

# M M M R

## MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

Celebrating 145 Years of Serving the MI Industry Est. 1879

# SPIN CONTROL

## DJ Interfaces & Controllers



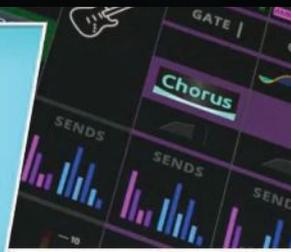
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### INSIDE



**Retail**  
'We Create Musicians' – Maxwell's House of Music is Having a Banner Year



**Survey**  
Light Up the Night! – Sales of Lighting & Stage Effects Remain Stable Post-Pandemic



**Guest Editorial**  
Many Happy Returns? For Customers, Yes; For MI Businesses, Not So Much

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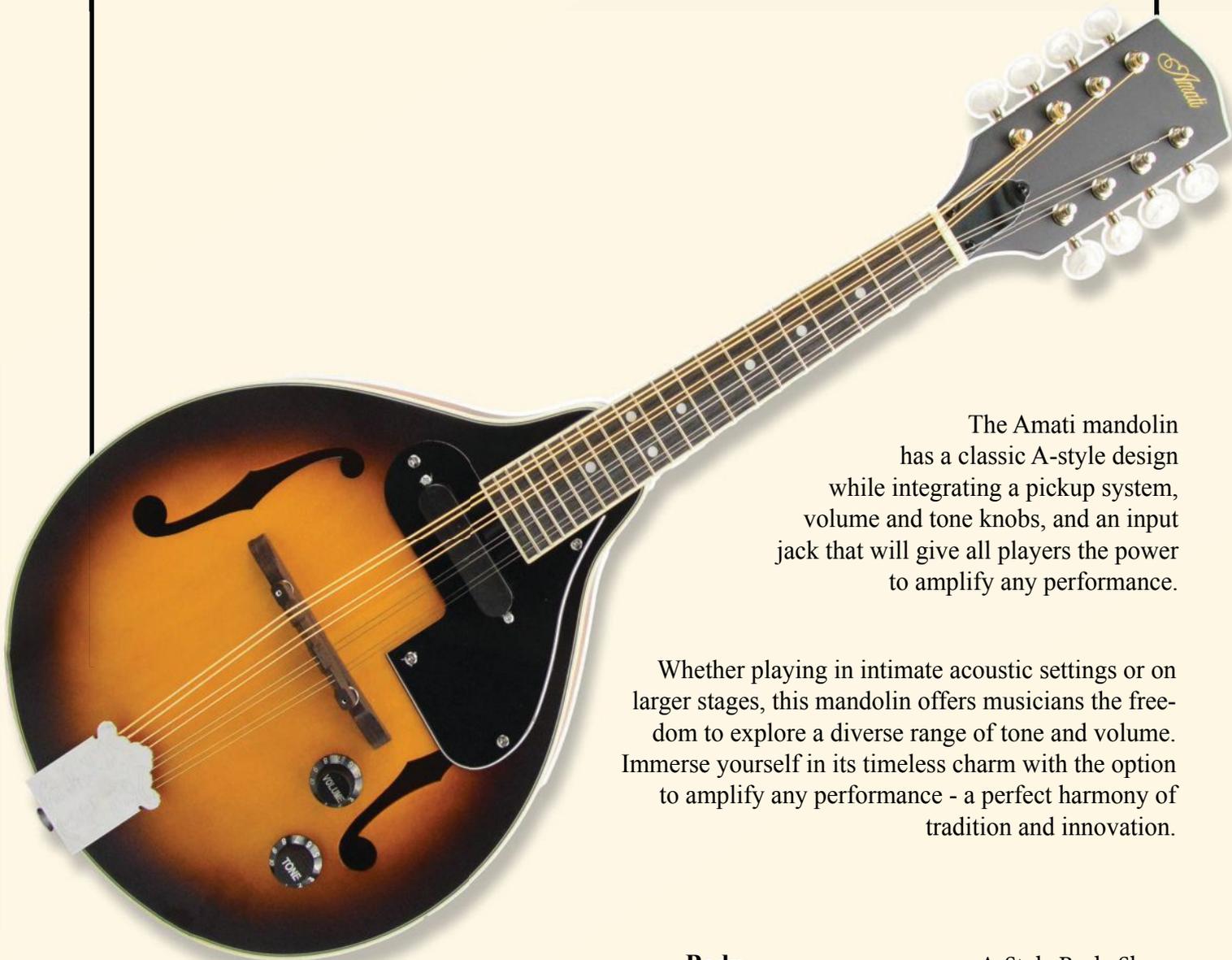
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**Includes**..... Deluxe Padded Bag

# C O N T E N T S

# MMR

MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

## FEATURES

Vol.183 APRIL 2024 No. 4

### Roundtable

#### Spin Control – DJ Interfaces & Controllers 11

DJ Controllers and interfaces provide the artist with a central command center that enables DJs to perform digital mixes via access to exhaustive musical libraries, while also applying effects and transitions in real time. Mixing on the fly, cross-fading, syncing drops and phrases, EQing different source materials to maintain sonic consistency – there’s a lot that goes into modern DJing!

### Retail

#### ‘We Create Musicians’ – Maxwell’s House of Music is Having a Banner Year in 2024 14

Hot on the heels of accepting both “Dealer of the Year” and the “Innovation Award” at the recent Top 100 Dealer Awards event at the 2024 NAMM Show, Maxwell’s House of Music co-owner Mark Maxwell was appointed as Indiana Arts Commissioner for Region 12 in the state. It’s safe to say this family business and local institution is doing something right! We recently sat down with Mark to discuss the operation’s history, current success, and plans for the future.

### Dealer Survey

#### Light Up the Night! – Sales of Lighting & Stage Effects Remain Stable Post-Pandemic 18

While the significant rebounds in business that MI dealers experienced post-COVID are now in the past, when it comes to lighting and stage effects equipment, nearly half of participants in this issue’s poll (50.1%) report that sales remain level when compared to last year. Additionally, with only 38.6% observing downward trending business for these products, that’s quite the turnaround when compared to the 70.4% from late 2021.

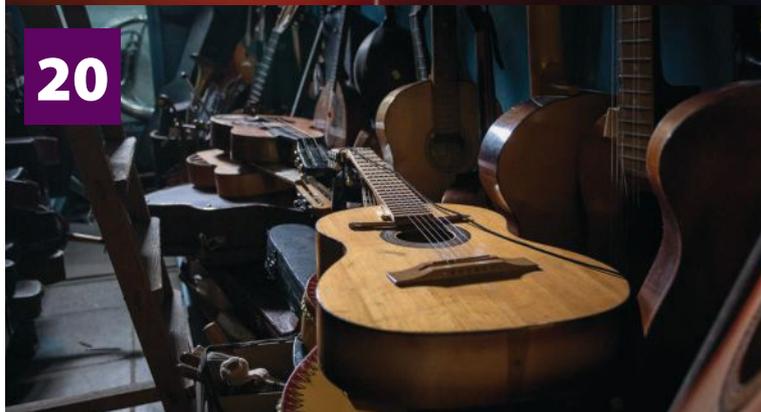
## Departments

Editorial.....	4
UpFront .....	5
People.....	8
Trade Regrets.....	10
Small Business Matters .....	17
New Products .....	21
Classifieds.....	27

### Guest Editorial

#### Many Happy Returns? For Customers, Yes; For MI Businesses, Not So Much 20

Gary C. Smith, president and CEO of the National Association for the Exchange of Industrial Resources (NAEIR), outlines the benefits of “giving in-kind” as an avenue to deal with returned instruments and musical gear. Aside from potentially high tax deductions, such donated merchandise creates good PR, supports philanthropy goals, and assures that a company’s brand isn’t diluted in the marketplace.



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## Music as an Avenue Towards Community Building Making Your Retail Business 'The Right Place'

By  
Christian  
Wissmuller

**"M**ost marketers have heard the term 'community building' at some point in the recent past," began an article from last summer in an issue of *Rolling Stone*. "It's not just a trend; it's a revolution that's taking over multiple industries and for good reason. Community building is all about creating a space where people feel connected, engaged and part of something bigger than themselves."

This very well-written opening salvo (shout-out to the author, Kim Pham) elegantly and effectively sums up what most of us involved in music – be it creation, commerce, distribution, journalism, and beyond – are well aware: "community building" does your own business model, bottom line, and wallet good because it does a person's soul good. Anyone who's played music with and for others, or who's really connected as an audience member at a performance, knows that feeling of inclusion and brotherhood.

Whatever you're "selling" – your store, a guitar, tickets to your band's next gig, clarinet reeds, copies of your new solo vinyl 7", an electronic drum kit, your business philosophy – getting your audience, customers, or teammates to feel somehow *part* of your commodity is key to lasting success. Happily, forging that connection is something that music and the culture of music-making does very well and very naturally, almost easily.

There's an annual event in my hometown of Boston, "The Rock n' Roll Rumble," that is, in essence, a glorified "battle of the bands." Over the decades it's featured a number of bands that went on to become big (or big-ish), had even bigger guest-hosts and performers, and been sponsored by a number of local radio stations, arts newspapers and magazines, and various corporate brands. And every year, when they announce the new crop of participants/contestants, I roll my eyes at the entire concept. Transforming the act of playing music – a joyful, personal, artistic expression of the purest sort – into a game, a competition... I imagine it's akin to how Bourdain felt about competitive cooking shows like "Top Chef" or "Beat Bobby Flay": "What are you people even *doing*?!! You've got the wrong end of the stick! You're *doing it wrong*!!!"

And yet, nearly every year, I wind up attending at least one of the shows, either because a friend's band is in the Rumble, or one of mine is (No, I've never won. We tapped out in the semi-finals once, which is absolutely fine by me since that's as far as Bullet LaVolta – the best live band I've ever seen and one of my favorite groups ever – got in 1988, but I digress...). What I inevitably wind up re-realizing each time is that it's not about the absurd concept or conceit of the Rumble or events like it, but that very palpable, convivial sense of musical community that pervades the entire occasion. Each year, that communal vibe sells me 100 percent and I am all-in. This year I'm an "official judge" for one of the Rumble nights and I already know I'll start out discretely rolling my eyes only to wind up thrashing along and pumping my fists with everyone else in the crowd moments later. I'm in "my place" – I'm in the *right place*.

That's the natural "community building" of music at work. If that feeling can sell an inherently silly battle of the bands to a negative creep like me, it can sell some ukuleles or synths at your store if you've got decent game.

Menzie Pittman knows first-hand – the dude's an award-winning MI retailer and educator – what music's community-building might can achieve, and he talks about it in this month's "Small Business Matters" column. "Local music stores must have a unique vibe, borne from a genuine depth of knowledge," he advises. "That one simple quality allows all potential customers to know that they have picked the right place."

Any business owner should ask him- or herself, "Am I doing enough to make my customers and potential customers feel, when they walk into the store, that they've picked their *right place*? Could I do more?"

I know from talking with many of you over the years and visiting countless dealers across the country and around the world that the vast majority of you are, always have been, and will continue to do precisely that. It never hurts, though, to remember music's unique ability to make others feel that powerful connection that comes from a sense of belonging.

And, hey – if "amplifying your brand through community building" results in more foot-traffic and sales, that's not so bad either!

*\*I, for one, actually really enjoy watching "Beat Bobby Flay," so don't come at me looking for consistency in messaging...*

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MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW



BAND, ORCHESTRA, CHORAL, THEATER AND MORE!

## NAMM Announces New Executive Committee Officers

The NAMM board of directors has elected officers to represent the executive committee, effective immediately and will serve through April 2025, representing NAMM's global membership and the music industry at large.

In a vote at the 2024 board meeting, Joe Castronovo, president of Korg USA Inc, was named as treasurer, joining Tom Sumner, president of Yamaha Corp. of Ameri-



Joe Castronovo, Tom Sumner, Whitney Brown Grisaffi, Chris White, and John Mlynczak

ca and current chair of the NAMM board of directors. The executive committee is also represented by Chris White, president of White House of Music, as vice chair, where he serves in an ex officio role as chair of The NAMM Foundation board; and Whitney Brown Grisaffi, president of Ted Brown Music, serving as secretary of the executive committee.

"It's been an incredible year thus far as chair during a monumental period for both NAMM and the music industry," said Sumner at the board meeting. "The results of The 2024 NAMM Show are best measured by our members' overwhelmingly positive feedback on the success they experienced for their businesses, and we remain laser-focused on bringing the right mix of our industry together each and every year."

Sumner also welcomed Castronovo to the executive committee. "Joe brings a wealth of industry knowledge, experience and leadership that will be the perfect complement to the existing NAMM executive committee. We're so honored to welcome Joe and look forward to a successful year."

"I'm excited by the opportunity to serve the industry in this capacity," Castronovo said. "I look forward to working with the board of directors in driving NAMM's vision, mission and objectives – and representing all NAMM members globally."

## BASSBOSS Loudspeakers Now Streamlined for Installation Via D-Tools

BASSBOSS has announced their integration with D-Tools, the premier systems integration project management software. This collaboration is set to facilitate system designs for audio installers who rely on BASSBOSS as their go-to loudspeaker brand, and provide new dealers line access to the cutting-edge performance that BASSBOSS provides.

D-Tools is an innovative, web-based platform which simplifies project workflows for system integrators. It offers a robust product library and a suite of management tools to enhance communication and efficiency from project conception to completion.

With BASSBOSS loudspeakers now featured on D-Tools, installers can effortlessly integrate these high-fidelity speakers into their designs. This partnership ensures that the pristine sound quality, powerful bass response, and reliable performance of BASSBOSS are more accessible than ever, providing a streamlined process for generating proposals and managing installations.

BASSBOSS' recent MK3 update also introduces remote management capabilities, allowing for network-based control of the audio systems. This feature is a game-changer for installers, offering unprecedented convenience and flexibility in system management.

Furthermore, MK3 reinforces BASSBOSS's commitment to dependability with weather-safe inputs and waterproof power connectors. These upgrades ensure that BASSBOSS speakers are equipped to deliver consistent, high-quality performance even in demanding semi-outdoor installations.

## EAW Names Audio Source as Rep for Pacific Northwest, Alaska and Hawaii

Eastern Acoustic Works (EAW), a leader in professional audio solutions, has announced Audio Source, Inc. as its new manufacturer's representative. Based in Moses Lake, WA, Audio Source will serve the Pacific Northwest including Washington, Oregon, Alaska, Hawaii, Northern California, Nevada and Idaho.

"We are very pleased to add a company of Audio Source's caliber to our team," says TJ Smith, president of EAW. "Audio Source has an outstanding reputation for excellence in product knowledge, as well as a passion for helping its clients create world class audio systems."

With vast knowledge of EAW's entire suite of products, a rich history in sales, and a dedicated focus to client relationships, Audio Source plans to grow EAW's presence in their territory and beyond.

"Audio Source was founded on the premise of delivering sales results to the manufacturers we represent. We are excited to now be representing EAW, a company we have held in high regard for a very long time," says Richard Gibson, Audio Source president.



J Smith, President of EAW; Dave Ranese, Vice President of Audio Source and Jonas Domkus, EAW's Technical Sales Manager West at EAW's ADAPT Awards

## Martin Guitar Charitable Foundation Announces Grants

The Martin Guitar Charitable Foundation announced that it awarded \$485,500 in grants to over 85 non-profit organizations in 2023, creating opportunities for the communities in which their employees live in Nazareth, Pennsylvania and throughout the Lehigh Valley, as well as acoustical music organizations nationally.

These grants support the foundation's focus areas: performance, participation, and education in acoustic steel string guitar music; community activity in the Nazareth region; study and preservation of America's acoustic guitar heritage; arts education programs emphasizing acoustic guitar; educational institutions in the Lehigh Valley; promotion of arts and culture, mainly in the Lehigh Valley; help for the poor, hungry, sick, and homeless in the Lehigh Valley; and environmental action related to guitar-making materials and processes.

Grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$35,000 were awarded to local and national programs. The foundation will receive proposals for 2024 grants from June 1 to August 31, 2024. For more information, please visit [martinguitar.com/martin-foundation](http://martinguitar.com/martin-foundation).

## Donner Expands to Indonesia by Opening New Flagship Location

Donner has announced its expansion into Southeast Asia by launching its flagship retail showroom and diverse range of musical instruments in Indonesia, through an exclusive partnership with PT Garuda Lestari Tradisi (Galestra), the country's leading distributor of musical instruments.

The significant expansion aims to elevate the musical experience for aspiring artist in Indonesia. Yiming Wen, vice president of brand marketing at Donner, stated, "The landing of Donner in Indonesia marks a pivotal chapter in our journey to become a global influencer in the musical instrument industry. We are poised to break new ground in the Indonesian market. Our partnership with Galestra enables us to offer products that embody the latest innovations, exceptional quality, and stylish designs at accessible prices, thereby fulfilling the aspirations of young musicians across Indonesia and eventually, the world."

Echoing this sentiment, Pak Franky, GM of sales at PT. GARUDA LESTARI TRADISI, added, "Donner's entry into the Indonesian market is a momentous occasion. We believe that their innovative range of musical instruments aligns perfectly with the needs of the Indonesian market—a country with a rich musical heritage and a burgeoning demand for quality musical instruments. Our collaboration is underpinned by a shared vision to empower musicians by providing them with the tools they need to realize their musical dreams."



Donner's Indonesian showroom

The strategic partnership between Donner and Galestra is expected to leverage the latter's extensive distribution network and deep market insight to ensure that Donner's instruments are accessible to musicians throughout Indonesia. This collaboration is not just a business venture; it is a commitment to enriching the musical landscape of Indonesia and supporting the growth of its music community.

Additionally, Donner and Galestra are excited to announce the opening of the Donner flagship store located in downtown Jakarta city. This flagship store is a significant milestone for Donner in Indonesia, serving as a hub for musicians to

explore, experience, and purchase Donner's wide range of musical instruments. It symbolizes Donner's dedication to making music more accessible and provides a tangible touchpoint for the brand in Southeast Asia.

With Indonesia being the first country in the Southeast Asian region to enjoy Donner's musical instruments, this partnership provides Donner with the momentum it needs to capture the global musical instrument market. It represents a significant step towards realizing Donner's mission to make music more accessible and enjoyable for everyone, reaffirming the brand's commitment to quality, innovation, and playability.

### Genelec Smart Active Monitors Chosen by the John Lennon Educational Tour Bus

Genelec is proud to be the studio monitor of choice for the John Lennon Educational Tour Bus – a mobile studio dedicated to providing young people, communities and schools with free events, workshops, interactive experiences, and hands-on opportunities to produce audio, video, and digital media projects. The U.S. bus recently installed a Dolby Atmos-certified 7.1.4 monitoring system composed of Genelec Smart Active Monitors. Included in this setup are Genelec 8341As for LCR and surrounds, 8320As for ceiling channels, and a 7360A subwoofer. This system joins other Genelec monitors already in use on the bus. The bus also recently emphasized its green initiative with the installation of solar panels and lithium ion batteries from Battle Born, a division of Dragonfly.

Interior of the U.S. John Lennon Educational Tour Bus, showing Genelec Smart Active Monitors comprising a Dolby Atmos-certified 7.1.4 monitoring system



## RED Development Welcomes Fender to PV

RED Development, an industry-leading commercial real estate company known for its high-performing mixed-use and retail portfolio, is adding Fender Musical Instruments Corp. (FMIC), the world's leading guitar manufacturer, to its best-in-class tenant roster at PV, the highly anticipated redevelopment of the former Paradise Valley Mall, in a single-tenant office building set to open next year.

FMIC will break ground on the 80,000-square-foot, three-story building later this year, which will open to team members in fall 2025. The new building, designed



by SmithGroup, will be a dynamic hub for collaboration and will boast an array of cutting-edge facilities, including a dedicated model shop for its guitar and amplifier designers, a state-of-the-art sound room, along with meeting rooms and flexible workspaces strategically designed to foster teamwork and innovation.

Fender was founded in Southern California and has established a worldwide influence extending from the studio to the stage and beyond. Everyone from beginners to the world's most acclaimed artists have used FMIC instruments, amps and gear, making the company a revered industry leader and a global cultural symbol.

Spanning more than 100 acres and situated in the heart of one of the most prominent neighborhoods in Phoenix, PV is a monumental mixed-use development. The master plan for the project features a plethora of dining, entertainment, retail, living and working experiences, which are linked to a more than three-acre, centrally located community open space with heavily landscaped multi-modal pathways. The scale of the project will redefine what live-work-play means.

The first phase of the massive redevelopment will open later this year, including the 400-residence multi-family building, The Blake, by StreetLights Residential. Also opening in 2024 are Whole Foods Market, Blanco Cocina + Cantina, Flower Child, Trevor's Liquor, Sephora, Avenida, Wren House Brewing Co. and Frost Gelato.

FMIC was represented by Cresa, a leading commercial real estate advisory firm. Cresa played a pivotal role in the site selection process by conducting a comprehensive search across the Phoenix metro area and will be overseeing the entire construction process. JLL, a global brokerage firm, represented RED.

## Audio-Technica Launches New Company and U.S. Distribution Facility

Audio-Technica U.S., Inc., recently announced the formation of a new logistical operations company, Technica Logistics Inc. The announcement was made by Manabu Aoki, Audio-Technica director and CEO/president of Audio-Technica U.S. Inc., and underscores A-T's long-term strategic business plan for ongoing growth and expansion in the coming years.

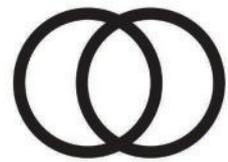
Technica Logistics Inc. began operation on April 1, and Michael Fuller, who has been with Audio-Technica for over 15 years, has been named as the managing director. The company plans to have approximately 40 employees throughout the U.S. and will have its headquarters at the Audio-Technica campus in Stow, Ohio.

In addition to the formation of Technica Logistics, Audio-Technica recently made a major investment in a West Coast facility consisting of a new 38,000-square-foot distribution and fulfillment center based in San Diego, California. By implementing enhanced software and automation, the company will continue to develop this facility as a world-class logistics center.

Audio-Technica currently operates distribution facilities near Charleston, South Carolina, and in Stow, Ohio. With these facilities, and the addition of the new facility in California, Technica Logistics will be able to ship product and reach 90% of the continental U.S. population within two days and nearly 100% within three days. Utilizing these facilities, Technica Logistics will be responsible for inbound receipt of product, inventory management, outbound delivery by truck and parcel shipments, and operations management for foreign trade zone activities.



**audio-technica**



**TANDEM™**

## Tandem Drums Partners with Dynamic Music for Australian Distribution

Tandem Drums has officially announced it has awarded Dynamic Music as its exclusive distributor for the Australian market.

Tandem Drums selected Dynamic Music based on the company's history. Founded in 1966, Dynamic Music is one of Australia's most established distributors, and it represents some of the world's most reputable drum brands including Pearl, Ludwig, Vic Firth, and Zildjian. This partnership will enable Tandem Drums to extend its current product line to artists across in Australia, while paving the way for future product offerings in that market.

Tandem Drums launched in 2023 following a successful crowdfunding campaign for its first product line, Drops. Drops are a collection of drum effects designed by the creator of MONO, the internationally acclaimed luggage and accessory brand. Frustrated by "those disgusting gels we all use," industrial designer and drummer Daniel Kushner designed Drops to enhance drum tone without the use of gels or adhesives.

Established in 1966, Dynamic Music is a leading importer/distributor of musical instruments & audio technology equipment in Australia. Dynamic Music are the exclusive distributor for a number of leading music industry brands including Pearl, Ludwig, Vic Firth, Zildjian, Cort, G7th, Fishman, and Godin.

## people on the move

After a distinguished 30+ year career at **Yamaha**, Paul Furtkamp will retire as of July 1, 2024. He started his career with Yamaha in 1986 and has held various positions, including his current position as senior director of the commercial audio and NEXO sales team.

**Julian Williams** took over the helm from Furtkamp as of April 1, 2024, as the new director of sales for the commercial audio and NEXO sales team. Julian joined Yamaha in 2016 as a district manager and was promoted to regional sales manager and then to senior sales manager before this latest promotion. Julian has experience in retail sales, audio engineering, retail management, facilities management and manufacturer representation. He also served honorably in the US Army Reserve and received his MBA from Sam Houston State University.



**David Venus** has been promoted to western regional manager. In October 2023, David took over this position from Julian Williams. David joined Yamaha in December 2019 as a district manager and has helped his assigned channel partners achieve high-level results. David attended Belmont University in Nashville, TN, receiving bachelor's degrees in business administration and marketing, and received his AVIXA Certified Technology Specialist (CTS) certification in March 2021.



**KMC Music**, a division of Exertis JAM, announces the appointment of **Jer Gervasi** for the Mid-South territory. This territory includes Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Gervasi brings over 35 years of experience in the musical instrument (MI) industry to his new role. In his long tenured career, he has served as a Guitar Center store manager for multiple locations in the New England and New York areas. Most recently he held the position of product specialist/sales manager at InMusic playing a pivotal role in launching and business development for the Headrush brand. He has also served as the vice presi-



dent for Shelby Automobiles. Gervasi is a dedicated supporter of animal rescue efforts and despite his busy schedule, he remains an active musician and recording engineer based in Las Vegas, NV.

KMC Music also announces the addition of **Eric Oppenheimer** to its dynamic team. With a rich background in the music industry, Eric brings a wealth of experience and passion to the organization. Oppenheimer's musical journey began at the age of 11. From that moment, a lifelong love affair with musical instruments was ignited. As a guitarist, Eric embarked on club date gigs and became a sought-after session musician. His dedication to music extended beyond performance, leading him to co-own a recording studio—a passion that endures to this day. Over the past three decades, Oppenheimer has made significant contributions to the musical instrument and professional audio industry. His roles as a national sales manager, customer service manager, product manager, and most recently, business development manager, has equipped him with a diverse skill set. Eric has worked with esteemed companies such as Samson Technologies, Group One Limited, Crest Audio, Fender Musical Instruments, and AtlasIED. As a multi-instrumentalist, engineer and active musician, he is poised to enhance KMC Music's team. He will play a pivotal role in supporting KMC's wide range of retail, systems integration, and E-commerce customers, ensuring they receive the highest level of service.



**Yasmine Riechers** is to become the new CEO of Georg Neumann GmbH, a subsidiary of the **Sennheiser Group**. In her new position, she takes over from Ralf Oehl and will be responsible for further expanding Georg Neumann's global business and driving forward the company's strategic direction. Riechers was previously head of the corporate development office of the Sennheiser Group. Most recently, as part of the extended executive management board of the Sennheiser Group, she headed the family-owned company's corporate development office. Prior to that, she worked at Sennheiser Greater



China as director of operations and subsequently as country manager. She started her career in human resources at Sennheiser in 2008, before joining Vier S Beteiligungsgesellschaft as project manager and later moving to BR Science and Technology as general manager and Siemens Transformer's Traction Transformer Division general manager in China. Riechers returned to the Sennheiser Group in 2015. She studied economics at the University of Paderborn and spent a semester abroad at Nottingham Trent University during her studies. She then continued her studies at the University of Birmingham, graduating in 2011 with a master's degree in international business.

The name Neumann is associated with over 90 years of success: the Berlin-based company, which is part of the Sennheiser Group, is regarded as a leading manufacturer of studio microphones. In addition to countless sound engineers who use Neumann microphones in their studio productions, its products are also used by world-famous musicians. In 2010, Neumann launched the first studio monitor and in 2019, the company expanded its range to include studio headphones. Since 2023, Neumann has also been developing audio interfaces together with the Sennheiser subsidiary, Merging Technologies, to support reference quality recording workflows. The company headquarters with the development, marketing, sales, and service departments are still located in Berlin.

**NAMM** has announced that **AJ Zane** has been appointed director of technology. In this position, Zane will lead NAMM's global technology organization, including product and platform technology, architecture, cybersecurity, infrastructure and cloud engineering, technical operations, enterprise applications and corporate IT, and technology-risk management.



"AJ is a career technologist with vast experience articulating and implementing product and technology visions for both consumer and B2B businesses," said John Mlynczak, NAMM president and CEO. "He brings a diverse background and experience that align with our commitment to stay at the forefront of technology and harness its power to propel our organization into the future."

I'm confident he will be an ideal leader for NAMM and a strong fit for our culture and business. I'm thrilled to welcome AJ to our NAMM team."

Previously, Zane worked at Measurabl, the world's most widely adopted ESG data-management solution for real estate, where he was an engineering manager with product and technology development team. Prior to joining Measurabl, he was technical principal at Veyo leading QA and design, responsible for building and scaling technology infrastructure and teams. He started his career in website development and software engineering and holds a B.A. in Computer Arts and Technology from Connecticut College.

"I am honored and thrilled to be joining the remarkable team at NAMM, especially at such an exciting time," said AJ Zane. "I am eager to shape our technology strategy and accelerate the pace of innovation for all of our global members and partners. With a solid technological foundation serving multiple platforms, NAMM is positioned to accelerate its technology growth and transformation and bring new and exciting advancements to the music industry on a daily basis."

**Guitar Center** has announced the appointment of **Kristin**

**Shane** as Guitar Center's executive vice president, chief merchandising and marketing officer, effective immediately. Reporting directly to CEO Gabe Dalporto, Shane will oversee the integration of the marketing and merchandising functions to enhance the end-to-end customer experience. Shane will be responsible for product, promotions, visual merchandising, omni-channel experience, and activations.

Shane transitions to her new role at Guitar Center from PetSmart, where she served as senior vice president, chief merchandising officer, driving billions in incremental sales and market expansion. Previously, she demonstrated her merchandising prowess at Target as vice president merchandise manager for the beauty and personal care business, leading to significant growth and earning the WWD's Best Beauty Retailer Award. Shane enriched her retail portfolio by advising high-growth beauty brands, helping to drive their strategic direction and go to market strategies.



**Korg USA** announces that after an extensive search, accomplished engineering and technology leader **Kevin Han** will join its executive team and lead its IT division into the future.



Korg USA's CFO Diana Cecchini says, "Kevin brings with him a wealth of knowledge and expertise that will contribute to Korg's strategic goals and objectives. He will play a pivotal role in driving our company's continued growth."

Han has over 20 years of experience in leading large technical teams in highly complex environments. Prior to coming to Korg USA, he worked at Google for nine years and IBM for 13 years in various leadership roles. Han holds a BS in computer engineering from New Jersey Institute of Technology.

At Google from 2016 to present, Han was head of contact center infrastructure and automation and senior manager of a \$25 million dollar budget leading a global team of network engineers, system development engineers and technical program managers. They developed and deployed end-to-end contact center solutions supporting critical product areas including sales, support, marketing, security, reception, and other teams across all of Alphabet. Han's team migrated Alphabet's contact center platform, handling approximately 80 million calls annually while servicing 21,000 agents, from an industry third-party platform to Google's proprietary developed platform.

In his previous role at Google, Han was hardware operations manager and lead a team of engineers including the New Product Introduction teams delivering Google Open POWER server initiatives, custom AI solutions, and custom data center storage solutions.

At IBM, Han moved up the ladder succeeding in various roles including Advisory Hardware development engineer, manager of VLSI Design and Test, and ultimately management of IBM zSeries Mainframe Product Engineering.

Han has that rare blend of being highly business conscious with extraordinary technical skills while also being an enthusiastic people person who excels at team management and personal communication. His resourcefulness, adaptability, and willingness to collaborate make him an exceptional fit for Korg USA.

"I'm very grateful to everyone that helped in the selection process," expresses CFO Cecchini. "In the coming weeks,

Kevin will be meeting with the IT team in Melville, New York, becoming familiar with key members of each department and realizing how his role aligns with our broader company strategy. I'm confident that Kevin's contributions will help us achieve even greater success.



**Rick Hall, Terry Bisette, and Andrew Shreve**

**GEWA music USA** is proud to announce significant leadership enhancements within the company. **Rick Hall** has taken the helm as the new CEO, ushering in a new era of strategic growth and innovation. Complementing this leadership expansion, **Terry Bisette** has been appointed as the vice president of drums & percussion, effective March 11, 2024. The previous CEO of GEWA music USA, **Xia Jin** has been promoted to resident.

Hall's appointment as CEO marks a pivotal moment in GEWA music USA's trajectory towards becoming a leading company in the musical instruments industry. His vision for the company aligns with its core values of excellence, innovation, and quality. Bisette, with his extensive background in sales, marketing, distribution and electronics within the drumming industry, is set to lead the Drums & Percussion division. His appointment is expected to reinforce GEWA music USA's position in the market, manage the distribution of Gretsch Drums in North America and the inclusion of Schlagwerk as a key brand within the division. The expansion of the drums & percussion division will not only focus on sales and marketing but also on manufacturing excellence within Gretsch Drums, ensuring that the highest standards of quality and innovation are met. The division's portfolio, featuring Gretsch Drums, Schlagwerk, and GEWA Digital Drums, is poised for significant growth and development under this new leadership.

Supporting the division's ambitions, Andrew Shreve will manage Brand and Artist Relations, with Dave Anania working alongside Bisette as "Salesman on the Road." Additionally, Jim Stanek's role as customer service and inside sales drums & percussion manager will be crucial for upholding the company's commitment to outstanding customer service.

# D'Andrea USA Celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

During 2024, D'Andrea celebrates 100 years in the music industry, supplying an extensive range of premium guitar accessories constructed from high quality materials manufactured in the USA.



With mallet dies, Luigi hand-punched out the first known guitar plectrums, and by 1928 he was a market leader, producing flat picks, thumb and finger-picks.

D'Andrea was actually set to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the company at NAMM in Anaheim, California in 2022, but unfortunately, due to the irregular NAMM schedule brought about by COVID, the celebration was postponed.

"The pandemic caused so much disruption in the music business," explains Fred DiTomasso, director of sales & marketing, D'Andrea, USA, "But as conditions improved and NAMM resumed its traditional schedule, D'Andrea celebrated the 100th anniversary on January 26, 2024, with a party at The Anaheim House of Blues with many company distributors, dealers, OEM customers, family, and friends.

The party featured speeches by Tony D'Andrea and John DiMugno, president of Delmar Products, D'Andrea, USA, who thanked numerous long-time employees who have contributed to the success of the company."

It was actually 102 years previously in 1922 when vacuum cleaner salesman, Luigi D'Andrea purchased sheets of tortoise shell colored cellulose nitrate plastic, in downtown New York City.

Unlike various brands that sadly fell wayside almost as quick and as they were formed, for well over 10 decades D'Andrea have continued to innovate and maintain a high profile by offering a diverse range of popular products.

In the world of popular music, D'Andrea have followed and survived musical trends and fashions along the way, including the 1950's when rock 'n roll itself, wasn't supposed to last, through the 60's when folk and roots music started to percolate, the British Beat Boom, blues, rock, punk, metal and more.

The company expanded and grew under the stewardship of three generations of the D'Andrea family until Tony D'Andrea decided to retire in 2012, selling the company to his trusted friend and long-time material supplier John DiMugno of Delmar Products Inc. located in Berlin, Connecticut, USA.

Luigi D'Andrea could never have imagined the global impact he started with that mallet and die a hundred (and two) years ago, the continued growth and sheer size of a multi-national company with products sold worldwide

## traderegrets

On March 11, Fender Musical Instruments Corporation shared the following sad news:

*Today, we reach out with heavy hearts to share the news of the passing of Mike Lewis, VP of product development at the Fender Custom Shop. Mike's departure has left a void that will be felt deeply within the Fender family and guitar community. While his legacy and impact cannot be replicated, FMIC is honored to continue his legacy.*



*Mike first joined Fender in the Sales department in 1991, where he engaged with dealers over the phone. Later, he revitalized Fender's evolving amp line, ensuring the business reclaimed the #1 market position by introducing iconic products such as the Deville Series and the Vibro-King. Mike's innovations also extended to Fender's electric guitar department, where he actively contributed to guitar innovations based on player preferences. Notably, he introduced Fender's first production Stratocaster with a regular humbucker: the Lone Star Strat.*

*His pioneering spirit was further demonstrated as he spearheaded Fender's first online store, showcasing his commitment to pushing boundaries. Mike went beyond just overseeing the site; he immersed himself, acquiring unique coding skills. Mike consistently exhibited a voracious appetite for learning new skills, whether in bowling, tattoos, ukuleles, painting, photography, or web design – he delved deep into each pursuit.*

*Mike's impact reached new heights when Fender collaborated with Gretsch. He revamped the entire line, restoring specifications to the original magic recipe, which resonated instantly with fans.*

*His commitment went so far that he took an old '59 6120 to a medical facility for an MRI and CAT scan, ensuring authenticity in its internal construction.*

*In the Fender Custom Shop, Mike brought his design aesthetic and keen management skills, resulting in the best 10-year run in the shop's history. His legacy is not just in running product lines but reimagining them, often tearing them back to their essence before rebuilding them anew.*

*Fender and the Fender Custom Shop mourn the loss of not just a colleague but a beloved member of our family. Mike's passion for guitars and his unwavering dedication to his craft was evident in every project he touched. His legacy at the Fender Custom Shop is a testament to his profound influence, and we are deeply grateful for the time we spent alongside him.*

*"Mike Lewis didn't merely oversee product lines; he possessed the rare ability to reimagine them, stripping them down to their essence and rebuilding them anew. His strong vision, cultivated over decades as a player, shaped his approach. From touring with Chuck Berry and opening for the Rolling Stones to serving as a studio session musician in 1970s NYC and owning a music store in Virginia, Mike's wealth of experience, perspective, and wisdom became the foundation he brought to Fender. He didn't just work here; he lived and embodied the spirit of the brand. Though I initially worked for him for many years, there came a point where the dynamic shifted, and he started working for me. And yes, throughout our time he consistently remained a mentor, a wellspring of wisdom, and, above all, a treasured friend until the end." said Justin Norvell, EVP of Product at FMIC.*

*Our thoughts are with Mike's family, friends, and loved ones. We extend our deepest condolences and support during this difficult period.*

# SPIN CONTROL

## DJ Interfaces & Controllers by Christian Wissmuller

“He just turns up with his memory stick and pretends he’s doing something and goes away with a huge amount of money,” said Iron Maiden frontman Bruce Dickenson of today’s DJs in a recent interview. Ouch. To be sure, though, plenty of musicians and music aficionados turn their noses down – perhaps rightly so – at the sort of “DJ” who arrives at a club or party and essentially just hits “PLAY” and lets a curated playlist on his or her laptop or smartphone provide the evening’s soundtrack. For many true artists out there, though, DJing is an involved creative process requiring every bit as much skill as traditional acoustic instruments. Mixing on the fly, cross-fading, synching drops and phrases, EQing different source material to maintain sonic consistency – a lot goes into it!

DJ controllers and interfaces provide the artist with a central command center that enables the DJ to perform and craft digital mixes via access to exhaustive musical libraries, while also applying effects and transitions in real time. This equipment – usually consisting of components such as jog wheels, transport buttons, performance pads, connection ports, and mixer controls – allows control of digital audio files and mixing files, without reliance on physical media such as CDs or vinyl. In other words: this is essential gear for any modern DJ.

*MMR* checked in with some of the major brands in the DJ market to get up to speed on what specific models of DJ controllers are selling in 2024, what features and technology are sought after by end-users, and how successful retailers market and promote these products.

# roundtable



“We believe the DJ equipment market is primed for growth due to rising electronic music popularity, a younger DJ demographic, and the return of live events are fueling this trend.”

— Luciano Minetti,  
Korg Brand Manager, KORG USA, Inc.



### For your brand(s) what are currently the top-selling models of DJ controllers & interfaces?

**Jake Hill:** For Numark, the Mixstream Pro + and Mixstream Pro Go standalone DJ controllers are performing really well and

the tried-and-true Party Mix DJ controller continues to sell at an astonishing rate!

For Denon DJ, the PRIME 4+ and SC LIVE 4 standalone DJ controllers are our top sellers, while the battery-powered PRIME GO also continues to be very popular as a portable solution for DJs on the go.

For RANE, the FOUR 4-channel Stems-focused DJ controller is our top seller, followed by the motorized ONE DJ controller.

**Dustin Good:** Our current DJ controller lineup consists of three models: the DJ-202, DJ-505, and DJ-707m. The first two represent entry and mid-level options, with all the features users expect in a modern DJ controller, plus some unique additions only Roland offers. The DJ-707m, while compact, is a powerhouse for event DJs and streamers with an insane amount of connectivity, routing, and tools packed in. All three controllers, regardless of price point, have pristine 24-Bit/48Khz fidelity which really shines over a good sound system.

Our immensely popular portable sampler, the SP-404MKII, also hosts a feature-packed DJ Mode and deserves to be mentioned here.

**Luciano Minetti:** Our MIDI controllers at KORG are known for their consistent performance, with popular models like the nanoKONTROL and microKEY leading the way. We've recently expanded our DJ specific product line with the introduction of the KAOSS Replay. This innovative DJ and live performance tool offers a range of innovative features, making it a strong contender in the market.

### What are some of the recently introduced, cutting-edge features that are really connecting with end-users?

**DG:** Being a brand with a rich history of synthesizers and drum machines that were integral in the development of electronic music, Roland is always looking to inspire and support approaches that meet at the crossroads of DJing and live electronic music performance. We offer full, programmable drum machines inside all our DJ controllers which allow for creative performance approaches. When combined with Serato's phenomenal stem separation technology, these controllers are remix powerhouses.

**LM:** The KAOSS Replay offers innovative features like a wide range of effects, enhanced sampling capabilities, and intuitive DJ controls. Its portable design and advanced features allow for easy live performances without needing extra equipment.

**JH:** DJs have really been intrigued by real-time access to Stems. The way that we've implemented the Stems workflow on the RANE FOUR has really connected well with users. The Stem-Split feature on the FOUR lets DJs instantly split the instrumental and acapella of a track across 2 channels at the press of a button. This, combined with the Stems Pad Mode, the dedicated Instrumental and Acapella buttons, and access to 4 channels, unlocks an entirely new level of creative performance options for DJs.

In addition, the frequent and free updates of Engine DJ have been very well received by DJs. Engine DJ is the operating system of our Numark and Denon DJ standalone DJ

“Since they can be used without a laptop connected, the standalone DJ controller options are great for in-store displays.”

— Jake Hill, Senior Marketing Manager, DJ Brands, inMusic, Inc.



**“DJs are definitely getting out and playing events again as promoters and venues continue to re-adjust from the impacts of the COVID pandemic.”**

**— Dustin Good, Product Manager, Dance and DJ, Roland Americas**



controllers. Recent updates have added Bluetooth audio out, standalone embedded sampler, Fader Echo, Match automatic library filtering, Engine DJ online profiles, and more. Updates are pushed out wirelessly so that users of devices are notified when an update is available and can download it directly to their device over Wi-Fi.

**Do you have any suggestions regarding best practices that MI retailers might want to explore when it comes to marketing and displaying these types of products?**

**LM:** After a successful presentation of the product at the 2024 NAMM show, live demos are essential for showcasing products like KAOSS Replay. In the case of KAOSS Replay, we recommend having a microphone on hand to encourage customers to try out the vocal processing effects and explore the product’s potential. The centralized touch screen makes for a fun hands-on experience where customers can shape their sound.

**JH:** Since they can be used without a laptop connected, the standalone DJ controller options are great for in-store displays. These devices include the Numark Mixstream Pro+ and Mixstream Pro Go, and most of the Denon DJ hardware lineup including the PRIME 4+ and SC LIVE 4. These units also have demo tracks built-in, plus the Numark Mixstreams also have on-board speakers!

**DG:** As with other tech categories, the more premium the product is, the more the customer tends to be knowledgeable about the spec.

For entry-level DJ controllers, overall value-vs-price is key for product messaging. Assuring the customer that they have everything they need will also ease their purchasing journey and lets sales staff sell with confidence. We offer a post-purchase bundle (US-only) with our DJ-202 that includes a full perpetual license for Serato DJ Pro software, a 3-month subscription to the BPM Supreme record pool, as well as a free introductory training course with a Roland product specialist, hosted online in real-time.

**Any upcoming or recently introduced models for your brand, or brands, that you’d like to discuss?**

**DG:** Through continued firmware updates, we keep ex-

panding the DJ Mode on the SP-404MKII sampler to offer more and more features. Now, this super-portable instrument, without the need for a computer, allows for carrying up to 16GB of songs that can be played out and mixed just like you would on a DJ mixer with features familiar to any DJ. Add to that the legendary built-in effects that the SP-404 line is renowned for, and you get a super-versatile performance tool that can find its way into many different setups.

**JH:** The PRIME 4+ was released in 2023 and is a great update to the proven PRIME 4, which was released in 2019. Not only does the PRIME 4+ have a sleek new look with improved jog wheels, but it also adds access to Amazon Music Unlimited and Bluetooth Audio input. It’s the ultimate standalone DJ controller for working DJs and is built to withstand the rigors of the road.

The RANE FOUR is another unit that is pushing innovation in the DJ industry forward. Released in 2023, its intuitive control options for DJing with Stems have set the bar for what a DJ controller is capable of. This, combined with the premium touch-sensitive jog wheels and over 22 internal effects options make the FOUR an incredible choice for any type of DJ.

**LM:** In addition to the KAOSS Replay, we also have the new Keystage controller. Keystage offers a slim design, MIDI 2.0 connectivity, and a display for DJs who want to trigger/modify sounds easily using a keyboard onstage.

**What’s your take on the overall state of the DJ market and what are your expectations for the coming months?**

**JH:** The DJ market continues to thrive and the recent technological advancements in Stems and standalone DJing continue to fuel that fire. We’re excited to continue to release innovative new DJ solutions across all of our brands in the coming months and beyond!

**LM:** We believe the DJ equipment market is primed for growth due to rising electronic music popularity, a younger DJ demographic, and the return of live events are fueling this trend. Additionally, innovative features like those found in the KAOSS Replay will keep DJs engaged and the market expanding.

**DG:** DJs are definitely getting out and playing events again as promoters and venues continue to re-adjust from the impacts of the COVID pandemic. 2023 market reports of DJ controller and mixer sales show strong growth YoY. Also, with summer coming in quickly, we can expect a strong Q2.

In regard to style and approach, “Open Format” DJing seems to be growing in popularity and expanding from smaller events and clubs to larger audiences, with DJs playing a huge variety of different music styles within one set. We love this, and features like having drum machines included in our DJ controllers are there for specifically this reason – to get creative with layering, add flavor, and keep the beat going. 🎧🎶



# 'We Create Musicians'

## Maxwell's House of Music is Having a Banner Year in 2024

by Christian Wissmüller

Chris White, NAMM Board Member; Whitney McNicol, Co-owner of Maxwell's House of Music; Mark Maxwell, Co-owner of Maxwell's House of Music; Fred Schiff, NAMM 2022 Dealer of the Year; and John Mynczak, NAMM CEO

Two major awards from the 2024 NAMM Show – including “Dealer of the Year – are just some of the most recent accolades being bestowed upon Jeffersonville, Indiana’s beloved Maxwell’s House of Music. The 12,500 square foot music superstore has been supplying instruments and gear, as well as providing lessons, repairs, and installations to the area’s musicians and venues for over four decades – and only seems to be gaining momentum!

Co-owner Mark Maxwell recently sat down with *MMR* to talk about the business’ history, how he’s implemented some effective changes since purchasing the store in 2011, and how Maxwell’s House of Music plans to continue improving and expanding their service offerings for their loyal customer-base.

**Let’s quickly go over some history and get *MMR* readers who may be unfamiliar up to speed: Maxwell’s House of Music has been in operation for over four decades under a few names. Can you talk about what inspired Marvin and Beverly Maxwell to found the business? What was their shared background that made them want to work in the MI retail industry?**

My dad was a drummer, and was traveling all over the country with the “Dick Clark Caravan of Stars.” With a wife and three kids, he wanted to be closer to home. He started working for a local music store for a while, but then he and mom decided to start their own business. Raising kids was the inspiration for that decision! My parents didn’t have a shared music background, but they really balanced each other out well in the business. Their different skill sets and personalities really complemented each other, which made it all work.

**And how did the store evolve into the present-day operation?**

Well, my siblings and I grew up in a music store. Music education and retail is what my family knew. My parents had four stores in the Southern Indiana/Louisville, KY metro area. When the housing market crashed in 2008 it was a turning point for them. We all

tried to do what we could, but they finally had to make the decision to scale back. They kept the Louisville, KY and Jeffersonville, IN stores.

By the end of 2010, they were ready to close the Jeffersonville store. In January 2011, my wife, Angie, and I bought it. I literally had 500 square feet of retail space with some strings and about \$1,000 in inventory! About 12 teachers stuck around with me in the other 2,500 square feet of the education department. Thank goodness for that, because education is what kept this business on the map!

In 2013, I added a “Dream Weaver” (literally her title) to our small staff, who helped us build a new foundation as we were doing inexpensive, yet productive things that made it possible to bring in more staff, more inventory, and more customers. Our progress was noticeable.

We made the decision to expand in 2016 when the space adjacent to us became available. All of a sudden, we were working with 12,500 square feet of space. Stocking that much space with inventory was our next financial challenge. We got very creative to make Maxwell’s HOUSE of Music. We built out small rooms that reflected places where people play music. From the den, to the kid’s bedroom, to a church, a garage, et cetera. It was interesting, different, and fun. We had successfully designed a showroom that felt magical on a very low budget. People were showing up, signing up, and shopping! In addition to that, the community was talking about us and our quirky music store.

We rode that wave for three years, and then when I had an opportunity to add some financial backing by bringing in a business partner, I jumped on it in 2019. This allowed for more inventory from more lines. Whitney McNicol is the financial mind that helps keep our bottom line on track. She helps make it possible to dream a little bigger now, too! For example, in 2022, we bought and relocated the iconic Guitar Emporium of Louisville, which was established in 1975.

What we have evolved into has been built by decades of history in this region.



Whitney McNicol and Mark Maxwell

**“The experience leading up to our big night at NAMM has been decades in the making. Without my parents, Marvin and Beverly Maxwell, starting this fire many years ago, none of this would be possible.”**

While we do rent out the space to bands who want to rehearse, we use that room almost every day for education purposes. We teach our Rock School, Weekend Warriors, Rock Orchestra, and the performance phase of our Music Lab groups on the stage. We also have “up close and personal” concerts in our venue. It holds 100-150 depending on the seating arrangement, so we really have a lot of options with this well-appointed room. This is a relatively new use of this room for after hours, but it has already drawn seven nationally touring artists/bands just over the last year. While it is another draw into the store, it’s not a directly profitable use of this space.

**Maxwell’s House of Music has long been recognized for service to the community and a tradition of excellence, collecting a good number of accolades along the way. The big recent news (or some of the recent big news), of course, is Maxwell’s winning both the NAMM Dealer of the Year and Innovation awards: Can you talk about the experience leading up to the big win and how it felt to walk on that stage – twice – to pick up two of the industry’s biggest awards?**

The experience leading up to our big night at NAMM has been decades in the making. Without my parents, Marvin and Beverly Maxwell, starting this fire many years ago, none of this would be possible. Hard work, interesting ideas, and community engagement involving many talented people have created a very special music retail and education experience... right here in an old strip mall in Jeffersonville, IN.

As far as the Top Dealer ceremony goes, Whitney and I were thrilled about winning the Innovation Award that night and were really just enjoying that moment. For the final category when they listed all of the nominees, we couldn’t believe we were in the mix. I remember looking at her and saying, “No way.” When Zach Phillips announced, “Dealer of the Year is Maxwell’s House of Music,” we were in shock. The walk to the stage from the back of the room where we were seated is a blur. I don’t remember much of what I said up there, but I know I thanked our team, and that’s the most important thing.

**Another recent honor bestowed upon you was being appointed as Indiana Arts Commissioner for Region 12. Can you talk about the events that led to such a thing and explain to our readers what your duties will be in that position?**

**Currently, how many employees are there at Maxwell’s?**

Today, we have 11 staff members, and 27 teachers. I am so proud of this extremely talented team. Their skills, unique perspectives, ideas, and personalities are what push us to our success. Having a strong team in place is vital.

Trust me when I say that I fully understand how staffing issues can tear us away from what we do best. In fact, over the past year, we have had a couple serious challenges on this front. I have learned a lot from these scenarios, that I hope I don’t have to re-learn! (Fool me once...)

**In addition to being a full line combo store, you also offer extensive music lesson programs, repairs, and installation services. Can you talk about how meaningful it’s been to the overall business to have the capacity to serve so many needs?**

Being a one-stop-shop wasn’t necessarily the spoken goal, but it has evolved into this over time. Our offerings and services are very much entangled with each other. The fact that it is all so tightly tied together does help create a synergy that we are able to serve to our community. Don’t get me wrong, it sure would be easier to just sell guitars, but the reality is, the profit margins wouldn’t allow that for long! Maxwell’s has embraced being a diversified resource on many levels.

**Uniquely, you also have a fairly sizable performance/event venue. When it’s not being rented out, how do you make use of that space?**

Our venue space has recently been memorialized in honor of a friend, Don Ernst. His widow, Nancy, knew he would want his state-of-the-art equipment to make a positive impact on our students’ music education and performance experiences, therefore she donated most of the sound and recording gear for the Don Ernst Theater.

Dusk casts its glow across the courtyard at Maxwell’s House of Music



## retail

The Indiana Arts Commission (IAC) is a state agency that works with creatives and organizations to help elevate artists and musicians of Indiana. This ranges from communicating about grant application opportunities, to networking, to informing artists about other various resources.

When I learned that the arts commissioner of my area was about to step down, I contacted the executive director of the IAC. It was a process of applying and interviewing, before I was later appointed by Governor Holcomb. My region consists of seven counties in Southern Indiana. My role is to act as a liaison between artists and musicians and the IAC. It truly is an honor to be a part of something that connects artists and musicians with each other and to potential resources.

**Maxwell's has quite a lot to celebrate in 2024 – and we've barely begun the year! Do you have any special events, promotions, or sales planned to mark all these wonderful developments and acknowledgements of both the business and yourself?**

Yes, 2024 has certainly had an epic start! Our primary focus today is to continue to build the Maxwell's Music Lab. In fact, there are two separate groups of 48 people who are 60+ years-old starting in March. We will also be adding more Lab sessions for school-aged students. In addition, we have a new electric rock orchestra being taught by a Grammy-nominated teacher that is growing every month. We're working with The Kentucky Derby Festival to place students, teachers, and customers on their performance



Marvin and Beverly Maxwell celebrate "Mom & Pop Business Day"

stage during Derby week. We are planning several performances at our outdoor stage for Make Music Day. Of course, we have a few surprises up our sleeve for the summer and fall that I believe the community will love!

**If you could boil it down to one maxim or saying or philosophical principle: what is it that you think Maxwell's House of Music is doing – and has done – right that has led to such a long history of success as an MI retailer?**

Yes! The motto that drives our retail and education efforts is: "We Create Musicians." 

An advertisement for Chateau Music USA, Inc. The background is a photograph of a brown leather armchair with a gold saxophone resting on it. To the left, there are green plants. An orange rectangular box is overlaid on the image, containing the text "Find the new sound" in a large, white, sans-serif font, and "Chambord Series - CAS-50 Cognac" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font below it. In the bottom left corner, there is a logo for "Chateau" with a laurel wreath and "TAIWAN" written below it. In the bottom center, the text "Château Music USA, Inc." is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font, followed by the address "2300 S. Reservoir St. Suite 208 Pomona, CA 91766", the phone number "TEL : (909) 627-8882", the email "Email: kcheng@chateausamusic.com", and the website "www.chateausamusic.com". In the bottom right corner, there is a QR code and the text "GET MORE INFORMATION" below it.

# The Differentiation Factor

## Music History: A Million-Dollar Idea



By  
Menzie  
Pittman

It was Bill Haley's "Rock Around the Clock" in 1954 that broke the pre-internet "internet," but can you explain the unusual ticking sound that you hear in the song? In 1955 it was Little Richard's recording of "Tutti Frutti," that caused such a fuss. So, what is relevant about Pat Boone's version? Many folks know that the song "That's All Right Mama," recorded in 1956, put Elvis Presley on the map. Was Elvis the first artist to record the song or should we know about "That's All Right" by Authur Crudup, recorded in 1946, 10 years pri-

or to Presley's release?

And who was "The Million Dollar Quartet?" There was an impromptu jam session that took place simply by chance on December 4, 1956, involving Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins, and Jonny Cash. The picture earned its name from an article that was published in the Memphis Press-Scimitar under the title, "Million Dollar Quartet." You probably did not know that. My point with all this is that music history matters, and it matters a lot. That tool of knowledge, in most cases, is the differentiation factor that influences customers to choose your store over a box. You may not have their advertising budget, but if you're noticeably better with deep accurate music history knowledge, your chances of winning a customer's loyalty improve markedly.

That photo of "The Million Dollar Quartet" hangs at the bottom of the staircase that leads to our teaching studios in Contemporary Music Center. I use it as a pop quiz when I escort new customers down the steps on a tour of our store. I ask them to name the musicians in the picture. Right now, you might want to crack open those music history books because later there will be a pop-quiz. By the way, everyone gets the names of Elvis and Jonny Cash right. This bizarre intervention is my way of letting potential customers know they have come to the right place to teach their kids. It's our way of introducing what I call "The Differentiation Factor." It gently shows first-timers that we know about music, and that we're not just another pretty face.

Now more than ever, to sustain success, the small box stores need to play defense. To survive the economic down-turn caused by inflation, local music stores must have a unique vibe, borne from a genuine depth of knowledge. That one simple quality allows all potential customers to know that they have picked the right place. To put it simply: it's not about the size of the restaurant, it's about the quality of the food and the uniqueness of the experience.

Here's our reality... Distractions, or what I refer to as "the shiny factor," which has everybody hopping to be bigger, faster, meaner, leaner, and everything to everybody. But in a time where inflation is killing the mood, and schools struggle to make up years of lost work, somebody must provide relief. Something must make us feel better, and somehow trust has to re-enter the discussion.



Here is the problem we need to confront. "The box" has entered the teaching space in a big way. New customers can become blinded by the shiny factor of the box stores, and they become confused because they are naïve to the new process. At first blush, it's easy to confuse the value (or lack thereof) of the two experiences, so it becomes our job to show them that experiences are not the same. This is where we stress the differentiating factors. We go the extra mile to let them know us. We tell dog stories, we share stories about the success of former CMC students, we share students winning a golden ticket on "American Idol," and stories about students that now live as musicians in Nashville, New York, or L.A. One approach we always strive to live by is not to bad-mouth the experience that the box offers. Instead, we share the success stories of our own students. We focus on our differentiation and keep the discussion positive.

So back to the quiz question: What is the ticking sound in "Rock Around the Clock?" The answer: It is Marshall Lytle's slap bass part. Lytle was one of the pioneers of the rockabilly slap bass style. A style also mastered by the late Dave Roe, formally with Jonnie Cash – a bass style still honored in Nashville today by musicians the likes of Joe Fick.

So, what is your differentiation factor? Is it service? Is it specialized knowledge? Is it a specialized skill? Is it proprietary? If you are an independent music store something about your business is unique, so now you only have to get out your ladder, climb up on the rooftop and shout it out loud! 🎸🎤

*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."*

“To survive the economic downturn caused by inflation, local music stores must have a unique vibe, borne from a genuine depth of knowledge. That one simple quality allows all potential customers to know that they have picked the right place.”

# Light Up the Night!

Sales of Lighting & Stage Effects Remain Stable Post-Pandemic By ChristianWissmuller

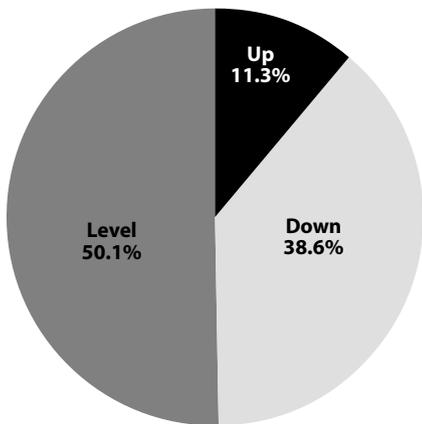
When we polled MI retailers on the state of the lighting & stage effect market segment back in fall of 2021, things were still – understandably – massively impacted by pandemic-related closures of clubs, bars, and other venues. On a larger scale, postponed, cancelled, or shortened tours from major bands and theater groups contributed further to a downward trend in sales.

Back then, 70.4% of participating dealers reported that sales of lighting equipment was down for their businesses. In light of that (pun unintended, but it stays), that “only” 38.6% in this current poll cite poor sales is perhaps cause for celebration. With almost exactly half of folks who filled out this month’s survey

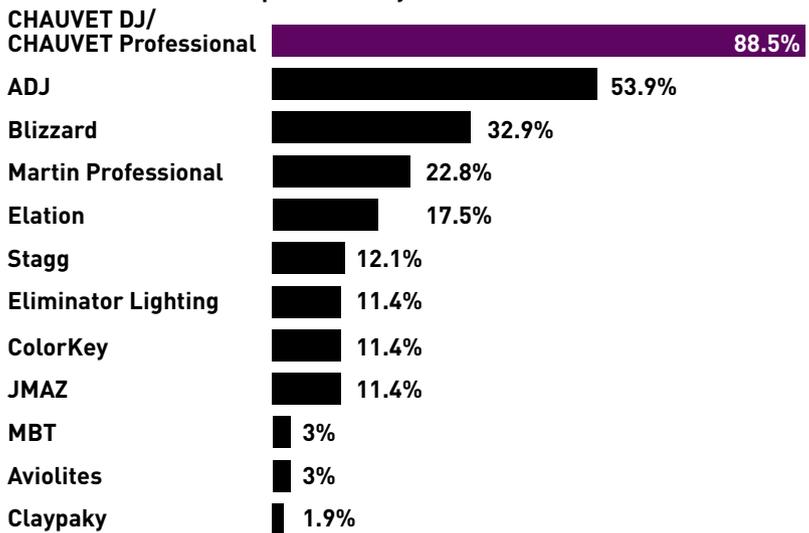
(50.1%) experiencing sales of lighting & stage effects that are similar to those of 2023 suggests both stability *and* that the drastic post-COVID “rebound effect” when it comes to this gear may have come and gone.

Beyond the above, many are observing that technological advances are driving changes at a rapid pace in the market – not surprising at all, given that this equipment is and always has been shaped by such innovation. As Jason Struble of Muncie, Indiana’s Sight & Sound Productions, Inc. says, “It’s been years since we put a par light on anything but a front truss. Back trusses have been movers for years. Pars are outdated. Movers made lasers kind of not so much in demand.”

When compared to last spring, sales of lighting & stage effects at your store are...



Which brands are the top sellers for your store?



**Have you been observing any trends regarding lighting & stage effects – customer buying habits, in-demand features, materials, size, et cetera?**

“My lighting and stage effects have been poor prior to the COVID shutdown.”  
**Daniel Yadesky**  
 Yadco Music  
 North Versailles, Pennsylvania

“Lighting sales really took off for us last year as bands were gigging a lot more coming out of the pandemic. They have remained fairly strong to start the year. Technology advances have given buyers a lot more options to choose from. The past year has seen more of the first-time or novice DJ market. As more people feel comfortable having back yard parties in the post pandemic, people are adding more lighting to their DJ home use.”  
**David St. John**  
 Music & Arts  
 Glendora, California

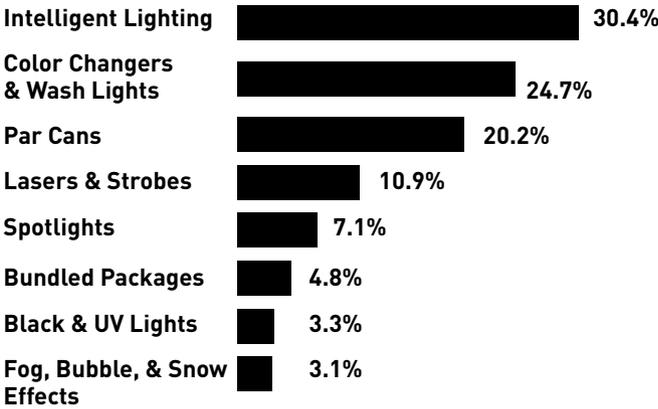
“Everything is movers and video walls now. We do lighting production and rental, as well. It’s been years since we put a par light on anything but a front truss. Back trusses have been movers for years. Pars are outdated. Movers made lasers kind of not so much in demand.”  
**Jason Struble**  
 Sight & Sound Productions, Inc.  
 Muncie, Indiana

“People are asking for moving heads more often.”  
**William Carroll**  
 Modern Music  
 Lisle, Illinois

“Customers prefer to buy online. Unless I’m willing to give it away.”  
**Dick Ward**  
 Music Unlimited  
 Richland, Washington



**What specific types of these products are most popular with your customers?**



“The past year has seen more of the first-time or novice DJ market. As more people feel comfortable having back yard parties in the post pandemic, people are adding more lighting to their DJ home use.”

**David St. John**  
 Music & Arts, Glendora, California

**THE INSTRUMENTS**

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# Many Happy Returns?

## For Customers, Yes; For MI Businesses, Not So Much In-kind Donation Can Ease the Burden of Returns on Warehouses and Make Beautiful Music



by Gary C. Smith  
[www.naeir.org](http://www.naeir.org)

U.S. retail sales during the 2023 holidays rose 3.1 percent over last year, according to figures from Mastercard – which isn't bad considering consumers are still feeling the pinch of inflation.

But another number is also going up. U.S. shoppers were expected to return \$173 billion worth of holiday purchases in early 2024, 28 percent more than last year, according to Optoro, a firm that helps retailers manage returns. Optoro

CEO Amena Ali told Reuters recently, "Our returns Super Bowl starts the day after Black Friday and goes into February." While the immediate "post-holiday" season is now past us, the phenomenon of mass-returns of purchases is an evergreen, year-round concern.

Returned products are a drag on the bottom line. They must be inspected and repackaged, which takes valuable time. Plus, the business is taking a chance that the instrument or gear won't go out of favor or fashion before it can be resold.

It's unlikely most returns can be resold at full price, so even brand-new merchandise can end up at a liquidation warehouse or in the trash heap.

Rather than disposing of musical merchandise or selling it to a liquidation warehouse, where you can't control brand identity, consider donating returned merchandise in-kind to a nonprofit. The resulting tax break for eligible C Corporations may be quite handsome, and it may even be more financially beneficial than reselling the merchandise at a cut-rate price.

Giving in-kind, though, comes with its own headaches. The business must vet every nonprofit organization, making sure it will accept the products on offer, understanding how it will be valued, and figuring out how and where merchandise has to be delivered.

In-kind donation organizations – of which there are several in the U.S. – do that legwork on behalf of businesses.

What's in it for them? These organizations provide free products to qualified 501(c)(3) nonprofits, which use them to serve more people in their communities. Gifts in-kind organizations may have hundreds of nonprofits as members that pay a nominal handling fee in order to have access to first-quality goods.

Thanks to the generosity of corporate donors, quality, brand new merchandise is given each year to schools, churches, and qualified non-profits, allowing them to stretch their budgets, get more done with less money, and even expand services by offering people the opportunity to have a musical instrument.

Donated merchandise runs the gamut from instruments to educational supplies, safety supplies to books, clothing to accesso-



ries, and beyond. NAEIR accepts donations at its 450,000-square-foot warehouse in Galesburg, Illinois, relieving businesses of inventory, returns, and overruns.

What's in it for businesses? Giving in-kind creates good public relations, supports corporate philanthropy goals, and provides assurance that merchandise won't end up on the open market or have branding diluted.

Plus, a company may qualify for a substantial tax deduction under Section 170(e)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Regular C corporations that donate inventory to qualified nonprofits can receive a tax deduction equal to up to twice the cost of the donated products. Under the tax code, deductions are equal to the cost of the inventory donated, plus half the difference between the cost and fair market-selling price, not to exceed twice the cost. For example, if a coated snare head costs \$10 to produce and retails for \$30, the difference is \$20. Half of \$20 is \$10. So, \$10 (product cost) plus \$10 (half the difference) equals a \$20 deduction. As \$20 does not exceed twice the product cost, it is an allowable deduction.

There's no one solution to the issues caused by customer returns, but in-kind donation can be a small part of the solution for your MI business. 

*Gary C. Smith is president and CEO of NAEIR, National Association for the Exchange of Industrial Resources, the largest gifts-in-kind organization in the U.S. Galesburg, Ill.-based NAEIR. ([www.NAEIR.org](http://www.NAEIR.org)) has received donations of excess inventory from more than 8,000 U.S. corporations and redistributed more than \$3 billion in products to non-profits and schools. Gary can be reached at (800) 562-0955.*

**“Rather than disposing of musical merchandise or selling it to a liquidation warehouse, where you can't control brand identity, consider donating returned merchandise in-kind to a nonprofit.”**



**PRO AUDIO**

**Radial Catapult Rack TX & RX Audio Over Cat 5 Units**

Radial Engineering announces shipping availability of its new Catapult Rack TX and Catapult Rack RX. The Catapult Rack TX and RX expand Radial’s line of audio over Cat 5 cable units, providing a streamlined and efficient way to handle analog audio distribution across significant distances.

The Catapult Rack TX and RX transform three standard Cat 5 or Cat 6 Ethernet cables into a passive 12-channel audio snake. This eliminates bulky, expensive traditional snakes while maintaining pristine sound quality. Perfect for both stage and studio, the Catapult TX and RX single rackspace units allow effortless transmission of mic and line-level signals with zero signal loss, interference, or digital conversion required. The versatile design enables seamless integration with other Radial audio over Cat 5/6 modules for maximum configuration flexibility.

Built with Radial’s signature ruggedness, the Catapult TX and RX boast durable steel enclosures, Neutrik etherCON connectors for secure cable locking, and reversible rack ears for easy placement in any setup. The ground lift function on each bank of XLRs minimizes unwanted noise, ensuring optimal signal clarity even over long runs.

[www.radialeng.com](http://www.radialeng.com)

**KRK Launches ROKIT Generation Five Studio Monitors**

As the unwavering cornerstone of professional audio monitoring for over three decades, KRK earned its reputation through a rich history of innovation and precision. Building off this legacy, Gibson introduces the newest addition to KRK’s impressive range of professional audio solutions: the ROKIT Generation Five Studio Monitors. Offered in three sizes – five, seven, and eight-inch – these advanced, active, two-way studio reference monitors feature three new voicing modes, an enhanced tweeter design, and a refreshed LCD. KRK ROKIT Generation Five monitors were created to meet the diverse needs of musicians, composers, producers, and sound engineers by providing the tools needed to reproduce every nuance of a production with astonishing clarity. The ROKIT Generation Five line is available through select dealers and online at [krkmusic.com](http://krkmusic.com).



[www.krkmusic.com](http://www.krkmusic.com)

**FRETTED**

**PRS Guitars Updates S2 Series with USA-Made PRS Pickups and Electronics**

PRS Guitars is now building its S2 Series instruments with USA-Made pickups and electronics – the same pickup models and electronics configurations and components as their Core guitars. PRS introduced the S2 Series in 2013 to bring fresh designs to players at a new price point. Meaning “Stevensville 2,” the S2 Series was named for a second manufacturing line that was created inside the PRS Stevensville, Maryland shop. However, since its introduction, the S2 Series has grown to be fully integrated into the same production



line as PRS Core and Bolt-On instruments.

Loaded with PRS’s renowned 85/15, 58/15 LT, and proprietary Narrowfield and TCI pickups – made right in PRS’s Maryland shop – the S2 Series now carries more PRS DNA than ever. The PRS S2 Series also comes with the same electronics as PRS Core instruments, including potentiometers with extreme audio tapers and other components with custom-designed features. To top off the specs, all Maryland-made PRS electric instruments feature a nitrocellulose finish. This finish is thin, allowing the guitars to have a resonant, organic tone. The nitro finish also has a natural feel, elevating the playing experience from the moment the guitar is picked up.

With 13 model choices, the S2 Series features both variations on well-known PRS models (like the Custom 24 and McCarty 594) and also truly distinct model choices found only in S2 (like the S2 Vela, S2 Standard 22, and S2 McCarty 594 Thinline).

[www.prsguitars.com](http://www.prsguitars.com)

**Córdoba Introduces Stage Black Burst Acoustic-Electric Guitar**

Córdoba Guitars is proud to debut its latest addition to the popular Stage platform, the Stage Black Burst. Designed to deliver the signature Córdoba acoustic sound seamlessly across all platforms, the Stage Black Burst combines the revolutionary Stage acoustic-electric concept with dark, monochromatic features for a bold and modern aesthetic.



The Stage Black Burst boasts premium design elements that set it apart from other guitars. It features a striking black burst top with black back, sides, and neck, complemented by an ebony fingerboard, ebony knobs, ivory body binding, and nickel hardware, including Córdoba’s unique Honeycomb Tuners. With a solid spruce top and flamed maple veneer, the Stage Black Burst ensures rich, balanced tones with excellent projection and clarity. This combination of materials enhances the overall sound quality of the instrument. The 1.5” chambered mahogany body of the Stage Black Burst provides reduced weight and enhanced resonance. This allows the top to resonate freely, resulting in a natural acoustic tone and ease of movement while playing.

Córdoba’s unique Fusion Neck design offers a comfortable playing experience with a 48mm nut width and fast 16” Fingerboard Radius. This innovative design bridges the gap between traditional nylon string and steel string guitars, appealing to a wide range of players. Equipped with a Stage Pickup System, the Stage Black Burst allows players to customize their acoustic tone effortlessly. Easy-to-access volume, eq, and body blend knobs ensure that players can tailor their sound to suit their preferences.

In line with Córdoba’s commitment to sustainability, the Stage Black Burst comes with sustainable packaging. The guitar is packaged in a recycled nylon gig bag made from microplastics and discarded fishing nets, reducing its environmental impact while maintaining the highest standards of quality and performance. Stage Black Burst \$1,150 USD (MSRP)

[www.cordobaguitars.com](http://www.cordobaguitars.com)

**Lower Your Voice with a Lanikai Quilted Maple Baritone**

Lanikai, the renowned name in ukuleles, is thrilled to announce baritones are joining the popular Quilted Maple series. The new color options include transparent black, transparent red, and transparent blue. These exquisite instruments combine striking aesthetics with exceptional playability, making it a must-have for musicians seeking both style and performance.

The new baritones feature a stunning glossy quilted maple top, back, and sides with black multiply binding. Lanikai Quilted Maple Baritones are meticulously crafted with attention to detail. The slotted paint-to-match headstock, adorned with accurate Grover nickel open tuners, ensures precise tuning stability and visual style.



Equipped with a Fishman pickup/tuner system, these baritones deliver exceptional sound quality whether you're performing on stage or recording in the studio. The wide neck profile provides ample space for your fingers, allowing for smooth chord transitions and effortless playing. Lanikai's commitment to quality extends to the smallest details—the NuBone XB nut and saddle enhance sustain and intonation.

The abalone rosette adds a touch of sophistication, while the hidden scarf joint ensures structural integrity as well as added sustain. Lanikai Quilted Maple Baritones are strung with D'Addario EJ88 strings, that deliver a balanced and warm tone. With our limited lifetime warranty, you can play your Lanikai Quilted Maple Baritone with confidence.

Each Quilted Maple Baritone includes a deluxe foam case that features backpack straps for easy transport and an external zippered pocket for accessories.

Rock Clouser, Lanikai brand manager, comments, "The Lanikai Quilted Maple series is extremely popular with concert and tenor players. So, we wanted to add some color options for baritone players/guitarists that prefer the unique voice of the baritone ukulele."

[www.lanikaiukuleles.com](http://www.lanikaiukuleles.com)

## Gibson Announces Jimmy Page 1969 EDS-1275 Doubleneck Collector's Edition

As it celebrates 130 years of music history, Gibson, the iconic instrument brand, is proud to announce it has entered into a new partnership with Jimmy Page, one of the most influential musicians in history and co-founder of one of the biggest bands of all time, Led Zeppelin. Introducing the Jimmy Page 1969 EDS-1275 Doubleneck Collector's Edition from Gibson Custom. Made in close collaboration and with significant input from Jimmy Page, only 50 Collector's Edition hand-signed, and played guitars will be available exclusively via the Gibson Garage Nashville (615) 933-6000, the Gibson Garage London +44 800 058 4720, and Gibson.com in Europe. For more details, visit: <https://www.gibson.com/en-US/page/jimmy-page>.



With its distinctive silhouette, Jimmy Page's Gibson EDS-1275 Doubleneck has become one of the most iconic guitars in history. The images of him playing it on stage with Led Zeppelin are indelible to rock 'n' roll history. Jimmy defined the model from the moment his EDS-1275 was delivered to him, which allowed him to play the acoustic and electric 6-string and 12-string parts of the song "Stairway to Heaven" at live performances, and later using it for "The Song Remains the Same," "The Rain Song," "Celebration Day," "Tangerine," and most recently at the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame last November as a tribute to Link Wray. The EDS-1275 has become synonymous with Page's legendary stage presence and

the electrifying moments that defined a genre.

Watch the interview with Jimmy Page as he talks about songwriting and visits the Gibson Custom Shop craftory in Nashville, Tennessee, and get a first look at the creation of the Jimmy Page 1969 EDS-1275 Doubleneck Collector's Edition [HERE](#).

Hand-crafted in close collaboration with Jimmy Page, this special Collector's Edition guitar uses Gibson's groundbreaking 3D scanning technology and ultra-precise Murphy Lab aging techniques to aid in creating a clone that captures the essence of Jimmy Page's original guitar. Every single detail has been thoughtfully recreated, from the exact playing wear to the sonic character of this exceptional guitar. Only 50 Collector's Edition guitars, all hand-signed and played by Jimmy Page, have been created by the expert luthiers of the Gibson Custom Shop in Nashville, Tennessee, and artfully aged to match the original finish by the Murphy Lab as part of this extraordinary Collector's Edition run. The Jimmy Page 1969 EDS-1275 Doubleneck Collector's Edition from the Gibson Custom Shop in Nashville represents a unique opportunity to own an exclusive part of music history that symbolizes musical innovation and the enduring legacy of one of rock's most celebrated guitarists, Jimmy Page.

The Jimmy Page 1969 EDS-1275 Doubleneck Collector's Edition features a lavish collection of case candy curated by Jimmy Page that features a Certificate of Authenticity Book with a photo taken by Barrie Wentzell, a wooden Pick Display with Herco® Flex pick played by Jimmy Page on the specific serialized guitar, a Premium Cherry/Black Leather Strap and Vintage Replica Strap, Schaller Strap Locks, an Embroidered Dragon Guitar Shroud, and a Gibson Doubleneck Stand.

[www.gibson.com](http://www.gibson.com)

## Introducing the Dean Guitars USA Zero Pickguard Gloss Natural

A high-octane instrument that draws upon Dean's legacy and is designed to satisfy the modern player's need to push sonic boundaries and blur genre distinctions, the USA Zero Pickguard Gloss Natural expands the success of the USA Series platform, embracing established features while prioritizing the diverse sonic needs of its users.

The USA Zero Pickguard Gloss embodies the spirit of musical exploration and limitless creativity within the hard rock and metal genres with enough high-end features to facilitate excellence in those realms and beyond. An eye-catching deep gloss mahogany body is paired with a classic black finish on the headstock with a distinctive Dean profile for a look that is both aggressive and sophisticated. The premium visual treatment is enhanced further with single-ply cream binding and gold hardware throughout. A slippery ebony fretboard extending to 22 frets embellished with Pearl Ultra Diamond inlays completes the stunning aesthetic package.

The USA Zero Pickguard Gloss Natural's HH pickup configuration features a USA DMT Baker Act Gold humbucking bridge pickup that screams with overwound attitude and a powerful low end, while the USA Time Capsule neck pickup offers glassy tones that excel across a multitude of genres. A CTS 500k Audio Taper potentiometer produces far less high-frequency signal loss than units with lower pot values, resulting in clear, bright sounds across a broad spectrum. The intuitive control layout is made up of Top Hat Gold knobs for volume and tone matched to a three-way toggle pickup selector switch. Other premium features also include a Tone Pros Tune-O-Matic bridge with gold Z Plate and



Grover Locking 18:1 tuners for reliable tuning stability throughout even the most aggressive string-bends and wild riffage.

Through this build, the Dean USA Zero Pickguard Gloss Natural offers hyper-playability and unparalleled sonic capacity married to stunning form for guitarists who demand the best and are re-defining what high-performance sounds like.

MSRP: \$5,398 USD

[www.deanguitars.com](http://www.deanguitars.com)

## Bourgeois Guitars Introduces Touchstone Signature

Bourgeois Guitars, renowned for their exceptional and meticulous craftsmanship, announced the release of the new Touchstone Signature; the latest addition to their Touchstone Series guitar line.



Showcasing some of the finest materials and painstaking attention to detail for which Bourgeois Guitars is known, the new Touchstone Signature features select Madagascar Rosewood back and sides and a torrefied, old-growth Alaskan Sitka Spruce soundboard. The body, fretboard, and headstock are all bound in Ziricote, a figured wood which pairs with Dana Bourgeois' distinctive tri-color herringbone top border and delicate pearl inlays to create an air of understated elegance.

The Signature Touchstone's 14-fret, one-piece genuine Mahogany neck, 25.5" scale length, and 1 23/32" bone nut provide a comfortable playing experience, while the ebony bridge, ivoroid pins and Schaller Grand Tune Gold/Ebony tuners complete a truly boutique aesthetic, ensuring optimal stability and tuning accuracy.

At the heart of each Touchstone Signature guitar is a masterfully hand-voiced Adirondack Spruce top and braces, crafted with precision and care in Bourgeois' Lewiston, Maine workshop. This dedication to quality ensures that every note resonates with the clarity, depth, and character that define the Bourgeois sound. Bourgeois' signature, high-gloss finish not only protects the instrument but also enhances the natural beauty of the premium tonewoods.

The Touchstone Signature is a testament to Bourgeois Guitars' ongoing commitment to crafting instruments that inspire musicians of all levels. By combining traditional techniques with innovative design elements, these guitars offer the world-class appointments and hand-voiced tone for which Bourgeois is known, making them more accessible to a wider range of players than ever before.

Touchstone Signature guitars are now available in two models: the OM Signature/TS and the D Signature/TS, with an MSRP of \$3,999.

[www.bourgeoisguitars.com](http://www.bourgeoisguitars.com)

## Limited Edition Raphael Saadiq Telecaster from Fender

Fender Musical Instruments Corporation (FMIC) announces the launch of a new signature Telecaster guitar honoring Raphael Saadiq, a multi-award-winning artist, songwriter, film & television composer, producer, and one



of R&B's foremost innovators. The Limited Edition Raphael Saadiq Telecaster pays homage to an artist whose credits include collaborations with Beyoncé, D'Angelo, Stevie Wonder, Whitney Hous-

ton, Adele, and a litany of others. A perfect confluence of modernized features and timeless retro design, the signature Telecaster guitar is the ideal instrument for any player looking to break down artistic boundaries with effortless style and timeless tonality. A comfortable '59 "C"-shape neck and resonant ash body make this signature instrument as approachable as it is sonically powerful.

Gifted with musical talent from a young age, Saadiq's journey began at the age of six, grooving on a bass. Throughout middle and high school, he played in various bands with school friends, transitioning from basement rehearsals to the grand stage. Shortly before turning eighteen, Saadiq seized a significant opportunity, landing a role as a bass player for Sheila E's backing band during Prince's *Parade* Tour. This catapulted his career, performing in sold-out stadiums alongside his childhood hero. Two years later, Saadiq returned to Oakland with a renewed sense of purpose. Swiftly taking action, he formed his musical outfit, Tony! Toni! Toné!, with his brother and cousin. The band achieved massive success throughout the '90s, reaching #2 on the *Billboard* R&B charts. Saadiq continued to solidify his name among music's finest, collaborating with icons like Tupac Shakur, Whitney Houston, Mary J. Blige, A Tribe Called Quest, and many more.

While known for his multifaceted roles in the studio and on stage, Saadiq's emotive and precise guitar playing has become a distinctive hallmark. Combining early soul and funk influences with his unique contemporary style, Saadiq stands as a one-of-a-kind player. He deserves a signature instrument that not only reflects his artistry but also embodies his fearless approach to playing – a tool that can empower any musician aspiring to make their artistic mark on the world.

This Telecaster is timeless to the bone yet irrefutably cutting edge. Vintage tall frets, black body binding and old school '59 "C" shaped neck will keep the purists plenty happy while more contemporary players will have to pick their jaws up off the floor after catching sight of this Telecaster guitar's striking Dark Red Metallic finish and psychedelic custom-tooled pickguard, inspired by his timeless album, *Instant Vintage*. A set of chrome hardware and painted black headstock ensure that this axe will turn heads even from the nosebleeds. But don't be fooled, this instrument is far more than just something pretty to look at: a set of Custom Rafael Saadiq pickups provide dynamic range that will arm players with clarity, sustain and precision across any number of genres. Introducing the Limited-Edition Raphael Saadiq Telecaster. Renowned guitarist, producer, and Grammy winner Raphael Saadiq brings his vision to life with this timeless model. It features an ash body, vintage-tall frets, flash paint job and custom Raphael Saadiq Single-Coil Tele pickups for sweet vintage tones.

In true tradition, the Fender Artist Signature Series honors iconic musicians through product progression and storytelling, creating instruments and gear inspired by the unique specifications of the world's greatest guitarists and bassists.

[www.fender.com](http://www.fender.com)

## ACCESSORIES



## ProMark Releases New Tim Jackson Signature Wood Tip Marching Stick

ProMark is proud to announce the release of the Tim Jackson Signature Wood Tip Tenor Stick. Available now, Jackson's signature product line is expanding to meet the needs of tenor players who prefer a wood tip over the original nylon.

One of the most in-demand consultants and instructors in

## newproducts

the US, Tim Jackson is a PASIC Multi-Tenor champion, as well as a four-time DCI Individual and Ensemble Multi-Tenor champion with The Blue Devils. The new Tim Jackson Signature Tenor Stick features the same innovative design, with a flared diameter at the handle, and 3 1/2" long taper for a comfortable grip and excellent rebound, but now with the classic feel and response of a wood tip.

<https://ddar.io/jackson-pr>

### New 30ft. Half-Coil Instrument Cables from Pig Hog Deliver More Distance & Flexibility On Stage

Pig Hog's new Half-Coiled Instrument cables are thoughtfully designed and balanced to combine the great look and feel of a vintage coiled cable, with the ergonomic benefit of a longer straight end. The longer section of straight cable allows



for more distance on stage, while also providing a tangle-free solution that keeps the coiled section of cable off the ground, giving just the right amount of slack for optimal performance.

The right-angle, coiled end of each cable includes 12" of straight cable, perfectly suited to wrap through guitar straps, while the connector has added length to fit easily into recessed input jacks. Whether wired to a pedal board, or directly to your amp, Pig Hog Half-Coil instrument cables deliver maximum flexibility and range.

All Half-Coil cables are constructed utilizing an extra-thick, yet supple 8mm jacket that naturally resists kinking or tangling. With proprietary conductor technology and robust shielding, Pig Hog cables are designed from the inside out to ensure crystal clear sound, without noise or interference, every time. Each cable is hand tested before shipment, and backed by Pig Hog's "no questions asked" lifetime guarantee!

MSRP: \$59.95 • MAP: \$39.95

[www.acedealerportal.com](http://www.acedealerportal.com)

### Tech 21's SansAmp Bass Driver DI Celebrates 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

The SansAmp Bass Driver DI has been an arsenal staple for players and studios almost since the day it was introduced in 1994. To commemorate its 30th anniversary, Tech 21 is issuing a limited edition with an anodized precision-machined aluminum billet housing and all metal knobs.



This all-analog multi-function, multi-application pedal dials up big vintage tube tones, bright modern slap sounds, gnarly distortions, and all in between. There are three different outputs to drive power amps, recording desks, PA mixers, or simply enhance your current rig. Controls include Presence for definition and upper harmonic content; Blend to combine the ratio of direct signal and SansAmp circuitry; and active 3-band EQ with 12dB of cut or boost.

The 100% analog SansAmp Tube Amplifier Emulation technology encompasses the entire signal chain, from pre-amp to power amp to speaker simulation. An integral part of the circuitry, the individually-tailored SansAmp speaker simulation will complement any type of bass speaker cabinet system.

It is rare an electronic music-related product can withstand such a test of time. The SansAmp Bass Driver has been used for every kind of music style from death metal to commercial jingles, in countless studios, and on tours around the globe. In fact, many

mammoth stage rigs you see are actually driven by a SansAmp nestled behind the backline. It has defied the odds and to this day, SansAmp remains the standard of the industry.

[www.tech21nyc.com](http://www.tech21nyc.com)

## PRINT & DIGITAL

### String Theory (New Fundamentals Workbook for Beginners) from Kendor Music Publishing



Kendor Music Publishing is excited to announce *String Theory*, a music fundamentals workbook from experienced string educator, Caryn Wiegand Neidhold. Written for the beginning string musician, this interactive workbook presents exercises on clefs, note-naming, time signatures, and counting in a consumable write-in format. A student- and instrument-focused supplement for the classroom or private lessons, *String Theory* contains a wealth of information on the fundamentals of string music.

"*String Theory* sprang from my desire to help all students in beginning orchestra classes and private studios achieve success in music literacy," says composer, author, and educator Caryn Wiegand Neidhold. "The format emphasizes repetition and recognition to encourage musical fluency and helps students learn new music at an increased rate. 'Road-tested' in the classroom for eight years, this book has been successful with all types of learners, especially students who struggle with note-reading."

In addition to her contributions to music education, Caryn Wiegand Neidhold is an accomplished conductor, composer, and arranger for both student and professional-level ensembles.

[www.kendormusic.com](http://www.kendormusic.com)

## SOUND REINFORCEMENT

### JBL Professional Introduces JBL Pro Connect App V2 for JBL Portable PA Speakers and Systems



Harman Professional Solutions has announced the launch of JBL Pro Connect V2, the newest version of its universal control application for streamlined management of select JBL portable PA speakers and systems. The new edition includes a variety of robust features and enhancements to further simplify hands-on control over a full-suite of mixer, DSP, and Bluetooth features.

V2 features include a new Demo Mode for touring of app capabilities and the ability to configure system settings and presets without needing to be connected to a Pro Connect-enabled speaker. Full Screen Mode enhances resolution for editing and adjusting controls, and Snapshot Language Support adds the convenience of saving snapshots in select local languages. A number of additional enhancements and performance improvements are also included.

Available for Android and iOS devices, JBL Pro Connect ensures that supported speakers and systems can be utilized to their full potential. Setting volume and adjusting EQ, activating Lexicon reverb and effects and dbx Digital DriveRack signal processing, customized ducking, saving and recalling presets, and more are all included features.

The app also offers a choice of pre-loaded presets for accessing popular control features like input EQ, dynamics, gates, limiters, and chorus delay. A variety of even deeper presets for EQ, gate, compressor, tap, delay, reverb, chorus, output limiter, output EQ, and more are also included. App-exclusive features and settings

include snapshots, multi-speaker grouping, tap tempo, and more.

JBL Pro Connect is free for life and more speakers and systems are continually expanding the Pro Connect ecosystem. From professional musicians and DJs to presenters, instructors and novices alike, JBL Pro Connect eases speaker setup and management and empowers users to have complete control of their portable PA experience.

**DEMO MODE** Explore the app and tour all its capabilities without being connected to speakers. You can also configure and save settings and presets offline and then load up your saved preferences when connected.

**FULL SCREEN MODE** Full Screen Mode offers a higher degree of resolution for editing and adjusting faders, dynamics, EQ, and FX sends.

**MIX OUT PRE/POST FADER SUPPORT** Mix Out Pre/Post Fader support empowers users with the added capability to seamlessly switch their MIX OUT feature between pre- and post-fader to match their use-case scenario.

**SNAPSHOT LANGUAGE SUPPORT** Users can conveniently save snapshots in a variety of select local languages once the keyboard has been loaded to the device.

#### FULL CONTROL IN THE PALM OF YOUR HAND

Dive deep into system mixer and DSP functions to optimize your stage sound for any scenario. Access app-exclusive features and speaker settings including snapshots, multi-speaker grouping, tap tempo and more.

#### ELEVATE YOUR STAGE SOUND WITH PRO EFFECTS

Activate ducking to make sure your voice stands out over background music. Adjust Lexicon reverb, chorus and delay effects for professional polish. Shape sound with surgical precision with parametric EQ.

#### SOUND AMAZING IN AN INSTANT

Choose from eight optimized sound presets, or customize your own. Simply and quickly, adjust main volume and source levels. Trigger dbx Automatic Feedback Suppression (AFS) to eliminate feedback. Optimize and protect speakers with dbx Digital DriveRack signal processing.

#### TAP INTO BLUETOOTH 5.0 FUNCTIONALITY

Advanced Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) technology for powerful wireless control functionality and performance. Connect and sync up to 10 JBL Pro Connect-enabled speakers.

#### PERSONALIZE YOUR WORKFLOW

Group speakers for mixing, rename channels for traditional channel strip functionality. Responsive portrait and landscape displays streamline operation.

JBL Pro Connect is currently available for the following speakers and systems: JBL PRX ONE, EON ONE MK2, EON700, PRX900 and EON ONE Compact, with additional models continually being added.

[www.jblpro.com](http://www.jblpro.com)

## VocoPro Announces Two New Wireless Headphone Packages for Educators

For educators looking to enhance the learning experience, audio leader VocoPro has announced two new, affordable wireless headphone packages.

VocoPro's Silent Symphony-Learn and Silent Symphony-Learn-Talk are guaranteed to sound great versus other wireless learning headphones on the market because they are true stereo and operate in the 900 UHF bandwidth – far away from possible TV, radio or Wi-Fi interference.



The suspension headband design ensures comfortable long-term wear while flexible elastic accommodates adult and children's head sizes.

The products' transmitters have two power settings, up to 300 feet of range on the high setting to cut across walls – or an auditorium. Users can run up to three transmitters in different programs at the same time with the headphones' ability to switch programs with the push of a button. This is great for silent learning, silent translation – or just hearing the instructor loud and clear in noisy environments.

Both versions come with 10 wireless headphones, a carrying bag and one transmitter. The Silent Symphony-Learn-Talk also includes a microphone input so the instructor can speak directly to the wireless headphones using the included headset microphone without needing an additional microphone mixer.

#### Features:

- Use up to 3 transmitters simultaneously
- Broadcast to an unlimited number of wireless headphone receivers
- Internal battery built into transmitter for remote use
- Transmission power level toggle (High/Low)
- Available 1/8" stereo audio output on each wireless headphone set
- Available 1/8" Mic input on transmitter
- Available RCA line input on transmitter
- Transmitter lasts up to 12 hours on a full charge
- Headphones last up to 18 hours on 2 AAA batteries

#### Silent-Symphony-Learn

MAP: \$619 • MSRP: \$859

#### Silent-Symphony Learn-Talk

MAP: \$689 • MSRP: \$919

[www.vocopro.com](http://www.vocopro.com)

## New Avante Audio Imperio Pro IMP118 Single 18-inch Active Subwoofer

Powerful, versatile, compact, and reliable, the new Imperio Pro IMP118 active subwoofer from professional audio manufacturer AVANTE Audio is now shipping.

Featuring high quality components, precision audio engineering, a robust enclosure, a powerful integrated amplifier, and a flexible internal DSP, it delivers high quality low frequency audio output suitable for a range of applications. With a variety of hardware options, it can be deployed in numerous configurations for medium-to-large-scale concerts, parties and events.

At the heart of the Imperio Pro IMP118 is a powerful 18-inch high-power transducer driven by a high-energy 4-inch (100mm) voice coil motor assembly. It is implemented through an efficient bass-reflex system design to deliver exceptionally linear frequency response from 32Hz – 130 Hz (-10dB) / 38 Hz -130Hz (-3dB) with a maximum SPL of 136 dB (peak). An integrated 3600-Watt (peak) Class-D power amplifier provides ample headroom and minimizes distortion, ensuring highly responsive deep sub bass output.

The enclosure is also fitted with an advanced DSP system that allows configuration for a wide variety of different applications and speaker arrangements. Access to the DSP settings is provided via a large backlit LCD display on the rear panel. An intuitive menu interface allows quick and easy setup, which is navigated using a single push-to-select rotary control.

DSP presets are provided for normal solo cabinet deployment as well as more advanced cardioid and end-fire coverage control patterns using multiple cabinets. The DSP also features FIR filters



## newproducts

for accurate LP-crossover settings that can be configured to 60 Hz, 70Hz, 80 Hz, 90 Hz, 100 Hz or 120 Hz. The menu interface can also be used to reverse the driver polarity, enter a delay time / distance and alter the volume level to optimize the signal gain structure.

The enclosure is designed to withstand the rigors of professional touring applications. Constructed from premium CNC-machined birch plywood, it has a sleek black polyurea finish that is very durable as well as a black powder coated steel grille to protect the speaker cone. It is fitted with a pair of recessed carry handles on the sides and features an XLR input socket alongside an XLR output for linking together additional active speakers. Power is supplied via a locking IP65-rated socket, which can't become accidentally disconnected during use. A locking IP65-rated output link socket is also provided, allowing the power supply for multiple speakers to be 'daisy chained' from a single outlet. The unit can be used globally as it is compatible with a power supply of 100~240V AC 50/60Hz. A protective rain cover is also provided for the amplifier panel and connection sockets, allowing for safe use outdoors in wet conditions.

A variety of integrated hardware accessories allow for versatile deployment. Firstly, a standard M20 threaded speaker pole slot is located on the top of the cabinet to allow a mid/top cabinet (for example one of AVANTE Audio's Achromic X Series models) or small configuration of Imperio Pro IMP205 compact line array modules to be mounted above. The bottom of the cabinet is also fitted with skids, which fit into corresponding shallow recesses on the top for when multiple units are stacked. A convenient spring-loaded locking system then allows the cabinets to be secured together without the need for straps or any other additional hardware. Finally, the cabinet is fitted with 20 captive nut M10 fly points for applications that require the speaker to be permanently mounted overhead.

Weighing in at 101 lbs. / 45.8 kgs., the unit can be easily managed by one or two people. To allow convenient transportation, a dedicated caster board (Imperio Pro IMC118) is available as an optional accessory. This locks securely to the bottom or the front of the cabinet, with the latter option covering the speaker grille to provide added protection during transportation and storage.

[www.avanteaudio.com](http://www.avanteaudio.com)

### ACCESSORIES

#### AxLabs Hardware Releases String Surfer Brass Roller Saddles for Strat Style Bridges

AxLabs Hardware is proud to introduce their new String Surfer Brass Roller Saddles designed specifically for Stratocaster-style bridges. Precision machined from solid brass, these saddles offer enhanced density and tonal qualities, delivering a sharper attack, extended sustain, and a warmer tone compared to stock thin pressed-steel or zinc block-style saddles.



Moreover, the roller mechanisms significantly minimize friction and binding, allowing the strings to effortlessly glide over the saddle surface. Not only does this advancement ensure a more precise string return during bends, but it also effectively minimizes the occurrence of string breakage on tremolo-equipped instruments.

The String Surfer kits come with brass roller saddles, height adjustment set screws, intonation screws, and intonation springs. Available now at AxLabsHardware.com and other online outlets.

Street price: \$96 – \$103

[www.axlabshardware.com](http://www.axlabshardware.com)

### PIANO & KEYBOARD

#### Roland Announces New RD-08 Stage Piano

Roland announces the RD-08, a new entry-level model in the long-running RD series of stage pianos for performing musicians. Roland's most affordable RD to date delivers no-compromise



sound and playability for professional gigging, along with versatile sounds, an intuitive interface, and onboard stereo speakers for self-contained operation. And with the upgradeable design, users can add even more sounds and features as needs evolve.

Used by everyone from weekend warriors to top touring pros, Roland RD pianos have been the leading choice of stage musicians since 1986. The RD-08 makes this acclaimed heritage accessible in a budget-friendly instrument with core RD features.

Backed by Roland's SuperNATURAL technology, the RD-08 is filled with dynamic, characterful acoustic and electric pianos for boundless expression on stage and in the studio. The instrument also includes a vast selection of organs, synths, strings, and other sounds to tackle any musical style, driven by the same ZEN-Core sound engine found in flagship synthesizers like FANTOM and JUPITER-X.

The RD-08 offers best-in-class playability crafted from over four decades of Roland piano development. The PHA-4 88-note keyboard features weighted hammer action and Ivory Feel keys for an authentic grand feel, realized with innovative design elements that reduce the instrument's weight without compromising the feel or performance.

Like all RD pianos, the RD-08 features an intuitive panel for smooth operation. Top-level buttons provide fast access to sound selection, transpose, and other functions, while four multi-function knobs offer hands-on control of layers, effects, EQ, and more. All keyboard tweaks can be saved within Scene memories, ready for instant recall while performing.

The RD-08 is an ideal stage piano for active players. The friendly weight and streamlined dimensions make it easy to move, while the rugged build will hold up to years of heavy use. Built-in stereo speakers project rich, room-filling sound, eliminating the need for an external amplifier while practicing at home, playing at rehearsals, and performing in small venues.

The RD-08 is primed to support ambitions as future needs grow. Available exclusively on Roland Cloud, the RD-08 Upgrade enhances the factory features with the SuperNATURAL Acoustic Piano 3 expansion, Apple MainStage support, Roland Cloud sound expansion options, additional USB capabilities, and more.

The Roland RD-08 Stage Piano is now available in the U.S. for \$999.99.

[www.roland.com](http://www.roland.com)



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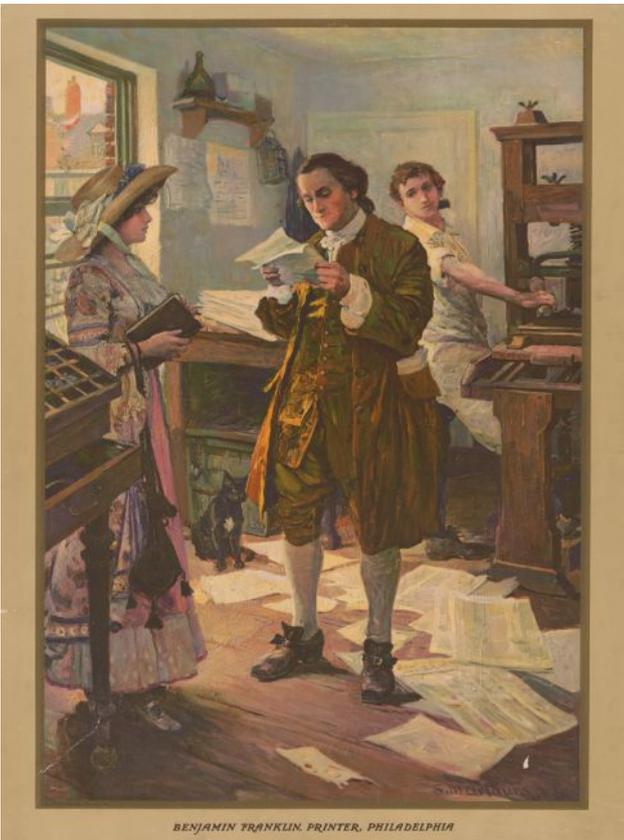
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