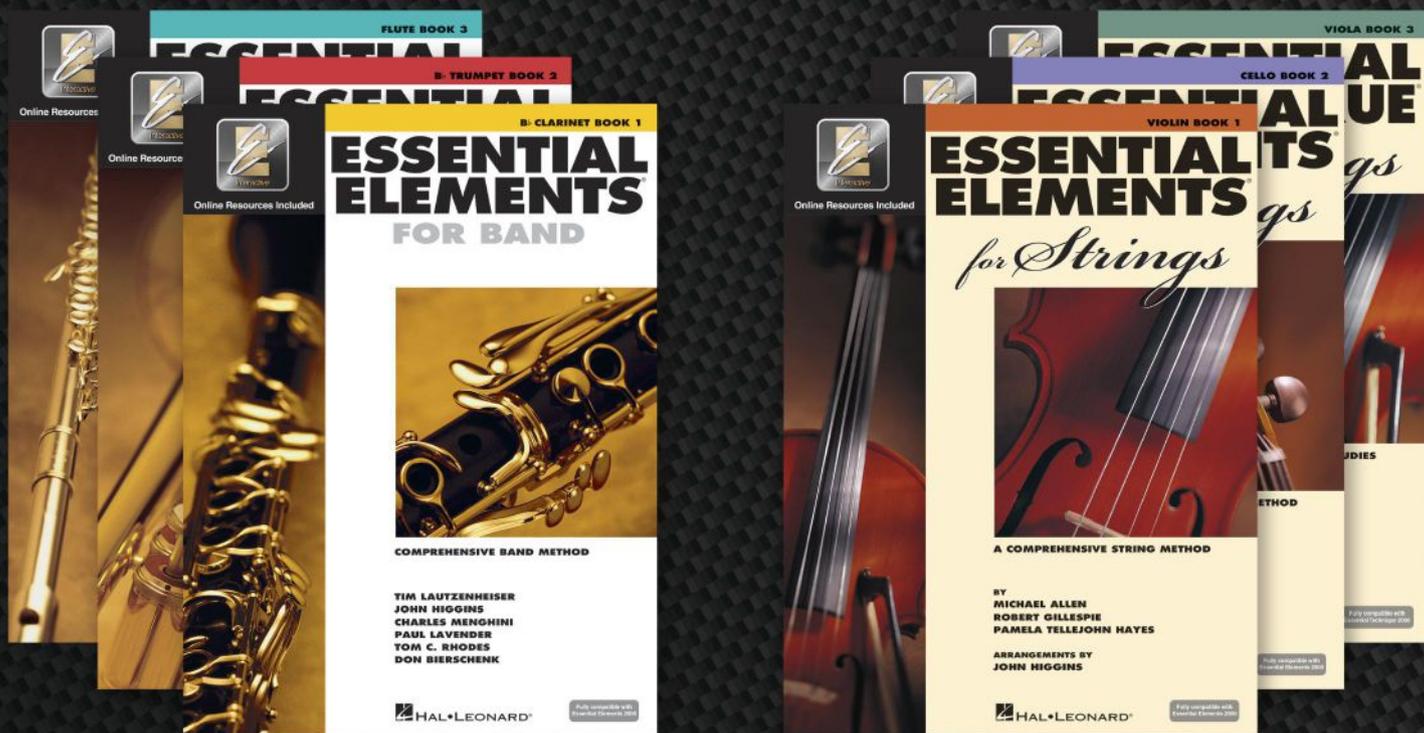
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KMC Music Appointed as Exclusive U.S. Distributor of Dream Cymbals

Pointing to the company's scale, resources, and broad-based network of 6,500 resellers, Dream Cymbals and Gongs has appointed KMC Music to serve as its exclusive United States distribution partner.

According to KMC Music vice president of Merchandising Roger Hart, the appointment includes full responsibility for managing all of Dream's United States

dealer sales, inventory and receivables.

"Dream is one of the hottest and most innovative brands in the retail music industry today and this new distribution agreement frees this dynamic and fast-growing company to focus on what it does best – innovative product design and development, manufacturing and marketing," Hart emphasized. "KMC Music will function as Dream's complete

sales and administrative resource and we're really looking forward to maximizing market growth and servicing their dealers. We're poised to do remarkable things together."

"Dream cymbals and gongs are the blank canvas musicians create art with," said Dream Cymbals and Gongs president Andy Morris. "Our goal is to create perfect conditions for musicians to find their authentic voice, in an affordable and sustainable way. Our new distribution agreement with KMC Music is going to help many more musicians to do just that. KMC Music shares our values and understands our commitment to exceed the highest expectations of our dealers and loyal customers. KMC Music has the broad reach, market depth and back-end resources that can help to drive sales while we continue to innovate new products and build our growing worldwide family of artists, dealers and musicians."

"The availability of Dream cymbals and gongs represents a significant new business opportunity for our dealers," Hart emphasized. "Dream offers an incredible product line that is affordably priced and reinforced by spot-on marketing that resonates with today's musicians."

KMC Music will be ready to receive and ship orders on June 15, 2018.

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Yamaha *continued from page 6*

"We are enjoying the opportunity to work so closely with Yamaha Guitar Group on this hand-off," stated Alex Nelson, president and managing director of Music Gear brands at LOUD Audio. "Ampeg is loved and respected by both customers and by our LOUD employees, so we are happy to see it move into the hands of a company like Yamaha. We are confident that we have found Ampeg the best possible home."

The addition of the Ampeg line completes the total offering for bass guitarists that already includes legendary Yamaha bass guitars such as the BB and TRBX alongside Line 6's Relay wireless and Helix amp and effects modelers.

Yamaha and LOUD will be working together over the next several months to ensure a smooth transition for all customers, dealers, and distributors, after which Ampeg operations will be headquartered in Calabasas, California at the Yamaha Guitar Group, Inc. offices.

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Hal Leonard Announces New Global Deal with Whitacre

Grammy Award-winning composer and conductor Eric Whitacre and Hal Leonard have announced they have expanded their relationship with a global print and distribution agreement effective July 1.

Whitacre, whose previous deal with Hal Leonard was limited to North America, is one of the most well-known and beloved composers today, with his pieces sung and performed around the world by both amateur and professional choir and instrumental ensembles. Winning a Grammy in 2012 for his 2010 debut album as both composer and conductor, *Light & Gold*, Whitacre has conducted performances with the London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and BBC Chorus. Additionally, his popular "Virtual Choir" series, a collection of six videos featuring clips of fans across the world singing Eric Whitacre arrangements, have amassed over 40 million views and inspired new and old fans alike.



Adam Hall North America Merges with MDG

Adam Hall North America, Inc., a newly formed subsidiary of the German-based Adam Hall Group, announced that it has merged with its New Jersey-based North American Distributor, Musical Distributors Group (MDG).

The partnership will enhance the Adam Hall Group's presence in the U.S. and Canada and improve customer experience and growth.

The deal will strengthen the presence of the Adam Hall brands, including LD Systems, Cameo Lighting, Gravity Stands, Palmer and Defender Cable Protection, as well as MDG's exclusive distribution brands, such as Höfner, Ultrasono, EBS, Mad Professor, and Lock-It Straps. By combining the sales and service expertise of MDG in America with the operational, logistics, and marketing strengths of the Adam Hall Group, Adam Hall North America, Inc. is well poised to service the North American music and event technology industry with increased reach and product availability while continuing its focus on customer service, consultation and satisfaction.

The deal was signed and completed in the early first quarter of 2018.



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Supplier Scene

JD Allen Joins JodyJazz Family of Artist Endorsers

JodyJazz Inc has announced that Tenor Saxophone titan JD Allen has joined the JodyJazz family of artist endorsers. JD Allen's mouthpiece choice is the JodyJazz GIANT Tenor 8.

"We are very pleased to welcome JD Allen as a JodyJazz Endorser Artist," said Jody Espina, founder and president of JodyJazz. "JD is one of the most important new voices on Tenor Sax to have hit the Jazz world in recent years. He has a unique and instantly recognizable sound and I am so proud for JodyJazz to be a part of that. There is so much more music to come from JD and we are excited to hear him develop and to support him in what is sure to be amazing career."

"A giant among mouthpieces- my JodyJazz Giant 8 makes it easier to express honest human emotions, which is the ultimate goal for any artist; translating the four basic human emotions of happiness, fear, anger and sadness - onto his or her horn," said JD Allen. "This mouthpiece is helping me realize this goal."



Korg USA and the Musicology Performance Center Host Autism Awareness Event

This past April, Long-Island based performance school Musicology hosted Rock the Lot, a fundraiser to promote awareness for Autism Speaks, with support from Korg USA Inc. and local rock radio station 94.3 The Shark.

The event honored local New York State Senator John Flanagan, as well as legendary bassist CJ Ramone for their generous contributions to the cause through the years. The day included games, raffles, and performances led by the students, including a memorable cover of "Blitzkrieg Bop" with CJ Ramone himself.

"With the support from Korg USA, Inc., Senator Flanagan and CJ Ramone, we were able to raise a few thousand dollars for this incredible charity," says Patrick Castania, owner of Musicology.



Patrick Castania (owner of Musicology), Jeff Frohman, CJ Ramone, Senator John Flanagan, John Ortenberg

gy. "All the proceeds were donated to Autism Speaks and we look forward to supporting them again soon."

Korg USA, Inc. donated a wide variety of gear including a Crush Drum Alpha kit, a selection of VOX and Blackstar amps, Korg Pitchclip tuners, a digital piano and Korg's popular Microkorg and monologue synthesizers.

Apart Audio Chooses TMP-Pro as U.S. Distributor



TMP-Pro, distribution division of The Music People, has announced it will partner with Apart Audio as their United States distributor.

A company with over 25 years of corresponding experience in fixed audio installation, Apart Audio manufactures affordable, unique, and reliable products.

Apart Audio is a leading global presence in fixed install audio, with products in over 90 countries fulfilling its mission to deliver innovative, cost-effective and above all reliable sound solutions that exceed customer demands and expectations.

"Our team recognized Apart's strength in design which is evident in the products' innovative function, which will be much appreciated by U.S. installers," said Music People president John Hennessey. "Apart has a strong reputation with their customers around the world with a broad appeal in their markets and a very low failure rate. We are excited to represent Apart Audio's unprecedented product in the U.S. for the first time."

"We are very happy to partner with TMP-Pro," concurred Apart Audio NV sales and marketing director Kris Vermuyten. "Their expertise in professional audio and knowledge of the U.S. market will allow Apart Audio to enter this important geographical area, completing our worldwide network. TMP-Pro has the years of experience and a proven track record of building a brand in a highly competitive market. We are confident they will succeed in doing the same with Apart Audio."

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The D'Addario Foundation Participates in Instrument Drives with Hungry for Music

The D'Addario Foundation, Hungry for Music, and Todd Rundgren's Spirit of Harmony Foundation are back for a nationwide instrument drive tour, stopping in Ace Hotels in Pittsburgh, Los Angeles, Chicago, and New Orleans this year.

The not-for-profits are expanding their partnership with Ace properties in 2018, with multiple Ace Hotels hosting instrument drives and performances to raise awareness—and funding—to bring music education into underserved communities.

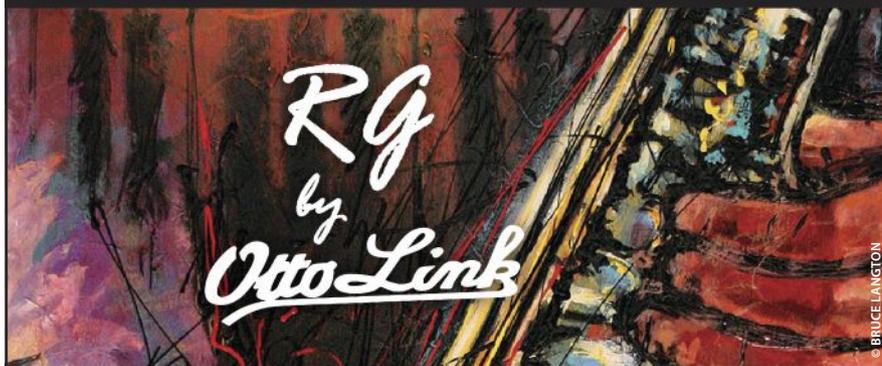
Starting in Pittsburgh on June 8, the D'Addario Foundation and Hungry for Music will be on-hand to collect gently used instruments to refurbish for students in need in music programs nationwide. The event will feature a musical performance by the Boilermaker Jazz Band. The next stop is the Ace Hotel in Los Angeles on July 29, followed by the Ace Hotel in Chicago on September 2, and culminating at the Ace Hotel in New Orleans on November 15.

"Many of the music programs that apply for support from the D'Addario Foundation have instrument needs," says Suzanne D'Addario Brouder, executive director of the D'Addario Foundation. "Lack of instruments means children on waiting lists, hoping for spots in these vital programs. Donating an instrument is a very direct way to make an instant impact. We are thrilled to continue this partnership with the Ace Hotels and truly appreciate their commitment to supporting our efforts to improve lives and develop healthier communities through music education."

For those with instrument donations unable to attend these events, the foundation recommends Instruments in the Cloud, an online giving platform that connects donors directly with classrooms in need.



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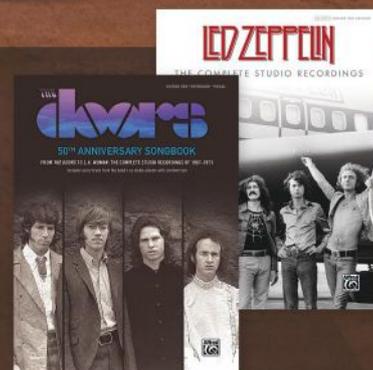
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Yamaha Donates Keyboards to New SFCM Afterschool Program

Yamaha Corporation of America and Music Exchange have donated 16 Yamaha portable 88-key keyboards and accessories to a new San Francisco Conservatory of Music (SFCM) afterschool music education program.

Funded by the Koret Foundation, it will launch in the summer of 2018 and will comprise core offerings of individual and group piano instruction, basic music theory, individual singing lessons and chorus. A public concert at the church on Sunday, May 6, introduced the afterschool music education program to the public.

"We are deeply grateful to the Koret Foundation and inspired by their investment in this initiative to bring music to underserved communities in the Bay Area," said David H. Stull, president at SFCM. "This partnership demonstrates the enormous potential we share as organizations when we collaborate on reaching critical goals, such as advancing the education of our children. We look forward with excitement to the future."

A 16-instrument Yamaha digital keyboard lab will be placed in two classrooms at the church. Reverend James Smith, artistic director for the Third Baptist Church, will offer piano instruction to students at the church, as well as singing lessons and choir rehearsals with piano accompaniment. With these instruments, students may work on their skills individually – using their headphones – and may also collaborate with each

other and perform in duets or groups.

"Yamaha and Music Exchange are literally right in our neighborhood, and our relationship is ongoing, so when we approached them, they were very generous about making this contribution," said Gloria Kim, vice president, external relations and artistic operations for SFCM. "Everyone involved came together to invest in the future of San Francisco."

"Our involvement with this program to inspire young students to learn to play music is consistent with our global dedication to music education," said Dan Rodowicz, national sales manager, Yamaha Institutional Solutions Group. "We are pleased to partner with San Francisco Conservatory of Music and the interfaith community to launch this dynamic initiative to reach underserved youth."



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CELESTION

Music & Arts Opens Three New California Locations, Acquires Gard's Music

Music & Arts has announced the opening of three new locations in the U.S. with the acquisition of Gard's Music in southern California.

Gard's Music is now being formally welcomed into the Music & Arts family as official locations. The stores, located at 848 S Grand Avenue in Glendora; 350 S Mountain Avenue in Upland; and 11837 E Foothill Boulevard

in Rancho Cucamonga, will continue to serve local residents and school music programs throughout nearby counties. "Music & Arts is proud to start a new chapter of rentals, lessons, and repairs in SoCal. We thank Gard's Music for their service to the local musical community and promise to continue to serve with the same level of dedication and pride," shares Music & Arts president Steve Zapf.



Woodwind & Brasswind Donate Music Classroom Supplies Throughout USA



Woodwind & Brasswind concluded Music in Our Schools Month by bringing music classroom supplies to public schools across

the United States.

Woodwind & Brasswind supplied a record-breaking number of nearly 1,500 music projects during Music in Our Schools Month, which will support over 36,000 music students across the country.

This year's increase in funded projects is attributed to the

generosity of Ripple, a cryptocurrency company. This organization donated \$29 million dollars to fund every active project on DonorsChoose.org.

An annual celebration created by the National Association for Music Education (NAfME), Music in Our Schools Month takes place in March to engage music educators, students and communities across the nation to support music education programs.

"Our partnership with DonorsChoose.org is invaluable. Providing quality music classroom supplies is one of many ways we show our appreciation to dedicated music teachers across the country," said Heather Cousineau, Woodwind & Brasswind institutional merchandising manager.

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D'Addario Foundation Awards Scholarships to Students in Their Free Long Island Lesson Program

Thanks to donations to the D'Addario Foundation's Music Education for Girls Initiative, dedicated students in D'Addario's free stringed instrument program will receive \$2,000 scholarships to continue their musical training.

"These young women first started with us at the age of ten and have achieved more than we ever imagined," says Suzanne D'Addario Brouder, executive director of the D'Addario Foundation. "After four years and 800 hours of free music training, these students



have blossomed as players and individuals, winning Academic, Citizenship, and Presidential awards."

The Long Island Lesson Program—financed completely by the D'Addario Foundation and managed by the Harmony Program—has operated for the last four years in the Copiague School District, chosen because of its constituency of high needs families. It has not had a string program for more than 30 years. The program provides six hours a week of instrument instruction more than 30 weeks a year, including summer camp.

"Some students want to attend Harvard and know they can get there through their music," says Kelly Flynn, lead teacher for the Long Island Lesson Program. "One of our students wants to attend Juilliard for cello and to think she would have never come to that conclusion, if not for this program so graciously funded by the D'Addario Foundation. I asked that specific student what she remembers from the first day of lessons, and she remembered picking out the cello and falling in love with it. Her parents had no idea what a cello even was."

The Copiague students will perform together in their end of the school year recital. The free event took place Monday May 21 at the D'Addario and Company facilities in Farmingdale, New York. At the recital, D'Addario Brouder announced the scholarship winners; the awards will cover youth orchestra fees, weekly private lessons and instruments.

As these underserved students grow beyond their middle school years, D'Addario Brouder says, "We have no doubt the trajectory of their lives has been forever changed."

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Lewis Awarded with Ami & Remo Belli Humanitarian Award

C.Terry Lewis was honored with the Ami & Remo Belli Humanitarian Award at the 6th annual Artbeat for Humanity Gala VI.

Terry Lewis is the former executive vice president of the Yamaha Corporation of America (until 2008) and was in charge of Yamaha’s U.S. musical instrument business in the U.S. for many years. He also served as president of two Yamaha subsidiary companies, Yamaha Artist Services, Inc. in New York City and Yamaha Entertainment Group, Inc. in Nashville, Tennessee. Until 2016, he also served as Chairman of the Yamaha Music and Wellness Institute, an organization that he co-founded in 2005 with CEO and noted neurologist Dr. Barry Bittman and the late Karl T. Bruhn.

He currently serves as a member of the Board of Directors for Banding Together, the San Diego-based nonprofit arm of the Music Therapy Center of California whose mission is to bring music opportunities to individuals with special needs.

“Terry Lewis is an initiator and an innovator of making music and drum circles part of the health and wellness lexicon - he was a key founder alongside other amazing people in music education and music therapy to prominently develop tools to use and benefit humanity at the Yamaha Music and Wellness Institute - a profound leader in the belief that music does the body, mind and soul good,” says Helen Dolas, CEO and founder Able ARTS Work. “The music, health and wellness industry would not be where it is today if it were not for Terry, for this we are all grateful.”



Lewis accepting the award



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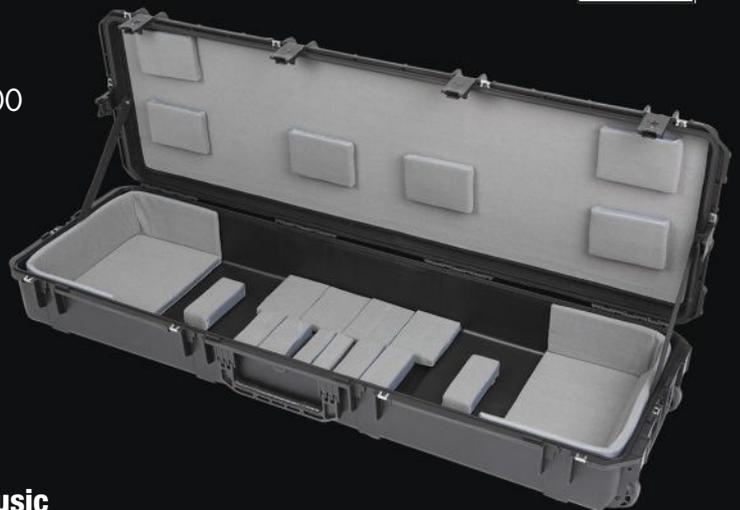
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Yamaha Helps Dayton Public Schools Restore Instrumental Music Program

From April 17 through 19, Dayton Public Schools (DPS) celebrated the rebirth of its long-dormant instrumental music program, with Yamaha Corporation of America on hand to help make it happen.

Yamaha worked in partnership with Dayton-based Winter Guard International Sport

of the Arts (WGI) and Music Education Consultants, Inc. (MEC) to bring artists and educators to a student body that has been without a band program for more than a decade. Billed as “DPS Big Gig,” the three-day event was spearheaded by Marcia Neel, senior director of education, Yamaha Corporation of

America and president of MEC, which provided pro-bono support.

“Being raised in the Dayton metro area, I can remember the days when DPS had a thriving instrumental music program. Working with the district to restore this program is truly a labor of love,” explains Neel.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, April 17 and 18, over 150 middle and high school students participated in clinics provided by Yamaha Performing Artist Lamar Burkhalter, music director for the Houston, Texans, and WGI director of Winds, Wayne Markworth. On Thursday, April 19, students attended the WGI Percussion World Championship Prelims, which featured percussion ensembles from all over the country. WGI also provided students with complimentary admission to the remaining competitions which were held all across the area throughout the weekend.

“Yamaha is committed to the future of music education in Dayton,” Neel said. “Students said that being engaged in music making at this level sharpened their overall focus and increased their confidence, an outcome we are thrilled to hear.”

In addition to Yamaha, WGI, and MEC, “DPS Big Gig” had support from other members of the area’s music community, including Fred J. Miller Inc. (FJM), Hauer Music, the University of Dayton, and Wright State University. Local music education majors were also on hand to sit in on the clinics and offer to coach during rehearsals. Marlene Miller, CEO of FJM, summed up the feelings of this newly-formed local consortium, “we are all in for DPS!”

“When I spoke to newly-appointed superintendent Dr. Elizabeth Lolli—herself a former elementary music teacher—she was enthused about music making and eager to expand the school system’s music programs,” said Neel. “This is the start of something truly special.”



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Shure Releases Statement Regarding the Discontinuation of Phono Products

Shure has released a statement regarding the discontinuation of their phono products.

"For more than 90 years, Shure has been committed to manufacturing and delivering products of the highest quality, reliability, and value. This commitment requires consistency in materials, processes, and testing, as well the capacity to react to fluctuations in demand," the statement reads. "In recent years, the ability to maintain our exacting standards in the phono-graph cartridge product category has been challenged, resulting in cost and delivery impacts that are inconsistent with the Shure brand promise."

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"In light of these conditions, and after thorough evaluation, we have made the difficult decision to discontinue production of Shure Phono products effective Summer 2018," the statement goes on to say. "Given our decades-long history of participation in the phono category, we recognize that this decision may come as a disappointment to our channel partners and end users. We are grateful for the support and loyalty demonstrated for Shure phono products through the years and we are proud of the impact that these products have made on our customers' lives and the reputation of the Shure brand. We believe that the proud legacy of Shure Phono is best served by exiting the category rather than continuing production under increasingly challenging circumstances. Shure will continue to bring reputable, high quality products to market and we look forward to meeting and exceeding customer expectations on our current and future offerings. As Shure expands into new markets and product categories for audiophiles, our enduring commitment to premium performance and technological innovation will remain at our core."

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MMR GLOBAL



by **Ronnie Dungan**

UK Brands in Price-Fixing Investigation

Five leading UK musical instrument companies have become the subject of an investigation into alleged price fixing by the Competition and Markets Authority.

According to reports, Fender, Korg, Yamaha, Casio, and Roland – all members of the MIA – with representatives from Fender, Korg (although Rob Castle has just retired), and Roland sitting on the MIA board, are apparently the subjects of individual investigations into “suspected breaches of competition law”.

According to reports in *The Telegraph*, as many as 10 CMA staff visited the offices of the companies, some carrying out searches for up to four days. Meanwhile, 14 leading music shops have been asked to provide details of their dealings with the firms. The shops are not under any suspicion of wrongdoing.

hopefully this will be enough to accommodate the spill section’s content.

According to the CMA: “[The] investigation is at an early stage and no assumptions should be made that competition law has been infringed. The CMA has not reached a view on whether there is sufficient evidence of an infringement of competition law for it to issue a statement of objections to any of the parties under investigation. Not all cases result in the CMA issuing a statement of objections. Further detail of the CMA’s procedures in Antitrust.”

Not long after the investigations opened the MIA attempted to warn members against anti-competitive practices and that they could be subject to raids by the CMA.

Five Get Investigated

I was going to write something about just how many well-known, and in some cases iconic, musical instrument brands are turning towards the pro-audio market to keep themselves going, but then it came to my attention that there may have been a great deal of naughtiness going on in the UK market and, well, sod pro-audio, that’s a lot more interesting.

It seems that the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) is keen to find out if some of the sector’s biggest brands have been rigging the market through anti-competitive practices, including possible collusion over pricing. Oh dear.

It may all come to nothing of course, and talk of “dawn raids” is obviously slightly sensational when “early morning” (8a.m.) would be the more accurate description, but on the other hand it might become something quite major indeed.

All of the alleged perpetrators may be completely innocent, which we will find out in the fullness of time or... they may not. It’s very difficult to get information on the case from investigators who obviously don’t want to prejudice it before they have got very far with the process.

All I will say is that this isn’t an individual

case. There are five companies being investigated and apparently more than a dozen retailers who are cooperating but are not under suspicion. So the CMA has gone big.

Trade body, the MIA, which counts all of the five reported companies among its membership and had the senior management of three on its board (one retired – very recently, along with another board member), fired off a reminder to its members after the raids about their legal obligations with regards to EU competition laws and some advice should they actually receive a visit from CMA investigators. The MIA itself is not under any sort of investigation.

But, it reminded me of an MIA conference seminar a couple of years ago in which the body’s resident legal experts were offering advice on a variety of topics and one senior member of the MIA board asking a question “for a friend” about pricing matters and what you could/couldn’t do/might get away with. But it was probably a coincidence. I’m sure the whole thing will blow over and there is absolutely nothing to answer for.

If not, get ready for the return of shredding. Without guitars.



Floyd Rose Moves Into Audio

Tremolo specialist Floyd Rose has become latest MI brand to move into the pro-audio market, with a range of headphones and earbuds.

The firm says the headphones are lightweight, modern, extremely comfortable, and capable of producing “crystalline audio character.”

The FR52 luxury headphone (£149 RRP) was designed and engineered in Europe and the U.S. with a team including Floyd Rose himself, and is available in a traditional cup headphone or a Pro Series 3D Earbud model, each headphone cup has two speaker drivers, dual moving coils and frequency divider board with improved clarity in the top end, richer mids and more complex, deeper lows.

Other features a durable fabric cable, lightweight design, metal construction and soft forming earpads, the FR52 represents the pinnacle of the Floyd Rose Audio Collection range.

FR81M Pro Series Luxury Wood Headphones (£129 RRP) are handcraft-

ed and feature 50mm driver diameter and 20 - 20 KHz frequency range, while an anti-tangle, detachable fabric cable with built-in microphone and volume control provides practicality and functionality.



Every pair of FR18M headphones is handcrafted, with each piano finish ear cup being unique. Every pair is packaged in a piano wood grain storage box, custom-molded to provide maximum protection and presentation.

Floyd Rose FR36 Bluetooth Headphones (£129) use APTX CSR Audio Technology, the FR36 Bluetooth Wireless/Wired cans boast 14 hours of continuous music on a full charge. A 40mm driver diameter and full 20Hz-

See FLOYD ROSE page 34

JHS Takes on Dean Markley Lines

Dean Markley has formed a new distribution partnership with JHS which will see the American firm's range of guitar innovations enter the UK and Ireland

Recent product launches, now available through JHS, include the innovative Blue Steel cables which are cryogenically treated for better sound, more output, and greater durability, as well as the range



of XM (extra-medium) strings, NickelSteel Bass Signature Series, and SR2000 High Performance bass strings.

Dean Markley CEO, Lori McCallian, said: "Under the agreement, Dean Markley will leverage JHS's half-century of industry experience to expand distribution of its products throughout the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. We are thrilled to partner with JHS - they have an outstanding reputation and tremendous reach. We have total confidence in their team and look forward to our full product line being available to customers in the region."

Commenting on the partnership, JHS managing director Dennis Drumm said: "Dean Markley is a name synonymous with rich heritage, cutting-edge innovation and musical products of the very highest quality. Needless to say, we are thrilled to welcome the addition of Dean Markley to our family of world-class brands. We are sure Dean Markley's popular range of strings, cables and acoustic pickups will prove to be a major hit with our stockists."

New for 2018, BG's selection of cleaning packs are designed to ensure long-lasting care for brass and wind instruments, while a selection of mouthpieces, ligatures, harnesses and straps are also available.

BG Combo Packs feature a trio of essential maintenance products in one package. BG Straps and Harnesses – BG Leather Neck Straps, Comfort straps and Saxophone harnesses are designed

to offer comfort, durability, and aesthetic appeal and feature a new coated snap hook, to protect the instrument from scratches, and prevent unwanted noises during recording and performance. Harnesses are also now available in a striking red color finish.

BG owner Frank Bichon explained: "Our products use precision en-

gineering techniques, exhibit luxurious finishing touches and are built to last. To sell Made in France products you have to aim for top-level quality and design. The rule of the game is to never sell anything we wouldn't buy ourselves."

BG brasswind care and cleaning products and accessories are distributed exclusively in the UK and ROI by JHS.

NS
DESIGN

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Featured Video: Rockabye
Instrument: NS CR4 Cello

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Photo by Michelle Paskman

Packer Eyes Another Gong

John Packer has been shortlisted for another award, just weeks after winning a Queen's Award for Industry, and has outlined plans to move its HQ, too.

The firm is up for a Best Growth Business gong in the Taunton Deane Business Awards.

Director, Rob Hanson, said: "We have very close staff working relationships within our company, many of which have years of experience in the music world. We owe a big thank you to all the staff that have contributed to our success. Going forward we are

looking into amalgamating our premises onto one site, providing customers and staff with a stable facility to continue our growth."

The winner will be announced at an awards ceremony later this month.

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GHS Adds in Innovation

GHS Strings has become the U.S. distributor of UK brand Innovation double bass strings.

Innovation Strings are well known in the world of Bluegrass, Americana, and Rockabilly. Utilizing a synthetic core and nylon cover, they are designed to provide the double bass player with a sound like the traditional gut string without the issues (or cost) associated with them.

Available in medium and low tension sets, Innovation double bass strings are perfect for Rockabilly / Psychobilly players looking for that trademark slap sound as well as the Bluegrass / Americana player looking for that warm thump of the bass. And for the traditional Jazz and Orchestral musician, Innovation offers a line of double bass strings suitable for both arco and pizz.

"We're very proud to be able to team up with Innovation in this capacity," said Jon Moody, manager of Digital Brand Development and Product Development at GHS. "This will allow us to better serve our existing Artist Family roster as well as allow Innovation wider exposure."

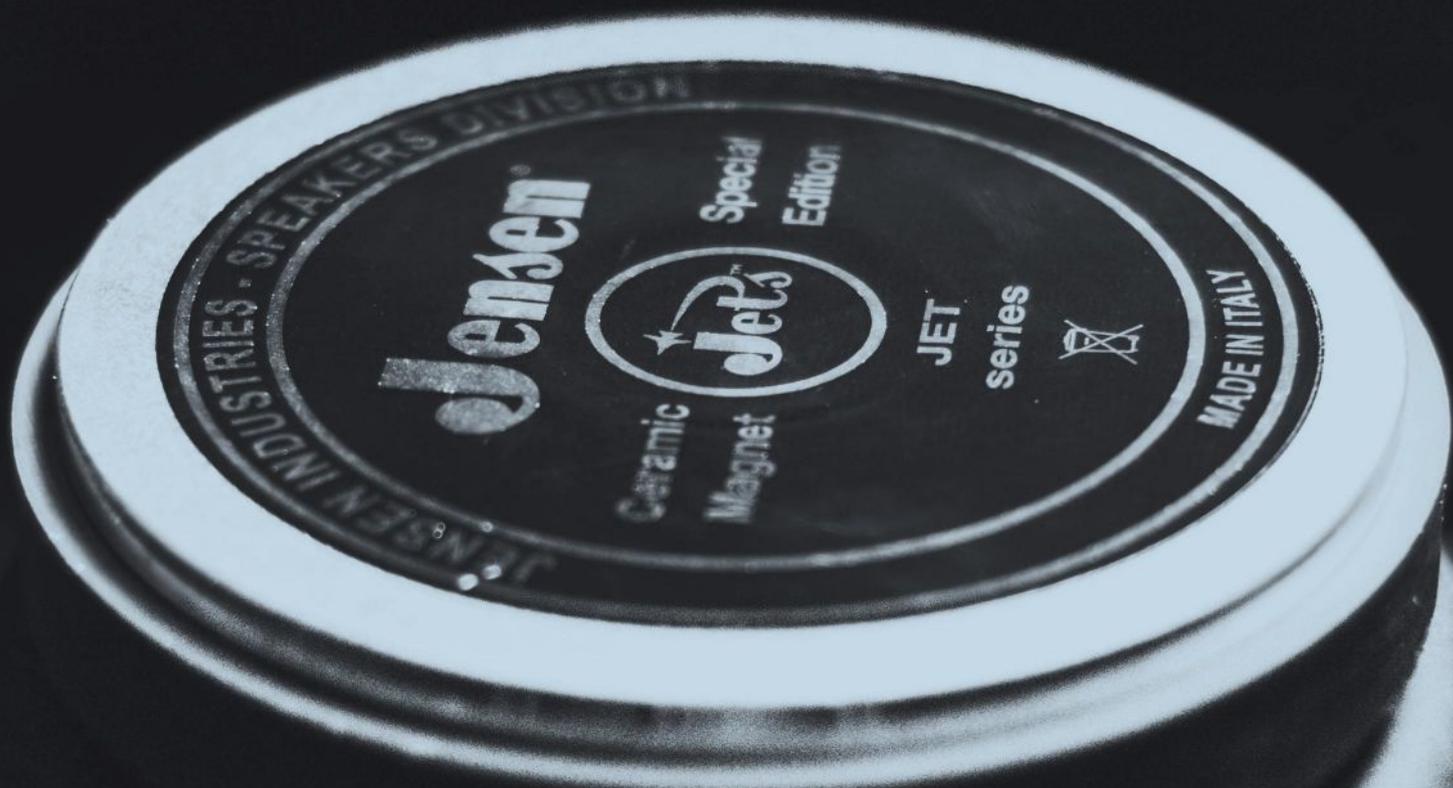
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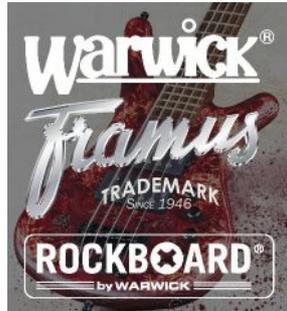
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High Tech Signs Framus and Warwick Exclusive

High Tech Distribution has been appointed as exclusive distributor for the Framus and Warwick brands in both the UK and France. HTD will be bringing customers all the brands associated with Framus & Warwick, including the newly revamped and innovative Rockboard range of bags, cases, and effects accessories. After visiting the Framus & Warwick factory in Germany, HTD U.K. sales manager, Ben Whatsley, said: "We are very excited to create the next chapter for these fabulous, well established brands and

our philosophies complement each other perfectly. With our wealth of knowledge and friendly approach, we are really looking forward to bringing Warwick, Framus, Rockbass, Rockboard, and Rockbag to our customers."



Floyd Rose *continued from page 30*

20KHz frequency response delivers a warm and accurate representation of sound. A 1.5 meter aux cable is included while cushioned cups and the custom-designed headband offer greater comfort by contouring around the shape of the listener's ear, delivering isolation from outside noises without adding bulk.

Floyd Rose FR360 Pro Series Wireless Sport Earbuds (£79.99) with In-Line Microphone are handcrafted with a low profile design featuring luxury-cushioned earbuds to provide superior noise isolation, while contemporary high-fidelity technology produces "flawless" sound quality. Sweat-proof and water-resistant, and featuring an anti-tangle cable with built-in microphone and volume control, the FR360 provides up to 6 hours of continual play. Available in Black and White.

Trade Regrets



Mary Jean Edstrom passed away on April 16th in La Jolla, California.

Mary Jean was married to Everett Leonard Edstrom, who along with his

brother Hal and their partner Roger Busdicker, co-founded Hal Leonard Publishing Company.

First encountering Everett ("Ev") when she saw the Hal Leonard Orchestra – a popular band in the Midwest at the time –

at the age of 17, Mary Jean was then introduced to Ev by her brother, Jim, in 1944.

Putting aside his own plans to tour nationally with the Hal Leonard Orchestra and her own Hollywood aspirations, the couple instead laid down roots in Winona, Minnesota where they would raise a family of five.

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On May 23rd, we received the following from Remo, Inc.:

*It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of **Fredy Shen**, a beloved leader and integral*

part of the Remo family.

Fredy was an inspiration to all who were fortunate enough to have known him.

In his forty years with Remo, Inc., Fredy filled positions on the Board of Directors of multiple companies and organizations. While acting as Executive Vice President of Remo, Inc. and President of Remo Asia, Fredy played an instrumental role in opening and fostering relationships between many companies in the Musical Products Industry. His friendships with manufacturers, retailers and distributors in every corner of the globe positioned Fredy as a true Ambassador of the Musical Products community.

A kind and considerate man to everyone he met, we mourn his passing and he will be missed by people all over the world.

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&
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Developed with a variety of players in mind, the Artcore Expressionist guitars are available in either full or semi-hollow body construction, multiple shapes and sizes, as well as some left-handed models. Figured top woods, and Ibanez Super 58 pickups are some noteworthy features of these expressive sounding guitars. They are an enticing option for any player seeking a hollow body that simply delivers more.

AKJV95DAL (pictured top) | AM93QMJBB (pictured bottom)

ON THE MOVE

Guitar Center (GC) has announced two new additions to its marketing and e-commerce teams: **Erica Moran** has been appointed vice president of marketing, and **Bob Buckborough** has been appointed vice president of eCommerce.

In her new role, Moran will lead Guitar Center's marketing efforts, including email marketing, retail and category marketing, visual merchandising, and media and partnership marketing. Moran joins Guitar Center with over 20 years of continued success in marketing, having developed and executed comprehensive direct and online marketing efforts for multiple *Fortune* 500 companies including Stride Rite and PetSmart. Most recently, she served as a retail and digital marketing consultant for ACIRE Consulting Group located in Phoenix, Arizona.



In Buckborough's new role, he will lead Guitarcenter.com and MusiciansFriend.com, along with marketplace efforts and eCommerce operations for the company. Buckborough brings to Guitar Center 20 years of experience and skills in developing successful omni-channel plans for both retail and wholesale divisions. He's a believer in company culture driving company brand narrative. Most recently, he served as the vice president of eCommerce at West Marine, where he worked to create omni-channel digital strategy and brand repositioning.



Additionally, the business solutions group of Guitar Center has appointed two key personnel – **Mike Trimble** and **Marcin Nowak** – as design engineers joining the GC Pro team. The addition of design engineers is part of the business solutions group's investment and expansion in providing AV/studio design – an initiative that also includes the recent acquisition of the Audio Visual Design Group (AVDG).



Industry veteran Trimble has deep experience in design of large-scale audio and visual systems. He has worked for various AV Integrators including Sound Image and Pro Media, as well as leading speaker man-

ufacturer JBL. He is professionally trained in a wide-range of AV technology. Mike will work with the GC Pro sales teams to offer clients professionally designed and implemented solutions.

Fellow industry veteran Nowak has an extensive knowledge of studio environments and configurations. He has been involved with high-end design, implementation and support for various studio environments with Guitar Center and other organizations for years. His area of expertise includes custom-built workstation solutions, console support, installations and more.



The keyboard division of **Yamaha Corporation of America** (YCA) has promoted two executives to further strengthen the company's keyboard brands, dealer service and to enhance overall customer experience. **Dane Madsen** has been named to the position of director of marketing, electronic keyboards, while **Ben Harrison** has been promoted to product marketing manager, digital pianos and portable keyboard.



In his new role, Madsen is responsible for developing and implementing marketing campaigns for products ranging from PSR portable keyboards to digital pianos including the CLP-, CSP- and CVP-series Clavinova digital pianos throughout the United States. He started with Yamaha as a product specialist in 1997 before officially joining the company in 2002 as product manager for what was then known as the Piano division. Madsen reports to Paul Calvin, the division's vice president and general manager.



Harrison joined the Yamaha keyboard division in April 2014 as electronic keyboard product manager, having worked for seven years at Yamaha Canada. He distinguished himself recently in leading the launches of the Genus digital workstation keyboard and Clavinova CSP, playing a pivotal role in the initial successes of these concept products. Harrison reports to Madsen.

Ashly Audio has appointed Noel Larson to serve as vice president of marketing and business development. With over two decades of experience in the industry, Larson is poised to take Ashly's solid fundamentals to new levels. He will develop and execute

Ashly's marketing vision and will work with Ashly engineers and strategic partners on new product development. Larson will report to Ashly CEO Jim Mack. Larson most recently served as Harman Professional's global director of retail solutions – signal processing, mics, and connected PA. At various points, Larson had oversight of the dbx, Lexicon, BSS, Digitech, AKG, and Soundcraft brands during his seven years there.



The **Conn-Selmer** Division of Education has welcomed **Dr. Nola Jones** as the Southeast Region educational support manager beginning in September of 2018. She will be retiring from the position of director of visual and performing arts for Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools in Nashville, Tennessee at the end of this school year.



Jones currently serves on the judge administrative team for Drum Corps International and she has adjudicated numerous national championships for Bands of America, Drum Corps International, Drum Corps Japan, Winter Guard International and Winter Guard International Percussion.

After departing from McFadden Sales, **Jeff Allen** has launched **Jeff Allen Sales**, a manufacturers representative in Indianapolis, Indiana. He will serve clients in Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Michigan, Western Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. With a speciality in guitar-oriented products, his expertise expands into anything MI-oriented, from instruments themselves to PA systems and amplifiers.



With a lifetime of music experience under his belt, which includes working as a booking agent and musician himself, Allen makes up a one-man team who is decades into his career but far from retiring.

Allen is currently looking for lines to work with pre-NAMM, and already has D & A Guitar Gear, Lunastone pedals and Valencia Straps on deck. New upstarts getting themselves off the ground and other manufacturers looking for more attention specific to their needs are ideal fits for his business, Allen says. "I give very specialized attention to the manufacturers I work for, and they're not just one of a list of manufactures," Allen says. You're going to get specialized attention from me."

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John Packer Musical Instruments' Rob Hanson

'Making the Choice that Much Easier for Music Retailers'



By Christian **Wissmuller**

Born out of a retail and repair shop founded by John Packer in England in 1974, John Packer Ltd. is now a worldwide-force in the design and manufacture of brass & woodwind instruments. With a distribution reach of nearly 50 countries across the globe, JP Musical Instruments is known by players and MI dealers, alike as a purveyor of quality student and intermediate gear.

We recently spoke with company director Rob Hanson about recent and upcoming product releases, the soon-to-be-bestowed Queen's Awards for Enterprise, and the overall state of the musical instruments market, both globally and here in the United States.

To begin with, can you fill our readers in on your own background? How did you get involved with MI and what led you to join John Packer Ltd.?

Rob Hanson: I grew up in a small town in the north of England where pretty much the only musical organizations were traditional brass bands. A work colleague of my parents was heavily into brass and his son started to learn to play, so naturally to keep up with the Joneses I had to learn to play also. Fortunately for me at that time, music lessons in the UK were paid for, in full, by the school as well as the free loan of an instrument. Had that not been the case I don't think I would have ever started, as my parents could have never afforded it. I got pretty good at it, never quite good enough to



make a living, but I certainly held my own in the very top brass bands in the UK as a cornet/flugelhorn player. Working in MI is something I always wanted to do and I was pretty good at selling things, so back in 1998 I called John Packer several times over several weeks to persuade him to give me a job and a chance. At the time, John Packer Ltd. was a medium-sized specialist woodwind and brass store that just did that "traditional brass and woodwind store thing" and did it very well. My idea was to go out on the road and be a road rep. This was pretty unheard of at

the time in the UK, but fortunately John Packer himself, said yes and my journey in MI began.

Over the 20 years that I have been with John Packer, the company has changed beyond all recognition. John Packer is a real person and still owns the company, but has very much taken a back seat. Myself and my colleague Annie Gardner run the day-to-day company now. The retail store is still a big part of our business, however the John Packer brand of instruments is our main focus. What started as one of the very first "house brands" has grown up to be a highly respected and reliable brand sold by hundreds of dealers around the globe. I think what sets us apart from many others is, at the end of the day, we are still retailers at heart. We understand what a retailer wants and needs and a lot of that is just simple stuff: getting answers to questions, parts availability, reasonable lead times, and simple payment terms and buy-ins. All the things that frustrate me

“We understand what a retailer wants and needs.”

as a retailer I have tried to eradicate, and I know my dealers will agree we have done a pretty good job of that. Life is complicated enough, buying and selling horns doesn't need to be.

Understood. Currently, what are the “hot sellers” for John Packer Musical Instruments?

The John Packer catalogue is pretty extensive, and we genuinely do provide a range from flute to tuba and all points in-between. Our best seller, which is really our best renter, has got to be the JP-251SWS B♭ trumpet. This is a silver plated step-up trumpet with a one-piece bell and a hard case at the price-point of most dealers' entry-level horn. At this time of year, we are inundated with school bid requests for our euphonium line, which starts with an entry-level, three-valve, non-compensator JP074 through to a full four-valve compensator JP374 which is as good as anything in the marketplace at any price.

Our marching brass line is gaining amazing traction, and this is now joined by the JP2057, sousaphone which is an amazing beast.

The new JP333 bass trombone is also gaining critical acclaim all over the globe.

You and I spoke a couple of years back at Music China. What's your take on the changing climate for MI trade shows – Musikmesse has contracted, Music China is expanding, NAMM is growing at a steady pace, while the “online market” and digital means of communication makes some question the point of such gatherings? What's your brand's take on these types of conferences in 2018 and beyond? Which are you still exhibiting at and planning to attend in the future?

Being a UK company, our major trade show back in the day was Frankfurt Messe. In those days our focus was as a retailer, so we would go along every year to place our Yamaha orders, et cetera and take advantage of those “trade show only” deals and packages. We would always leave [on] the last day of the show to walk the halls searching for the latest and greatest new thing that we could make our fortune from. As our manufacturing side increased, the first ever international trade show we exhibited at was Frankfurt and we had a great show and that was the case for a good three or four years. What we saw was a shift in the audience much more

towards a public event rather than a trade event. Exhibiting at a trade show for any company is a huge expense and I felt that at Frankfurt we were no longer getting value for money. Public brand awareness is important for any business, but there are much more cost-effective ways of getting it than a trade show. The changes in marketing focus for all industries with the onset of social media et cetera have come thick and fast which also hasn't helped.

Sadly, Frankfurt isn't on our calendar anymore in any capacity. We will be exhibiting at Music China, which is an amazing show for us as we are very strong in the Asian market, and then back to Anaheim for Winter NAMM, along with some state music conferences such as TMEA and Midwest. Sadly, this year we are unable to attend Summer NAMM, as I have to go to Buckingham Palace to collect The Queen's award for Enterprise on the same day. Summer NAMM for us is a great show and one that really is going from strength to strength, but we will be back in 2019.

I think the long-term future of trade shows is a precarious one. I am very much old school in my way of doing business. I like to see people face-to-face and I am forever telling my staff that really, we are not in “the music business” – we are in the communications business and communicate we must. We all do too much business by email, but there is nothing to compare with sitting down with someone and just talking. That's the strength of a trade show and the one thing that the “online market” cannot compete with. For me, one of Frankfurt's failures by turning itself into a retail show was by increasing the noise levels it made communication impossible. Dealer meetings became shorter and shorter and eventually the dealers just stopped coming.

As you just now alluded to, John Packer very recently won a Queen's Award for Enterprise. Can you talk about the significance of that honor to your company and brand?

The Queen's award for enterprise is the most prestigious award that any UK company can win and the significance to the company and brand is huge. Myself and my co-director Annie Gardner will travel to Buckingham Palace on the 28th of June to collect the award from HRH Prince Charles. In a world full of celebrity endorsements, who better than ours! On a serious note,

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though: in a marketplace that is overcrowded with product and brands through a lot of hard work and listening to our customers wants and needs we have created a fantastic network of dealers, especially in the U.S. These dealers' business with us is growing, along with a growing number of dealers. This award is a

recognition of those achievements and one that will help accelerate that growth throughout 2018 and beyond.

To what extent is the volatility in the global market – politically and economically – affecting the UK, Europe, and John Packer, specifically?

I am married to a U.S. citizen who now lives in the UK. As you can imagine, we both travel extensively backwards and forwards across the pond. When we are in the U.S. I am inundated with the question, "What do you think about Brexit?" When we are in the UK she is inundated with the question, "What do you think about Trump?" I think that the volatility in the global market is caused

mainly by the same thing that is dominating our political landscape and that's fear. Fear is winning. The Brexit and Trump campaigners terrified the voters with "what ifs" and in the music industry we are all terrified of not getting that deal. If your only answer is to join the race to the bottom, that's a battle no one ever wins. I am sure there will be a lot more twists and turns in the Brexit and Trump debate. The good thing is the Brexit deal must be done in the next 12 months. Trump still has a while longer in office. Who knows what might happen.

"In a marketplace that is overcrowded with product and brands through a lot of hard work we have created a fantastic network of dealers, especially in the U.S."

Any significant product introductions or developments that you'd like to share with MMR readers?

New for the 2018 season is the Sousaphone along with the new JP333Rath Bass trombone. We also have a new front action four-valve piston tuba – the JP179B – which, along with the JP078 three-valve top action, gives you a tuba option that is rentable. One of the greatest achievements over the last year has been persuading the guys at Allied to carry our spares. Our inventory there is increasing all the time, but again coming from a retail background we understand how important it is to have a reliable parts supply network and with Allied carrying all the consumables with top-ups from our stock in the UK we have achieved that. As for new products in the pipeline, we hope to have the new marching tuba along with a couple of other exciting developments just around the corner.

What are your expectations for the coming months in 2018, both as it pertains to John Packer Musical Instruments and the market, overall?

As far as John Packer Musical instruments are concerned we are more than excited about 2018. We have a solid network of dealers across the U.S. and beyond. Our dealers are all buying more this year than they did last and there are more of them each month. I am quite choosy about who we supply. We specialize in supplying small to medium and independent stores and providing them with a product that is well made, good parts availability, simple delivery from our warehouse in North Carolina, and easy payment terms. Our dealers, in return, work very hard for us to promote the product to their customer base and in return we protect that base. Our relationship with our dealers is always a two-way thing and this is something that our dealers find not only refreshing, but also incredibly productive. There is no doubt the industry is in a little turmoil. It's still very strong, especially in the U.S., however the simple math is that there is too much product out there, and too many folks selling it into a market that is not getting any bigger. Back more years than I care to count as a 7-year-old my parents took me to the local music store to buy me my first cornet as the school instrument was beat up. My choice was a Besson Sovereign and I could choose between Silver and Lacquer. That was it. Things have changed a lot since those days. The choice nowadays is mind-blowing for the parent, never mind as a music storeowner who must look at products that they want to invest time and effort in for any chance of a return. At John Packer we like to make the choice that much easier for that music storeowner.

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Sign Here

Artist-signature guitars have their own narrative – one that can be helpful to retail

By Dan Daley

The role of the signature artist-model guitar in MI retail has changed along with the culture of the guitar. For years, the artist's name was the main or even the sole attraction to the buyer. However, the many hundreds of signature models coming to the market over the last several decades combined with the diffusion of music genres and of the notion of the guitar hero itself have changed the nature of what a signature model is.

"Even five or ten years ago, it was more of a name game – you'd do a guitar with an artist's name on it and you'd expect their fans to buy it," says Joe Naylor, founder and designer at Reverend Guitars. Now, he says, as music and its heroes have become more niche oriented, consumers are attracted less by the marquee value of its namesake and more by the specific design and function features that distinguish a signature model. The signature guitar is also a way to get a new guitar model above the noise floor of an increasingly crowded guitar marketplace.

That said, however, each signature model does advance the craft, the art and the commerce of guitars, making the entire process one worth looking deeper into.

The Detroit Shuffle

Pete Anderson's signature PA1 hollow-body model, one of two that Reverend Guitars markets under his name along with the Eaststuds solid-body guitar, came about after the Detroit guitar company drew up a cheeky advertisement featuring Kid Rock, another Detroit native, flipping off what's known to some as the "Detroit peace sign." Anderson sought out Reverend founder Joe Naylor at the company's booth at the 2005 NAMM Show and gruffly asked who was responsible for the offending ad. Naylor, girding for a verbal barrage, acknowledged it was his idea, to which Anderson blurted out, "I love it!" The guitarist, sidekick to country-music iconoclast Dwight Yoakum and as it turned out who grew up around the corner from what would become Reverend Motor City headquarters, would be ready to do a custom guitar two years later, drawn to Reverend by its ballsy sense of humor.

Naylor remembers him as picky perfectionist who knew exactly what he wanted. That turned into a year and a half in which prototypes of the guitar, made from Naylor's hand-drawn blueprints on 18 by 24-inch drafting paper and sent back from Reverend's Korean manufacturing subcontractor, began to more precisely reflect Anderson's requirements. Chief among these was the need to play loudly and with good sustain but without feedback. As it turned out,



Naylor's first attempt at bracing the inside of the guitar addressed the sustain and feedback issues, but added too much weight to the guitar. Trimming the bracing solved that and also led to the development of Reverend's Uni-Brace, a feature now used on all three versions of the signature hollow-body. Other features unique to Anderson's guitar include a bushing-mounted bridge and a 15th fret neck/body joint for better high-fret access.

The process of creating Anderson's guitar, which is one of 23 signature models in Reverend's inventory, is typical of the narrative behind most signature axes, says Naylor. The economics are simple and straightforward – a five-percent royalty on the wholesale price of the guitar to the artist, who'll also generally hang onto an early production model (they are also supplied additional guitars for touring), as well as an agreement to use the guitar on stage and in the studio, with a willingness to be photographed doing so and to talk about it in interviews. The guitar brand is generally able to add a premium of between 10 and 20 percent to signature guitars, which helps offset the cost of prototyping and focused marketing. Both artist and manufacturer benefit from the direct synergies and cross-promotion of each other's brands, as well as any collateral benefits, such as the development of the specialized bracing, in the case of the PA1, now celebrating its 10th anniversary and which has become the best seller among Reverend's signature guitars.

"It's a matter of finding a good fit between artist and manufacturer, both in terms of what can be accomplished and in terms of being complementary to our brand," says Naylor.

Americana Icon

Grammy-winning Americana icon Jason Isbell debuted a signature Martin D-18 last year. While it's closely modeled after Martin's Golden Era series, Isbell's guitar reflects a lot of knowledgeable detail that Fred Greene, Martin's senior director of product management, says is typical of Martin signature artists. For instance, Isbell asked for an Adirondack spruce top, mahogany back and sides, and rear-shifted scalloped bracing, as well as hide-glue construction, a feature particular to Martin's Authentic series guitars that dissolves into the grain of the wood and creates more resonance throughout the instrument. Isbell also chose a thin finish and left off the pick guard, design details that combine to add volume. The guitar's aesthetics are topped off by a reproduction at the 12th fret of a tattoo Isbell and his wife share. "There are some signature artists who are very, very guitar savvy," he says. "Jason is one of those," along with



several other Martin endorsers like Seth Avett and John Mayer.

Martin's signature agreements are fairly typical for the industry, regarding terms, prototyping and royalty rates, says Greene, but he adds that they tend to "start with a handshake and go from there." Martin approaches most of its signature artists themselves, looking for musicians who fit the brand's image – the Americana genre's assertion of authenticity makes it fertile ground, though the company will also look at how an artist can help it gain traction in music sectors it wants to increase its presence in. Artists sometimes approach the manufacturer, but Greene says they are wary of those just looking for product placements. It's important, he emphasizes, that an artist already have "an emotional relationship" with the brand. "We're looking for influencers," he says.

Once in agreement, the process generally begins with a visit to the Martin museum at its facility in Nazareth, Pennsylvania. There, Isbell, his band The 400 Unit, guitarist Sadler Vaden, and guitar tech Michael Bethancourt sat down and played an assortment of guitars, including a pre-war D-45 and a D-18 that belonged to Kurt Cobain. These were chosen because they fit Isbell's initial parameters, such as volume, but as the process progressed they'd find various esthetic and performance elements that he also liked, such as barrel shape of a 1939 neck, and Schaller tuning machines, with Greene taking notes along the way.

"They're taking esthetic and other elements from a variety of guitars, but it's really like designing a guitar from scratch, because there are so many possibilities and combinations to choose from," says Greene. Some of these choices are detailed and personal; for instance, Isbell was taken by the rosette from a rare Ditson 111. The tattoo was important for the same reason, but it also acts as the signifier that this is not a stock D-18. "It lets buyers know immediately that this is a personally designed guitar," he says.

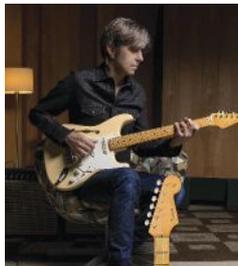
Part of Greene's task is to also let artists know what might not work, such as a T-bar truss rod, which cannot be adjusted. "If it's a guitar that's going to stay in the home or the studio, where the humidity and temperature are pretty constant, then that's fine," he says. "But it could be problem if they want to take it on the road."

Once all the specifications are achieved, manufacturing runs are decided. Some, like Isbell's D-18, priced at \$4,799, will remain open ended, letting the market determine

that; John Mayer's signature D-45, by comparison, was limited to 45 copies at \$16,000 each. "John wanted a collectible and scarcity established that," says Greene. "Jason wanted a premium guitar but one that was affordable."

Fender's Other Eric

The Eric Johnson Signature Stratocaster Thinline, revealed at winter NAMM in January, is the third signature collaboration between Fender and the seven-time Grammy nominee, who won the award for Best Rock Instrumental Performance in 1992. It also represents the 30th anniversary of the signature-guitar program for the brand. Thus, the process of creating the new \$1,999.99-listed guitar, which features Johnson touches like a two-piece alder body with countersunk screws, a vintage-style tremolo with silver-painted block, and a thin headstock with vintage-style staggered tuning machines, followed a familiar script, one that



minimized the time that had to be spent working in person at the company's Custom Shop in Corona, California where its signature guitars are made. "Fender and Eric have worked together before, so we had a good, organic working relationship already in place," comments Justin Norvell, SVP of Fender products. The new guitar went through an estimated one dozen prototype stages, each one overnighted to Johnson at his studio in Austin or on the road when he was on the touring (and he was on both almost constantly since the process began in 2015, as he was recording and then touring to support 2016's *EJ* album and 2017's *Collage LP*).

What was a bit different in this particular case, as a result of the remote collaboration, was that the prototypes were making their way onto social-media videos, as fans recorded Johnson playing the progressive iterations of the guitar live, with Johnson posting some videos himself. It wasn't a strategic marketing leak, Norvell assures, though it did begin to generate interest in the axe as much as 16 months before its planned introduction. "If we had orchestrated a leak we would have done it lot closer to the release date," he says. "But it was OK because it was real – Eric was getting inspired by the guitars."

Fender's signature-model run sizes will vary by artist, and most will have limited manufacturing runs, either because inter-

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est may wane or the artist intended it as a collectible product. A few, such as those bearing names like Eric Clapton and Jeff Beck, become perennials. However, the concept is also leading to the development of signaturized accessories, likely later this year, although a Fender spokesperson declined to specify further.

How Retailers Win

Retailers can derive additional benefits from signature guitars. "It opens the door for discussion about unique features [and] the design goals, and provides an interesting story behind the guitar that the retailer can use as part of the sales pitch," Naylor says. Greene notes that retailers benefit from signature axes because "they legitimize a product," and act as shorthand for buyers' own aspirations. "A salesperson can ask a customer who they listen to, who they like, and a signature model might contain many of those elements," he explains.

Fender's Justin Norvell suggests retailers look at signature models as ways to create initial relationships with new players, using their affinity for a particular artist to connect through their named guitar. Similarly, new models of the same artists' guitars over the course of years also offer a sense of continuity and professional growth with that artist. "Most people who start on guitar start playing because of an artist they admire and want to emulate," he explains, likening the connection to that of athletes and their sponsored sports gear. "The signature guitar is what brings them into the fold."

However, a walk through the last NAMM Show suggests that we may be nearing something like "peak signature," with hundreds

of models named for guitarists throughout the show floor. Greene says that's being driven in part by more regional brands signing up more and more local and niche guitar heroes. "There is a saturation point, and that's something we have to be careful about," he says. If retailers adroitly follow the same advice, they can leverage the signature-model guitar as a solid sales avenue. **BY ANDREW**

Making Eric Johnson's Guitar Everyone's Guitar

Calling from Lubbock, in the middle of the Texas leg of a tour that sees him both supporting his new *Collage* LP and revisiting 1990's classic *Ah Via Musicom* album, Eric Johnson says by the time he got to his third signature guitar, he wasn't sweating the small stuff anymore. "On this one, we had quickly figured out the neck and the pickups," he says. "What we focused on were the woods and the width of the body. This guitar is very close to the others we've done but it's the first semi-hollow body."

Johnson says this model, made by Fender's Custom Shop, owes some of its inspiration to the Gibson 335, an axe he says "I've always loved," but it keeps much of what's gone into the two previous Stratocaster variations he's done. It also maintains Johnson's humility when it comes to signature models. The single F-hole is the biggest indicator that this guitar is special, but to find out it's his you'd have to look closely at the bolt plate on the neck, which is inscribed simple "EJ." "It's my ideas in this guitar," says Johnson, "but we didn't make a big thing out of saying that, because everyone needs to find a way to make a guitar their own."

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Not Just Phoning It In

In 2018, headphones designed for professional studio use still have the same fundamental purpose and goal as always: true replication of source audio material and durability. However, new and evolving features and user preferences such as cordless charging and wireless communication capability mean that some of the models of today and tomorrow are (or will) be taking these vital pieces of recording and mixing gear into heretofore unseen territory.

MMR recently connected with four major players in the realm of recording headphone design and manufacture to learn about what techniques are driving sales on the retail level, what trends are shaping cutting-edge design, and what models are selling best at the moment.

Manufacturers of Studio Headphones Innovate and Adapt to Cater to Today's End-Users

By Christian Wissmuller

For your brand, what's currently the "hottest" selling studio/recording headphone model?

Matt Engstrom: The SRH440 Professional Studio Headphones.

Nithin Cherian: Our hottest professional monitoring headphone is the Yamaha HPH-MT8. I find the most discerning of pros love how it sounds. Many are telling us they are changing from their favorites of the past 15 years for these new Yamaha models.

John Maier: Our entire audiophile headphone line does well for us. In particular, Lola is performing very well right now. While this model doesn't have our signature audiophile power amp, it still retains the unique design and superior sound quality, but at a lower price point.

Peter Chaikin: The AKG line of affordable professional headphones – the AKG K52, K72, and K92 – is selling strongly. Providing legendary AKG studio performance, durability, and comfort, they are an exceptional value.

What "best practices" – displays, marketing, promotion – have you noticed that retailers who do especially well selling these headphones are adopting?

NC: The most successful dealers deploy displays where customers can test drive various headphones in-store. Additionally, these dealers ensure that their staff is well versed on how to help a customer determine which model is best for a given application, be it monitoring, mixing, tracking, etc.

PC: Retail locations with active demo of K52, K72, and K92 see greater velocity. At the affordable price points, differences in performance are apparent. An active display with ample output, and the ability to A/B compare headphones using well-produced tracks engages the customer, makes sonic differences apparent, and the purchase decision easy.

JM: Having interactive displays where the customer can experience the headphone's features and sound quality can make a huge difference. Obviously, there are technical complexities to making this happen successfully. However, we've partnered with many retailers in designing and implementing these displays with great success.



“An active display with ample output, and the ability to A/B compare headphones using well-produced tracks engages the customer, makes sonic differences apparent and the purchase decision easy.”



Peter Chaikin, Director, Recording and Retail Solutions Harman Professional (AKG)

ME: Education across product categories. This enables them to provide relevant tips and tricks as well as product recommendations. Additionally, it allows them to determine what use case the customer is looking to address. From there, they can create education and product bundles that serve those needs. They also engage people by sharing the information consumers are already looking for and taking that one step further by showing them what can be done and how to use it. And, they are more likely to engage customers.



“Headphones for studios are tools, not toys. Therefore, studio headphones can't and shouldn't cater to the latest flash-in-the-pan trends.”



Matt Engstrom, Senior Category Manager, Wired Products/Monitoring Products Shure, Incorporated

What are the major trends that are impacting the market with respect to studio/recording headphone design and manufacture?

JM: The biggest trend we see is the shift to consumers listening on mobile devices. Obviously this has been happening for some time now, however, engineers and producers are having to shift their thinking from mostly mixing for speakers to building their mix for a headphone-listening environment. That will put pressure on manufacturers to continue to innovate, but also bodes well for the market in general in the coming years.

PC: The headphone market is huge and growing and professional headphones are a familiar sight outside the studio. While AKG Professional headphones are designed and tested to meet the pro's demand for accuracy, comfort, and long-term durability, these attributes are appreciated by the broader market as well.

ME: Headphones for studios are tools, not toys. Therefore, studio headphones

can't and shouldn't cater to the latest flash-in-the-pan trends. Studio headphones must remain true to the source sound and must live up to rigorous use under conditions where failure is not an option. Those trends won't change. To stay consistent with our corporate philosophy, we offer replacement cables and pads for most of our headphone products and we stand behind all of them with a two-year warranty.

NC: With changing standards, combined with the prevalence of wireless communications and other convenience-based features such as cordless charging, we're seeing an increase in requests for these features in the entry pro market of headphone monitoring solutions.

What are your expectations for the coming months/year with respect to this market segment?

NC: We see growing interest in applications for mixing, monitoring, and playback of virtual reality (VR) audio. Therefore, we expect to see smaller



“The biggest trend we see is the shift to consumers listening on mobile devices.”



John Maier, CEO
Blue Microphones

manufacturers attempting to break into the market with non-traditional approaches.

ME: Our studio headphone sales have been very consistent for almost a decade, so we don't anticipate any major changes. Our strengths will continue to be accurate and balanced audio quality combined with industry leading durability.

JM: We anticipate that the headphone market will continue to grow as



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“[Successful] dealers ensure that their staff is well versed on how to help a customer determine which model is best for a given application, be it monitoring, mixing, tracking, et cetera.”



Nithin Cherian
Product Marketing Manager
Yamaha Pro Audio

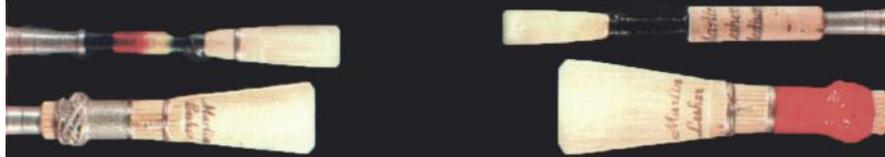
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more professionals are mixing with and for headphones. Manufacturers will continue to develop and refine their products to meet the needs of professionals and consumers. As the quality of the headphone market advances with improved drivers and features like our built-in amplifiers, the customer base will widen as both professionals and consumers embrace higher-quality headphones.

PC: We anticipate healthy growth of our professional headphone business driven by growth of the industry engaged in content creation.

Any product introductions or other news in this area that you'd like to share with our readers?

ME: Our policy is to comment on currently available products, so all we can say is that we are always working on new and exciting things and studio headphones are no exception.

JM: We have accomplished our goals in our introduction into the headphone market over the past few years. We are looking closely at our current microphone customers and developing headphones that are even more specifically designed with them and their applications in mind. Should be an exciting few years for us in headphones!

NC: Audio is becoming an increasingly personal experience, so as we move ahead we will be sharpening our focus on headphones even more as they assume a more prominent position in the marketplace. Yamaha has been a trailblazer in studio monitors since the NS-10M; today we continue to make monitors known for their neutral, open sound quality and fatigue-free wear for long-term use. Going forward, as we convert the wider live-audio experience into a more personal one – with the same accuracy that's come to characterize our products – it will have mounting applications in gaming, VR, and more. 

FULLY LOADED

Summer NAMM Booth 1035

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Multi-functional effect controls.

Control effect parameters and save expression snapshots for each built-in effect (expression pedal sold separately).

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Note From Joe



Top 10 Reasons Why 2018 Summer NAMM Is Your Smartest Mid-Year Investment

In business we are all looking for smart places to invest—ones with low risk and high reward, but those opportunities can often be hard to find. Summer NAMM makes that decision easy by offering business-enhancing opportunities to discover new products, sharpen your skills, and build professional relationships vital to your company's growth.

Here are our top 10 reasons why an investment in Summer NAMM will more than pay for your trip.

1 New and Innovative Products

With 1,600 + brands on display, including more than 200 new exhibitors, Summer NAMM attracts your most trusted manufacturing partners, but also welcomes emerging brands that you won't find anywhere else. Make sure to stop at the Boutique Guitar Showcase, Pro Audio Showcase and the dedicated School Band and Orchestra area to find those one-of-a-kind products that your customers want, and more importantly, that your competition doesn't have.

2 Learn From Your Peers

More than 14,000 registrants from 38 countries, including 90% of the Top 100 U.S. Dealers, provide a diverse pool of successful peers to network with in Music City. Experience the family reunion feel that Summer NAMM has always been known for. This year, expanded lobby and food areas will help facilitate connections.

3 The All-New Retail Training Summit

Kick-off the show with the all-new Retail Training Summit, the premier education event for music retailers, designed to give hands-on, proven ideas, techniques and tools for retail success. Retail professionals will be able to choose from six sessions covering the most relevant topics to stay competitive.

4 Get a Glimpse into the Future

Each morning of the show, Breakfast Sessions will present big ideas about the future of the industry with topics such as "Retail Innovators," "How to Become a Digital Powerhouse: Seven Steps to Online Transformation," and the perennial favorite, "Best in Show," showcasing the hottest products from Summer NAMM that consumers will be buzzing about into the holiday season and beyond.

5 Solve Your Toughest Business Challenges

During all three days of the show, established and emerging music instrument, retail, and pro audio industry members can tailor their learning experience at the Idea Center with more than 60 future-focused educational sessions covering the biggest ideas and game-changing tactics.

6 Discover New Technologies

TEC Tracks will reveal the future of pro audio for sound, studio and stage pros, and on Saturday, A3E (Advanced Audio + Applications Exchange) will present the game-changing ideas that are driving the evolution of new technologies in our industry. Plus, the community will be able to connect with the famed co-hosts of Pensado's Place, Dave Pensado and Herb Trawick, during the "Pro Audio Party" featuring their popular web show where they host audio and recording luminaries in an hour-long live interview session.

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“We never know what we’ll find at Summer NAMM but it’s ALWAYS something good. That’s why it’s a can’t miss event for Central Music!”

Robert Christie, A & G Central Music, Madison Heights, Michigan
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7 Understand Changing Regulations

New regulations such as CITES and Prop 65 are continuing to shape how our industry operates. Through a series of targeted roundtable discussions, attendees will be informed by experts who will help answer your toughest questions and guide decision making.

8 Be Inspired by the Top 100

Dubbed the “Retail Oscars” by Music Inc. magazine, the Top 100 Dealer Awards spotlights the industry’s very best music product retailers and shares their strategies for success with proven ideas and inspirational moments you can take back to your store and your staff.

9 Networking Events and Star Power

All attendees are invited to the annual Summer NAMM Opening Night Party, featuring the 35th Annual American Eagle Awards, honoring jazz legends Chick Corea and The Manhattan Transfer in recognition of their long-term contributions to American musical culture and heritage.

10 Explore Nashville

Enjoy live music throughout the city from legendary Broadway Street to landmark theaters such as the Ryman and Grand Ole Opry. Get inspired in Music City USA!

Check out the show directory and map, download the mobile app, plan your education schedule and we’ll see you in Nashville!

Summer NAMM At a Glance

DISCOVER new products

1,600+
BRANDS

- 200+ new exhibitors
- Pro Audio Showcase
- School Band and Orchestra
- Future of the Guitar
- Boutique Guitar Showcase
- One-of-a-kind products

ENHANCE your skills

60+
EDUCATION
SESSIONS

- Retail Training Summit
- 60 future-focused educational sessions
- NAMM U Breakfast Sessions
- TEC Tracks
- Policy roundtables

BUILD business relationships



- Experience the family reunion
- 14,000 registrants from 38 countries
- 90% of the Top 100 U.S. Dealers
- Opening Night Party featuring The American Eagle Awards
- Top 100 Dealer Awards
- Enjoy Nashville



Visit namm.org/attend to learn more about Summer NAMM

Fretted

Warwick Bases and Framus Guitars

Booth # 1342

This Warwick Thumb SC 6-String 1" Macassar Ebony Top bass is equipped with swamp ash back, Macassar Ebony top, curved body shaping, flamed maple neck with Ekanga veneer stripes (five laminations, purple heart and maple), Tigerstripe Ebony fingerboard, and matching headstock. Other features include 26 extra hard jumbo-bronze frets (perfectly set by Invisible Fretwork Technology), side fretboard markers illuminated by LED, Warwick Just-A-Nut III brass nut, Warwick machines with wooden knobs, black satin hardware, solid Warwick two-piece brass bridge, Warwick security locks, passive MEC soapbar humbucker (with series / parallel / single coil switching) and active MEC three-way electronics.

The William DuVall Signature Framus Talisman Custom Shop Masterbuilt is equipped with contoured mahogany body with AAA flamed maple top and quilted maple inlays, set-in mahogany neck, Tigerstripe Ebony fretboard, Framus custom fretboard inlays, illuminated side fretboard dots, Graph Tech Ratio Locking tuners with wooden knobs, 22 extra high, per IFT - (Invisible Fretwork



Technology) Plek Fretwork perfectly set Jumbo Nickel Silver frets with rounded edges, Graph Tech Black Tusq Low Friction nut, Seymour Duncan APH-1 (neck) and SH-11 (bridge) pickups, each with split coil function, matching wooden compartment lid, TonePros Tune-o-Matic Bridge, Warwick Security Locks, chrome black or gold hardware and natural oil finish, colored transparent satin finish or high polish finish. This masterpiece from Markneukirchen, Germany comes with a Framus user kit and a RockBag leather gigbag.

The William DuVall Signature Framus Talisman Pro Series Teambuilt features a mahogany body with AAA Flamed maple top and quilted maple inlays, a set-in mahogany neck, a Tigerstripe Ebony fretboard, Framus custom fretboard inlays, illuminated side fretboard dots, Graph Tech Ratio locking tuners with wooden knobs, 22 extra high, per IFT - (Invisible Fretwork Technology) Plek Fretwork perfectly set Jumbo Nickel Silver frets with rounded edges, a Graph Tech Black Tusq Low Friction nut, Seymour Duncan APH-1 (neck) and SH-11 (bridge) pickups, each with split-coil function, an easy access compartment cover, TonePros Tune-o-Matic bridge, Warwick Security Locks, gold hardware, a nirvana black transparent high polish finish, an adjusting key and a high-quality Starline RockBag.



www.warwick-distribution.de

Breedlove Guitars' New 'Ghost' Model

Booth #1213

The Ghost guitar is the newest addition to the Breedlove's Oregon Series. This all myrtlewood body guitar exemplifies the musical character of this northwest tonewood with a mystical look. Features include myrtlewood top, back and sides, Gotoh 510 Tuners Chrome with ebony button, slotted diamonds inlay, herringbone rosette, none nut and saddle, and a deluxe hard-shell case.

www.breedlovemusic.com



Bedell Guitars' Paleo Guitar Booth #1213

The new Paleo guitar from Bedell offers a Sitka spruce guitar top, which is perhaps the youngest tonewood of the guitar body, cut from a spruce log which was buried under a massive landslide approximately 2,850 years ago in Southeast Alaska. The grayish-green hue of the wood is a result of being buried and submerged in the damp Alaskan soil for almost three thousand years. The oldest tonewood in this instrument dates back to the Paleozoic era. The back and sides are crafted from a prehistoric wood called Kauri, which grew some 50,000 years ago in what is today New Zealand.

www.bedellguitars.com



Cases & Stands

New Gear From SKB Cases Booth # 313

The popular Fly Rack series of cases has been updated with a new, improved design that is lighter in weight and more affordable than previous models. The four new Injection Molded Fly Racks feature injection molded rack cages housed in military grade injection molded iSeries cases, providing a lightweight solution that doesn't compromise on strength or durability. Integrated TSA locks in SKB's patented trigger latches ensure additional convenience and security when traveling by air. Injection Molded Fly Racks are molded of ultra high-strength polypropylene copolymer resin, and feature water- and dust-tight, submersible designs (MIL-C-4150J) that are resistant to corrosion and impact damage (MIL-STD-810G). Other standard features include molded-in hinges, patented "trigger release" TSA-retrofitable latches, comfortable snap-down rubber over-molded cushion grip handles, automatic ambient pressure equalization valves (MIL-STD-648C), and resistance to UV, solvents, corrosion, and fungus.

The 3i-5014-SRB iSeries StingRay Bass Case is water-proof and military grade, and has been designed specifically to accommodate Music Man StingRay 4 and 5-string bass guitars. It features a plush-covered rigid foam interior that provides total neck support and protection on all sides. Two TSA-accessible locking latches, quiet glide wheels, and a pull handle also help to make this case an ideal choice for musicians on the go. Price: \$289.99.

www.skbcases.com

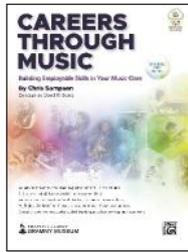


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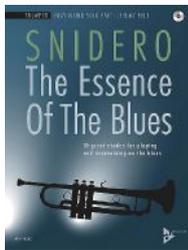
New Releases from Alfred Music

Booth # 635

Careers Through Music provides a pathway to achieving success in any career—both in and outside of music. Each of the book's 15 eight-minute lesson plans have the same simple format and focuses on a specific transferable skill, such as problem solving, networking, teamwork, and self-management. For even greater impact, reproducible pages for student activity sheets are included, along with access to exclusive videos of music and business professionals discussing the lesson topics. Available as book & streaming video for \$34.99.

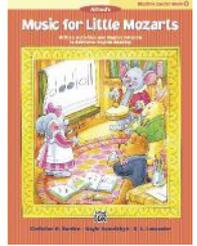


The Essence of the Blues sheds light on one of the most important forms in 20th century music. From jazz, rock, pop, hip-hop, country, and other genres, the sound of the blues has had an enormous impact on modern music. Perfect for rehearsals or classroom, there are six instrumental books, transposed for alto sax, tenor sax, trumpet, trombone, flute, and clarinet. It contains 10 etudes focusing on various types of the blues, as well as an in-depth analysis of blues styles, vocabulary, and music theory. Each etude includes specific techniques used by some of the all-time best jazz/blues musicians,



including Miles Davis, Charlie Parker, BB King, Stanley Turrentine, and others. All phrasing and articulation included, enabling the musician to precisely learn jazz style. Price: \$24.95.

Music for Little Mozarts: Rhythm Speller Books 1–4, reinforce rhythm skills based on the concepts introduced in the music lesson books 1–4. Each page of the *Rhythm Speller Books* has two activities—a rhythm writing activity and a rhythm reading activity. The written activities reinforce note values and counting through coloring, circling, drawing, or matching. The rhythm reading activities help students practice clapping or tapping rhythm patterns while counting aloud, playing rhythms on rhythm instruments or keys on the keyboard, and chanting words based on rhythm patterns. It includes eight rhythm ensembles featuring pieces accompanied by one or two rhythm instruments. By studying these ensembles, students learn to identify rhythm patterns. Teaching activities focus on three areas—rhythm, reading, and intervals. The teaching activities use a “listen and copy” technique where the teacher sings, chants, or claps and the student responds, echoing the teacher. *Music for Little Mozarts: Rhythm Speller Books 1–4* will be available for \$7.99 and *Music for Little Mozarts: Rhythm Ensembles and Teaching Activities* will be available for \$19.99.



www.alfred.com

See us at SNAMM Booth # 1420

NEW BJÖRN BABY.

Designed by effects guru Björn Juhl, the new BJB **Baby Blue OD** from One Control encapsulated the finest aspects from the 18-year history of this legendary circuit. Blurring the line between dynamic overdrive and fuzz, BBOD can take you from sublime rhythm tones to a saturated wall of sound.



ONE CONTROL

one-control.com

Print & Digital

New Titles from Hal Leonard Booth # 611

Hal Leonard has released updated editions of their bestselling *FastTrack Starter Packs* to connect with today's beginners of all ages. The new editions are available for guitar, bass, drums, and keyboards. The books include online audio examples and 60 minutes of video lessons that can be downloaded or streamed on any type of computer or device.

The *FastTrack* packs are designed for people who are motivated to teach themselves but are not impressed with what's available for free online. The packs use the Hal Leonard name to assure students they'll be getting the quality instruction they deserve but in a convenient do-it-yourself-on-your-own terms way. Written with teenagers and adults in mind, the instruction starts with the basics but moves along at a healthy clip to get students playing music quickly while not skipping the essentials they need for a strong musical core. The goal is to get people playing and feeling confident enough by the end of the book to move into songbooks and more advanced instruction.

FastTrack Guitar, Bass, Drums and Keyboard Start Packs retail for \$14.99 each.

Hal Leonard's *Piano for Teens* is designed specifically to address those issues so that students and teachers can both feel comfortable and confident with their lessons.

With a fast-track approach to learning, *Piano for Teens* provides students with familiar songs like "Hello," "Hallelujah," and "Roar" as part of the instruction so that they can start making music as quickly as possible. Songs and concepts are presented in clean, simple page layouts, and progress in a logical sequence so students progress swiftly and play with confidence.

Piano for Teens retails for \$12.99.

www.halleonard.com



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Accessories

Faxx Reeds Booth # 601

American Way Marketing has introduced a new line of Faxx synthetic double reeds. This synthetic Hybrid European Scrape reed is designed to be less resistant, allowing for ease of playability. Available in strengths of medium soft, medium, and medium hard.

www.americanwaymktg.com



Double Reaction Bridge from Riversong Guitars

Booth # 1433

The new patented Double Reaction Bridge from Riversong Guitars gives an additional 10 percent volume gain over conventional glued on bridges. It eliminates the "spruce squeeze" of the soft wood that essentially isolates the string energy from the structure.

Riversong's new Double Reaction Bridge focuses the string and bridge energy to the bracing, bridge plate and top at the same time.

www.riversongguitars.com





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From the makers of the best mini guitars, the best mini amp: a tiny guitar amplifier that will sound -and look- as good on stage as in your kid's bedroom. Built with premium materials and bundled with an instrument cable, the Loog Mini Amp is the perfect companion for the Loog Pro Electric, or *any* electric guitar. See it in action at Summer NAMM 2018: booth 1033.

Accessories



Drumdots Booth # 1651

Drumdots stick to drums without being sticky and allow the drum head to breathe more like an un-dampened drum, but can be used upside-down on the resonator head, vertical on the bass drum or even on cymbals and cowbells. Side by side frequency response analysis shows us that one drumdot has two times the over-ring time reduction compared to the leading competitor while maintaining more of the natural frequency response of the drum.

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One Control's New Pedals Booth # 1420

The Honey Bee Overdrive is renowned for its warm overdrive crunch which is easily adjustable by a twist of a knob. Over the years, there have been several revisions of this sought-after pedal, and One Control has announced that this version is the best version yet, as it contains all the revisions and improvements from previous models.

Designed by pedal guru Bjorn Juhl (BJF/BJFe), the One Control Baby Blue Overdrive is based on the BJFe creation FUZZ 1, utilizing a discrete circuit that combines dynamic overdrive and fuzz. The Baby Blue OD produces sublime tone at reduced rhythm volumes as well as cranked up lead output, whether set to a low gain clean, or a saturated wall of sound. The Baby Blue OD utilizes the finest modern components, painstakingly selected and tuned by Bjorn Juhl himself, to produce this classic, NOS sound.

www.one-control.com



New Accessories from D'Addario Booth # 1001



Promark by D'Addario has released the new FireGrain line of drumsticks, a series of drumsticks that uses a heat-tempering process that transforms ordinary hickory drumsticks into durable precision tools. These FireGrain sticks allow drummers to hit harder and play longer without any excess vibration and keeping with the original weight, balance, and feel.



Promark has also expanded their ActiveGrip line to include a Classic2B model, as well as a clear finish option for their existing product line up. The technology behind the heat-activated coating makes the ActiveGrip stick tackier as the player's hands sweat and their body temperature rises. Unlike other grip alternatives on the market, ActiveGrip doesn't tear up players hands or cause restrictions to range of movement or technique.

Evans Drumheads' Hydraulic Red offerings now include a 14" coated snare batter, which will also be the first in the Evans portfolio to feature a clear version their patented UV-cured coating. Hydraulic Red drumheads feature a thin layer of oil sandwiched between two plies of 7 mil red film, offering maximum durability, and a short, fat sound. Hydraulics are famously easy to tune, making them a perfect fit for troublesome drums and players with little tuning experience. Used as a snare batter, Hydraulic drumheads produce a very short, focused sound with little to no overtones. The addition of our patented UV coating creates an extremely durable finish that will not flake or chip as easily as traditional coatings. This coating also features enhanced surface texture, making it great for brush work. Price: \$41 MSRP (\$18.99 MAP)



Evans Drumheads by D'Addario Percussion expanded their UV coating technology to include a brand-new line of bass drum heads. The UV1 Series is the number one solution for drummers who are tired of flaked, chipped and worn out coatings. The UV1 Bass series features a 10 mil, single-ply bass drumhead as well as popular EQ4 and EMAD variations available from 16" to 26."



www.daddario.com

Accessories

New Accessories from D'Addario

Booth # 1001

D'Addario's new Nyltch Ukulele strings from 6- and 8-string tenor ukuleles were developed in cooperation with Aquila Nyltech. Known for its traditionally warm, gut-like tone, and D'Addario Nyltech strings deliver precise intonation and tuning stability not found in other ukulele strings.



D'Addario Orchestral's newest synthetic string set Ascenté now includes line extension for violin and a full line of brand new viola strings. Ascenté is intended for string players of all levels and ages and has been specifically designed to help players advance their craft with elegance and consistency.



The D'Addario Select Jazz Marble Mouthpiece features a medium chamber and facing length, and is milled, not molded, from solid rod rubber using D'Addario's precise computer-controlled mouthpiece-making technology. These limited-edition Select Jazz marble mouthpieces are for alto and tenor saxophone.



www.daddario.com



Whirlwind's MultiSelector PRO Instrument Switcher

The MultiSelector PRO is a unidirectional 4-to-1 instrument switcher that allows selection of any one of four inputs to a single output. Each of the four inputs is electronically buffered with a 1 megohm input impedance which emulates a proper amplifier load and prevents any degradation to the instrument's tone. Signals pass through the MultiSelector PRO transparently, with no coloration and the digitally controlled optical switching is completely silent. All three non-active inputs are routed to the tuner outputs, so a guitar tech can tune any instrument in a non-active channel without unplugging it.

www.whirlwindusa.com

Dava's Power Grips

Dava Power Grips are thicker and stiffer than Dava's Grip Tip model, and have Dava's proprietary rubber grip and distinctive look but now provide extra bite and attack for musicians who need a rock solid feel. Power Grips come in a choice of materials, including delrin, nylon, and poly-gels. A six-pack retails for \$7.50.



www.davapick.com

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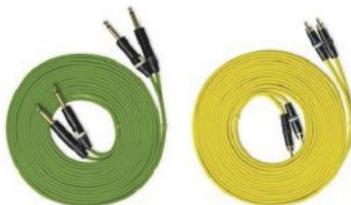
Emissary Parallel Boost from Walrus Boost

Booth # 1353

Walrus Audio's new 2-in-1 boost help makes leads stand out, slides sing, and finger picking really come to life. The Emissary Parallel Boost features two independent boost circuits running in parallel to work together. Use one or the other by themselves, or mix any combination of both by turning up each knob to the desired level. The top knob controls the volume for the "bright" boost circuit. This is a clean, high headroom JFET boost, with a slight emphasis on higher frequencies to liven up your tone. The bottom knob controls the volume for the "mid" boost circuit. This circuit features a targeted boost at either 1kHz or 800Hz selected by the toggle switch.



www.walrusaudio.com



Ceon Cables by Cordial Booth #733

Cordial's flexible CEON twin cable offers a 3 mm thick jacket, whose spiral shield effectively protects its high-grade copper core (OFC 99.99 percent). This feature guarantees DJs an interference-free sound in the most demanding sound environments. The cable also features NEUTRIK connectors, which are renowned for their sturdiness and supreme beat, loop and break sounds. Available lengths include 0.6, 1.5, and 3 meters, and connector options include jack plug/cinch, jack plug/jack plug, and cinch/cinch.

www.ceon-cables.com

New Guitar Potentiometer from Bourns

Bourns Model PDB183-GTR guitar potentiometer with push-pull switch provides the ability to upgrade switching capabilities and volume or tone controls. From a single 18 mm package, guitarists can control multiple functions such as split-coil switching for humbucking (double-pole) pickups or stacked single-coil pickups, active electronics activation, and pickup phase switching.



Model PDB185-GTR is an innovative guitar potentiometer that facilitates operating active electronics for the control of tonal quality, pickup switching and activating sound-effect circuits. It uses a mechanical latching switch action similar to that of a spring-loaded ball point pen. The guitarist can simply push the knob to activate the switch and push again to deactivate.

www.bourns.com

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Accessories

Fishman Matrix Infinity VT and Matrix Infinity Mic Blend Booth #933

The new Fishman Matrix Infinity VT and Matrix Infinity Mic Blend pickups feature updated electronics designed to offer players easily accessible performance voicing functions, as well as an overall sound optimized for modern acoustic amplification and sound reinforcement systems. The Matrix Infinity Mic Blend adds a blendable cardioid condenser mic for increased "air" and a more tactile tone. Both pickup systems are housed in newly designed modules that are fully enclosed and hidden away from view—while still being "finger-tip" accessible to players during performances.

www.fishman.com



Pianos & Keyboards

New from Yamaha Booth # 643

Yamaha's P-125 digital piano replaces the P-115, one of the top-selling digital pianos on the market today. Using the P-125 with the Yamaha Smart Pianist app for iOS devices, users gain a touch screen graphic interface to select voices, and to configure settings quickly and easily. The Smart Pianist app also takes advantage of the instrument's built-in USB audio and MIDI interface and on-board speaker system. This not only enables the user to play along with their favorite artists, but it also allows them to record audio and/or MIDI performances into a computer. The P-125 faithfully reproduces the magnificent sound of The Yamaha CFIII 9-foot concert grand piano, along with the finest level of nuanced expression, thanks to 4-level Pure CF sampling and the industry leading Graded Hammer Standard (GHS) keyboard.

www.yamaha.com



Casio's CT-X Series Booth #431

Casio's CT-X3000 and flagship CT-X5000 are equipped with AiX (Acoustic & Intelligent multi-expression), and deliver sound quality far beyond that of any other portable keyboard. The new models offer enhanced speaker systems, in addition to 800 tones, 235 rhythms, 100 programmable DSP effects, tone and rhythm editing, 17-track MIDI recorders, four phrase pads, and much more.

www.casio.com



Amplifiers

Mini-Laney from Laney Amplification Booth #1433

The Mini-Laney range features two battery powered models in three bite size iconic designs to choose from. The Mini range is available in two models: MINI and MINI-ST, which is stereo. The Mini range is available styled after the Ironheart, Lionheart, or Supergroup amp families. Each model features a clean & drive channel, gain, tone, and volume controls, guitar in, aux in, headphone out, and the unique LSI (Laney Smartphone Insert). The LSI allows you to connect your amp to your favorite tone generating app. LSI cable is supplied with the amp and works with IOS and Android devices.

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'The Bends' & Pugilist Distortion Pedals from Fender

Fender's "The Bends" pedal is a great sounding compressor that comes with a ton of flexibility as it relates to your tone. The first thing you'll notice is that this pedal is beautiful – it has a gun-metal grey casing with four knobs, a foot switch, and a big jewel LED. The LED is not just an on/off display; its lush glow will switch between white and red to show when the compressor circuit is active. As a nice touch, you can turn off the LED (Though why would you want to? It's gorgeous!).



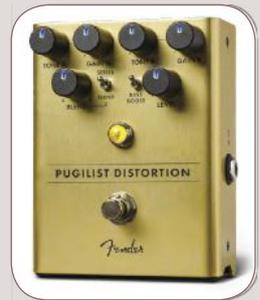
- The four knobs all control key elements of a standard compressor:
- Blend dials between the dry and compressed signal, allowing you to choose how much of the effect you want to apply to your tone.
- Drive controls how hard the compressor will hit your tone – turn it all the way clockwise for maximum compression
- Recovery tunes the speed at which the compressor will attack and release
- Level adjusts the output level of the pedal

These four knobs enable you to dial up a wide variety of different tones. While playing a Telecaster through a vintage Fender Princeton with a clean sound, "The Bends" softened up the classic Tele high-end bite and added a really nice mid-range to

my tone. When I switched on some distortion, that mid-range brought out the warmth of the tube amp and also added some great sustain.

"The Bends" is a versatile, great sounding compressor that is sure to add a level of sophistication to your pedal board.

Fender's "Pugilist Distortion" pedal looks intimidating out of the box. It has six knobs, two switches, Fender's signature jewel LED, and a footswitch. There's a lot going on but it's all necessary and awesome. The best way to describe the "Pugilist Distortion" is that it's actually two distortion pedals in one. The pedal has two different distortions, each with its own Gain and Tone control, and then a global Blend and Level control. One really nice feature of the of the Blend knob is that you can run the two distortion sounds either blended, which allows you to adjust how much of each sound you want in your mix, or run them stacked in series, which pushes Distortion A into Distortion B, creating the potential for some gnarly sounds. There's also a Bass Boost switch, which adds in a good dose of low end.



In a world filled with amazing distortion pedals, the team at Fender has added a really unique pedal to the mix. Whether you are looking for a subtle bite or a fat distortion, the "Pugilist Distortion" will help you dial in the tone you are looking for. *(Daniel Sussman)*

Tuning your drums can be a tedious and time-consuming process. Every player has dealt with getting his or her drums tuned and ending up chasing a ring or overtone. Drumdots are definitely a useful tool in the process of fine-tuning your drums.

The ones I tried out came four per-pack in a sturdy, clear, hard plastic case. A drumdot is essentially a clear gel (technically, it's Vtem, a special polymer developed for drumdots) circle about 1.5" in diameter and 1/8" thick

I got my drums in tune and positioned the drum dots in the outer two inches on the batter head of each drum. Instantly there was a dramatic reduction in any ringing/overtone from all the drums, while there was not much change in the overall tone of the drum (a good thing). I experimented with positioning of the drumdots on the drum head and was able to dial in the sound I was looking for out of each in-

dividual drum. I put drumdots on each of the resonant heads of my kit and, again, they did a great job of cutting out any unwanted overtones from there, and I had no issue with them falling from the head.

Drumdots also work great on cymbals. I placed two drumdots on my ride cymbal and it made the ping of my ride cut through a lot clearer by dampening a substantial amount of the wash from the cymbal. It significantly shortened the decay of the crash cymbals on my kit, giving them a very "fast crash" sound. After playing on the kit over a couple weeks, there was no issue with the drums dots losing their tackiness if I needed to reposition them. They stayed firmly stuck to the drum heads throughout each session on which they were used. Drum dots also left no sticky residue behind when removed and came on and off the drum head easily each time. Overall – a handy and efficient tool that can help drummers of all styles and ability levels more easily get the sounds and tones they're after. *(Scott Cappellini)*



drumdots



WingMan by Option Knob

Every now and again, someone comes up with an idea that solves an age-old, universal problem. In this case, that problem is when your band is playing onstage and all of a sudden the guitar cuts out because your guitarist is bending over to adjust the knobs on his or her super fancy boutique effects pedal before tearing into the solo. It's not the biggest deal in the world, but if you can notice them drop out, the crowd probably does, too.

Option Knob has been tackling this issue for a while now, but the latest version of their foot control knob, the WingMan, finally solves this problem with a sleek, new, non-intrusive design. Packaged with inserts that will fit the pots on both standard and boutique pedals, the WingMan is designed to replace the frequently adjusted pedal knobs so

you can move them with your feet instead of bending down to manually adjust. The wingtips flare upwards so it won't interfere with the adjacent knobs, and the new pointy edges really allows you to dig in with the bottom of your shoe to get a solid grip on it for better control. The sharp blue glow in the dark feature makes it easy to spot on even the darkest stage.

The WingMan is easy to install and totally intuitive to use. The low price makes it a satisfying impulse buy and you can pick up a couple without breaking the bank. It's a small accessory but it can make a big impact on the song. (*John Miller*)



Pedalboards are pedalboards, right? A piece of wood or metal that you Velcro all your effects and stompboxes to and lug around from gig to gig so you don't have to plug in all your pedals every show, right?

While awaiting my new RockBoard set up, I wondered what I could possibly write about, not yet realizing that Warwick has reinvented the game here. Having used several brands until they broke or the gig bag ripped, I was quickly disabused of the notion that all pedalboards are equal as soon as I took this thing out of the box. The board itself is a sleek and lightweight cold-rolled aluminum platform, tipping the scales at a mere 2.6 lbs. It's slightly angled, allowing for easy access while providing space underneath for a power supply and hiding cables. Velcro strips are included to secure the pedals to the board and after three gigs with this system, my pedals haven't budged an inch. While there are options for soft gigbags, I got the hard flight case, which was surprisingly durable despite its super lightweight. My package included a few accessories that should be no-brainer add-ons for anyone buying the RockBoard. There's a slot where you can install a Warwick MOD1 patchbay, which allows all-in-one access to your pedals so you can plug right into the front of the board instead of the first pedal in your



chain, which greatly reduces the chances that you'll accidentally kick your cable loose during a show. A handy Power Block was also included, which eliminates the need for up to ten differently sized power supplies. You can power all your pedals off of this one block using Warwick's DC cables, making for a uniform system that is easy to zip-tie down to the undercarriage of the board to keep them both neat and out of sight.

Another option for the RockBoard is the Natural Sound Buffer. I had always relied on the buffers in the Boss pedals in order to keep my tone from degrading too badly, but after using this, I'm not sure how I'll be able to go back. I noticed immediately that my trebles were brighter and there was less degradation of tone. Its compact size makes it easy to put it at the top of your pedal train and it's perfect to just "set and forget."

Finally, I was most excited about the smallest accessories, the Flat Patch Cables. These are just a fantastic product. By reducing the amount of space on between connections, I was able to free up enough room to add an extra pedal to the rig! These are available in both standard black or with gold plated connector tips.

While there are many pedalboard systems on the market, Warwick's RockBoard allows modular customization depending on your needs. The seven available sizes and the wide range of accessories lets each player come up with a system that works best for them. (*John Miller*)

RockBoard 3.1 by Warwick

Roland Drums: Electronically Authentic

Roland Launches New Additions to Electronic Drum Line

By Victoria Wasylak

Can electronic drums be authentic? For Roland, the answer is a resounding yes.

The company gathered members of the press and notable drummers at their United States headquarters in Los Angeles, California, on May 8 to launch their newest additions to their line of electronic drums: the TD-17 series of electronic drum kits, the KD-220 and KD-180 bass drums, the PDX-12 snare pad, the VH-10 V-Hi-Hat, and the KD-10 kick pad.

The TD-17 Series includes three new kits: the KV, the KVX, the upper model with a second crash and new VH-10 hi-hats, and the KL, which is essentially the "light" version of the kit. Also added to the roster were the new flagship TD-50KVX V-Drums kit and new mid-level TD-25KVX V-Drums kit. "Percussion in its many forms has been at the heart of our foundation for 50 years," said Roland Global CSO & senior executive officer Gordon Raison during the unveiling on May 8, which was also livestreamed online.

Developed by 15 different Roland team members over a year and a half, these additions to the already-existing V-Drums products build on their legitimate drum sounds with new technology, such as advanced Prismatic Sound Modeling, which mimics the exact sound and reaction a drum would make based on where the drum pads are hit by a drummer. The final result is different kits that provide an engaging experience and sound and behave like acoustic drum kits.

"We call it prismatic because it's very much like a prism. You get one input - one beam of light comes in and you get a rainbow, which flies out the other side," explains Jules Tabberer-Stewart, Roland's global strategic product marketing manager for the drums category. "If you take that analogy in terms of drumming, if I were to play an acoustic snare drum in front of me right now, and I do one hit, what's going to happen is I'm going to get tone from the drumhead, but the drumhead is going to interact with the drum shell, and that's going to affect the same wires, and all of those materials start reacting to one another."



The Roland TD-17KVX V-Drums kit, part of the new TD-17 series

"What Prismatic does is it takes that input from the drummer - a single hit - and it virtually (in the model) understands how

all those materials would interact together and behave, and it means that the second hit, and the third hit, and the fourth hit don't sound like the first hit," Tabberer-Stewart adds.

The kits also feature the "time check" tool, which players can use to monitor their progress and Roland affirms can help drummers learn and improve faster. An improvement over using a metronome, players can use this tool to adjust the settings on tempo and time signatures, as well as when warming up.

A major plus for the kits in the TD-17 series are their ability to pair with smartphones via Bluetooth technology, allowing players to access lessons, YouTube, and drum-less tracks to practice with. The kits also are able to read SD cards loaded with music and can slow down or speed up the music to help drummers learn better.

"If you're going to invest in a hobby, you want it to be fun, because if it's fun, it's going to be motivational," Tabberer-Stewart notes. "If it's anything but inspiring, it's going to be that thing that sits in the corner that you tap occasionally."

The entirety of the drums are centered around technology, says Takahiro Murai, Roland Corporation product leader of R&D, drums and percussion, aiming the kits at the younger generations that are accustomed to using smartphones and advanced technology in their everyday lives. "Modern technology is a very key feature," he says.

The new kits go so far as to include updated drum sounds throughout their included sound libraries to match those used in current popular music. "We killed some of our darlings [sounds]," says Michael Schack, Roland product artist, who was on-deck during the launch as a demo drummer enlisted to show off the capabilities of the new kits. Schack's comment makes it clear that Roland have departed from some of the well-used sounds of the past, choosing to focus on the creation of new and updated sound libraries for their newest V-Drums.

Tabberer-Stewart noted that the best fit for the kits range from student players as young as 10 to hobbyists in their 30s. Being electronic, of course, the kits are easier to move and store, and make far less noise than acoustic kits, making them ideal for many players.

"I talk to a lot of people who are using our gear, and most of them are using it at home or at some kind of studio," Tabberer-Stewart notes. "When it comes to electronic drums, there's the noise factor. An acoustic kit - when you're trying to play it in a family house or apartment or wherever - it's big and it takes up a lot of space, and it's noisy and cumbersome. Although it feels very rewarding to play, those are the immediate challenges. That's probably why we've seen really big growth in electronic drums in the last 20 years."

The launch also coincided with Roland's new partnership with Melodics, a practice habit and feedback app for identifying mistakes and missed notes while playing an instrument. Much like Guitar Hero, the app keeps tracks of incorrect notes and streaks of correct notes, as well as if the player hits any notes too early or late. Every set of V-Drums comes with the Melodics app and 40 free lessons.

"We are definitely in the premium range of electronic drums. What we put into the product in terms of R & D, technology, investment in that," Tabberer-Stewart says. "It's not just about one thing - like sound - it's not just about the pads, it's not just about the sensing, it's all of those things coming together and working together in harmony - and that's our strength."

After launching their new additions to the V-Drums family, Roland hosted a party to celebrate the grand opening of their Los Angeles Artist Relations Center, located on the second floor of their United States headquarters. The new center will allow artists to use the room and equipment for content creation, streaming events, demos and rehearsals, complete with audio and video

L-R: Takahiro Murai and Jules Tabberer-Stewart during the new product launch on May 8



The KD-180 Bass Drum

product support specialists on hand to assist.

"It is the goal of Roland and BOSS to support our family of artists on a multitude of levels, including leveraging our company's social media reach to their benefit," says Brian Alli, Roland's vice president of global influencers. "We have a special passion for these artists - both emerging and established - and with the opening of this new Artist Relations Center in L.A., we look forward to broadening our activities in regard to the content we can create together. We also learn a huge amount from our artists - for instance, their unique real-world needs and insights, which we can bring back to R&D, and in turn can help drive the products we bring to market. Sometimes an artist will use one of our instruments in a way we never imagined, and that can be a real breakthrough for our engineering team."

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Co-owners Stu Cohen and Joe Caruso

Branching Out

After a Lifetime in Acoustics, The Music Emporium Moves into the Electric Guitar World

By Victoria Wasylak

To all the folks at Guitar Center locations around the country, the Music Emporium in Lexington, Massachusetts has a message for you: many, many thanks.

In a world where retail stores seem to peddle roughly the same goods, the Music Emporium aims to offer the exact opposite of a big-box, “soul crushing” shopping experience.

“They didn’t put us out of business – they helped our business,” says co-owner Joe Caruso about Guitar Center. “Too often, every store is the same, they’re all carrying the same stuff. There’s too much homogeneity in the retail world.”

Tucked in historic Lexington, the store has earned a reputation for carrying the finest models of acoustic guitars from non-mainstream dealers over the past forty years. First started in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania by Stu Cohen, the store quickly moved to Cambridge during the height of the ‘60s folk music scene in the Boston area.

But after decades of honing in on their specialty, Caruso and co. found that it didn’t feel like there was any room to expand. At the same time, Collings Guitars made an important decision: they started to include electric guitars in their product line.

It was a special kind of sign for the Massachusetts store, which began to incorporate far more electric models just a few years ago, following suit with Collings.

Ever since Caruso’s involvement with the Music Emporium began in the 1990s, Collings has been an integral part of the shop, and remains the most popular brand of guitars in the store.

“Embracing that company to the fullest extent – taking as many guitars as we could possibly get from them, which at that time

wasn’t a lot, but continued to push how much people are willing to spend on a new acoustic guitar as opposed to a used acoustic guitar, continuing to push that to what we thought was a breaking point, but it never broke,” Caruso says. “It always continued to generate more sales and more interest. We definitely put a good number of our eggs in the Collings basket, sort of bet on that horse, and it turned out to be our best investment.”

While the store had previously carried a handful of electric guitars, their entire reputation had been built around acoustic instruments. Including a wider variety of electrics in the store signaled a new era for the business altogether.

“It’s not like we didn’t have any electrics, but we never really embraced it because we felt like... Collings did electric, so we kind of went along with that, but that was still only a small percentage of what we did – that was several years of slowly growing that,” Caruso notes. “I think when we made the decision that we needed to have more than Collings, we needed to grow – I wanted to grow, and we had all the best acoustic lines, there were no more acoustic lines that we really wanted, and while we still could have carried more from each of those vendors, I guess I was bored and I wanted a challenge. I wanted to inject new blood into the store.”

Caruso and Cohen made the decision together with sales manager Adam Dardeck and asked around for which brands would be best to carry, keeping one-man guitar shops and the like in mind. Caruso, for the record, was offered part ownership around 2001. Since his initial involvement, the company has launched from a \$900,000 business to a \$5 million business – all with only eight employees.

The Music Emporium officially brought in a bigger selection of electric guitars around 2014.

"We didn't want to do Fender, we don't want to do Gibson, we don't want to do PRS, because everybody had those. Why try to be like everybody else?" he says. "All these small builders we could represent that don't have a home, we could be sort of that place. We could be the place to go to find so many cool, obscure lines that players may have heard about, but no one carries them."

Especially with the recent boom in attention for independent artists – guitarmakers included – the trend has fared well for everyone. Caruso says that roughly 35 percent of guitar sales are now electric.

"We carry them because they really do represent the best in the industry," Caruso says. "Certainly we attract more electric players, but we haven't lost the acoustic players. And that's what it's become. People walk in and are like, 'These are amazing, I've never heard of



Some of the newer electric guitar offerings in the store

these guitars.' They trust that we're not carrying them because we have to or because we're gonna make a boatload of money – the margins are pretty thin on a lot of these smaller builders."

Much like Caruso's gut feeling to try something new, he says that he sees the same whim in many of his customers who have also traditionally played only or mainly acoustic guitars.

"The cool thing is, all these people we've been selling acoustic guitars to, they almost acted on the same impulse I acted on," he says. "Playing electric kind of makes you feel young again. If you want to tap into your youth and want to be cool – that's kind of what was in my mind when I thought, 'Let's carry electrics.'"

Caruso also notes that this feeling goes hand in hand with older folks looking to try something new, and looking for a quality piece to musically experiment with.

"I cater to an older demographic. Younger people are too busy paying off college loans to afford the guitars I sell," he notes. "They want to feel that youthful energy again. They're elegant, they're mature, they're stately, this is not Eddie Van Halen's guitar. These are beautiful, artful, respectful creations. They're not gimmicky, they have substance to them."

That very substance is what the Music Emporium has strived to cultivate in their shop and selection, especially with their new expansion into the electric world. That push to keep their taste front and center is exactly why big box stores don't pose a threat to the Lexington store.

"They [arge stores and chains] can overwhelm people with what looks like a very vast and deep inventory, but let's face it – there's nothing deep or interesting about their inventory. It looked big, but

really, it was a lot of the same," he explains. "Customers walk into my store and it's a completely different experience. First of all, it's elegant, it's like walking into your own very lived-in house or living room. It's a very warm, cozy, inviting, artful kind of display of product. There's no slatwall, there's no glaring florescent lights. It's a different experience, and people recognize that as soon as they walk in. How many small retail stores today are actually growing, expanding? There's so much stagnancy out there and so many people closing."

According to Caruso, so many retail stores – chains, independent, or otherwise – have fallen into the trap of all carrying the same inventory, which ultimately leaves customers to choose where they shop solely based on prices, since the stores pose the same, often bland, shopping experience. From there, stores plunge into sales to lure musicians in, but Caruso isn't about deep discounting. The Guitar Center in nearby Boston still doesn't pose a threat, Caruso says.

"I don't overcharge, but I don't think the name of the game is racing to the bottom, it's not selling stuff just to get it off the shelves," he explains. "I've had guitars that I've had for years – just waiting for the right person to come. A guitar is made to last a lifetime, why do I need to turn this? There's a person out there for every guitar. These are electric guitars, they're made to last for generations. You can't buy people's loyalty. I haven't had a sale in – I don't know, 20 years?"

Also helping out the store thrive is their small but expertly trained sales team, who Caruso says have helped with the store's transition to selling electrics significantly.

"The business would not be what it was if it were just me, or me and my partner. We would fail miserably, mostly because we would



The Music Emporium showroom

burn out, or because I don't have the same expertise as the guys I hired," Caruso adds. "I hired a couple of guys in the last two or three years whose specialty was electric guitars, which we never did. We were known as an acoustic shop, and I realized we needed to diversify to stay alive and stay relevant, so we needed to have more than just that, but I knew nothing about electric guitars. I played Strats, that's all I knew, and my knowledge of electrics is pretty limited."

Fused with the two co-owners' expertise on acoustics and their team's added knowledge on the electric guitar world, the store is not only bringing in new customers, but bringing acoustic players into a new phase of their career.

"The people who have been buying these great acoustic guitars have moved over quite easily to the electric world," Caruso says. "It's been really eye-opening and fun. It's injected new life and blood into the business. They're not two camps divided by a wall, they cross back and forth all the time." [COURTESY]

Passing the Torch

NLFX Professional steps up as the MI dealer of Bemidji

By Victoria Wasylak

Not all music retail stores can last forever, but they can pass the torch to the next shop suited to carry on the MI duties in their community. That's exactly what Overbeek Electronics and Music did when the two Overbeek brothers decided that after 30-plus years of running their Bemidji, Minnesota store, it was time to retire.

Behind the scenes, years before the store closed their doors in March, Larry and Kevin Overbeek got a coffee with NLFX Professional founder Ben Stowe, whose business is also located in Bemidji. The DJ and audio store and team travel as far as Japan and Spain to perform installations, but keep their headquarters in Minnesota. Despite being in an entire different area of musical equipment, to Stowe, seeing the area go without an MI store felt immoral.

The three men would go on to coordinate over the next three years on how NLFX could take the reins over so that nothing would be lacking from the area. When it came time for Overbeek Electronics and Music to shutter its doors in March 2018, NLFX had opened their very first showroom, complete with a proper assortment of instruments and accessories.

"We [NLFX] took a place in the backseat to work with them on a timeline so there wouldn't be any lag of services to the community," Stowe says. "We were basically open by the time they closed. It's a fairly small city here, and we're kind of an anomaly because our footprint is really more national, and our install team has even done installs internationally. We have kind of a big footprint in a small town, and so I've known the owners of the music store for probably twenty years, at least. We really stayed out of that [area] - we've been in business for 25 years and we sell pro audio and lighting and video, both through direct retail and through systems integration and that sort of thing. We felt that they were serving the community, so we said 'you know, we're just going to leave that alone' ... and the owners and I were friends."

For Stowe, the goal was to make sure all players in the area - both recreational and vocational - would still have the same resources. His mission remains particularly important in that part of the country, where fellow retail stores are located on the other side of the map. Stowe affirms that if it weren't for NLFX stepping up to the plate, players would have to drive about 100 miles to get to another MI store - easily an hour-plus drive for anyone in need of new strings or guitar cables.

"We're 200 miles north of Minneapolis - we are in the proverbial middle of nowhere, but we have a thriving, vibrant little city," he notes. "It's 100 miles to the next small music store, and it's 200 miles to the next Guitar Center... We felt it [opening the show room] was a useful and necessary way to use out resources."

Keeping things firmly planted in Bemidji, Stowe decided to keep the showroom on the current NLFX "campus" located at 1319 Naylor Drive SE.

Seeing that Overbeek's store had actually been an old



gas station that would have been expensive to update, NLFX carved out space in their own area for the showroom. Complete with a warehouse, the I.T. department, and customer service, all the necessary features were already in one spot. As an added bonus, the showroom is already slightly bigger than the Overbeek space was to begin with.

"I said 'we have space in our existing facility, we're in an industrial park, we have three buildings on our little campus here.' We're kind of like an itty-bitty baby Sweetwater. And so we said 'let's remodel out existing facility and put a showroom in there,' and that takes some of that financial pressure off."

Due to the fact that the prior NLFX facilities, of course, were already open, Stowe likened the process to "building an airplane while flying it," but even while in the works, the community responded to the project with excitement.

"We had customers driving for an hour away to see the progress - I think they were just excited to see name brands, which the other store just wasn't able to do. We're carrying Fender, DW [Drum Workshop], Remo as a direct dealer, and that just never happened in this town."

Although the store is still in its early stages, Stowe says that the best-selling brands in the store include Roland, Fender, Yamaha, and Drum Workshop - all brands that Overbeek

did not traditionally carry in their store. Customers are not only noticing, but taking advantage of the NLFX stock.

"It's nice when you bring in a brand like that that's got equity, that everybody knows. I'd say thus far, our best seller has been accessories, things that people need for the instrument that they already have," he explains. "And there too, we have the best string selection our community has ever seen. We've sold products nationwide for 25 years, and we know what it takes to do business in that climate."

NLFX, also 20-plus years old, is seasoned in selling sound and lighting products to both the retail and wholesale markets with a classic "Minnesota nice" attitude. But the transition to include an MI store in the NLFX universe has been a tricky one, adding around 200,000 SKUs to their system – that's a lot of new products.

"I never thought I'd know about reeds – or care to," Stowe says, chuckling.

But with the expertise of their new employees – including a certified instrument repair tech and woodwind specialist, and a brass specialist – the changes have been a lot easier, especially with Overbeek's secret weapon on board.

"In fact, they only had one employee, she was there 27 years, and we've hired her," Stowe explains.

That one-employee tour de force was Vicki Hegg, who co-incidentally has known Stowe since he was a teenager.

Hegg, who truly had been with Overbeek for close to three decades, had been working in the store back since the days when Overbeek mainly sold TVs and stereos as an electronics dealer. For the last four years, she was Overbeek's sole employee (aside from the two Overbeek brothers, who both worked part-time).

"I pretty much took care of the whole store," she says of her time at Overbeek. "I guess Ben saw potential there and asked me to help with his store. I went from being the youngest [in the store] to the oldest."

Between wanting to continue on the same career path and Stowe saying that he wanted to keep Overbeek's "mom and pop shop" feel, Hegg was sold. By taking her on with two other employees at NLFX, the showroom already has triple the workforce (NLFX as a whole company has 32). Many of her customers have taken to Hegg so much that they've followed her to NLFX.

"The transition was good and exciting, yet it was kind of scary a little bit," she says. "The NLFX crew has been great. They've helped me become part of the crew – I feel like I've been here a long time. I think it's a great partnership."

Hegg says that Overbeek frequently got involved in the local music community by selling "band books" – coupon booklets to raise money for local school band and orchestra



Ben Stowe in the new NLFX showroom

groups – and tickets to local shows. On the flip side, because Stowe has noted the area as a popular vacation spot for Minnesota, he plans to do a "Camp NLFX" in the summertime.

In an effort to make sure that the NLFX showroom is as accommodating as possible, in the time leading up to the official store opening, Stowe says he's sat down and chatted with almost every musical influencer in town to see what resource NLFX needs to provide.

"I've had hundreds of cups of coffee – and that's not an exaggeration – with area musicians and music educators really to say 'what can we build for you? How do we do this right?' And I think we're still learning but I feel really good about the start we've had," Stowe affirms. "I've got a four-inch thick folder of notes from meetings."

An operating but still developing instrument repair programs rounds out their services.

"I feel like it was the last piece to a really good puzzle – right now I don't see anything as missing," Stowe says of the early stages of the NLFX showroom. "We're a pretty complete machine right now. This is a really great fit to what we already do."

Now with the NLFX showroom wheels in motion, Both Stowe and Hegg agree that their responsibility couldn't be clearer.

"I think music is existential to the human process – there's something about music that isn't anywhere else, it's part of our DNA," Stowe says. "I think because music is so deeply entrenched in human DNA, having a place where you can walk in and see, touch, feel, an instrument – we want to give them that ability, to interact with these things, and also have the necessary accessories to keep those instruments playable. For us to have the resources and the industry connections and the opportunity to do this and not do it, I think would be a crime." ■■■■■

Integrity: A Real Problem Facing the Music Industry

By Menzie Pittman

After stumbling through an awkward moment with a new employee, my cell phone happened to ring. I looked down to see the name of a close and trusted friend. I decided to step outside and take the call. As old friends often do, he asked how my day was going. Laughingly, I said, "Your timing is always impeccable, and you must be psychic because I'm in the middle of dealing with an employee meltdown." I continued saying, "I unintentionally hurt a new employee's feelings, and I want him to know I am sorry." Without missing a beat my friend said, "I'll let you go, but importantly, does he know you are invested in him? If that is unclear and you are intent on keeping him, make sure to let him know that you are." He went on, "It is also important as you train him to continually let him know you are invested in him."

My exact quote to my friend was, "You're a genius!" You see, my friend comes from an integrity-based mode of thinking. He uses every moment as a teaching moment; more importantly, he knows that if you develop and build trust in *your* business environment, then the functionality of the relationships within can breathe and grow, and leadership is the natural byproduct.

After listening to my friend's advice, I went out back of the store where my new employee was sitting, and my opening words to him were, "I need to apologize." I continued, "As part of your training team, we have overlooked teaching you a few critically important things. We have not stressed enough that it is okay not to know something, but what *is* important is to know how to ask when you don't." We talked further, and acting on my friend's guidance, I shared that I was, indeed, invested in him, and that it was the responsibility of the business to show him that we, "as a team," are in it together. As we talked more, I shared my belief that it is important for the team to show him the "whats, and hows," but more importantly "the whys" of how to think and consider situations. The time we shared was very productive, and I felt good about it because I knew I had approached the moment with true integrity and, therefore, had improved an already important relationship.

Compare that experience to another I had a few days later with an associate in the music industry. I received a call from a music business associate. As usual, the small talk was plentiful. There were lots of, "I am so glad we are now working together" sentiments, and tons of, "This is going to be really productive" promises. Then, from out of the blue, without a blink, the associate brought to my attention that he and his company had an opportunity to add their product to a competitor's store only a few miles away. The call was to see if I would mind. Wow! Well, it's

fair to say the conversation took an interesting turn. Although my mind was blown, the supplier saw nothing wrong with the idea. What could it hurt by putting their product in a competitor's store in close proximity to mine, right? The good news is, at least this time I was asked, unlike the last time. Risking good will, I shared the truth that I was emphatically opposed to the idea. It was completely unfathomable to me how this vendor could not see why it posed a problem. The rep told me that if I objected, it wouldn't happen. But for me, trust left the building with Elvis. I tried to clarify my position on future like-proposals by saying that he only needs to ponder the integrity of any situation, and he would know my stance on all issues. Simply put: just do the right thing – it's easy. But what I see as the music industry's *true problem* is that integrity has become inconvenient.

I believe the all-to-convenient business phrase is "it's better to apologize than ask permission." Could that possibly be the reason the music retail industry is in the shape it's in? If you have read any trade magazines lately, the discussion about the health of the music products industry is questioned over and over. Sadly, it seems we are treating the symptoms and not the cause of the problems.

The problem from where I sit is that we have displaced integrity for the convenience of fast money. If it's bigger, it's better. More stuff, less knowledge of how to use it. If I can sell my business in five to 10 years, I can reap big profits. If we add a gizmo to our dinglehopper, we will sell more units. Do these sound familiar?

However, through all of this I do see one consistent glimmer of hope. The discussion of, "we need to fix this" is now front and center. Don't get me wrong: the problem of lack of integrity is still very alive and well. But more people in the industry are speaking up and speaking out when that lack of integrity rears its ugly head. Didn't David Bowie write a song about that called "Heroes"? PARADE



Menzie Pittman is the owner and director of education at Contemporary Music Center in Virginia (CMC). Following a performance and teaching career spanning more than 32 years, he founded CMC in 1989 and continues to perform, teach, and oversee daily operations. He has 50 years of musical experience as a drummer and drum instructor. Menzie is a frequent speaker at NAMM's Idea Center, and a freelance writer for MMR's "Small Business Matters" column.



By Jaimie Blackman

Selling Your Business? Stay in Control

Don't wish it were easier; Wish you were better.' – Jim Rohn

Making financial decisions has never been easy for business owners. When given a choice, the tyranny of the urgent usually wins over the severity of the important.

Imagine there are two problems you can attack. The first one involved a rental instrument being issued to the wrong student. You figure it will take about 45 minutes to straighten out the mess – annoying, but you can handle it. The second issue regards having the previously postponed conversation with your key manager about your succession plan – important, but complicated. Which one do you take care of first?

If you're like most business owners, you take care of the issue which you have more control of. In this case, that is the rental problem, which may not be the best decision.

If you're like most MI business owners, your store represents 80 percent-plus of your net worth. As such, this will be the most important financial decision of your professional life. Because the process is so complex, it's no surprise that most owners experience excessive anxiety when trying to figure out how to transition ownership. Anxiety and complexity always results in delays.

The mind game begins like this: "One day I'll exit the business by choice, or be forced to exit because of failing health. Still, I have plenty of time to figure out what to do. After all, how difficult can this be? I'll just leave the details to my accountant and lawyer." Of course, it's never that simple.

In my January 2018 *MMR* column I wrote about exiting a business from the *buyer's* perspective. In my June column I'll focus on the flip side of the coin; selling your business from the *owner's* perspective.

There are only three ways to exit your business

- 1: Inside sale – sell to a family member or key manager(s) or employees.
- 2: Outside sale – sell to a third party, a competitor or strategic buyer.
- 3: Liquidate your inventory – planned or unplanned.

Remember that your goal is to maximize the value of your business today, so one day you can sell it profitably. When having exit planning conversations with your professional advisors, family, and friends, here are a few tips you'll need to know to stay in control, a prerequisite for making timely and better decisions.

TIME MATTERS

Some of your succession planning goals can be accomplished in months, while other goals can take years.

- 1: Identifying, training, motivating, and retaining your key managers can easily take several years.
- 2: Taking pre-tax annual profits off the table and diversifying your investments in a 401(k) is a five-year-plus goal.
- 3: Deciding on who your successor(s) will be and making sure he, she, or they will continue growing the business is usually a multi-year effort.

Questions for your advisor: *How much time is required to implement the strategies you are recommending? Are the strategies you are recommending aligned with my personal values?*

PERSONAL & BUSINESS READINESS

Separating yourself from your business may be harder than you think.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- 1: Are you emotionally ready to separate from your business?
- 2: Do you know what you will be doing after you transition your business?
- 3: Do you know what your monthly income need is to be financially healthy?

Questions for your advisor: *What is the minimum I need to sell the business for to support I and my partner for the rest of our lives? How can I best de-risk my business from death, divorce, disability, and departure in order to maximize the future sale?*

BUSINESS VALUATION

If you own a portfolio of investments, your monthly statements will tell you the current value. Do you know how much your business is worth? Business valuation is half science, half art. Here are three common methods.

Multiple of discretionary earnings method is a common method used for small business owners. It's calculated by earnings (bottom line) and goodwill, times a multiplier. Adjusted book value is added to this number. Adjusted book value is the measure of a company's valuation after liabilities and assets are adjusted to reflect true fair market value.

Asset valuation focuses on the fair market value of its total assets minus its total liabilities.

Market valuation attempts to determine the appraisal value of a business based on the selling price of other like businesses.

STOCK SALE VS. ASSET SALE

The seller wants to sell the business as a stock sale, the buyer wants an asset sale.

Have your attorney and accountant explain the pros and cons of both methods. Generally speaking, the seller usually wants to exit with a stock sale for the tax benefits, versus selling the assets of the business. On the other hand, the buyer wants to purchase the assets for greater tax benefits and reduced liability of future claims against the company.

The takeaway? A few important principles can keep you in control of the conversation. When you're in control, it's full steam ahead. Let me know if you have any questions. ☎️



Jaimie Blackman – a former music educator & retailer – is a certified wealth strategist & maker of Value-Creator | MoneyCapsules®, which capsule value-creation activities into 90-day sprints. Blackman helps music retailers accelerate business value now and maximize value when it's time to exit. Blackman is a frequent speaker at NAMM's Idea Center. Visit jaimieblackman.com to subscribe to his newsletters and webcasts.

ACCESSORIES

GluBoost's EndPoint Mark + Mask System

GluBoost's End-Point Mark + Mask System eliminates adhesive and finish runoff. The included Perimeter Markers + Ultra High Performance tape are both specially formulated keep the glue contained in a chosen area on any surface. These kits are specifically to work/for use with MasterGlu adhesives and Fill n' Finish formulas, and are simple to use. Contents include one roll of 36 yard by 1/8" wide, bright green, high tack vinyl tape, and one box of 3 non-toxic yellow glue and finish Perimeter Markers.



www.gluboot.com

BEAM B-01 Clip-On MetroTuner and Tone Generator

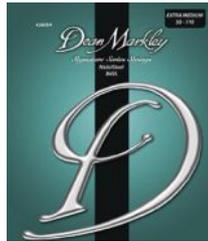
The BEAM B-01 MetroTuner and Tone Generator is a multi-featured tuner, audible metronome, and 5 octave tone generator. The tuner is calibrated for guitar, bass, violin, ukulele, and banjo, plus the keys of BH, C, EH, and F, and has a large color display. The metronome speed can be varied from 30 to 280 beats per minute, and has 8 rhythms and a volume control. It includes a USB rechargeable built-in battery with cable and a unique magnetic swivel joint. The swivel mount is held to the tuner head by a very powerful magnetic ball joint. The head can then be mounted by itself onto any ferrous music stand.



www.meiselaccessories.com

Extra-Medium XM Strings from Dean Markley

Dean Markley's new XM (extra-medium) set are the newest addition to their NickelSteel Bass Signature Series of bass guitar strings. Available in a 4-string or 5-string set, XM bass strings offer the same solid, full bright sound that the NickelSteel Bass brand is known for, and they're made with Dean Markley's time-tested process that ensures a smooth feel with long-lasting tone. In the 4-string XM package, players will find a set of G, D, A and E strings with gauges measuring .050, .070, .090, and .110 mm. In the 5-string package, players will find the same gauges with an additional low B string measuring .130 mm, now the thickest string in the entire series.



www.deanmarkley.com

Peruvian Matador Series Ukulele Bags from Henry Heller

Henry Heller's new Peruvian Matador Series Ukulele Bags are available in five different designs and both Soprano and Concert/Tenor sizes. Faced with an authentic hand-woven Andean fabric and adorned with a shoulder strap, these bags have been highly anticipated since they were first introduced at Winter NAMM and are now in stock and shipping.



www.omgmusic.com

ODR-1 Pedal from Nobels

The ODR-1 pedal from Nobels features a drive and a level control, and a proprietary spectrum control that optimizes the midrange frequency for clarity and full dynamic range while not smothering the character of your guitar. Nobels have lowered the MAP on the ODR-1 from \$109 to \$99. All Nobels pedals feature a solid metal chassis and Nobels Remote Control Jack switching system and easy-access top loaded battery compartment.



www.nobels.de

EarthQuaker Devices' Pyramids

EarthQuaker Devices' Pyramids Stereo Flanging Device is built upon the same proprietary DSP architecture as the Avalanche Run. Pyramids is a Stereo Flanging Device with five user-definable presets, eight flanger modes, tap tempo, tap subdivision via the Rate & Tap mini-toggle, a multifunction Modify control, positive and negative feedback, and a variable Mix control. Pyramids' "activate" footswitch features EarthQuaker Devices' exclusive Flexi-Switch technology. This relay-based true-bypass switching platform allows for momentary or latching operation, making it easier than ever to engage the effect to bedazzle individual notes or phrases. For standard latching operation, tap the footswitch to activate the effect and tap again to bypass.



www.earthquakerdevices.com

DRUMS & PERCUSSION



1728N Series Snare Drums from WFLIII Drums

The 1728N Series snare drums from WFLIII Drums are available in 3-ply maple and 5-ply mahogany shells and feature hand hewn snare beds, 45° bearing edges, custom WFLIII lugs, and either a classic S1 throw-off or a Trick GS007 multi-step throw-off for greater control. Both the maple and mahogany drums are refreshingly nuanced and alive in a world where 20- and 30-ply snares are commonplace. These drums rely on thin plies of mahogany for their warmth, poplar for their crisp attack and maple for their musicality.

www.wfliiidrums.com

AMPLIFIERS

Mooer's New Micro Preamps

Mooer's two new Micro Preamps, the 014 Taxidea Taxus and the 015 Brown Sound, offer a small size and light weight that allows musicians to trade their heavy and expensive tube amplifiers for a lighter and less expensive solution. All Mooer Micro Preamps come complete with dual channels, integrated speaker cabinet simulation, and dual operating modes. Mooer Micro Preamps are sonically accurate digital recreations of the preamp sections of popular tube amplifiers. Mooer developed these preamps by analyzing real tube amplifiers to capture their sound, dynamics, and response. Mooer Micro Preamps 014 and 015 are now available at a street price of \$99 each.



www.moeraudio.com

FRETTED

Cort's Sunset TC Electric Guitar

A hybrid of T-style and LP style, the Sunset TC incorporates the features of two types of iconic solid-body electric guitars. The ash body is lightweight but has a surprisingly strong, tight and punchy sound with emphasis on the high-mid-range. Its natural beauty and distinctive grain patterns are ideal for the distressed finish, available in Worn Butter Blonde or Worn White Blonde. The pairing of the ash tonal wood and bolt-on hard maple neck produce a fundamental tone with plenty of attack that will cut through and be heard clearly in the mix.



www.cortguitars.com

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DJ & LIGHTING



Pioneer DJ's DDJ-SB3 Controller

The 2-channel DDJ-SB3 is a new controller from Pioneer DJ designed for dedicated use with Serato DJ Lite. The interface of the DDJ-SB3 is even more intuitive, inheriting traits from the layouts of the top models in the DDJ-S series, including the dedicated play and cue buttons and the independent Auto Loop button. The new Pad Scratch feature allows users to reproduce scratches based on the legendary hip hop DJ's own recordings by simply pressing the Performance Pads. MAP is \$249.

www.pioneerdj.com

New Fixtures from Chauvet Professional

Chauvet Professional's Ovation H-605FC is a new convection-cooled fixture powered by an RGBA-Lime LED engine, enabling it to replicate nearly any color with extraordinary accuracy, as well as virtually any color temperature of white. Color temperature presets from 2800K to 6500K with high CRI and CQS ensure that the fixture's output is of the highest quality. Interchangeable lens plates allow the fixture's beam angle to go from narrow to wide so it can be adapted to different mounting heights. Silent in its operation, the Ovation H-605FC is well-suited for recital halls and venues that have video productions. The fixture also features adjustable Pulse Width Modulation, which avoids flickering on camera.

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By Dan Daley

Heroes are Where You Find Them – You Just Have to Know Where to Look

The widely reported decline in electric guitar sales has been attributed to a number of things, from how the hyper-masculine image that electric guitars have projected since the 1980s has lost mojo in the era of #MeToo, to the rise of synth-heavy, guitar-lite EDM. Then there's the fact that hip-hop surpassed rock last year to become the biggest music genre in the U.S. in terms of total consumption, according to Nielsen Music's year-end report. Another purported reason offered is the dearth of genuine guitar heroes. There are simply far fewer new role models to look up to for the guitar anymore. But maybe we've been looking in the wrong places.

Thirteen-year-old Yang Tae-hwan was the featured performer during the spectacular closing ceremony for the Winter Olympics in February, and the kid killed it, shredding the appropriately chosen "Winter" movement of Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*. Yang's entire performance was an ode to the electric axe: the dance sequence behind him was choreographed as though its acrobatic terpsichoreans were scaling the glowing strings of a guitar undulating under his flying fingers. If after the broadcast more than a few viewers found themselves walking into MI stores and drawn inexplicably towards the guitar section, a solid case could be made for the usefulness of subliminal messaging.

The fact is that there are plenty of young guitar virtuosos around. Twenty-one-year-old Marcus King, the son of bluesman Marvin King, fires up a brand of roots music he calls "soul-influenced psychedelic Southern rock," leading the *Philadelphia Inquirer* to dub him a "guitar superstar." Then there is Christine "Kingfish" Ingram, an 18-year-old stringlinger from Mississippi who is reinventing the blues. And 28-year-old Samantha Fish has been ripping it up ever since she won the 2012 Blues Music Awards' Best New Artist Debut honor.

These guitarists and others are known to the cognoscenti, of course, but the trick is getting them into situations and contexts that refresh the focus on the electric guitar. It's challenging – it's just a much more cluttered world vying for everyone's attention today. And the guitar itself is not enough – the generic Strat and Les Paul outlines have been co-opted by already-passé video games and hack advertising, with Flying V shapes rocketing out of neon beer cans. The guitar has to be in the right hands in order to make a difference.

Yang isn't what you'd think of as a typical guitar god: the diminutive prodigy and his owlish John Lennon-esque eyewear evoke more a slightly plump Harry Potter than a lean Eddie Van Halen. On the other hand, "The Big Bang Theory's" leading-man astrophysicist Dr. Sheldon Cooper earns one million per episode and has over four million Twitter followers. What constitutes a matinee idol these days is very different than what it was when the term "guitar hero" was coined a half century ago.

Today, we have a few figureheads to lead a new vanguard: St. Vincent and Jack White, to name a couple; the former brings a David Byrne-infused feminism to guitar playing (research funded by Fender in 2015 revealed that 50 percent of all buyers of new guitars in the last five years have been female), the lat-



“The decline of electric guitar sales (which incidentally is a real thing and isn't offset by Live Nation producing more concerts and other weird non sequiturs, as some industry cheerleaders have asserted) is happening, but it's not irreversible.”

ter maintains a necessary punkish connection to the instrument (like Billie Joe Armstrong before he went all Broadway on us), and both broaden the narrow image of the guitar god in ways that nearly calcified trope needed to be stretched. We're even getting some help from Disney, which just licensed the *Disney Super Guitar* LP, an all-star album featuring shredders including Zakk Wylde, Paul Gilbert, George Lynch, and Orianthi performing popular Disney songs.

The decline of electric guitar sales (which incidentally is a real thing and isn't offset by Live Nation producing more concerts and other weird non sequiturs, as some industry cheerleaders have asserted) is happening, but it's not irreversible. MI retail can play a part in this perceptual renovation, by broadening its own views of guitar imagery. Whose pictures are in those posters on the walls? They'll make a difference between resonating with the Baby Boomer customers who've been buying the electric guitars for decades and the Millennials and Gen Zs whose buying habits are still being formed.

Rock on, Yang Tae-hwan (who is now a Cort endorser). You're a marketing exec's composite dream, and the sooner everyone realizes that, the better.



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