

MMR

MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

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'Weirdness' and Enthusiasm for the Arts Drive Prosperity in Austin, Texas



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MMR's Mike Lawson reflects on his time with the company, and what he sees the guitar giant doing right in 2019 after their previous trouble with branding and bankruptcy

MMR Musical Merchandise Review® (ISSN 0027-4615), Volume 178, Number 7, July 2019, founded in 1879, is published monthly by Timeless Communications Corp., 6000 South Eastern Ave., Suite 14J, Las Vegas, NV 89119, (702) 479-1879, publisher of School Band and Orchestra, Choral Director and JAZZed. Periodicals Postage Paid at Las Vegas, NV and additional mailing offices. *MMR* is distributed free to qualified individuals and is directed to music dealers and retailers, wholesalers and distributors, importers and exporters and manufacturers of all types of musical instruments and their accessories, related electronic sound equipment, general musical accessories, musical publications and teaching aides. **POSTMASTER:** Send all UAA to CFS. **NON-POSTAL AND MILITARY FACILITIES:** send address corrections to Musical Merchandise Review, PO Box 16655 North Hollywood, CA 91615-6655. The publishers of this magazine do not accept responsibility for statements made by their advertisers in business competition. No portion of this issue may be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. Copyright ©2019 by Timeless Communications Corp., all rights reserved. Printed in USA.



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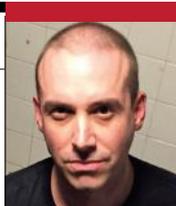


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Paradise City



by Christian Wissmuller

Each July, *MMR* takes a close look at the MI scene – on both the retail and vendor sides – of a particular U.S. metro area. This year, we decided to shine a light on Austin, Texas (see Victoria Wasylak’s excellent Market Profile on page 54).

Odds are, you’re aware that the Lone Star State’s capital is something of a boomtown, and has been for a number of years. I first visited Austin in 2006 and it was already a very happening spot: lots of thriving companies with innumerable start-ups swimming in their wake; young, hipster migrants; trendy cafés, restaurants, and clubs to cater to such new-comers; and just a very palpable “vibe” – there was an energy to the place. When I returned a couple years ago, I was floored by how much the city had transformed in such a relatively short time. Since 2006, Austin has added four major skyscrapers (over 500 feet) to its skyline with 11 more(!!!) currently in the works, and between 2014 and 2018 the city added 12,000 new tech workers to the area.

This phenomenon – urbanization – is by no means limited to Austin. Any regular Summer NAMM attendee or exhibitor can attest to how drastically Nashville has changed in the past 10-20 years and there are similar hotbeds of city growth throughout much of the nation. Add to that the continuing (and, in most cases, expanding) allure of perennially popular metro areas – NYC, San Francisco, Boston, San Diego, et cetera – and you’re looking at a truly historic shift in how and where folks choose to live.

And this trend is global. In 2015, the International Organization for Migration estimated that roughly three million people are moving to cities each week with over 54 percent of global population being in urban cores – up

from 30 percent in 1950.

Of what relevance is all this to *MMR* readership? Time was, many (hell, *most*) middle-income houses had pianos. Not only does my modest city apartment not have room for even an upright, but of all my friends and their extended families I can only think of two that have a piano in the home. As more and more people attempt to squeeze into finite spaces, we’re living closer to one another, on top of (or beneath) one another – and, as a byproduct, not only is it our own space that we have to navigate, we also need to acknowledge that our nearest neighbor likely isn’t separated by two large lawns, but by paper-thin walls and ceilings (see this month’s Roundtable on the changing trends in guitar and bass amplifiers on page 42). The days of getting a group of like-minded souls together to bash out some tunes in a garage or basement are long gone for many. Not only is there only one garage on my own street (inefficient use of exceedingly expensive/profitable real estate), if anyone attempted to play live music with any degree of volume (*forget* acoustic drums) there’d be a neighborhood uproar since we’re all packed in like sardines.

Consumer playing (and consequently *purchasing*) habits are changing to adapt to the realities of city life. Products are already being engineered to better serve today’s musician. Savvy MI retailers will keep up with what gear speaks to the customer of 2019 – not of 1969 or even 1989. 

Christian Wissmuller
cwissmuller@timeless.com

PRESIDENT

Terry Lowetlowe@timeless.com

GROUP PUBLISHER

Greg Gallardogregg@timeless.com

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Christian Wissmullercwissmuller@timeless.com

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Victoria Wasylakvictoria@timeless.com

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Mike Lawsonmlawson@timeless.com

AUDIO / MI ADVISOR

George Petersengeorge@timeless.com

LIGHTING / STAGING ADVISOR

Nook Schoenfeldnook@timeless.com

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Dan Daleyddaley@timeless.com

WEB DESIGNER

Mike Hoffmike@mikehoff.com

ADVERTISING / MARKETING DIRECTORS

Lauren Byrgelbyrge@timeless.com

Matt Hubermh@timeless.com

Matt Kingmking@timeless.com

GREATER CHINA

Judy Wang, Worldwide Focus Media
C: 0086-13810325171 E: judy@timeless.com

ART DIRECTOR/PRODUCTION MANAGER

Mike Streetmstreet@timeless.com

SENIOR GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Angela Marlettamarlett@timeless.com

VICE PRESIDENT

William Hamilton Vanyowvanyo@timeless.com

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR / CIRCULATION

Naomi Crewsncrews@timeless.com

Timeless Communications Corp.
6000 South Eastern Ave • Suite 14-J
Las Vegas NV 89119, TEL 702.479.1879

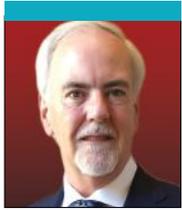
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Jobs! Jobs! Jobs!



by Terry Lowe

You know, I really must apologize... Through the years, we have done a great job in keeping you informed of the latest in new products and technology. We deep-dive every month into bringing you best practices for the MI store owner, as well. However, one thing we haven't done our best at is helping you find *your* next

opportunity.

Well, those days are over. I am very pleased to announce the creation of TimelessJobs.com, brought to you by *MMR*, *PLSN*, *FOH*, and *Stage Directions* magazines. Right now, on the site, you'll find hundreds of great, full-time positions available throughout the country, each needing the skill sets that *you* have.

For employers, there has never been a pool of more-qualified potential candidates than the readers of our magazines. Our readers are the thought-leaders of the industry. They are the ones who want to stay on top of our ever-changing, dynamic field. Our subscribers want to grow their skill sets. That is why they read us, month-in and month-out. And guess what? They are looking for new opportunities!

According to our recent **2019 Entertainment Technology Jobs and Salary Survey**, 46 percent of our current, full-time employed subscribers stated they were looking for their next opportunity, while 72 percent of our independent contractors stated that if the right opportunity came along, they would seek full-time employment.

Between our four magazines, we have in excess of 74,000 subscribers, and with our pass-along readership, we have over 180,000 individuals seeing our magazines on a monthly basis. Where better to place your recruiting ads? Now, with our new TimelessJobs.com site, you won't find a more valuable place to target the best-qualified candidates for your position.

Communicating is our business, and what better information to share to our readers than opportunities to make their lives better? We're very excited about this new chapter in expanding the ways our publications can help you. Whether you are an employer or a job candidate, we look forward to helping you achieve the best results for your company's hiring needs or for your own career.

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Industry News

SLM Becomes Exclusive Full Line Distributor of Mooer Effects & Amplification

St. Louis Music has announced a new agreement with Mooer Audio to be their exclusive full line distributor in the U.S. of Mooer's innovative effects pedals and amplification.

"It's fantastic to be working with Mooer," says Chris Meikle, senior vice president of St. Louis Music. "Mooer has a truly innovative company culture and genuine ambition to create class leading technology. The new GE300 multi effects processor is a great example of what the company is capable of and what we can expect in the future."



Mooer burst onto the music products scene in 2010 with the original micro-sized guitar effects pedals. Since then, Mooer has been an industry leader in providing professional sounding, high-tech products for musicians around the world.

Mooer's technological capabilities have continued to grow year after year, bringing very creative and innovative products with it. In 2016, Mooer developed a series of highly-complex digital products such as the Devin Townsend OCEAN MACHINE, the MICRO PREAMP series, the GE200 multi-effects unit, and the RADAR IR Loader. These developments continued in 2018 with the critically-acclaimed PREAMP LIVE preamp modeler, amplification products, as well as introducing new combination pedalboard solutions with the TRUCK series.

Visit www.mooeraudio.com for more information or to become a dealer call your St. Louis Music representative at (314) 727-4512 or email info@stlouismusic.com.

- Industry News
- MMR Global
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30+ Featured Employers Help TimelessJobs.com Debut

If the response to the debut of TimelessJobs.com is any indication, the entertainment technology job market is red hot, and competition for top talent has never been fiercer. The jobs and career portal, published by Timeless Communications – publishers of *MMR*, *PLSN*, *FOH*, *Stage Directions*, and *EPD* – debuted at the InfoComm 2019 Show in Orlando with more than 30 leading industry brands as featured employers, and more than 50 targeted industry job listings.

In its first week of operation, 31 leading industry employers, including Yamaha Corporation of America, 4 Wall Entertainment, Bandit Lites, Chauvet Professional, Full Compass Systems, Sweetwater Sound, Jam Industries, Lectrosonics, Point Source, and The Clearwing Group and two dozen other leading employers post-



ed more than four dozen job listings in 18 states and Canada.

"We're ecstatic with the response," Timeless president Terry Lowe said. "Every CEO and hiring manager we've spoken to has confirmed that finding qualified candidates to fill critical roles is key to an organization's success. With more than 74,000 subscribers, our readership represents the industry's top talent – and the best candidates for your recruitment efforts."

Timeless Jobs products include job listings, 5- and 10-pack bundles, and integrated advertising in *MMR*, *PLSN*, *FOH*, and *Stage Directions* print and online advertising and targeted e-letters.

NAMM Congratulates the 2019 Top 100 Dealers

NAMM has announced the list of enterprising music product retailers to be honored at the organization's Top 100 Dealer Awards. Now in its ninth year and held during the Summer NAMM (July 18-20) in Nashville, the annual awards honor retailers who demonstrate exceptional commitment to their stores, neighborhoods, and customers, and share in a vision of creating a more musical world through their local communities.

"NAMM retail members are at the forefront of creating more music makers and in my opinion, are the heartbeat of our industry in communities around the world," said Joe Lamond, NAMM president and CEO. "We look forward to an exciting evening in Nashville to honor and celebrate the Top 100 Dealers and to learn the secrets of how they are adapting to the changing retail environment and succeeding in the marketplace."

Each Top 100 Dealer submission was evaluated for effectiveness in marketing, customer engagement and innovation

in retail by a panel of independent judges. The panel has also made a selection for several "Best of" category winners, including two new categories: the "Innovation Award" and "Best Community Retail Store." The event's new "Top 100 Customers' Choice Award" encourages fans and customers of the nominated store to vote online at: TopDealer.NAMM.org.

Other categories include "Best Customer Service;" "Best Store Design;" "Best Marketing and Sales Promotion;" "Best Online Engagement;" and the "Music Makes a Difference Award." From the winners of these categories, one store will be recognized with the coveted "Dealer of the Year" Award.

The Top 100 Awards will be held on Friday, July 19 inside Music City Center's Davidson Ballroom starting at 6:00 p.m. Country Music Television's on-air personality Katie Cook will host the awards. For additional information about the Top 100 Awards, visit www.namm.org/summer/2019/top-dealer-awards





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Yamaha Music and Wellness Institute Seeks Award Applications

Applications are now being accepted for the 2019 Brian Jemelian Award for outstanding achievement, an annual program that recognizes one individual who, by virtue of their exceptional musical commitment, inspires positive personal and cultural transformation.

The recognition award was established by the Yamaha Music and Wellness Institute (YMWI) in memory of Brian Jemelian, who served as a senior vice president at Yamaha Corporation of America (YCA) and as a member of the board of directors at YMWI until his passing July 7, 2017. The award of up to \$6,000 is to be used toward the purchase price of a brand-new Yamaha musical instrument.

Kalil Olsen was named the first recipient of the award in 2017, following his stellar piano performance at the week-long festival, Celebrating the Spectrum held at Michigan State University, where he received a brand new Clavinova CVP-705B digital piano.

The Brian Jemelian Award is open to all individuals who reside in the United States with the exception of YMWI and YCA employees, contractors and family members.

A Nomination Letter is required from a third party directly familiar with the nominee (parents or relatives are not included). The letter must include the nominee's name, basis (rationale) for the nomination, brief synopsis of the nominee's background/achievements, description and/or examples of how the nominee has influenced or inspired others through their music and an explanation of why the nominee is exceptional and deserving of

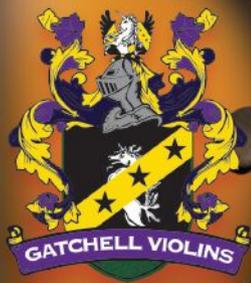
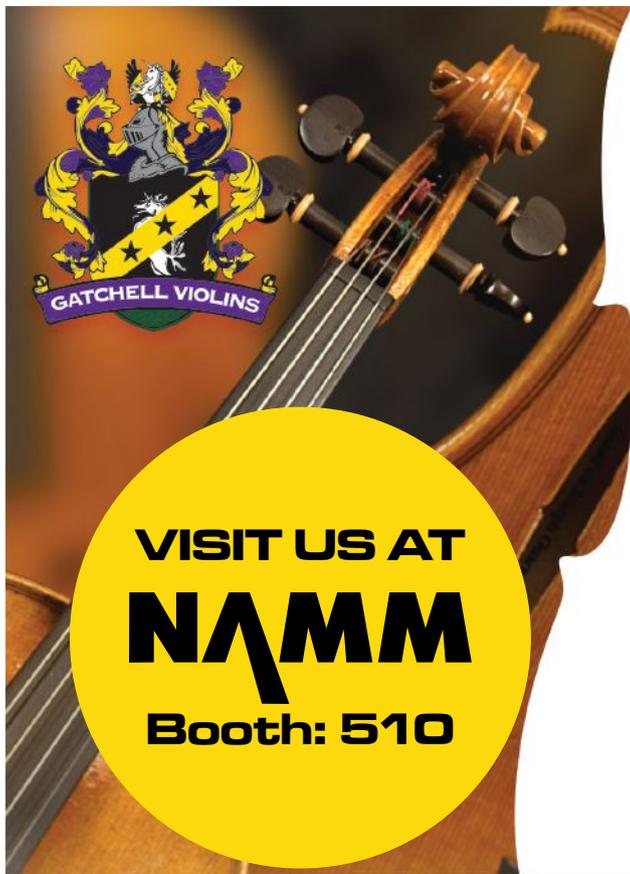
the award.

Also required is a nominee perspective letter that includes an explanation of how music has transformed the person's life and a discussion of how and why the person is committed to inspiring others through music. In the event that the nominee is unable to complete this in a written manner, a recorded explanation or document provided by a parent/relative may be submitted for review.

Applications for the 2019 award will be accepted through October 31. The awards committee, comprised of YMWI board directors will make a final decision on this year's recipient in early December, with an awards ceremony scheduled to take place by the end of the year.

"This award clearly extends beyond musicality. We are searching for extraordinary individuals who incorporate music into their lives in a manner that expresses their creative spirit, benevolence and spirituality – a clear reflection of Brian's example as a YMWI leader and visionary," noted Barry Bittman, MD, YMWI chairman and CEO. "Brian recognized creative musical expression as a healing strategy with immense potential for positive personal transformation. This award in Brian's memory carries forth his example to inspire the best in others."

For more information about the Brian Jemelian Award, or to submit an application, please contact YMWI@yamaha.com. To learn more about the Yamaha Music and Wellness Institute, visit www.yamahainstitute.org



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Womack to Perform at Summer NAMM

On Saturday, July 20 at Summer NAMM, Lee Ann Womack will perform on the NAMM Avid Stage on the Terrace. Womack's career in country music spans over 20 years and nine studio albums. Her most recent album, *The Lonely, The Lonesome & The Gone*, was released at the end of 2017.

Along with her 2003 Grammy award for "Best Country Collaboration" with Willie Nelson for "Mendocino County Line," Womack counts numerous awards to her credit. Her 2000 crossover hit, "I Hope You Dance," reached number one on both the *Billboard* Hot Country Singles & Tracks and Hot Adult Contemporary Tracks charts.



Tony Awards Uses Shure Axient Digital for the First Time

The 73rd Annual Tony Awards was a first for Shure, as the live CBS broadcast relied entirely on Shure Axient Digital for the first time. The digital wireless solution was a game changer for the production according to Vinny Siniscal, who engineered audio for the show with Firehouse Productions.

"Using Axient Digital allowed us to pack all of our audio needs into the proper open airspace," said Siniscal, referring to tighter spectrum availability at Radio City Music Hall. "Plus, the Wireless Workbench® software helped us track everything. We had 48 microphones active, and I could adjust them all from my control center. I could also track battery life of each transmitter to make sure we were always charged."



"Knowing that the biggest stage in theater relies on Shure products to help execute such an important moment in the industry means everything to us," said Ben Escobedo, senior market development specialist, Pro Audio, at Shure, who was onsite at the Tony Awards. "We understand how hard theater professionals work toward making their performances stand out, and we want to ensure our equipment helps showcase those talents on Broadway's biggest night."

Siniscal's job was to make sure the audio sounded great for each of the performers—as well as the host—for the nationally televised live broadcast. He used 57 total transmitters, including 32 ADX1Ms for Corden and the ensemble cast.

He was also able to set up four "diversity" zones and said Axient Digital handled all of the micro bodypack transmitters "like a champ."

"The ease of coordination made running the audio for this show like a dream," he recalled. He used the transmitter registration feature to assign multiple transmitters to the same receiver channel, enabling him to increase his overall management capabilities and make changes with the touch of a button.

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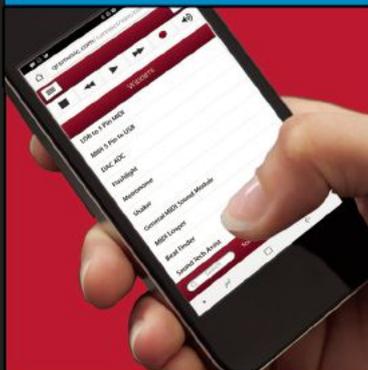
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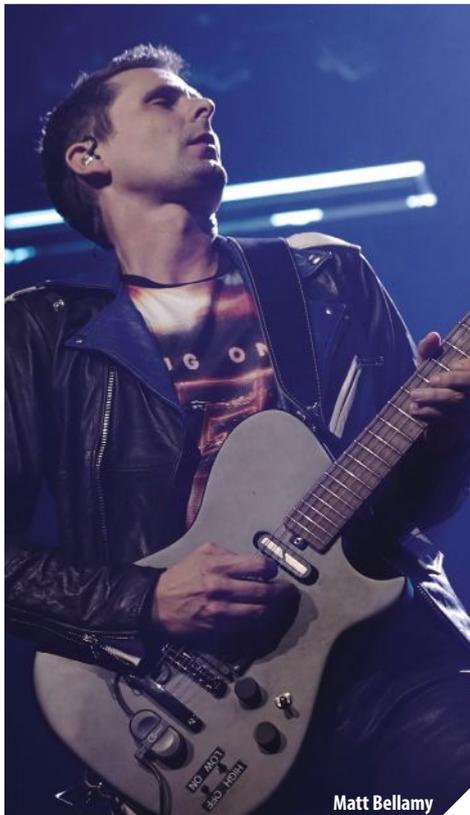
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Matt Bellamy

Fishman, Arturia, and MIND Music Labs Create a State of the Art Synth Guitar in 30 Days

British mega band MUSE is currently on tour promoting their latest album *Simulation Theory*, performing in sold out stadiums all over the world. Each night frontman and guitarist Matt Bellamy brings out a one of a kind guitar with a special history to play the song, "The Dark Side." While Bellamy is happy with the result, reporting that "the guitar works great!", the story of how this guitar was conceived and built is just a few short weeks is very interesting.

Bellamy wants the sounds he created in the studio on stage as much as possible. One essential part of his sound is the Arturia Prophet V synthesizer. Being a user of Fishman's TriplePlay MIDI guitar pickup & controller, both on stage and in the studio, he wanted to continue to use that to play the Arturia synth live, but without distance, range, cables and a computer getting in the way of his stage performance.

"When Matt told me he absolutely wanted to use the Prophet V softsynth live on tour," said Muse guitar tech Chris Whitemyer, "but still be able to move around the stage without any restrictions, I knew we had to find a new kind of solution that would take the computer out of the picture."

Chris Whitemyer was aware of Swedish music tech company MIND Music Labs and how their ELK MusicOS could run existing plugins and instruments on hardware. Thinking MIND might be the missing piece of the puzzle he approached them at the 2019 NAMM Show. Together with Fishman and Arturia, a first meeting was held in the MIND Music Labs booth on the show floor. That meeting, which took place just a few weeks before the start of Muse's 2019 World Tour, kicked off several hectic weeks resulting in the three companies producing a new kind of guitar. **see MUSE GUITAR page 18**

PUT SOME STING IN YOUR TONE.

From the tonal palette of the analog effects master Björn Juhl, the new **Silver Bee OD** captures that on-the-edge sound, with shimmering treble just on the brink of distortion, reminiscent of classic American "silvery" combo amps.

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OMG Music has been taking care of independent dealers' needs since 1990, so it's no surprise that these two companies would team up to offer dealers the highest level of quality and service that can only come from a strong partnership between the two.

"TKL's quality is legendary in the industry. With the rapidly increasing costs resulting from the escalating tariff situ-

ation, the value of the North American and American-made cases TKL offers is now off the charts" says Brett Marcus, partner at OMG Music.

"We wanted another partner that took servicing the dealers as seriously as we take protecting instruments. There was only one name that kept coming up when speaking with customers – OMG Music" says Tom Dougherty, owner and president of TKL.

OMG Music is a direct source for TKL products in the U.S. See them at Summer NAMM booths #1512 and #909.

Dobbs Stanford Appointed as Sennheiser Sales Rep

Sennheiser has announced that it has appointed Dobbs Stanford Corporation as sales representative for the TOLA region of the U.S. (Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana) to represent its Professional AV line of products.

Dobbs Stanford Corporation is recognized as one of the nation's premier sales representatives of professional AV products in the United States, employing a team of experienced professionals.



"We are truly excited to be working along with Sennheiser, which has a longstanding heritage in professional AV products," commented Fred Dobbs, owner and president of Dobbs Stanford. "Our mission will be to ensure that professional AV integrators in this region have an exceptional, enjoyable and profitable experience selling Sennheiser technologies to their clients."

Dobbs Stanford works with dealers, consultants and architects, delivering project and application support with a deep technical expertise. The firm also boasts in-house technical staff, a programming department and operations staff – all focused on the professional AV market.

"After being impressed by the professionalism and drive of Dobbs Stanford I am delighted that they have agreed to represent Sennheiser in this important territory," said Simon Holley, vice president, Sales & Marketing, Pro Audio Solutions, Sennheiser. "I very much look forward to working closely with the Dobbs Stanford team and seeing our market share continue to grow."

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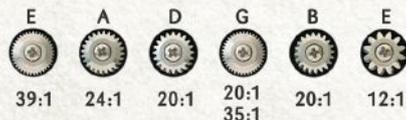
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KORG 'Moves' with Sweetwater at Annual Movement Music Festival

KORG recently partnered with Sweetwater Sound to exhibit a wide array of synthesizers and keyboards during Michigan's music festival Movement. Musicians, EDM and techno music lovers, as well as community leaders got hands on with the newest gear from KORG: the minilogue xd, minilogue xd module and the new volca nubass.



Austin Moss and Nick Kwas

"This event was yet again a great way to spread mindshare and get people excited about KORG tech gear, even amateurs and non-musicians. The new gear we displayed was a big hit, as well as some classics including the KORG monologue, the ideal synth for creating and producing techno sounds. We look forward to attending again next year," says lead product specialist at KORG USA, Inc., Nick Kwas.

MUSE Guitar

from page 14

tar just in time for the tour's first date in Houston, Texas.

"Going to that first meeting at NAMM I didn't know what to expect," said Fishman founder and president Larry Fishman, "but as soon as we plugged in the guitar with our TriplePlay system in the Powered by ELK audio interface board, it was pretty clear that the Fishman and ELK systems would be compatible."

What was clear after the first meeting was that the reliability of the Fishman TriplePlay MIDI Guitar Controller in combination with ELK's ability to run existing plugins inside the guitar could open up a new world for performers like Matt Bellamy. And with the tour just weeks away, a plan was hatched to get the system finalized and ready for use in the most demanding of conditions – a world tour of arenas and stadiums.

MIND Music Labs CEO Michele Benincaso commented, "Getting three different companies to join forces on a special project like this does not happen very often, so this was truly special. To go from a first meeting at NAMM to a functioning system in just weeks was a mind-blowing achievement. It required the special expertise and focused efforts of all three companies to pull it off – I can still hardly believe we did."

Only days after the closing of the NAMM Show, MIND Music Labs CTO Stefano Zambon flew to Fishman's Andover, Massachusetts headquarters to figure out how to get a powered by ELK audio board inside a guitar, that not only plays well

enough to satisfy a world class performer, but could also control the Arturia Prophet V at extremely low latency. In short, redefine the state of the art for synth guitars.

"To see one of our V Collection classic products like the Prophet V on Stage with Muse is very exciting," said Arturia CEO Frédéric Brun, "The fact that it is that same plugin running in the guitar as you use in the studio really makes all the difference. I mean, Matt Bellamy even uses the same preset in the studio!"

On February 22, just four weeks after the first initial meeting at NAMM, MUSE went on stage in Houston in front of a jam-packed Toyota Center. Seven songs into the show, Chris Whitemeyer handed Bellamy the new guitar for the song "The Dark Side."

Chris added, "When all the guys got together to build this, we didn't tell Matt that a new guitar was going to be built or maybe not built. I just gave it to him for the first show and told him he could walk as far as he wanted on stage. He just said, 'Oh, Cool!'"

"I had no doubt in my mind it would work and it performed flawlessly. When I first got the guitar one week before the first show I tested it very thoroughly, leaving it on for four hours, turning it off and on fifty or more times, and jumping up and down with it and bouncing it off a mattress. It passed all the tests. The guitar is rock solid! Matt and I couldn't be happier. It does everything I hoped it would and it's on stage every night"

If you want to see this unique guitar in action it will be on MUSE's Simulation Theory World Tour in Europe all summer and in South and Central America this fall.

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Supplier Scene

D'Addario Foundation Awards Ten College Scholarships

The D'Addario Foundation has announced the first-ever recipients of their new college scholarship. Ten students from Foundation grantee programs – seven of them being the first generation in their family to attend college – will be supported for four years with a scholarship that helps cover the cost of soft expenses such as books, transportation, and food.



The recipients of the college scholarships are a diverse group of students that have participated in robust instrument programs across the U.S., including UpBeat NYC, Orch-Kids, Rock to the Future, All-City High School Music Program, Young Musicians Unite, Intonation Music, Play On Philly, and Phoenix Conservatory of Music. Scholarship recipients have been a part of these programs for an average of seven years each and most have attended every weekday after school and acted as peer mentors for younger students.

Scholarship recipient Asia Palmer from Baltimore Symphony Orchestra's OrchKids program remarks, "Without music or OrchKids I probably wouldn't have the motivation to even apply to college, so I'm very grateful that both are a part of my life. I am incredibly grateful for this scholarship and it made me feel unstoppable – I now know that if I put my mind to something and work hard, I will get it!" She will be attending The Hartt School at University of Hartford.

Yamaha Advantage Seminars Provide Roadmap to Success

More than 60 Yamaha Music School owners and Yamaha music dealers from across North America recently attended the Yamaha Advantage program, a conference designed to help educators and dealers develop relationships with their customers and sharpen skills in finances, sales, marketing, operation and employee training.

The Yamaha Advantage conference was held at the New York, New York Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas from June 3-5.

The most recent addition to the conference, the Yamaha Music School Advantage program, celebrated its third successful year. Registered Yamaha Music School operators attended a jam-packed day of various workshops, including sales techniques, marketing and business operations, tactics for building awareness, improving customer relationships, and increasing enrollment. These seminars were led by Tom Hemphill, franchise marketing manager, Yamaha Corporation of America, who used case studies and role-playing to give attendees the tools they need to face challenges in the industry.

Attendees were also offered Financial Advantage seminars throughout the day. Financial Advantage, the legacy component of Yamaha Advantage, has trained more than 600 dealer participants in numerous training sessions. The workshops

were led by Alan Friedman, CPA, a partner with Friedman, Kannenberg & Company, P.C. with more than 30 years of accounting, tax, and consulting experience in the music industry; and Daniel Jobe, an accounting, tax, and consulting professional who works closely with music stores to supervise accounting issues.

"It's incredibly rewarding to work with educators who share our passion for developing young music makers," noted Hemphill. "At Yamaha, we are committed to supporting the next generation of musicians by encouraging them to make waves – to grow artistically and to share their passion with the world. This event truly represents the core of what we believe in as a company."

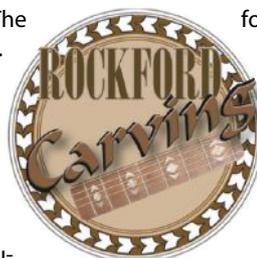
The Music School Advantage and Financial Advantage workshops were also held with Succession Advantage, the component seminar in the program that helps business owners as they plan for their retirement or the sale of their school.

Educators and dealers had high praise for the workshops they attended. "The Music School Advantage program was incredibly inspiring. It was wonderful to learn about what Yamaha can bring to our communities," said Heidi Grimes of East Valley Yamaha Music School in Chandler, Arizona.



Rockford Carving Company Launches the 'Guitar Passport' Program

Rockford Carving Company has announced the development of The "Guitar Passport"™ program. This program provides traceability from the endangered species (Wood & Shell Plate) guitar components which have been produced in accordance with the companies FSC, LACEY, and CITES documents. The Guitar Passport system



uses an installed RFID Chip in Rockford Carving's manufactured sub assemblies. Endangered raw materials will have the ability to be instantly traced back to the FSC, LACEY, and CITES certified program by way of a RFID chip reader. Proof of compliance to governmental standards will be available on a secure data site.



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Allen & Heath Power Billie Eilish and Kanye West at Coachella

Allen & Heath's dLive Digital Mixing System played its part at this year's edition of Coachella, supporting buzz-worthy sets by Billie Eilish and Kanye West's special Easter Sunday Service.

Sound Image supplied a pair of S5000 Control Surfaces and DM64 MixRacks to handle both front of house and monitor duties as Eilish wooed her fans in two packed and highly energetic shows.

Jeff Hawley, Allen & Heath USA marketing manager commented, "Billie has been out with dLive for her last sold out tour and now in support of her Billboard-topping *When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?* album, with Coachella being a great way to really kick off the new tour. Engineers like Drew Thornton and Salim Akram (Billie Eilish FOH and monitor engineers) are out there showing just how powerful, robust, and scalable the dLive really is – tackling fly dates with the compact C1500 one day and jumping up to 168 fader strips on an S5000 to drive huge shows such as Coachella, on the next."



dLive was also an integral part of Kanye West's innovative Sunday Service, the debut public performance of his gospel-themed interactive experience. A dLive C3500 and DM64 MixRack were positioned just a few feet away from Kanye on "the mountain," along with over 20 Allen & Heath ME-1 Personal Monitor Mixers which fed in-ear mixes to the accompanying choir members and live musicians.

"We worked with Kanye's team to design a system that is flexible enough to keep up with his ever-evolving technical and artistic needs," notes Allen & Heath live sound and touring manager Mike Bangs. "The ability to have great sounding effects right in the box with dLive's DEEP processing, having a multitude of options and formats for easily expanding I/O as needed, and the plug and play ME personal monitoring made for a smooth setup, even in the middle of a field. We are very proud to have played a part in making this special performance a highlight of Coachella 2019."



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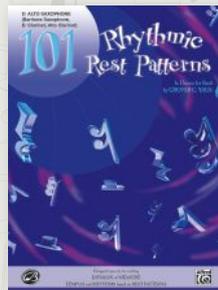
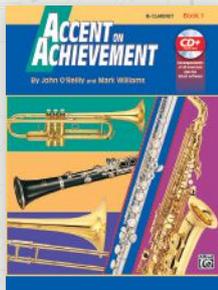
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St. John's Univ. Enlists Sennheiser's TeamConnect Ceiling

St. John's University recently began standardizing the technology within its classrooms, conference rooms, and meeting spaces, and settled on Sennheiser's TeamConnect Ceiling as its primary audio-conferencing solution.

With an international student body and dynamic faculty that are pushing the boundaries of modern post-second-

ary education, St. John's primary goal in implementing Sennheiser's TeamConnect Ceiling conferencing solution was to provide greater flexibility for its faculty, while delivering the best possible communications experience: "When we look at an AV solution, it is meant to facilitate communication, whether inside or outside of the classroom," says Eric

Alvarado, director of academic technology, St. John's University. "Teaching is at the point where the traditional walls of a classroom are no longer a limitation; so, our spaces have to perform and be flexible."

Before settling on the TeamConnect Ceiling solution, St. John's had already been utilizing Sennheiser wireless microphones across its campus.

"We started installing the wireless mics in Manhattan around 2013 and we probably have well over 300 wireless microphones from Sennheiser at this point," explains Salvatore Frucci, audiovisual systems engineer, St. John's University. "I met our Sennheiser sales representative, Tom Conte, at InfoComm in 2015 and we set up time to demo the TeamConnect Ceiling system, and it was quite impressive. This was the catalyst that started the process of us installing them here on the campus."

"The great thing about TeamConnect is that it really follows your voice around the room with the beamforming technology," Frucci continues. "This feature caught our attention pretty quick, and as we started deploying them, the difference in intelligibility was night and day." Currently, St. John's has TeamConnect Ceiling units in four locations: its St. Augustine Faculty Development Classroom has two of them in one of its larger spaces, and three other units are located in conference rooms across the University's main campus in Queens."

Now that St. John's has several TeamConnect Ceiling units installed, the Sennheiser Control Cockpit software is being used to monitor and manage the status of the network enabled microphones across campus – including TeamConnect Ceiling units and several other Sennheiser microphones across campus. By using Sennheiser Control Cockpit, the team can gain status information at a glance and make adjustments for one or multiple devices at the same time.

"We are using Control Cockpit to remotely check the battery levels of our microphones, as well as frequency placement of our wireless mics," says Frucci. "We have 80 rooms in one building, so you have to be very careful with frequency assignments. Control Cockpit helps us manage this and ensure that all our frequencies are aligned so we don't have any performance issues."

The advertisement features a close-up of a guitar with several packages of SIT Strings. The packages are labeled '2ND (B) STRING', '5TH (A) STRING', '1ST (E) STRING', and '4TH (D) STRING'. The SIT logo, which consists of the letters 'SIT' in a stylized font with a hand holding a string, is prominent. Below the logo, the text 'SIT Strings' is written in a script font. The background is dark, making the guitar and string packages stand out.

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Alfred Music Advocates for Music Education in Washington, D.C. During Annual Fly-In

During the week of May 20-24, Alfred Music business leaders Ron Manus, chief business development officer, and Jennifer Paisley-Schuch, trade shows and partnerships director, joined more than 100 music industry leaders, notable artists, and arts education activists to advocate for all school-aged children to have access to quality, comprehensive school music education programs.

As part of the NAMM Advocacy Fly-In, the delegation met with members of Congress and other policy stakeholders to reinforce the importance of music as part of a well-rounded education and to urge Congress to fund the Title IV program at its authorized level of \$1.65 billion in fiscal year 2020 to ensure that the goals of the Every Student Succeeds Act are realized for every child.

Manus said, "This year we could really see the momentum building in our efforts to get the Every Student Succeeds Act fully funded! It was great showing up in Congressional offices and being greeted with, 'My favorite meeting of the year' by our friends in Congress. Music is so important for our schools, it unites the school and brings everyone together in a profound way. After all, how can you have a High School Football game without a marching band? We are fighting to ensure that every child who has the desire to learn and participate has access to a quality music education."

Paisley-Schuch added, "It is such a privilege to participate in the Fly-In and fight to ensure that every child has access to a well-rounded education that includes music. Music is important to the growth and development of our youth and I want every child to have the same access and opportunities in music that I was fortunate to have growing up. It is extremely encouraging to hear several of the Congressional offices that we visited agree and offer their support to



Ron Manus and Jennifer Paisley-Schuch

fully fund the Every Student Succeeds Act."

The Advocacy week began on Monday, May 20 with a Day of Service at Charles Hart Middle School in Congress Heights. Nearly 60 NAMM Members provided one-on-one instruction on drums, guitars, and ukuleles to students, as well as needed maintenance and repair to the school's musical instruments. In the evening, the delegation delved into the opportunities to advance music education at a special panel session featuring arts leaders, school administrators, and the Save The Music Foundation.

On Tuesday, Manus and Paisley-Schuch prepared for their efforts on Capitol Hill by participating in advocacy training, during which the group was apprised of current issues facing public school music programs and briefed on the Every Student Succeeds Act and the current political climate from a variety of policy and arts leaders.

That evening, Manus, Paisley-Schuch, and the group joined The NAMM Foundation in honoring Chairman Robert C. "Bobby" Scott (VA-03), Committee on Education and Labor, with the Support Music Champion Award. The award was presented by former Secretary of Education Richard Riley and NAMM president and CEO Joe Lamond to the Chairman, in recognition of the Scott's unwavering commitment to music and the arts and for his role as one of the primary authors and champion of the Every Student Succeeds Act.

Upon presentation of the award, See *ALFRED MUSIC* page 28



LEE BUTTERWORTH

Danley Gear Chosen for the Fine Arts Pablo Center at the Confluence

The Pablo Center at the Confluence in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, recently installed the center's new audio and video systems, which include over 60 Danley Sound Labs loudspeakers and subwoofers powered by Danley's multi-channel DNA amplifier/DSPs. AV integration firm Camera Corner Connecting Point (CCCP) of Green Bay, Wisconsin assisted in the design and installation of the systems.

The Pablo Center hired Threshold Acoustics, of Chicago, Illinois, to handle the acoustic and sound system design for the two larger spaces in the building – the proscenium theater and the JAMF black box theater. They hired CCCP to design AV systems for all the other rooms in the building, as well as the video systems.

"The practice spaces didn't have any particular loudspeaker manufacturer specified, but when they asked us to run the numbers on filling them with products from the proscenium theater's loudspeaker manufacturer, it was way over budget," said Scott Tomashek, director of AV design and engineering for CCCP. "I explained that Danley would be a great option. People have this idea that Danley boxes are super expensive, but they're not. They deliver state-of-the-art performance at a price that would allow the Pablo Center to more than meet their performance specifications, which required both volume and critical-listening fidelity."

Each of the five rehearsal spaces uses four Danley SM96 loudspeakers – one in each corner – for mains and a single Danley TH112 subwoofer. Four-channel Danley DNA 10k4 Pro amplifiers drive the loudspeakers and subwoofers.

"Using the Danley amps made the setup and commissioning easier due to built-in DSP presets for the various Dan-

ley models," Tomashek said. "The Danley hardware made it easy to hang the speakers off the pipe grid in these spaces. I worked with local fabricators to make custom rigging plates to suspend the subwoofers from the pipe grid as well."

Given Anderson's new enthusiasm for Danley, he and the team from Threshold agreed with Tomashek's suggestion to switch the JAMF black box theater over to Danley as well. "Since it's a black box theater, we fitted the speakers with clamps to allow them to be reconfigured for different shows and applications," he said. "A total of eight Danley SM96s are dedicated to the JAMF along with four Danley TH112 subwoofers and four Danley SHMicros. All are powered with Danley DNA 10K4 Pro amplifiers." A Yamaha CL3 digital console serves as the system's nerve center and feeds the Danley amplifiers via Dante. Aaron Johnson, a consultant with Threshold Acoustics, tuned the system, starting from the Danley presets that come with the Danley amplifiers.

The Pablo Center's light, sound, and video production lab includes "more Danley boxes than would seem reasonable given its size," in Tomashek's words, a fact that reflects the flexibility necessary for such a space. There are four Danley SH60 loudspeakers, four Danley THmini subwoofers, and sixteen Danley SHMicros, all flexibly powered by six 4-channel Danley DNA 10k4 Pro amplifiers. "They're going to be teaching sound, lighting, and video design, and plenty more in the lab," Tomashek said. "The DSP in the Danley amplifiers is extremely flexible and will allow them to make any scenario happen. All the Danley SHMicros can be used as effects speakers... or really whatever they want. They could even do high-dimension surround sound systems."

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Whalum Endorses P. Mauriat Saxophones



P. Mauriat has welcomed Kirk Whalum as an endorsee. He performs exclusively on the P. Mauriat PMXT-66R tenor saxophone in Cognac Lacquer. "We couldn't be

more thrilled to be working with a legend like Kirk," says Adam MacBlane, communications director, band & orchestra at St. Louis Music. "He has colored the world so beautifully with his music, and that he has chosen one of our horns, specifically the PMXT-66R tenor sax, is a true honor."

Whalum remarks, "Newness! Rebirth in a way? This new horn goes along with lots of other fresh new moves for me in my 48th year playing saxophone, and believe me the P. Mauriat PMXT-66RCL is inspiring me, pushing me into the next 48 years."

ALFRED MUSIC

from page 26

the Chairman shared, "I want to thank the National Association of Music Merchants for promoting music and arts education in public schools. We know that access to music and art programs can be a powerful tool for improving student engagement, attendance, and outcomes. We must continue the important work of ensuring that all students have access to high-quality arts and music programs that enrich their development and lead to better educational outcomes."

On Wednesday, Manus met with Cong. Tony Cárdenas, Cong. Scott Peters, Cong. Duncan Hunter and legislative staff for Cong. Ted Lieu, Cong. Maxine Waters, Cong. Adam Schiff, and Cong. Katie Hill. Paisley-Schuch met with Cong. Kathleen Rice, Cong. Max Rose, and legislative staff for Sen. Charles Schumer, Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, Cong. Jerrold Nadler, Cong. John Katko, Governor Andrew Cuomo's Office, and other elected officials to advocate for school-level music

programs across the nation and to discuss the multitude of benefits music education espouses, such as increased brain function, focus, and language development.

Later Wednesday evening, the delegation, music and arts stakeholders, and others gathered to celebrate former New York Yankee World Series champion, NAMM Foundation Board member, music education champion, and accomplished musician Bernie Williams.



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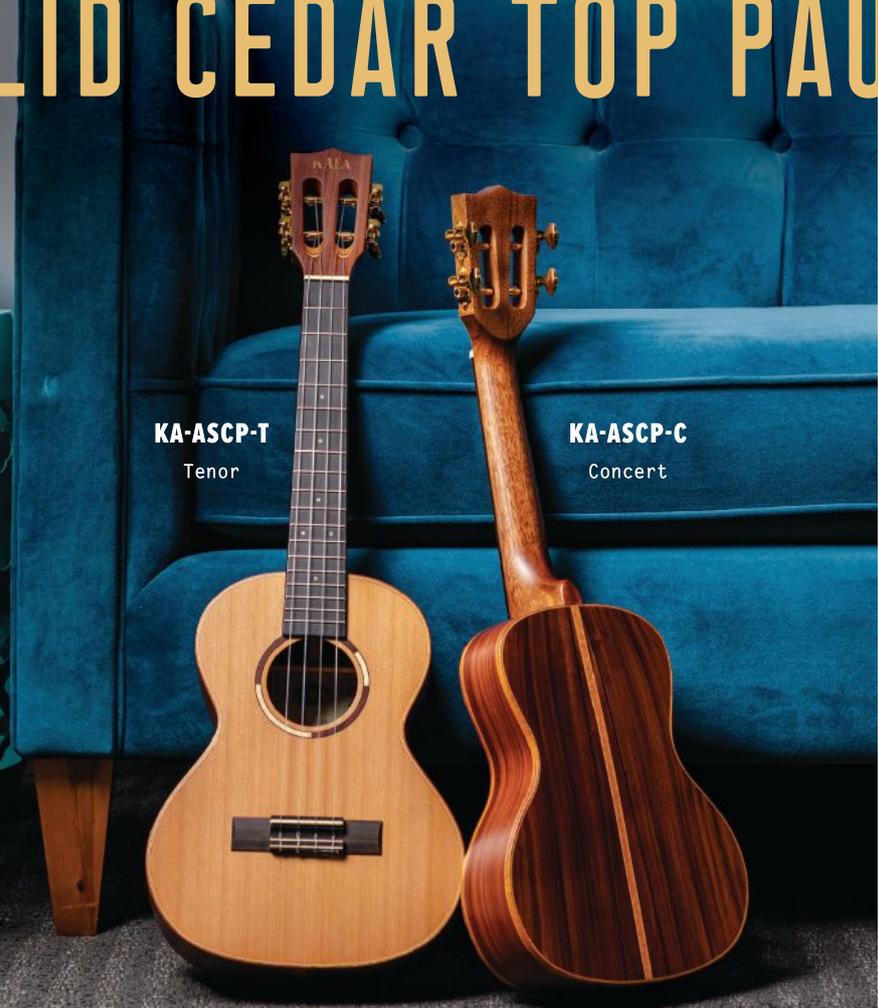
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This All Solid Cedar Top Ukulele with Solid Pau Ferro back and sides has a gorgeous asymmetrical rosette of Maple and Pau Ferro that helps give these ukes a very distinct look. The all solid Cedar top provides this ukulele with a warm and sweet tone with excellent loud projection. The all solid Pau Ferro back and sides are a perfect audio and visual compliment to the solid cedar top as they provide bright clear tonal elements to this instrument's sound. With the the concert or tenor model at your side you can feel confident that you'll be ready for any musical setting whether in the studio or on stage.

KALABRAND.COM

SOLID CEDAR TOP PAU FERRO



KA-ASCP-T
Tenor

KA-ASCP-C
Concert



Summer NAMM
BOOTH# 1007

GLOBAL NEWS

Dexibell Celebrates Dealers with 'Keys to the Future' Event in Italy

On May 14, Dexibell celebrated its dealers and artists with its "Keys to the Future" event at Proel global headquarters in Sant'Omero, Italy.

Dexibell dealers from around the globe recently gathered at the global headquarters of Proel to attend "Keys to the Future," an event focused on Dexibell's award-winning tone, touch, technology and design and offer a preview of its next-generation instruments and technology.

During the event, dealers were treated to a guided tour of the Dexibell factory by its leading engineers, followed by a tour of the Proel headquarters and logistics center, and culminated with a banquet where three North American dealers were presented with Dexibell's 2018 Retail Excellence awards: Sweetwater (USA), Chuck Levin's Washington Music Center (USA), and Cosmo Music (Canada).

The "Keys to the Future" event culminated with an evening performance by emerging American stars in the Proel Theater. The evening was streamed live on Dexibell's social media channels, and is now available to watch on YouTube.

"Behind every great brand are passionate, dedicated people and partners; and it is a delight to bring select dealers and artists to Italy to meet the hard-working people who make Dexibell possible, and to celebrate a new musical Renaissance," says Antonio Ferranti, president of Dexibell North America. "Dexibell, and our parent-company Proel, is headquartered in the heart of Italy, a region which founded the great Renaissance of art and science over 700 years ago. And from that region, Dexibell is engineering a new musical Renaissance that's being heard around the world."

La Cité Collégiale Enlists Sennheiser Fixtures for New Theater

La Cité Collégiale in Ontario recently opened its Excentricité education facility, which features a 1,200-seat theater dubbed "The Studio." Patrick Roy of systems integrator group CBCI Telecom spec'd the entire Excentricité project, selecting Sennheiser's Digital 6000 wireless system for its ability to eliminate feedback, its wide dynamic range, and its Dante connectivity.

"The Studio features a complete digital system over network with a Dante board," Roy explained. "It was La Cité's vision to have a complete Dante system – both audio and video – in the 360-degree Studio. Dante is the new wave with consoles, mics and speakers all changing to this platform. Depending on the network, it can be much cheaper. So, the Dante connectivity coupled with its high sound quality made the Digital 6000 a perfect fit."

Installed alongside The Studio's Digital 6000 system was Sennheiser's MobileConnect – the company's system and app that streams audio content via Wi-Fi to smartphones. The MobileConnect smartphone hearing system app is ideal for use in universities where it provides students with personalized audio. Since The Studio holds both conferences and plays performances, the MobileConnect system was a perfect fit for Roy and his team. "MobileConnect is great because it offers a state-of-the-art audio experience and is easy to use for the end-user," Roy said. "It really enhances the listening experience."

The Studio boasts 252 feet of 360-degree video, and with close to 50 speakers installed to support the immersive au-



La Cité Collégiale

dio-visual experience, Roy and his team were tasked with finding an audio system that would keep feedback to a minimum. "With so many speakers in one space, you really need a system that can prevent feedback," Roy explained. "The Studio features a d&b Soundscape system, two line arrays and Renkus-Heinz ICONYX speakers placed behind the screens as well as speakers specifically for conferences. Finding an audio system that could eliminate feedback was important."

Because The Studio holds a variety of different events – from conferences to theater productions to live band performances – Roy needed a multi-purpose system that could deliver crystal-clear audio whatever the application.

"The Digital 6000 Series works great with guitars for live bands and because the space can be rented out for live performances, this was important," Roy explained. "The Studio was a unique project because of the 360-degree aspect. We made sure to choose only the best system for this project to make the sound adaptable for whatever the space held, whether it was a conference or a play."

After using the system for a few months, Roy said La Cité's staff have been blown away by the audio in the 360-degree Studio. "The sound in The Studio has far surpassed La Cité's expectations," Roy said. "Even the patrons that have attended a performance in the 360-degree studio are saying great things about the audio experience."

Italian Speaker Imports Expands Again



The Italian Speaker Imports warehouse in Wappingers Falls, New York

Italian Speaker Imports (I.S.I. / FBT USA) has announced its move to a larger location in Wappingers Falls, New York. John Krupa, president and owner of the company, recently purchased the building in response to growing orders, inventory and staff, citing a desire to provide an even stronger customer experience as a driver for the change. I.S.I. is the exclusive distributor of FBT, JTS and Bespeco.

ISI's new building, located at 72 Airport
See *I.S.I.* page 32

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MX Événement and CHAUVET DJ Help Design Aglaé Create Magic For Euro Disney



Sophie Hombert and her company Design Aglaé S.A. recently adorned the popular Ticket to America Startup Competition with her floral display at Disneyland Paris. Adding a captivating glow to this enchanting vista at the high-profile event, which was sponsored by the American Chamber of Commerce in France, was a lighting system by MX Événement that drew on the illuminating power of the CHAUVET DJ EVE P-150 UV. The company deployed 16 of the 150W UV LED fixtures throughout the display, relying on their ultraviolet light to make rows of specially treated flowers glow in the dark.

The Design Aglaé creative process begins with a new (and entirely natural) nutritive serum that causes the flowers glow under ultraviolet light, so their beauty can be savored both day and night.

MX Événement was asked to provide lighting that could project a smooth, evenly focused field of UV illumination on the flowers, while not distracting from the floral display itself. After evaluating 15 different UV fixture options, the MX Événement team selected the EVE P-150 UV for the project.

"We had to find powerful, compact and lightweight projectors to perform," said an MX Événement spokesperson. "The output of the EVE fixture was very impressive, and the adjustable opening with magnetic lenses was especially useful in allowing us to focus the light. These features, along with the EVE's reasonable cost, compactness and easy installation design, made it the clear choice."

Also winning praise from MX Événement and others associated with the Ticket to America Startup Competition were the EVE P-150 UV's silent operation and flicker-free output. Both of these features were extremely useful in helping to make the lighting system unobtrusive during the event.

Trade Regrets

On Friday, June 14, we received the following from a representative for Mackie:



*I'm reaching out to let you know that last week Mackie lost a dear friend, colleague and Mackie family member – **Jessica Bryner**. Jessica passed away unexpectedly on Tuesday June 4th.*

This has been a devastating loss for all of us. Jessica was not only an amazing co-worker who always took on more than asked, was so incredibly organized, and was so smart and talented, but she was also a great friend who cared about the people around her so much. If you spent any time with her on the phone or in person, you know that she was always smiling and laughing. She loved this industry, music and the relationships she developed along the way.

This has been incredibly difficult to grasp and process for the Mackie team, and especially the marketing group. We appreciate your patience as we get back on our feet again.

On June 5, we received the following from NAMM historian Dan Del Fiorentino:



*It is with a heavy heart that we note the passing of **William Dunkley** on May 30, 2019. He was 97 years old. His death marks the end of an important era in the music products industry as he ran a successful retail company as well as worked long and hard to support the industry and encourage music making whenever he could.*

*William and his wife Dorothy co-founded Dunkley Music Stores in Boise, Idaho. In addition to taking the trade of organ and piano sales out of the store and into the truck to their customers, the Dunkley's were widely known in the industry as great advocates of music making. Along with a long list of local and national music-related charities, they have contributed to the growth of the music products industry on several levels. William's love for aircraft and their annual flights to the NAMM show are also legendary within the industry. He served on the NAMM Board of Directors twice (1965-1968 and again from 1974-1977). His store motto was echoed throughout our industry as it clearly states our true feelings: *The Richest Child Is Poor Without Music.**

I.S.I.

from page 30

Drive, Wappingers Falls, New York, was an ideal choice according to Krupa. In addition to providing his staff with more room for working and inventory, the purchase has also provided the flexibility needed to design office and warehouse spaces to his specifications, maximizing both efficiency and delivery.

"We've been lucky enough to keep growing exponentially year over year," said Krupa. "Everyone who works with us knows that our goal, across the board, is to provide exceptional products, service and delivery to our clients. Our new building provides nearly double the square footage over our previous warehouse space and is close to the trucking companies we utilize,

which means our customers get more of what they need, faster than ever now."

"I tell people all the time," said Mike Brown, president of M&M Productions. "Anybody can go buy audio visual equipment and do a show for you. The difference between one company and another is the people 'in' that company, and the customer service they'll provide to you. M & M Productions USA is all about quality and service. We love dealing with everyone at Italian Speaker Imports because they have the same philosophy we do... You can have the best speaker product in the world, but you've got to have the people to sell it, support it and stand by the product – At Italian Speaker Imports, they do."

ON THE MOVE

Sweetwater has announced the hiring of Troy Poe as a second senior vice president of human resources.

Prior to joining Sweetwater, Poe led human resources at Blue Man Group Las Vegas and national award-winning Towbin Automotive Group. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Indiana State, has served on advisory boards for SHRM (Society Human Resource Management) and holds their SHRM-SCP designation.

As Sweetwater continues a major expansion project that includes a huge increase in staffing, he will help guide the hiring of hundreds of new employees over the next four years.

"I'm very excited to be part of the Sweetwater team," said Poe. "Sweetwater has emerged as one of the best places in the country to work. I hope to build on the company's stellar reputation and further improve the experience for current and potential employees."

Poe will work alongside Jeff McDonald, who's been the senior VP of human resources for 14 years. "The tremendous growth we've experienced in recent years has been astounding. As we continue to expand, Troy's influence will be invaluable," said McDonald. "I look forward to working with him."



Rockford Carving has announced the appointment of Rick Gembar as their new head of Business Development.

Gembar spent 25 years with Gibson Brands as SR/VP/GM of the Gibson Custom Division in addition to mentoring roles at Gibson USA, Montana and Memphis.

"Rockford Carving had a 25-year relationship working with Rick and together Gibson Custom attained tremendous growth year over year. His out of the box thinking and creativity opened-up new markets for guitar sales. Gibson Custom was the Gold Standard for the industry," says Bob Klingler

Gembar has a background in architectural millwork and design and is a skilled craftsman who continues to produce fine furniture. He received an MBA from Vanderbilt University in 2002 and attended Kent State University 1970-1974.

Over his 25 year career with Gibson, Mr. Gembar was known for his effective leadership, coaching and employee development. He achieved 90 percent market share for guitars over \$3,000 net due to his focus on the global marketplace. Collectors Choice, Custom

Direct, and Made to Measure are all programs designed and implemented, while he was at Gibson Custom.

Rockford Carving Company is the premier manufacturer of head veneers, fingerboards, pickguards, cut parts/inlays, brass hardware, bridge bases, and pool table components.

Martin Audio North America has appointed Joe Lima as product support specialist.

Bolstering Martin Audio North America's Product Support Group, Lima will support sales by providing technical support services and training in the U.S. and Canada to the sales team, distributors and dealers. He will also assist in the development of new products, identify and report sales opportunities.

Lima has been involved in audio production for most of his career including rock and world music concert touring in Europe where he worked as a FOH and monitor engineer and system tech. He also produced a number of successful albums in Portugal and Spain before working for a variety of production companies in Europe and the U.S. Most recently, he helped build a successful audio department at Frost Productions before joining Martin Audio.



Bourgeois Guitars has announced the promotion of Christopher Fleming to the position of president and COO.

Fleming joined Bourgeois Guitars after serving over 20 years as a captain in both the Merchant Marine and the maritime non-profit sector. He is one of the last generations of "Hawse Pipers," (mariners who did not attend a Merchant Marine Academy), to attain an unlimited master of motor, steam, sail, and towing vessels of unlimited tonnage up on all oceans, the highest level of maritime licensure.

For the last seven years, Fleming spent his off-ship time building acoustic guitars for his own brand out of his shop in midcoast Maine. After the birth of his son, Christopher decided to "swallow the anchor" and move ashore to be a full-time father. He joined Bourgeois Guitars as a luthier in October of 2017.

In his new role he will also be responsible for Production and Administrative team development, management of infrastructure and marketing initiatives, and will facilitate short and long-range strategic planning. The company is excited and proud to have his leadership experience and his passion for the craft on board as it lays course into the future.



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Note From Kimberly Deverell

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Summer NAMM Plan

Discover how to maximize Summer NAMM and the reasons why it is important for your community music store to attend.

Summer NAMM is a truly unique trade show. In Nashville, we have plenty of time to spend alongside our vendors and friends. The relaxed atmosphere at this annual NAMMily reunion allows us to focus on relationship building and networking. Because of the casual vibe, we find more opportunity to connect with the broader industry on a deeper level. In fact, some of our dearest friendships were born at Summer NAMM! Additionally, we appreciate the recognition and sense of community that the Top 100 Dealer Awards brings to music retailers. It's invaluable to be around the "cream of the crop," and it inspires our team to do more and strive to be better!

How I Work the Show

San Diego Music Studio works the floor as a team. First, we visit our long-term vendors. We take the time to catch up on a personal level then place our orders. For many of our products, we pre-plan our purchases. Then, when we're face-to-face, our team is able to support exhibitors' sales in person, showing our support and placing an order, as well as asking for any incentives. Likewise, the show is a great opportunity to meet with the senior management of our favorite vendors, creating a relationship that goes deeper into the company structure.

Next, we like to block off a day to walk the entire show floor, booth by booth. It's critically valuable to get to know the new products and services, as well as scope out potential holiday merchandise. We love to find new impulse buys for our customers, such as front-counter products. We call these tchotchke items our "gum or candy." These fun, little and creative products fit with our store, so when we find one, we'll place an order on the spot!

As we walk the floor, we share playful social media posts, so we can generate buzz and bring the Summer NAMM experience to

our customers back home. They love the sneak previews of the fun new products coming soon to our store.

After that, it's off to relevant NAMM U education sessions. The ideas are easy to implement and have the potential to revolutionize our operation. Finally, I never miss the Coalition on Coalitions meeting. It's so valuable to get involved and learn how we as retailers can help make music education a reality for all. Through the techniques and powerful network at the Coalition on Coalitions, we've found tools to help make a difference in our representative government and a delightful way to connect as a musical community.

Following Up

When we return home, our team follows up on the orders we made at the show, gets in contact with the new vendors we met and continues placing orders. We pool our notes from NAMM U education sessions and share them with our staff. We'll also have meetings to discuss all that we learned and creative ways of implementing these new ideas in our store.

Don't Miss Out on a Valuable Opportunity!

In my opinion, missing Summer NAMM is a missed opportunity. Period. It's a missed opportunity to meet new people, connect and build lasting relationships. Summer NAMM is the perfect mid-year refresh. It is a breath of fresh air. The show sparks inspiration and gets the creative juices flowing again. I couldn't imagine waiting an entire year in between shows!

Kimberly Deverell

Director of Operations • San Diego Music Studio

Current NAMM Board Member

Summer NAMM

July 18–20, 2019

Nashville, Tennessee



Grow Your Sales

Find the products your customers are looking for entering the holiday buying season.

- Explore the fretted community, including the new Boutique Guitar Showcase
- See the latest in SBO and a wide array of percussion products
- Expand your tech offerings with the Pro Audio Showcase
- Discover new directions for the industry in the summer debut of Software.NAMM



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- The Customer Experience Revolution
- 5 Website Hacks to Boost Online Sales
- Music Lessons: How to End No-Shows Forever
- Tips for Launching a Music Festival at Your Store



Build Your Business Community

Benefit from new ideas, connections and inspiration to drive a successful second half of the year.

- Connect with fellow retailers at the NAMM Opening Night Party Featuring the 36th Annual American Eagle Awards honoring George Clinton and Vince Guaraldi
- Develop your network at the Top 100 Dealer Awards, hosted by CMT star Katie Cook
- Enjoy live entertainment on the NAMM Avid Stage on the Terrace



Your entire team will benefit by attending the Retail Training Summit!
Wednesday, July 17



Win in the Age of Disruption: NAMM U Breakfast Session Retail Disruptors
Thursday, July 18



Network with retail innovators at the Top 100 Dealer Awards
Friday, July 19

The retailers that are attending are the folks who seem to truly understand how fast the world is changing. They know that the clues to their future growth can be found by attending as many NAMM U sessions as possible and by keeping their ear to the ground and fully involved in the countless conversations occurring in and around Summer NAMM.

Joe Lamond • NAMM President and CEO

Learn More and Register at
namm.org/summer

SUMMER NAMM Buyer's Guide

Browse the aisles of NAMM before you even touch down in Nashville with MMR's annual product guide

ACCESSORIES

S.I.T Strings Guitars "CRT" Electric Guitar Strings

Booth: 1107



S.I.T Strings has released an electric version of their CRT coated guitar strings. These strings offer four standard gauge options (.09-.042, .09-.046, .010-.046, .011-.050) and are made with eight percent NPS (Nickel Plated Steel wrap wire) with hard tempered plain steel strings. CRT coating extends the life of the string while maintaining a balanced tone and the organic feel of an un-coated string. Street price: \$11.99



www.sitstrings.com

New Cables from RockBoard

Booth: 1123

The RockBoard Power Ace Voltage Doubler Y Cable is a high-quality voltage doubler cable with super compact connectors to combine the output voltage of two isolated power connectors (e.g. 2 x 9V to 1 x 18V). With the RockBoard Power Ace Voltage Doubler Y cable, two isolated 9V outputs of a power supply can be bridged to one 18V output. This can be used for pedals with higher voltage for more headroom or for pedals that can only be operated with higher voltages such as 18V.

Also new is the RockBoard Power Ace Current Doubler Y Cable, a high-quality current doubler cable with super compact connectors for combining the output current of two isolated current connections (e.g. 2 x 150 mA to 1 x 300 mA). With the RockBoard Current Doubler, two isolated current outputs of the same voltage can be bridged to combine their current output (mA) for current-hungry pedals.



www.rockboard.de

Asterope Pro Bass Series Instrument Cables

Booth: 529

Asterope's full line of the Asterope Pro Bass Series instrument cables is ideal for bass players in both studio and live environments. The new products deliver fuller, rounder and richer tones while preserving warm mids and clean highs. The Pro Bass Series uses Asterope's exclusive technology –the result of decades of R&D – providing customers with greater clarity, bandwidth and harmonic response.

The Asterope Pro Bass cables are built with extensive braided shielding, non-metallic connector barrels, patented solid core, ultra-clarity nickel connectors, ultra-pure silver solder, and a durable exterior jacketing to protect the integrity of the cable's architecture. The products undergo a proprietary process to increase clarity and enhance electron flow, delivering enhanced harmonic and frequency response.



www.asterope.com



Artesia's Everywhere Studio Bundle

Booth: 335

A mobile recording studio in a backpack, Artesia's Everywhere Studio bundle has what you need to produce industry quality tracks while on the go. The bundle comes complete with the Xkey 25 MIDI Keyboard Controller (with carrying case), the Artesia A22XT Hi-Res USB Audio Interface, the professional AMC-10 Cardioid Condenser Microphone, Studio Monitor Headphones, as well as all the connecting cables and software needed for your Mac/PC/Linux laptop. All of this comes in an adjustable backpack with expansive storage for the whole setup and weighs four pounds. \$299 street price.

www.virginmusicalinstrumentcompany.com

The GSP1000 ABY Switcher from On-Stage

Booth: 521

On-Stage's new GSP1000 ABY Switcher is complete with true bypass circuitry, giving musicians the ultimate choice between 2 input/1 output and/or 1 input/2 configurations.

The new GSP1000 allows players to run one signal to two separate amps for real-time stereo, pivot to and from two amps for dirty/clean dynamics, run two separate instruments through an effects chain simultaneously or bypass anything from that temperamental boutique effect to their entire pedalboard.



www.on-stage.com

CASES & STANDS

New Stands from AirTurn

Booth: 7600

AirTurn's goSTAND is a portable mic/tablet stand that works well for both standing and seated musicians for holding their tablet computers, microphones and other gear that can be mounted using a standard 5/8-27 mic thread. The stand is less than 18" (453mm) when fully folded and fits in most backpacks and carry-ons. It weighs only 2.6 lbs. (1.25kg) and can expand from 18" (453mm) to 57" (1447mm), while steel tubing provides the weight to keep attached objects steady.

Likewise, the Telescoping BOOM is less than 16" (407mm) when fully collapsed, but stretches to 27.5" (704mm) when fully extended, and weighs 1.3 lbs. (.55kg). It works with all AirTurn mounting systems.

The AirTurn Manos Mount turns your favorite tablet or smartphone into the ultimate music stand. The Manos Mount is modeled after the human hand, with cantilever "thumbs" in back and springloaded "fingers" in front that ensure a secure grip. The Manos Mount attaches to any microphone stand and delivers smooth 360° rotation with portrait and landscape locking positions, while a self-locking hinge easily adjusts your tablet or smartphone to any viewing angle. From smartphones to tablets, the Manos Mount can accommodate reading devices of all sizes, and the Manos Mount can grip your device in or out of any protective case, even iPads in Otterboxes.

www.airturn.com



Hercules Plus Series

Booth: 1421

Hercules Stands' new Plus Series stands provide players with an increased level of security, dependability and versatility. The upgraded AGS yoke is designed to fit a wider range of instrument necks, from wider neck instruments like classical guitars, to narrow neck instruments like ukuleles, mandolins and banjos. The Plus series stands come with specially designed "N.I.N.A." (Narrow Neck Instrument Adjustment) cuffs to ensure all instrument types are safely locked.

In addition, the re-imagined footpad of Hercules Plus Series Guitar Stands maximize friction to better prevent sliding, and the new "Instant Height Adjustment Clutch" allows for super quick, easy, and secure positioning.

www.herculesstands.com



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New Custom Shop Master Built Streamer LX from Warwick

Booth: 1123

This Warwick Custom Shop Master Built Streamer LX features a Wild Flamed Maple body (curved body shape), a Nirvana Red Burst Transparent High Polish Finish, and a matching wooden electronics compartment cover and matching headstock with red "W" LED logo.



The bolt-on neck of this Streamer LX consists of Wenge (three laminations), and the fingerboard is made of ziricote. Twenty-four extra hard Jumbo bronze frets were inserted into the fretboard by IFT (Invisible Fretwork Technology) and perfectly set up by Plek Fretwork. Further equipment details include: height-adjustable Just-A-Nut III brass nut, Warwick tuners with wooden knobs, active MEC P/J pickups, active Warwick 2-way electronics with lithium battery that can be recharged via USB like a mobile phone, volume P/P control, balance, treble and bass, 2-piece solid Warwick brass bridge, Warwick security locks, and Warwick EMP strings 045" - 105".



www.warwick.de

Pursuit Models from Breedlove

Booth: 1213

Breedlove has unveiled three new additions to the popular Pursuit Series in each of their body shapes: The Concertina, The Concert, and the Concerto. Each model is crafted with myrtlewood from the Oregon coast, and finished with the new Prairie Burst finish. These acoustic-electric guitars deliver the tonal balance of myrtlewood, which has a unique voice blending the best of East Indian rosewood and maple with distinct and clear bass, mids, and highs.

With the addition of an ebony fretboard, the two cutaway models (the versatile Concert body and large body Concerto) allow for easy access to the entire fretboard. The smaller body Concertina was engineered for a light play style with clean and powerful projection from a small body guitar that is a joy to hold and play. With a 12-fret to body design, this guitar is ideal for the player looking for a more nuanced sound with more tonal complexity, and comfortable playing experience.

www.breedlovemusic.com



Yamaha's STORIA Series Guitars

Booth: 643

Yamaha's new series of STORIA acoustic-electric guitars are designed with beginning and potential players in mind. In addition to their appealing finishes, tasteful inlay work, and champagne gold tuners, these models feature superb workmanship, solid tops, brass bridge pins, and Yamaha SRT passive undersaddle pickups, which provide a warm and natural-sounding acoustic tone when the guitars are amplified. All three STORIA models have FS (Concert) body shapes with mahogany backs and sides, nato necks with walnut fingerboards, urea nuts and saddles, and 25" scale lengths.

STORIA I has a solid Sitka spruce top with an off-white semi-gloss finish and ivory body binding. The mahogany back and sides have a natural finish, the inside is light blue and the rosette is inlaid with ivory and mahogany. The guitar has a clear yet rich sound.

STORIA II has a solid mahogany top with a natural semi-gloss finish and a 3/16" (5mm) beveled edge. The mahogany back and sides also have a natural finish, the inside is ultramarine and the rosette is inlaid with ivory and abalone. The mahogany top, sides, and back give the guitar a warm yet well-balanced sound.

STORIA III has a solid mahogany top with a chocolate-brown gloss finish and black body binding. The mahogany back and sides also have a chocolate-brown finish, the inside is wine red and the rosette has ivory, red wine, and black inlays. The mahogany top, sides, and back give the guitar a warm yet well-balanced sound.

www.yamaha.com



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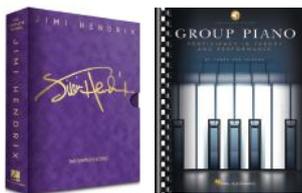
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PRINT & DIGITAL



Hal Leonard's New Releases

Booth: 611

Jimi Hendrix – The Complete Scores is a special hardcover book that features over 1000 pages to all 52 songs featured on *Are You Experienced*, *Axis: Bold as Love*, *Electric Ladyland*, and *Band of Gypsies*. Songs featured in the collection include: "Purple Haze," "Hey Joe," "The Wind Cries Mary," "Foxy Lady," "Little Wing," "Castles

Made of Sand," "Bold as Love," "Crosstown Traffic," "All Along the Watchtower," "Voodoo Child (Slight Return)," "Machine Gun," "Power to Love," and more. Each instrument has been transcribed faithfully from the original recordings for every song, allowing musicians to take a deep dive into the compositions, lyrics, solos and sounds of Jimi and the rest of his band. Guitar and bass parts are written in standard notation and tablature. The book, wrapped in a sleek slipcase, is covered in purple suede material with bright gold foil, making this a must have for Hendrix diehards. \$80

Group Piano: Proficiency in Theory and Performance is an exhaustive spiral comb-bound resource featuring nearly 400 pages and 28 chapters – ideal for collegiate programs for non-music majors or any adult beginner setting. Each chapter of *Group Piano* begins with a chart of clearly-defined objectives to give students insight into what they'll be learning, and what they'll be doing to achieve those necessary skills. The jam-packed course builds note-reading and piano performance skills; in-depth music theory by learning and applying all the major and minor scales, arpeggios, chord progressions with analysis, improvisation, ear-training, harmonization; score-reading; ensemble playing; and much more. *Group Piano* also includes over 50 audio tracks accompanying various activities throughout the book and can be accessed using a unique code inside the book. \$39.99

www.halleonard.com

New Books from Alfred Music

Booth: 543

Alfred Music's *Top Broadway and Movie Songs* series is arranged for flute, clarinet, alto sax, tenor sax, trumpet, horn in F, trombone, violin, viola, cello, and optional piano accompaniment. All wind instrument arrangements are fully compatible, and can be successfully performed as ensembles or solos by students who have completed the first book

of any standard band or method. All string instrument arrangements are also compatible. The included TNT 2 software features the ability to change the speed of the recordings without changing the pitch—slow the tempo down for practice, or speed it up to performance tempo. Titles include: "Over the Rainbow," "Shallow," "Always Remember Us This Way," "Look What I Found," "I'll Never Love Again," "Another Day of Sun," "City of Stars," "You'll Be Back," "Wonderful Life," "Danger Zone," "Eye of the Tiger," "Mamma Mia!," and "Suddenly, Seymour." \$12.99

2019 Greatest Christian Hits includes 12 easy arrangements of the most popular Christian songs from 2019. From ballads to up-tempo styles, these songs will be inspirational for all pianists. Titles include: "Build My Life" (Housefires), "Do It Again" (Elevation Worship), "Even Then" (Micah Tyler), "Joy" (For King & Country), "Known" (Tauren Wells), "Only Jesus" (Casting Crowns), "Reckless Love" (Cory Asbury), "Resurrection Power" (Chris Tomlin), "So Will I (100 Billion X)" (Hillsong United), "Tremble" (Mosaic MSC), "Who You Say I Am" (Hillsong Worship), and "You Say" (Lauren Daigle). \$10.50

Harmony Handbook is a new resource for developing treble choirs. The book offers a step-by-step guide that will take beginners from unison to two-part singing by focusing on the underlying aural and developmental skills necessary for success. Sequential chapters on unison, echo, round, and partner singing serve as benchmarks along the way to full harmony. Each of ten carefully curated songs is prefaced with a two-page rehearsal guide that targets essential objectives and suggests exercises and activities designed to introduce, explore, and master the pieces.

Teacher's Handbook & Online PDF/Audio (\$59.99), Teacher's Handbook & Online PDF (\$29.99), Enhanced CD (\$39.99), and Online Audio (\$39.99). www.alfred.com

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www.grotto.com/The-Cleveland-Drum-Company/Mallets



PIANO & KEYBOARD

Artesia's Harmony Studio Digital Piano

Booth: 335

The new Harmony Studio Digital Piano from Artesia has the feel of a true acoustic piano, while offering a sleek, stylish design. A weighted, hammer keyboard action and the new proprietary sound engine provide a robust, nuanced, expression for an amazing piano playing experience. The new full-scale hammer action keyboard brings the true feeling of an acoustic piano to your fingertips. This acoustic balanced action design offers dynamic response and smooth playability, plus five different velocity touch settings to satisfy every style of play.

In addition to its three layer Supra Sound sample processing, the Harmony offers full connectivity through its USB to Host, USB MIDI and stereo audio in and out connections.

www.virginmusicalinstrumentcompany.com



New Digital Piano and Keyboard from KORG

Booth: 1343

KORG's B2 series is a next-generation line of digital pianos designed to sound and feel as authentic as the real thing. With three new models, the B2 series is packed with carefully selected sounds, as well as numerous new features and tools that will inspire any level pianist.

The B2, B2N, and B2SP (pictured) are embedded with expressive all-new piano samples in both mono and stereo, plus EP, organ, strings and more. Like its predecessor, the B1, the B2 and B2SP feature KORG's Natural Hammer weighted piano action, while the B2N's key bed is lighter in action, perfect for players who prefer a lighter touch and better portability. Each model has fantastic connectivity, including USB MIDI and Audio to connect to any smartphone, tablet or computer.

All models include a complementary pedal; B2 and B2N with a single piano type sustain pedal, B2SP with a stand and three-pedal system; and each comes with a matching music rest as well. The B2N is available in black for \$399.99, the B2 and B2SP are both available in black and white for \$499.99 and \$599.99 respectively.

KORG has taken the elegance of the D1 stage piano and crafted a new color version, this time in a sophisticated white finish. The D1 series is sleek in design and despite its fully-fledged weighted key bed, can be easily transported between gigs, studio sessions and practices. The D1 features the Real Weighted Hammer Action (RH3) key bed deemed KORG's finest graded action. It contains an expressive total of 30 expressive sounds, which not only include classic piano sounds, but also electric piano, organ, clavi and a wide array of string sounds, perfectly covering a variety of genres. \$629.99.

www.korg.com



AMPLIFICATION

The BJF-S66 from One-Control

One Control, in collaboration with renowned electronics designer Björn Juhl, has introduced its first ever guitar amp head: the BJF-S66.

BJF-S66 uses an efficient Class D power amp design, and the preamp is a discrete, solid-state all analog signal path for pure tone. The ultra-compact BJF-S66 features 2 channels - rhythm and lead, with adjustable lead boost - plus 3-band EQ controls, a bright switch, channel-specific reverb level and decay controls, and tremolo controls.

On the rear panel, there's an effects loop send/return, preamp out (to feed recording gear, effects processors, or another power amp), speaker out, and footswitch inputs. Channel select, FX loop (on/off), and tremolo (on/off) are all optionally controllable via footswitch, either using separate latching footswitches or the custom FS-P3 3-way footswitch (\$119 street; sold separately). Street: \$599 USD

www.one-control.com



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PRO AUDIO

New Updates from Allen & Heath

Allen & Heath has released a key update to the SQ series, delivering added features and new dynamic processing options ported from the company's flagship dLive digital mixing system.



V1.4 unveils a dynamic trio of powerful audio tools, comprising Multiband Compressors, Dynamic EQ and De-Esser, all straight from the FX Rack of dLive. These optional additions allow SQ users to have up to eight instances that can be inserted on any input channel, group or mix.

Giving engineers more preparation time away from the console, V1.4 also introduces the eagerly awaited offline mode for SQ's MixPad App, which is now also being released for PC and Mac (previously iOS and Android only). Offline mode enables engineers to create entire show files without the need for an SQ, manage shows and scenes offline, and send and receive entire shows over a wired or wireless network.

Users can further streamline their workflow using SQ's new Input Ganging, which features eight separate gangs with drag 'n' drop set-up to link processing, routing and faders across multiple input channels and can also be switched per-scene.

SQ's overhauled Recall Filters provide further control over the mix and have been extended to include per-scene filtering, ideal for theatre engineers or those needing to use complex scene-to-scene recalls. For installations and studio engineers, high resolution MIDI control to and from the mixer has been implemented, enabling absolute and relative adjustments of essential parameters remotely, as well as the ability to send automation from a DAW, or send and receive scene changes, all via network or USB.

Additional highlights include a Mono option for the Matrices, store and recall of individual scenes and libraries to a USB device, socket control directly from the I/O screen, and new SoftKey / Soft Rotary options.

www.allen-heath.com

BAND & ORCHESTRA



The 1634 Tenor Trombone from XO Brass

Booth: 1421

The 1634 Tenor Trombone is designed for serious trombone players seeking a .508" bore straight trombone. The 1634 features include lightweight construction, a .508" bore, specially annealed hand-crafted eight-inch bell with small bead bell wire, custom-tapered leadpipe, ergonomically-positioned hand brace, nickel outer slide tubes with rounded nickel silver crook, chromed inner slides, 24K gold-plated balance, and XO ultralight case.

www.xobrass.com

DRUMS & PERCUSSION



New Color Upgrades from Mapex

Booth: 1421

Mapex has added two new color upgrades to their Armory Series: Emerald Burst and Redwood Burst. These new finishes are being applied to the Armory Series hybrid shell, constructed of birch/maple/birch, in a six-ply, 7.2MM thickness. With this latest addition, all current Armory Series finishes now feature this exotic olive veneer. The Mapex SONIClear™ bearing edges allow for a direct transmission of sound, reducing unwanted frequencies and providing a strong fundamental pitch and effortless tuning experience, especially at lower tunings.

www.mapexdrums.com

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GREAT *and small*

Guitar Amplifier Footprints Shrink, While Functionality Expands

by Christian **Wissmuller**

In an issue from a few years past, *MMR* specifically shone a light on so-called “lunchbox amplifiers” – truly diminutive units that can fit in a courier bag, but which boast enough power to be more than sufficient as a gigging amp on all but the largest club or bar stages (think Orange’s Tiny Terror, which arguably began the trend).

This year, when reaching out to some of the bigger names in guitar amp design, we *weren’t* expressly aiming to examine the whole “small is beautiful” angle, but that is absolutely the main takeaway from our July Roundtable. Between the challenges of living in ever-more-modest (and, by necessity, *quieter*) urban apartments, carting gear to shows, and wanting an amplifier that is equally well suited to both the bedroom and the stage, guitarists and bassists – even when not looking for something quite as teeny as a lunchbox amp – are more and more seeking out compact, yet sufficiently loud and feature-rich, product.

What are your hottest models of amplifier at the moment?

Luke Green: The new Marshall Studio range launched in January and it is proving very popular – we have had to grow the workforce in our UK factory to keep up with global demand. Artists and new players alike have fallen in love with the iconic Marshall tones in lower wattage models. They truly encompass the spirit of Marshall and make the famous sounds more accessible.

Eden’s Terra Nova bass amplifiers continue to be a popular. They offer super clean, high-fidelity sounds in lightweight units. They are easy to use and have all the features you need for learning, gigging and recording.

Jeff Slingluff: The hottest models from BOSS/Roland right now are the BOSS amplifiers that feature our proprietary amplifier technology called Tube Logic. As they’ve been out the longest, the Katana 50- and 100-Watt models have a very solid user base, but gaining quick attention from a wider group of pro-level players is the newly released Nextone amplifier series.

Brian Piccolo: Our low wattage tube amplifiers are doing very well, specifically Blackstar’s new Studio 10 series which features three models – all 10 watts with a 1x12 speaker. The difference between the models being the tube compliments in each amplifier. You can choose an EL34, 6L6, or KT88 version.

We also released a 20W series at WNAMM 2019 that has done incredibly well for us. The flagship model is the HT20RMKII combo which has two channels, 1x12 Celestion speaker and Reverb. It is a very small, compact, and versatile amplifier. It also has a power attenuator that will take the output wattage down to two watts, which is a feature that a lot of players want in amplifiers, as wattages have been trending down over the years. This series also features a compact head and vertical 2x12 cabinet that has been received well by the market. We also have a Jared James Nichols signature model based off the 20W head and vertical 2x12 cabinet that has been very popular with consumers.

Max Gutnik: The Mustang LT25 (\$149.99 USD) and Bassbreaker 30R (\$899.99 USD) are the two hot models right now. Mustang LT25 is ideal for beginners and students, with a super-simple user interface and a collection of 30 presets covering a wide range of music – a “greatest hits” of electric guitar tones. It produces amazing tones, making it an ideal practice amp for home or office.

The Bassbreaker 30R is a 30-watt, all-tube, two-channel amp with additional gain boost and provides amazing clean and medium to high gain distorted tones – with built-in effects loop and a single 12” Celestion® V-Type speaker, the 30R packs a distinctively creamy Bassbreaker punch.

We will also be debuting some amazing new amps at Summer NAMM, so stay tuned!

Steve Hendee: Hughes & Kettner’s highly anticipated Black Spirit Combo amp will be available this summer, which follows the Black Spirit head released earlier this year. The Grandmeister tube head continues to be sought after and is reaching legendary status.

Any significant developments – technological, materials used, sizes, et cetera – that have been impacting amp design and sales lately?

JS: Almost three years ago we released the Katana amplifier series, which was the first amplifier we produced that included Tube Logic at a price point accessible to most guitar players. Tube Logic is a proprietary technology that allows BOSS amplifiers to truly deliver the dynamics, feel, and cut-through-a-band capabilities that were formerly only available to traditionally cranked-up tube amplifiers. In November 2019, following the tremendous success of the Katana amplifier, we released the Nextone amplifier series. BOSS Nextone amplifiers take Tube Logic one step further by providing four independent class A/B amplifier sections to the power amp, which allows the amps to not only mimic the tone and feel but also the dynamic interaction of the guitar, amplifier, and speaker as a whole experience, and allows the user to select between four different infamous power tube styles.

MG: Smaller combo amps in the low to medium wattage range are popular, both for solid state and tube amps. We have been doing a lot more exclusive product for the channel with custom tolex and new speaker combinations, too. On the high end, American hand-wired and vintage reissues are still the bread and butter of the line. Classic Fender tone is always in style.

SH: Over the past couple of years, we have seen a trend in smaller, lighter weight amps. Years back, giant stacks were the fashion and dominated stages. Hughes & Kettner's Black Spirit 200 Combo is branded as a, "Wall of Sound that you can carry with one hand." As a result, stages are cleaner, most of the technology is built right in to the amp and the amp you use in your bedroom is the same one that you bring to the gig.

BP: Small, compact amplifiers are extremely popular now. Several amplifier companies released low wattage product lines in 2018 and early 2019. In addition to the market wanting smaller, low wattage amplifiers, the advancements in digital amplifier modeling, simulation, and profiling have impacted the traditional amplifier design more so recently than in the past. Like always trends change, and currently, we are seeing less live acts using traditional amplifiers on stage or using amplifiers at all. It has become very common to see bands using a profiler type rig

or high-end digital modeling product on tour. Also, software continues to rise in popularity as companies have made advancements in the quality of those types of products.

LG: A lot of players are looking for lower volume and physically smaller units, but with great tonal quality. This brings with it a couple of design challenges – creating the recognised tone and breakup of higher-powered amps using less power and

from much smaller chassis and enclosures. We introduced Powerstem technology in the Origin range last year, which works by reducing the voltage rails around the power amplifier rather than using our traditional pentode/triode reduction methods. The new DSL and Studio ranges offer power reduction too. These options give an amp added flexibility – you can use the same gear to practice in your bedroom and to take on stage.

NS
DESIGN

"NS Design makes the best UEB. The dual pick-up system allows you to create a perfect, custom tone, to fit whatever genre of music you are playing in – it continues to impress me, every day."

Artist: Nick Villalobos
Band: Simply Three
Instrument: NS CR5M EUB

sales@NEDSTEINBERGER.com

Photo by Laurent Seiffers

What have you noticed to be some key strategies employed by successful amplifier retailers in terms of promotion, in-store presentation, customer interaction, and so on?

MG: Amps are very experiential, especially if they are not a known quantity like a Hot Rod Deluxe or Twin Reverb. The best dealers have great content online to draw customers in and provide a means to demo the products

SH: For Hughes & Kettner it has been "demo-after-demo." We directly approach the end user and host in-store events featuring guitar legends, such as Tony McAlpine and local guitar heroes working shopping our amps. Our Hughes & Kettner events at brick & mortar locations are supported by social media, targeted emails, and in-store posters and banners.

BP: Some of the most successful strategies we are seeing retailers implement revolve around engaging and informative content that has personality. Nailing their digital identity and working hard to build their stores brand has been extremely impactful to many retailers. On a more basic sales strategy, financing continues to have a major influence on sales. With terms offers of 48 months, it makes products more accessible to the consumer.

JS: One of the big trends in the industry is Reactive Load Attenuators. BOSS just started shipping the WAZA-TAE (Waza Tube Amp Expander), which not only attenuates your amplifier with one of 16 reactive loads, but also adds continuously variable volume, FX Loop, Reverb, Delay, Compression, and footswitch programmability to any cranked-up tube amplifier. And it does this through both the live speaker cabinet and direct out. While traditional retailers are doing extremely well with amplifiers like Katana, which can provide a cranked up experience at any volume, they are also lining up for products like the WAZA-TAE for the traditional tube amp customers – both in terms of providing an extremely useful tool for a modern guitar enthusiast, but also as a powerful in-store sales tool for demonstrating the tube amps they sell. Turns out providing a demo of a cranked-up tube amplifier at a reasonable in-store volume is an extremely valuable sales tool as well.

LG: Brands can build a connection with consumers before they enter their local music store. Digital strategies focussing on engagement and content creation rather than selling and advertising are increasingly successful. Re-vamping our website and social media content to include more unique, engaging, and authentic content has increased our reach and engagement dramatically. We are aiming to be more accessible and inclusive – for example, acknowledging the wider reach and appeal of Marshall beyond the realms of rock and metal.

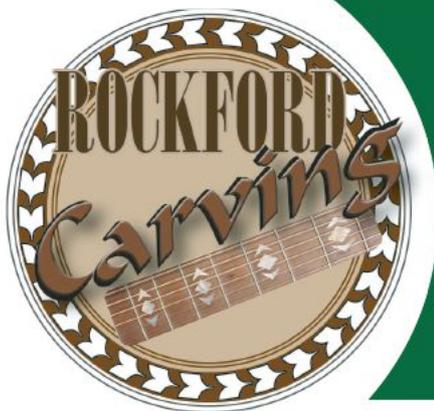
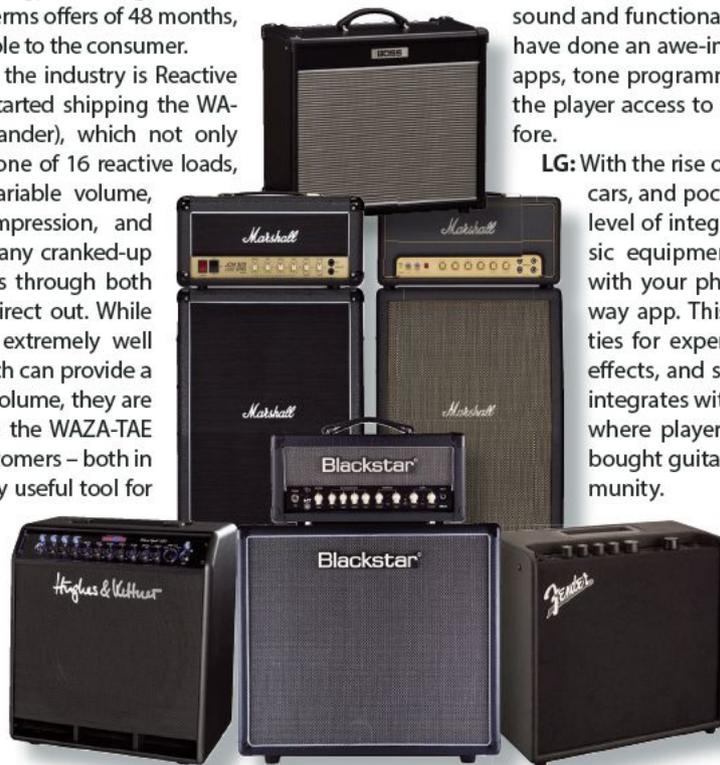
Additionally, the consumer experience doesn't finish after they leave the store. Customer service and after-sales care are very important to get right. The retailers that have focused on customer care as their strategy and provided a personal, fast, and helpful interaction are becoming more successful.

Are you anticipating any "on the horizon" trends with respect to amps?

SH: We will see a continuation of applying technology to the sound and functionality of the amp. Hughes & Kettner have done an awe-inspiring job of incorporating iPad apps, tone programmability, and authentically giving the player access to more tone choices than ever before.

LG: With the rise of smart technology in our homes, cars, and pockets, consumers expect the same level of integration and control with their music equipment. Marshall's Code range pairs with your phone or tablet through the Gateway app. This offers almost endless possibilities for experimenting with different presets, effects, and signal paths. The Code range also integrates with MyMarshall, an online platform where players share their presets, which has brought guitarists together and created a community.

We are researching and experimenting with including even more smart technology into our future products with the aim of improving the player's experience. Marshall's success has always been based on facilitating artists' expression and creativity, and



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Jeff Slingsluff, Guitar Products Manager, BOSS/Roland U.S.



Brian Piccolo, Director Guitar Brands Management, Korg USA



Steve Hendee, U.S. Director of Sales, Yorkville Sound (Hughes & Kettner's North American Distributor)



Max Gutnik, VP of Electrics, Bases, and Amplifiers, FMIC



Luke Green, Product Director, Marshall Amplification

this is a continuation of that.

There is a rising trend for authentic valve products in smaller sizes. This is for people that want the stage sound and tone of professional players in a portable and convenient size and volume. Houses are getting smaller, many people are living in flats, and sound restrictions are getting stricter. So, users need amps that will fit in the space they have without causing problems with their neighbours.

JS: Two things that seem to be the common trend are an aspect of necessity. These are size and volume (loudness). A modern guitar player is increasingly faced with the need to travel small, and at the same time, they are increasingly asked to play more quietly. From apartment living to touring stage bands, these two problems are at the forefront of conversation and are unfortunately at constant odds with a guitar player's desire to experience the dynamics and feel of a cranked-up amplifier. You'll continue to see solutions for these challenges in our product lines. From the Katana and Nextone amplifiers which feature a Power Control function, to GT-1000 which is a multi-effects processor that provides extremely dynamic feel through either direct or in conjunction with your amplifier, to our most recent release of the Waza Tube Amp Expander that allows you to use your own tube amp with cranked-up feel but at any volume.

BP: I am expecting the smaller amp trend to continue along with the digital "amp replacement" trend. I think we will see more companies release accessible products in the digital hardware section, and the consumer acceptance of these products will increase as more variety becomes available.

MG: Stages are becoming quieter and cartage is getting more expensive. I think lighter, more versatile amps that don't compromise quality are where things need to go.

What are your expectations for this market segment in the coming months?

JS: The market seems to be dividing amongst three trends: Affordable combo amplifiers that work well within a band while providing the best dynamic experience like Nextone and Katana, all-in-one multi-effects/amplifier processors like ME-80 and GT-1000, and a resurgence of high-powered tube amplifiers tamed and enhanced by product like the WAZA-TAE.

LG: The digital market is still in its infancy with regards to amps, but it has seen some strong developments over the last few years. In the coming months, this will continue to grow and develop, but there will still be the desire for the analogue/valve amps. Size is becoming increasingly important and we can only see the demand for smaller amps with lower wattage, exceptional tone and per-

formance growing.

MG: We are seeing healthy growth in the segment and see that continuing into next year. Digital/solid state amps account for around 60 percent of the revenue in the segment, so we see more competitors bringing out products in that space. We also see the market for high-end tube and boutique amps continue to grow. With all of the options, it's an exciting time to be playing guitar.

BP: We are expecting the trends of the past several months continue for 2019. Stable sales of smaller low wattage amplifiers and digital products.

SH: We expect to go from strength to strength as the guitar market is reinvigorated. Hughes & Kettner will continue to be ahead of the curve with technological applications, offering every guitar player access to their dream tone. 

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Take Your Pick

Sales of Guitar & Bass Picks by Christian **Wissmuller**

With just over half (51.2 percent) of participants in this month's dealer survey (sent out to over 300 retailers) reporting sales in 2019 as being level to the numbers from 2018, the guitar and bass pick market appears to be quite stable.

A fact that's not especially surprising – most anyone who plays a guitar or bass needs picks [*All classical, flamenco, and other players, don't bother writing in – unless you've got a really witty dig to make...*] and, as with strings, these aren't one-time purchases. With use, picks wear down, chip, crack, or get lost. And, while the market for actual guitars and basses ebbs and flows, the number of long-term, active musicians is fairly constant. If I'm walking into your store and buying a bag of picks today, odds are I'll be back for another bag in six months or so.

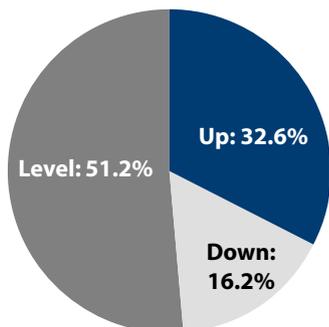
As with strings, cables, amplification, effects, and virtually any and all fretted-related gear, many – if not most – serious players have "their" pick and tend to be fairly loyal. It's a little surprising that, giv-

en the variety of options available, these discerning and demanding customers still tend to skew towards the traditional. The vast majority embrace Tortex, celluloid, or nylon plectrums, despite the myriad of other, more exotic options (bone, felt, stone, metal, wood, Delrin, et cetera). As Jerry Vesely of Vesely's Music (Parowan, Utah) notes, "There have been sporadic 'trendy' SKUs over time – sometimes only an opening order or two, then gone."

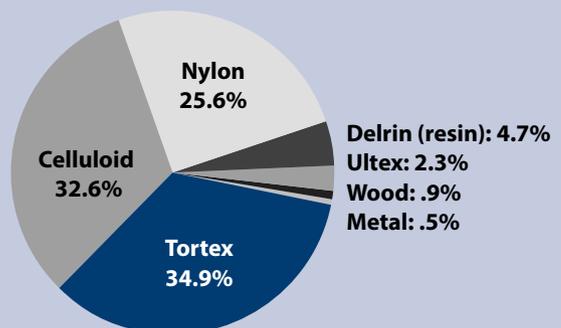
While some observe that, despite the consistent sales guitar picks represent, there's not much profit to be made, others argue that the money *is* there – you just have to put in the effort.

"We carry Blue Chip picks which sell for \$40 each," offers Tim Bascom of Lebanon, Missouri's Morgan Music. "How do we sell them? Easy...we *sell* them. We make our customers aware that there is a difference in picks (especially for acoustic players) and we give them one to try out on a guitar in-store. They hear the difference, and they buy it. It's not called 'selling' for nothing, folks!"

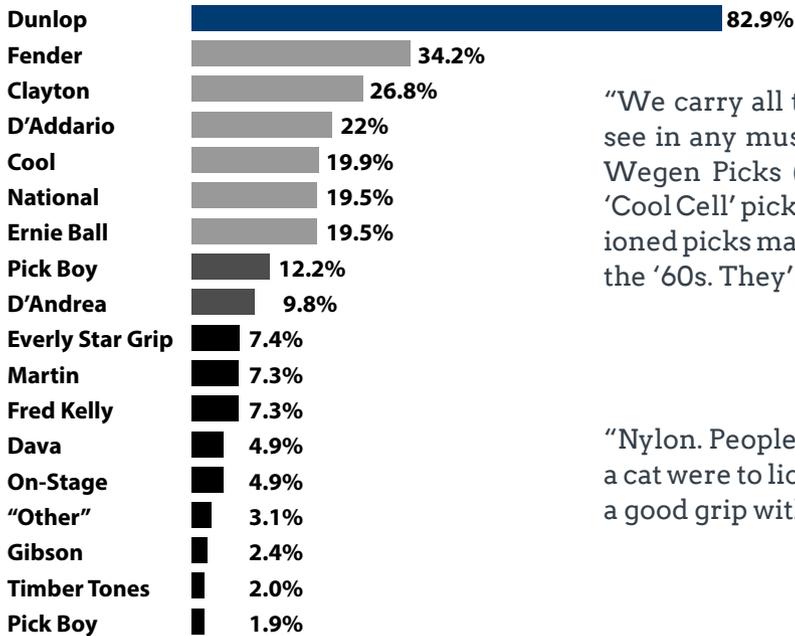
So far in 2019, sales of guitar & bass picks for your store are...



Within the larger "picks" category, what type of material do you sell most of, in terms of volume?



What brands of guitar & bass picks are selling best for your store?



"We carry all the 'normal' brands of picks you'd expect to see in any music store... but we also carry Blue Chip Picks, Wegen Picks (made in the Netherlands), and Cool Picks' 'Cool Cell' picks which are very popular, as they are old-fashioned picks made of celluloid, like they used to make back in the '60s. They're made in Japan, and live up to their name."

Tim Bascom
Morgan Music
Lebanon, Missouri

"Nylon. People seem to like that 'cat tongue' feel, as though a cat were to lick you [and] the fact that the dimples give you a good grip with no slipping."

Donald Whalen
Swansboro Music & Pawn
Swansboro, North Carolina

(The "other" brands mentioned most frequently were, in order: Peavey, Blue Chip, and Brain)

Have you been noticing any current trends when it comes to this market segment – either on the consumer or vendor side (materials/techniques being used by suppliers, buying preferences or habits of end-users, et cetera)?

"Despite carrying packages of picks, our customers prefer to buy onesies, twosies, and get a wide variety of sizes and thicknesses from our self-serve trays."

Ed Intagliata
Cassell's Music
San Fernando, California

Spidey Mulrooney
The Music Shop
Southington, Connecticut

"I have noticed that when we have the picks in a nice looking, brand-labeled display right at the front counter we seem to sell through them faster."

Kyle Rindlisbacher
Riverton Music
Sandy, Utah

"Fewer plain, more 'novelty' [picks] selling."

Joanne Julier
Cerd Ystwyth Music
Aberystwyth, Ceredigion
Wales

"We designed a cool pick that has become our best seller. Most of our customers are not picky(!) about the material – they just want some colorful, interesting picks in a few gauges. So our store-brand picks do best."

Ted Parrish
Parrish Music
Viroqua, Wisconsin

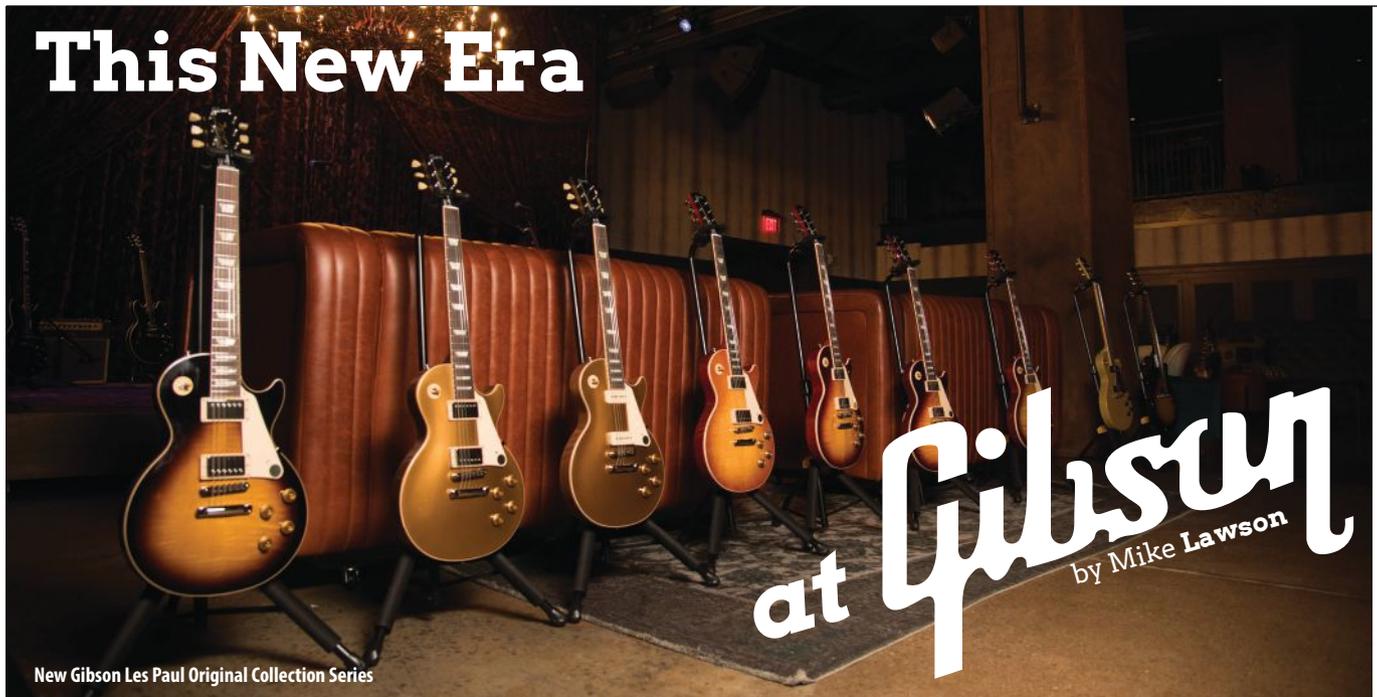
"Taylor is talking about how pick choice impacts your tone. I will try to make myself and my customers more aware of this."

John Barton
Friendly River Music
Cornish, Maine

"If people are able to see, touch and compare a large variety, they are more likely to 'buy to try' and not just buy their favorites."

Karen D. Janiszewski
Music Room
Cheektowaga, New York

"Smaller pics seem to be popular again – especially the Dunlop Max Grip Jazz III style."



Full disclosure: I worked (for only) about three years at Gibson, in the 1990s, and left there (the first time) on good terms. I got to do cool things, work with A-list artists, market great guitars, work with awesome dealers, and much more. I made lasting friendships with some of the best people working in the MI world.

I think most people who work at Gibson, and are musicians, do so because they love the products, the brand, the history. People develop brand loyalty from an early age. It becomes part of their identity. I was a Coke, Levi's, Ford, Gibson guy. Some people are Pepsi, Wrangler, Chevy, Fender people. Brands resonate, people stick with them. I saw a lot of whacky stuff, but didn't leave the company disgruntled. I stayed in touch with both Dave Berryman and Henry Juszkiewicz, and was occasionally party to helping them out with things for the next dozen years or so, from loaning my guitar to Epiphone to use as a model to make their reissue of the Les Paul Signature model, to introducing Henry to Hector Ruiz, then CEO of AMD, when he learned I was consulting Hector on digital audio initiatives.

Second Tour of Duty

In 2008, I made an ill-fated return that lasted, literally, a few weeks. The first thing said to me by Henry the day I reported was, "Well, you work for me again, so I don't have to be nice to you anymore." I thought he was kidding. Former co-workers warned me; people questioned my sanity. Looking back, I do as well. I stepped back into a very unhappy place. My nanosecond next round at the company did not end well. I still have the disturbing, very personally-directed email sent to me that led to my departing as quickly as I accepted the offer to come back. But regardless of how I felt after that, I was always on good terms with the other owner, Dave Berryman. I've always wished the best for the brand. This setup a very personal inner conflict. I've played this line since I was a teenager. Out of my 50-plus guitars, two-thirds are Gibson/Epiphone models of varying vintages. I love these guitars. Personal, lifetime brand affinity. No need to expound. The job site GlassDoor.com is full of reviews, and most are stunningly accurate with a similar theme. They overwhelmingly didn't approve of the CEO, but love the brand on a very personal level. That was how I felt, too.

Guitarmageddon Approaches

I couldn't see myself buying many new Gibson products for the past decade, especially with the disastrously-awful 2015 line, which Henry once described as having had a "soft reception" by the market. Robot tuners became standard on most everything. Henry demanded most fretboards be widened, while the nut slot width stayed the same for the innovative zero-fret adjustable brass nut, an idea designed by the talented Frank Johns.

In 2016, a popular dealer in upstate New York practically begged me to buy a new 2015 Les Paul Junior for well below cost, stuck with so many. I did. I wanted to see how bad things had become. I opened it up and saw the plug-and-play circuit boards to connect the pots and pickup. I replaced the brass nut with a retrofit synthetic adjustable nut. I put white button machine heads on and hand-wired 500k pots with a bumblebee capacitor. Though odd to play from the fretboard width, the tone is now on point.

Bankruptcy in 2018 was inevitable for Gibson. So many bad decisions, from incessant lifestyle branding attempts, to consumer electronics, instrument company acquisitions nearly always shuttered, quality issues, price increases, unhappy dealers and consumers, venue naming rights, tour buses and, well... it is a big list of bad choices.

I was skeptical when I saw Gibson at Summer NAMM in 2018. Henry was still CEO; they were still in bankruptcy. Handing out "I support the new Gibson" hats was not going to change that, even with nice looking guitars on display at the show again, after years of not fully or even exhibiting.

Gibson then emerged from bankruptcy by fall with no debt, divesting non-core acquisitions, returning to its roots with new management. I waited. At Winter NAMM 2019, for the first time in many years, Gibson exhibited *and* invited *all* NAMM attendees to see the exhibit. I tried to get a look at the guitars, but the room was so packed, it was difficult to navigate. I spent time outside of it reminiscing and getting insight on the new management from a few employees I knew, who had been there for decades. They were cautiously, but enthusiastically optimistic about Gibson's prospects.

Could the guitars I love and have played for so long really be in the hands of management who want the best for them, return to original standards, have sane modern improvements that don't profane the originals? Will Gibson become the place to work that we hoped it would be when we took our jobs? Will dealers be courted, treated with respect, have reasonable expectations? Can this brand make amends with its fanbase which saw quality nose-diving, even Amazon-only cheap "Gibson" models created, and diverging from the things that made these guitars a legend?

The End of the Beginning

Bankruptcy is an ugly process. Emerging from it takes new investment, leadership, and a court-approved solid plan for moving forward. In April, Gibson held a press preview in Nashville. The event featured a walk-through of the line by James "JC" Curleigh, president and CEO, and chief merchant officer, Cesar Gueikian. Cesar explained the new "Original Collection" of guitars which includes the Les Paul Standard '50s, Les Paul Standard '60s, Les Paul Special in TV Yellow, Les Paul Junior in Tobacco Burst, the SG 61 Standard with factory stop-tail, Maestro and Sideways vibrolas, SG Special and Junior, the ES-335 Figured and DOT, Firebird, Flying V and Explorer, as well as the J-45, Hummingbird and J-200.

Most questions were answered by looking at the guitars, picking them up, playing them, and by Cesar, before I asked. My first impression was they looked like Gibson Custom Shop models. Gueikian explained to everyone the differences between them and the spot-on replicas being made at Gibson Custom, and some of the differences are subtle historically-accurate things that would make little difference to players not interested in buying modern replicas with long neck tenons, or pinpoint accurate appointments.

The first thing I noticed was that the finishes are superb. From the "bursts" to the coloring of the cherry stain, thinner binding, the spot-on TV Yellow, the guitars looked stunning. No more plug and play. All hand-wired.

Prices went down. I had a really good feeling about what I had seen and heard. As a brand devotee, as a player, I was actually excited and trying to decide whether I wanted to buy the TV Yellow Special, or the SG 61 Standard with the sideways vibrola.

It has been a long time since I looked at a new Gibson like that.

Cesar invited me to the plant. To say it is different than my times there is an understatement. Though some of the re-doing in the layout of the factory was a result of getting back into production after the flood of Nashville, significant things happened in just the past six months. The management took advice from employees on improving workflow and safety. They completely separated the paint areas from the rest of the factory. Guitars are no longer exposed to dust from woodworking during the finishing, installing sealed double-doors to separate the areas, investing heavily in a factory-wide dust removal system. In the 1990s, a lot of guitars constantly were in repair or waiting to be cut up and put in the dumpster. Now, very few were not making it through production, with numerous QC checks along the way to prevent damage.

Something I'd never seen in that factory? Happy employees walking up to senior management feeling free to discuss things, giving hugs and high-fives. I'm not saying everything is nirvana.

It's still a workplace and a factory, but the dark cloud and sense of foreboding seemed gone. I recall corporate would always call us at the plant to warn us that Henry was coming over. Those days are over.

JC and I caught up again by phone. I wanted to know about his take on the changes and future. He said the focus at the plant was on quality: "We invested heavily in dust management, dust collection, dust elimination, and dust measuring as well. You can actually measure dust."

He said, "... we used to touch guitars in progress about 74 times. Now we touch them less than 30 times because we found a way to sequentially line them up much smarter, move them around which significantly reduces dings and dents. We invested in high-quality lighting throughout the factory. We've been letting the team on the floor come up with smarter ways to improve productivity, quality, flow, and safety. We did a complete safety audit and invested significantly into upgrades. We covered all that in the last six months. We took everyone up to a certain base pay level, which hasn't been adjusted for years. We added a 401k company matching plan."



Cesar Gueikian, Mike Lawson, and James "JC" Curleigh

What About the Dealers?

All that sounded great to me as a fan and former employee. Employees seem to be happy and the factory has probably never been in better shape, the product is on point. The management seemed to care. But the product and happy employees are only two parts of four. The next are dealers and consumers. Gibson was notoriously difficult to do business with and I wanted to know how that was changing.

For starters, Gibson is now opening up Epiphone-only dealers. They are not requiring huge buy-ins of all lines. A lot has changed in becoming a dealer.

JC said, "[It] used to take months to go through this arduous obstacle course of authorization. We now open up customers in less than five days. From the time you say, 'Let's go,' getting authorized is five days, provided the dealer does their part. We have a conversation to say, 'Over time, what are your intentions with Gibson, how much share can we have of your guitar business?' If our average market share in the premium sector is 30 percent to 35 percent, then we would expect over time to get that sort of market share in a specialty dealer store."

Lower Prices... from Gibson?

"We recalibrated our pricing against external market dynamics, internal business dynamics, and we arrived at rationalized, reasonable pricing for what you get. We're launching the G-45 for \$1,000, a made in the USA acoustic guitar. We're listening. 'Hey, Gibson, charge the appropriate price.' 'Okay, we'll do that.' What we want [from dealers] is core representation of our range. There's nothing worse than when someone says, 'I'm an authorized Gibson dealer,' and then a fan walks in and they only have two guitars. So, they have to have the core range, then let's have an orientation of how we can grow to get to the certain share level. Dealers like that conversation. Then we put the right level of support with our dealer product specialists, we put the support with the internal relationship managers, and the rep starts to manage the accounts. This with a contract that's got half the number of pages it used to have, and all the limitations, for the most part, have been removed. And if you're not a custom shop, we're not gonna force that on you. If you are electric only and you don't do acoustics, we're not gonna force that on you."

'Gibson Doesn't Listen to the Customers'

I asked what Gibson can do to repair its relations with consumers. JC said, "I think the biggest accusation was no one at Gibson listens. Before I joined, I probably read 10,000 different website comments. And if there was one common theme, it was Gibson doesn't listen. We started listening, and we came up with the Original Collection, back to historic true specs. We came up with a Modern Collection for modern guitarist who don't want novelty on their guitar, they want true simple innovation to help them shape and create their sound. I mean, we're not superheroes. Me, nor Cesar, nor KKR, none of us are trying to be superheroes. We don't claim to be perfect. There are gonna be moments where we're gonna make a decision, or something's gonna happen and people will go, 'Oh, what happened there?'"

'So, what happened here?'

I'm glad JC recognizes they will make mistakes. I believe him. He comes across as sincere and believable. Sadly, just a week after our conversation, a clearly ham-fisted "Play Authentic" video about trademark infringement by other companies was put out, and then pulled from YouTube. The video featured Mark Agnesi, late of Norm's Rare Guitars, who is now Gibson's "director of brand experience."



JC, this was a mistake. Nothing disappears from the Internet. I don't know who approved this tone-deaf script or final video, but... I digress. And the timing – Gibson is off to such a great re-start. This set off an unneeded kerfuffle. Mandolin and other boutique tiny companies are up in arms. Negative press is popping up online again. This is a major distraction.

Why now, just before Summer NAMM? Face palm.

Agnesi even rants about TV and film companies taping over Gibson's name on the headstock. I've got news for him. A lot of times when that happens, it is because Gibson was approached, and were extremely difficult to work with, or refused and an artist insisted on playing their personal guitar when Gibson turned their noses up at them or their management. Or the producers didn't want to infer an endorsement. This rant should not have been in this video and, frankly, this video should not have been made nor released. It was weird. The next day, a story came out that Dean is being sued for their decades-old Flying V-style guitar. Who knows what is coming next? I absolutely agree with protecting the brand, the heritage, the legacy... but Gibson, you are under a microscope right now. Timing is everything. Messaging, crucial right now.

My Conclusion

I like JC and Cesar. They seem like affable, honest, intelligent, capable leadership with great intentions. If somebody called asking if they should take a job at Gibson, my new answer would be, "Yes, it is in transition, but poised for great things."

The product is on-point. The prices are lower. There has probably never been a better time to become a Gibson or Epiphone dealer in decades and proudly stock once-again high-quality guitars that live up to the legacy. If I were a dealer, I would absolutely look at carrying Gibson again now before my nearest competitor does. As a fan and player, I would tell anyone to try the new Original Collection.

On trademark policing, Gibson, there's more to worry about from Chinese counterfeiters rampantly popping up again on eBay and Facebook, than the decades-old Dean flying V style guitars.

Protect your trademarks, do what you need to do, but remember, everyone is watching you. The dealers, the public, the competition. Closely. Please don't muck this up. Gibson fans are counting on you. I love the prices, the new dealer programs, listening to consumers, and the new line. All good things in all good time. Do more of that. 🙏

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Gordy Lupo and his wife Marcia at the first Michigan Guitar show in 1989



The Gordy's Music storefront



Scott Farrow, Fred Doe, Dwight Berriman, Gordy Lupo, Cal Gracy

MAKING ELECTRIC HISTORY in Motor City

The Michigan Guitar Show Celebrates 30 Years by Victoria Wasylak

Up near Motor City, there's a decades-old electric tour de force that just won't quit.

The road to 30 years of the Michigan Guitar Show has not been an easy one, but at this point, founder Gordy Lupo knows that it's too much of a necessary event in the Detroit area to ever stop.

Since starting the show in 1989, in addition to ownership of his instrument store Gordy's Music, the vintage guitar market has taken a handful of turns, from its meteoric rise in the '90s, to its eventual decline come the turn of the century. Still, Lupo acknowledges there's a serious need for what he and his shop offer every year. So much so, that for the special anniversary edition (which took place in late June), he restored it to the event's old full-weekend glory, and also brought it to a new locale – the Emerald Theatre.

It's quite the ordeal that he organized with his small staff at 70 years old. After orchestrating the show for 30 years, Lupo shows no signs of complacency.

"It's 10 weeks away," he told *MMR* in April. It's actually driving me nuts. I'm not kidding. I mean, I can't shake it. I mean, I try to forget about it, but it just keeps haunting me."

Specifically, Lupo took a few extra risks this year for the anniversary edition of the show, which took place June 29 and 30 – he not only secured a special location on the East Side of Detroit for this year, but he made the event two days (as opposed to one in previous years) and moved the show to the summertime instead of the fall.

Lupo founded Gordy's Music in Ferndale in 1986 with his wife, starting things off by selling about 40 or 50 vintage guitars and a dozen amps from a 400-square foot shop that had no bathroom ("I wanted to play it safe – I didn't want to go out of business," Lupo says).

During the early years of the store, Lupo happened upon a guitar show ad in *Guitar Player* magazine, prompting him to attend the Missouri event 800 miles away. The success of that very first show spurred on a habit for Lupo, as he started to attend upwards of 15 guitar shows a year in Nashville, while still keeping Gordy's Music going back home in Ferndale. Somewhere in between Michigan and Tennessee, the idea to keep things local hit him.

"Sure enough, the wife and I were on the road doing some guitar show," he said. "And when you're on the road you get some good thinking time in. It just hit me and we started talking about it, you know, "When we get back we're gonna have a guitar show. People want to know why we don't have them."

When Lupo and his wife debuted the Michigan Guitar Show in 1989, things escalated quickly – as Lupo puts it, "off the hook"-level – quickly in the 2,600 square foot space they had rented.

"I mean, it was just insane. There were guys setting up booths out in the parking lot," he recalls. "I way oversold that show. I turned a lot of guys away that wanted to set up and it was a free-for-all, it was out of control. Everybody still talks about it around here to this day."

Lupo learned quickly from that first year's overflow, going on to book 50,000 square feet of fairgrounds for the future editions of the show throughout the 1990s. Come the end of the decade, though, matters in the market started to fluctuate in the opposite direction.

"That was our peak, and that was the peak of the vintage guitar industry in the '90s," Lupo explains. "Then the decline of vintage guitar selling and finding [came] towards the end of the '90s, it all started to taper back down. The show got smaller again. We just had to roll with the punches on that part of it and we stayed at the fairgrounds for about eight, 10 years, and then we couldn't afford it anymore. We were getting less dealer participation. We actually added a whole other room, then we took the room away."

The Michigan Guitar Show adapted each year, moving to smaller venues and eventually cutting the three-day affair to two days, then to just one day. Being an independent MI store with a limited staff, keeping the show in business without sacrificing the security of Gordy's Music running smoothly has been a huge priority.

"It was a gradual trimming, cutting back on the venue, making it a one-day show. We trimmed it fast and that's how we survived," Lupo elaborates. "We stayed a one-day show for over 10 years. Like I said, the whole guitar industry was on a downslide and it got down to a smaller venue. And one day, it was enough. We took care of all of the business that had to be taken care of. We could do it in one day, it was a lot cheaper, and I didn't want my show to be a boring show where everybody is looking at each other going, 'What the hell?' When it started to get like that, I said, 'I'm not doing this. I'm not going to do this.' So we made it a one day show. It was very busy. Everybody was happy."

Come 2009, Lupo even took a year off from organizing the show because he felt depressed about the decline he had witnessed since the late '90s. His break would turn out to be extraordinarily short-lived.

"You know what? It was more work, believe it or not, not having that show," Lupo says. "Because I kept getting all these phone calls. I kept getting all my customers saying, 'How come?' It took more time to explain why we're not having one."

To Lupo, the significant fuss over the show's absence just proved how vital it was to the community, despite the fact that the vintage guitar market had become leaner.

"Somebody else didn't just step right in and take my place, so I felt like I had to do it," he says. "So I kept doing it."

For the 30th anniversary, though, Lupo elected to restore the show to two days and bring it to a location on the other side of Detroit at the Emerald Theatre. The theater has three tiers, com-

plete with a small club and PA system, ideal for hosting guitar clinics and performances on both days. Dylan Dunbar with Reverend Guitars, Jake Allen from Takamine Guitars, and Larry McCray with Echopark Guitars will all be in attendance to host free clinics.

"For the past 10 years, we found a real good venue, but it's out on the West Side by the airport," he explained back in April. "So we've been stuck on the West Side for 10 years [as] a very successful one-day show. Now it's the 30th anniversary. We're moving it to the way East Side and we're sticking our neck out renting this theater for the whole weekend – we're having a two-day show with a Friday setup like everybody used to do back in the day. We're recreating that, and so we're going to see how this goes. We didn't want to have it in the fall at our other venue because we wanted it to be special."

Albeit anxious, Lupo said the excitement around town was palpable, especially since the new location was more convenient for many of the guests: "The vibes I'm getting around town, everybody is thumbs up, especially East Side because it's an hour drive for a guy on the East Side to go to our show [ordinarily]. Now we're in their neighborhood, we're going to pull a lot from Port Huron which is north of Mount Clemens on the East Side. It's a different draw. But we do have 2,600 people on our show mailing list."

Thankfully, attendance has remained consistent of late, averaging 500 to 750 guests per day. It's a significant drop from what Lupo saw on the fairgrounds in the '90s – more like 1,500 folks per day then – but he was optimistic that there will be a spike in attendance this year since it's an anniversary edition.

"I'm anticipating 1,000 people a day. That's my goal. If I don't do 1,000 people a day, I'm gonna be upset with myself for not doing a good enough job. But I've been working on this show for three and a half months already," he said in the spring.

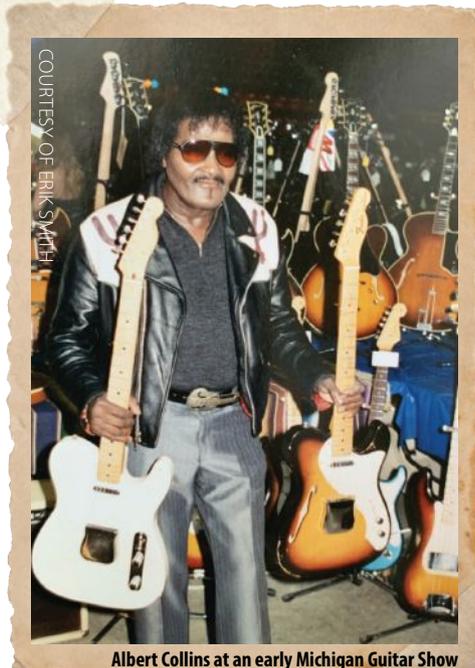
As of late June, however, Lupo confirmed to *MMR* that the show was already nearly sold out and he anticipated having to start a waiting list for vendors. Equally exciting is the fact that the Steve Miller Band will be stopping by in the early morning – a secret to the public as we at *MMR* write this article, but by the time this magazine is in your mailbox, it will have been a highlight of the show for sure.

– Gordy Lupo

The news bodes well for Lupo, who earlier in the year expressed a desire to see some faces from the show's formative years who launched their careers largely using the show.

"I'm kind of hoping to see some old faces from over the decades," he said. "A lot of guys started out pretty small at our shows – I watched a lot of these guys grow into 'vintage guitar' icons. It'd just be nice to get some of the guys in there from the old days."

And for Lupo, 30 years in, his wish was granted. 



Albert Collins at an early Michigan Guitar Show

“I mean, it was just insane. There were guys setting up booths out in the parking lot. I way oversold that show. I turned a lot of guys away that wanted to set up and it was a free-for-all, it was out of control. Everybody still talks about it around here to this day.”

Headed



South By Southwest 'Weirdness' and Enthusiasm for the Arts Drive Prosperity in Austin, Texas By Victoria Wasylak

Standing on 6th Street in Austin in the middle of March, it's easy to see why Austin is one of the biggest – and perhaps most underrated – music cities in the world. In the hub of music, movies, and tech festival South by Southwest, the street overflows with live music pouring from bars' and restaurants' open windows. And that's just the tip of the musical iceberg. The fact that there's a stage at the Austin airport truly says it all.

As one of the major cultural meccas of both Texas and the South in general, the city offers a vibrant lifestyle for its residents, artists or otherwise. On paper, it's an ideal spot for any MI supplier or retailer. In real life, these institutions serve their steadfast musical communities and reap the creative and fiscal benefits – as you'd imagine – but still face struggles in spite of the area's massive growth. From the weather to the ability of musicians to actually find local gigs, all these factors trickle down to the MI realm of Austin. Rising rent prices and cost of living, of course, are more widespread concerns that also apply.

This year, *MMR* chatted with folks who represent the MI world of Austin to get a better glimpse of this delightfully dedicated-to-weirdness part of Texas, and what it has to offer the MI market. Read on below for five unique perspectives on the Austin market.

Strait Music **Clint Strait, Vice President**

Clint Strait, vice president of Strait Music, is a born-and-raised Austin resident, working at this third generation, family owned business. Strait Music actually boasts two brick and mortar locations, one in the northern region of the city and the other towards the south. Clint has been serving as the vice president for roughly 13 years now, a good chunk of Strait Music's 50-plus years in business.

"We take a lot of pride of being a longstanding business in this great city," he tells *MMR*. "Music being our identity and the fabric of our city means more players and more inspired to play."

Strait Music's clientele seems to reflect the full span of how MI stores can expand their reach: from podcasters to houses of worship, the store capitalizes on all the not-obvious sales that *MMR* has covered in the past.



Inside the Strait Music showroom

"Being a true full-line store, we have many customer profiles, from the live music venue customers and bedroom podcasters in pro audio to houses of worship buying pianos and everything in between," Strait says. "We cater to beginner families in our band and orchestra departments and really have a focus on families throughout the store. Being around as long as we have, we have many professional musicians, some famous, that shop in our fretted departments, in addition to working professionals with a music hobby. In every department, we go from 1st time player to seasoned professional and have gear to suit all ends of the spectrum. We sort of pride ourselves in catering to everyone."

Despite the fact that Strait describes the scene around town as lively, he notes that many Austin-based musicians often find better paying gigs outside of the city, making it harder for them to earn reasonable pay at a musician.

"Certainly it's a 'healthy' scene given our focus on live music as a city," he explains. "I would say for musicians, though, it's becoming much harder to actually make decent money playing in Austin. Many of our local bands have to travel outside the city to play gigs for that reason. Certainly though from a retail standpoint, we are quite lucky to be in a city where music is our identity. [It] just leads to more players, and thus more customers. We also have a focus on music in our schools relevant to other places, so that leads to a vibrant school music climate as well."

Also troubling is the rise of rent prices, which means current employees may have to move out of the area, costing stores valued and already-trained salespeople and clerks.

"Along the same lines, it has not affected us at Strait Music, but rising rents can be difficult on other local retailers and it has forced people to move or cease operations," Strait says.

Still, Strait sees the "grind" in Austin musicians and retailers, and still has many "good local competitors, or 'competi-mates'" and national competition thriving in the Austin area.

Sonata Marketing John Files, Owner (formerly of Bass Emporium)

After over 25 years working in retail, John Files opened his own operation, Bass Emporium, in 2002. Following ten years in the space, however, Files eventually moved his business online, and then started Sonata Marketing, working with Elrick Bass Guitars, ProCo Cables, and GR Bass Amplification. Still, Files' operation remains based in Austin, and Files himself still interacts with the public daily.

"I've always been passionate about bass guitar and wanted my own operation, so in 2002, I opened my storefront and got the opportunity to do it my way," he explains of his personal history in the MI realm. "It was hard work, but I really loved my suppliers, my staff (Chuck Brown and Joshua Zarbo) my teachers (Ed Friedland and Lynne Davis), and all of my customers. I owned the building in which I had my business and had the opportunity to sell it and carry the note for a financial advantage in 2012. I sold the building and went online for a couple of more years and then started working with Elrick Bass Guitars and doing Music Product Marketing. I had never been in product distribution, the one part of the retail life cycle that I never participated in, and thought I should complete the circle. Sonata Marketing was then born as distribution. I wanted to create a distribution outlet focused on the indie retailer and intended on keeping it 'indie friendly'. I want each of us to develop a relationship where we both take a couple of knocks, perhaps, but then both feel the rewards of operating an honest, fair business."

At Sonata Marketing, Files is still working in Austin, contacting retailers and overseas suppliers, as well as shipping and receiving products, among many other responsibilities. Even though he no longer owns a physical shop, Files still has a front-row seat to the massive growth

Sonata Marketing™



John Files

that the city's been experiencing, and the increased population means more customers for everyone. Even better, Files says the general population in Austin is "inquisitive, engaged and willing to spend money on music gear."

"You make lifelong friends out of some customers and there are always new musicians moving to town, expanding the market," he explains. "We're experiencing the highest growth rate of any major city in the USA for consecutive eight years, with an average of 157 per day moving to Austin (about 56,000 per year), so your market is constantly increasing. We are now ranked as the 11th most populated city in the US. It has grown and changed a lot!"

Files describes the health of the Austin music in a similar, positive light, calling it "very engaged, vigorous, and eclectic" thanks to its steady reputation as a live music town.

"Austin is one of the truly great music towns - lots of bands, single acts, composers, and music students," he says. "You can hear music any night of the week in

dozens of places around town (not including 6th street). We even have a stage at the Austin airport. We also have the ACL Festival (typically in October) that began in 2002. It is now two consecutive weekends and last year over 450,000 attended. In the spring we have SXSW (South by Southwest), which began in 1987. This is the largest music conference and festival in the world with over 2,000 bands playing all over town through the seven consecutive days. We are a live music town!"

Even outside of music, Files explains that the Austin population is active in general, and attracts other forms of arts and entertainment, keeping the city fresh overall. The median age is also lower in Austin than most cities - and the median income level is higher - which translates to good business for the entire scene.

"We have a lot of outdoor activities and many unique enterprises that keep things interesting (our unofficial slogan is 'Keep Austin Weird') and progressive," he

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says. "Whenever you get a smart, educated, upwardly mobile consumer base, you have the opportunity to try new products, experiment with marketing and take a few chances that you might not otherwise. We do a lot of major film work and commercials here and that always provides a haven for some rather famous personalities and musicians to live here without being hassled in their everyday lives."

He continues: "We have a lot of local customers ranging in age from very young first timers to elderly, from beginners to professional musicians. The median age in Austin is 30 years and the median income level is \$55,500 per individual, so we are over the national average for income and younger on the median age (which is 38 in the United States). This provides a youthful population with disposable income, and they love to spend it dining out, jogging, volunteering and, most importantly, listening to music."

Still, when it comes to the cons of living in the Austin area, Files – like many – says many issues boil down to financial

matters. While rent prices keep rising, a problem unique to Austin is its high property taxes.

"The two biggest challenges for any MI supplier in Austin are, a) the cost of real estate (whether leasing or buying) and, b) the taxes," Files says. "We do not have a state income tax, so our property taxes make up for the difference. Property is always hot in Austin, we never had a slowdown in the mid-2000s, and it is more expensive and hotter than ever. To find the right size location WITH parking is quite a challenge. Another challenge, and not just in Austin, is the shift in the musician's income. They earn less than ever before (on average), both live and recording, and that is a challenge for all MI suppliers. Hobbyists will always have discretionary funds, but keeping the full-time musician in the mix is a challenge, but very vital."

The riskiest stumbling block, though, has nothing to do with the area, and more to do with what the modern MI market is like as a whole. New approaches to sales and marketing have cost smaller retailers, he theorizes.

"The biggest challenge, in my humble opinion, is the shifting marketing/sales model that creates pain and confusion between the supplier and the retailer. You have brands selling direct, you have the independent retailers building a brand and then that brand gets leveraged into a big-box or a one-location super Internet outlet. The big guys are not brand builders, they capitalize on the brands being built and selling lots, while the small indie retailers suffered the pain of building the brands. I don't see the sweat equity paying off for them – that is going to affect what products are successful or not going forward."

Still, Files remains optimistic, and looking forward, he says the ever-expanding population and infrastructure in Austin signal more growth for the city in the coming years, spearheaded by many different industries together.

"Things are not slowing down any time soon. We presently have 20-plus skyscraper permits out for new construction downtown. With industry giants like Apple, Dell, IBM, Amazon, Apple, Applied Materials, AT&T, National Instruments, Whole Foods, and Samsung making their home here, we always have a strong, diversified customer base. I predict that this will spill over into all of the retail sectors, including MI and the overall health of the ATX music scene."

South Austin Music Bill Welker, Owner

South Austin Music owner Bill Welker sees Austin as the live music capital of the world and counts serving the city's musicians as a privilege, from putting guitars in the hands of newbies, to fixing the gear of learned pros.

"We don't have a typical customer," he says. "We have customers that are well known and recording with big names that we serve daily. And we have young players that are 14, 15 years old just falling in love with a guitar. And we have everything in between, there's not a typical customer. If it was a typical customer, it would be a guitar player that loves guitars and loves to see a nice array of new, used, and vintage guitars. But that's basically all of our customers. But let's not leave the banjo players out, the mandolin players out, ukulele players out. We have something for everybody. But you know, as I've said, we cater to working musicians, so we're full-service amp repair, guitar repair."

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The South Austin Music storefront



From serving these Austin area-musicians, though, Welker has learned that it can be difficult to land well-paying shows in town, forcing many players to be on tour more often than not.

"Here at South Austin Music, we cater to the working musician. So from what I know learning from our customers, gigs are a little tough to get," he says. The average pay is less than what it should be for a quality band. But it is Austin, Texas. And there's live music everywhere. And not just live music but great, great quality live music everywhere. I would add that the cost of living in Austin has been on the rise. And that makes it hard for working musicians to make ends meet here in Austin. But most of the successful bands are playing regionally, if not nationally, so they enjoy calling Austin home."

Believe it or not, beating the heat is another reason that keeps bands and individual performers out of town year-round in Austin, even if that's where their home is.

"I already spoke to someone today that said they're on their way to Boston, because they don't like being in Austin in the summer, and summer is here," he explains. "Most touring acts, they go on the road – they travel, they get out of the Texas heat as much as possible. We also see an influx of new people, new customers that discover the store. And we're a popular store, so it doesn't take them long to learn about us."

From a brick and mortar store's perspective, rising rent prices are also of concern. Welker himself purchased the building that South Austin Music does business in a few years ago after renting it for thirty years; other stores, however, have not been as lucky.

"That was just very fortunate that I was able to pull that off because a lot of busi-

nesses have gone away," he says. "I mean, there were three other music stores between my store and the river downtown, and they're all gone and relocated. It's a real blessing to still be in the spot where I've been all these years."

Near South Austin Music is another music staple for the, Saxon Pub, which was recently purchased by Gary Keller in order to not only preserve and protect the venue, but, give it a facelift. Both situations show the economic shifts taking

place in the area, and how Austin locals are adapting.

"The building that I had to buy in order to stay put has got a live music venue on one side that someone bought a building just to preserve that venue," Welker says. "And on the other side is a new apartment [building], massive structures. Across the street, there's going to be a new development of apartments. And it's going to eventually give us more customers. But it is also taking away things that are dear to us. Places that are dear to us.

He concludes: "Austin is expanding vastly, rapidly. Unfortunately, when change happens, you lose some of what attracts people to come to Austin. And we as a community have gone through that. And we are closely holding on to what made Austin what it is. We don't want everything to be replaced with shiny new. We love the favorite live music venues and the favorite record stores and the favorite music stores that people love to go to. And because of its rapid growth, those types of places are going to the wayside because of affordability issues."

Henry Heller

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Austin Guitar House
Brent Tenczar, Manager

Over at Austin Guitar House, manager Brent Tenczar – like many others – has witnessed an overwhelming amount of continued growth in the store’s eight years of business.

“I think the overall health of the Austin music scene is still very strong. It seems as though there is a new music venue popping up every other week, and there is a constant onslaught of musicians still moving here every day!” he tells *MMR*.



Inside Austin Guitar House

“There is a treasure trove of incredible guitar players that just doesn’t seem to run out. And we feel very lucky to work with a lot of them here at AGH!”

He adds: “I expect nothing but growth over the next few months. AGH has been in Austin for coming up on eight years. What we have seen year after year, month after month, is that this City is becoming

more fruitful all the time! And with Google and Apple both building new campuses here in the coming year or so, that’s only going to bring more people, which by default brings more music!”

Like any store, it’s tough to define a “typical” customer for Austin Guitar House, but Tenczar says very few beginners are in the shop due to the fact that Austin Guitar House is a higher end boutique store, although there are some rare exceptions. “Every now and then we will get the mom or dad that really wants to support their kid with a quality product, and that always puts smiles on our faces!” Tenczar says. Otherwise, AGH name-ly serves working musicians and serious hobbyists. Their eclectic clientele goes hand in hand with what he cites as the best part about running a store in Austin: “Definitely the people!”

“Austin is known as being ‘weird,’ and that is even more true when you talk about Austin musicians!” he explains. “I have worked in guitar stores all over the country, and have never dealt with a more eclectic customer base. It’s fun to go to work every day, as you never know what kind of character you’ll meet next.”

On the flip side, Tenczar also echoes the sentiments of his fellow Austin businesses with regards to rising costs for small business owners, saying that these factors add significant financial pressure to independent businesses.

“The only significant challenge for any retailer in Austin, including MI retailers, is cost of doing business,” he says. “With how fast this city is growing, prime retail locations are getting more and more pricey by the day. In a few years, it may be impossible for a small ‘mom and pop’ store to operate close to downtown.”

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Collings Guitars Steve McCreary, General Manager

Over at Collings Guitars, general manager Steve McCreary feels that both the company and Austin have expanded in tangent with each other throughout the city's recent prosperity.

"Austin has long had a reputation for attracting and producing boundary pushing artists, both locally and internationally acclaimed. In a similar vein, Collings Guitars, as a company steeped in tradition and quality, has also 'pushed' its own industry," he says. "In this way, Austin and Collings have grown in step with each other by continually working to establish themselves as leaders in both music and instrument manufacturing."

As a result, Collings has reaped the benefits of the many pros of the Austin area, such as close proximity to international ports and a steady influx of new faces.

"As instrument builders, there is a steady flow of touring artists coming through town and lots of visitors from events like SXSW, the ACL Festival and the only Formula 1 track in the United States," McCreary adds. "Also, as a small exporting manufacturer, we're not far from major international ports, for both air and ocean. Not only that, but it's a great place to live. The music, the food, the river, the lakes and the hills are only some of the contributing factors to that. As far as the music scene goes, I often show the local music listings to people visiting our shop who are looking for live music. They are always in disbelief at the sheer number of places to go hear it."

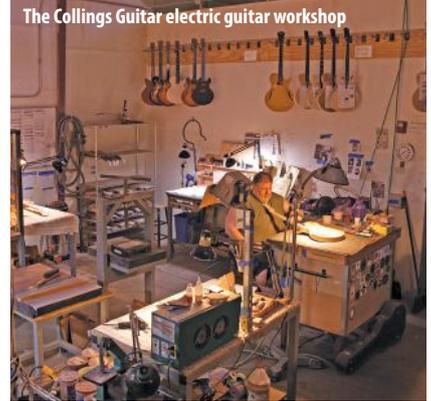
The growth, on the other hand, is also what McCreary cites as one of the troubles of running a business in Austin, due to the subsequent rise in costs for shops.

"Partially due to it being a great place to live and previously low real estate prices, I would say that the main challenge would be the explosive growth that Austin has experienced over the past 10-20 years. This growth doesn't seem to be slowing down any, either," he says. "The current reports are that 140 people per day are moving here. Along with the tech industries booming here, Dell, Apple, Google, Amazon, IBM, Resideo, NXP, Samsung, Oracle, Facebook, Indeed, Accenture, AT&T, etc., the costs of living and doing business here have grown exponentially as well. Median home prices have increased over 17 percent in the past

couple of years, so affordable housing often finds employees commuting long distances from where we're located."

He continues: "Increased traffic has also added to that commuting burden. Areas of east Austin, with historically lower costs, now represent some of the highest gentrification rates in the country. Median homes prices have increased 148 percent since 2012, while incomes have only increased 30 percent. I recently read a study that the difference between the amount of income needed to live comfortably in town and the median income is about \$30,000. Such realities have certainly been a challenge for us."

McCreary also cites stiff competition for good paying gigs in the Austin music scene, but is confident that "as long as people keep moving here and the colleges and universities in town keep bringing in young folks, the music scene will thrive and Austin will continue to earn its title of 'The Live Music Capital of the World!' As much as things have changed since I moved here in 1974, I still don't want to live anywhere else." 



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Killing the Goose of Engagement

Facebook and YouTube's Biggest Mistake

by Menzie Pittman

When Advertising Fails the Customer

Customer engagement is the only thing that matters in branding and businesses. That's it – nothing else matters... Nothing. Imagine a corporate executive suggesting an idea that is intended to bring advertisers on board in droves, but is absolutely guaranteed to kill "brand engagement" and ultimately lose the advertisers they so desperately seek. That's right: it is absolutely, 100 percent guaranteed to destroy engagement. Do you think a team of well-paid advertising executives would ever sign on to such a risky proposition and incorporate such an idea? No way, right? If you said, "No way," I'm afraid you are wrong. Look at social media platforms.

Social media is one of the last great addictions. It should have warning labels stating the possibility of dependence, much like warning labels on cigarette packs. Social media hosts such as Facebook are emboldened by the understanding of what causes that one endorphin, that one celebrity molecule of happiness – dopamine – to surge in our brain. They have weaved into their platforms techniques that commandeer us to return perpetually. They believe no one will ever leave.

What Could Possibly Kill that Golden Goose?

Greed over experience is the answer. Ask yourself, "What could be so off-target that customers would leave?" Perhaps the answer is ads placed in the middle of a music video, or videos that are story-based.

The first time I experienced this, I thought, "OMG! This is just wrong. Tell me they will never stay with *this* idea." Why is it such a bad idea? Just ask the inventor of eight-track tapes what happened when the cassette tape hit the marketplace. Can you lose a market in which you have a total monopoly? Maybe. Ads that are placed in the middle of music videos is possibly the worst idea I have ever witnessed. It will *kill engagement*, guaranteed, but it's the new trend in advertising.

Take, for example, the video where Derek Trucks, John Mayer, and BB King are playing together, and Trucks is playing a solo that is executed so beautifully that John Mayer is visibly losing his mind as he sits and watches. It's a two-minute video and at 1:12 a 20-second ad interrupts Trucks in the middle of his solo. This is a solo that King is so moved by, he refers to the slide solo as the best he's ever heard and says so in the video. After twenty seconds the ad concludes and the video resumes – you can't skip it or escape out of it. What happened to the moment? What happened to the *engagement*?

Eight-track tapes sometimes changed sides in the middle of a song due to limitations in physical design. It was not by intention. Facebook and YouTube, however, do have choices. They are deliberately deciding to place the ads. For the most part, YouTube places the ad in front of the video with an opt-out button, but not always. In longer videos they strategically place the ad to interrupt the content. On a purely artistic level, I can't even comprehend that decision. It *kills engagement*. On a business level, I understand marketing pressures. It seems that social media platforms have begun to succumb to financial competition. These businesses have chosen *greed over brand*.

Like Pandora, perhaps YouTube will begin to offer you a minimum monthly payment for your "advertisement-free" experience. Remember when people turned from commercial TV stations to "advertisement-free" cable channels for a monthly fee? Then folks turned to streaming platforms like Hulu, but advertising began to appear there. Now streaming platforms offer "advertisement-free" or "advertisement-pause" packages for a price. You have to ask yourself, "At what point do people become *unengaged* with your platform and leave your brand?"

Don't misunderstand. It's not just Facebook and YouTube making terrible choices. Just this week Spotify reorganized the way their platform worked. They had a 71 percent negative reaction to the "improved platform." These companies believe the customer won't leave, but they are horribly wrong. Take me, for example. I have reduced my personal engagement on Facebook by 90 percent and recently, I had an experience with a tech giant that was so unproductive I will change brands. Think about what I'm saying: I will change brands!

Engagement is Everything to a Business

It's no secret that a popular rating site buries your business' reviews if you don't participate with their advertising. Do yourself a favor and look up "Chef Davide Cerretini," the restaurant owner who asked for 1-star Yelp reviews in exchange for discounts at his restaurant. This story is fascinating because this tiny restaurant owner had reached a crossroads with rating sites. He thought of an ingenious way to confront what some might call extortion. In the process, Chef Davide increased *engagement in his business* and dealt with his problem at the same time. His strategy was utterly brilliant.

As we continue to move into the new frontier, we are going to see enterprises making more unproductive decisions. Everyone is taking their eye off the ball and attempting to ring every last dollar out of the towel – no matter what the cost. Be assured, no one can make a business work if you lose customer engagement and customer trust. Can you name a tech giant that you respect anymore? I certainly can't.

When greed, power, and arrogance replace engagement and customer satisfaction, the result becomes akin to the game of Jenga. You can be doing well for a while, but then you move the wrong piece, and it all comes crashing down.

In Closing

I want to speak fairly about practices that do or don't work. Facebook has recently changed their review practices to a, "Would you recommend this page?" system. It has improved visibility for all businesses, especially those that have active customer engagement like music stores. That simple change has tripled our "share" engagement. Facebook got that one right. They focused their energy on bettering the platform for the customer, and that is the right thing to do.

Always remember, your brand defines who you are. Invest in improving your brand rather than falling victim to the latest marketing trend. Put integrity foremost into your brand; remove the need for excessive greed, ill-gotten power, and egotism. When you do, my guess is you will enjoy increased *client engagement* and customer trust. 



Identity Theft, Part II by Jaime Blackman

Last month, my *MMR* column focused on education and awareness of identity theft, a crime which has impacted every part of our life.

Types of information which have been compromised include: Social Security number, credit/debit card number, protected health information, DMV records, financial accounts, and email/password. *Source - ITRC 2018*

In part II, I will be sharing best practices for identity theft prevention, monitoring, and recovery. Just in time for your summer travel season: a gold mine for thieves.

Let's start with a personal story.

In 1972, I visited the beautiful city of Barcelona – the home of Picasso, Gaudí, and Dalí. Unfortunately, it's also the home of a culture of thieves who pickpocket your valuables. I can remember that I was at the Barcelona train station, wearing a man's bag, hung close to my side. With all the hustle and bustle of the train station, and a carefully choreographed partnership of thieves working the area, it happened. The thief was able to unzip my bag, and take the gold he was looking for: an American passport and cash.

The resulting inconvenience amounted to temporary hunger and sleeping on the beach until my parents wired their weary son money the following day. After a visit to the American embassy, I was off once again.

Today when your identity is robbed, however, the inconvenience is not temporary and the fix not so simple. Your social security number and date of birth can wind up moving around the internet in perpetuity.

In fact, according to Kaspersky Lab, a global cybersecurity company, travelers are more likely to be robbed of the data than their money.

One in five international travelers gets hit by cybercrime. In the last two years, identity thieves have hit the travel industry hard, causing major data breaches at Marriott, British Airways, Delta Air Lines, and Orbitz.

Prevention

One source of identity theft which can be as deadly as mouse trap to an unsuspecting rodent, is unsecured public Wi-Fi. The open territory of public Wi-Fi is like removing the front door to your home. Robbing your data and infecting your device with malicious software is only the beginning.

A simple prevention strategy is to turn off the automatic connection to Wi-Fi option on all your devices. I personally use the hotspot option on my iPhone. Bottom line: stay off unsecured, public Wi-Fi networks.

Monitoring

In principal, monitoring is simple to understand. You're looking for suspicious activity related to personal information and financial accounts. Financial institutions have been stepping up their efforts in alerting customers via text, email, and phone when a suspicious transaction is recognized. Still, there is data to suggest that those who are proactive were able to detect fraud faster than any external source.

Visit annualcreditreport.com. Federal law allows you to get one free copy of your credit report every 12 months. This is a valuable resource which gives you the opportunity to make sure your reports are correct. If you recognize transactions you didn't initiate, that usually is an indication that your identity has been compromised.

Recovery

If you suspect that you have become a victim of identity theft, there are steps you can take.

Report unauthorized transactions involving your ATM, debit, or credit card to the issuer's fraud department immediately. Federal law limits consumers' liability if the physical credit card has been stolen to \$50. However, if you report the card stolen before any fraudulent charges are made, you have zero liability. On the other hand, if your credit number is stolen as in a data breach or hack, you're not responsible for any fraudulent charges.

It's important to keep in mind that once your identity has been hijacked, the nightmare doesn't necessarily end with the issuance of a new credit card. Your data is most likely circulating on the dark web, an area in which anonymous visitors troll the internet hunting for data, which can result in other forms of identity theft, including medical information or driver's license misuse, and even taking a mortgage out in your name.

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA), both the credit bureau and the financial organization are responsible for correcting fraudulent or inaccurate information in your report. To dispute inaccurate or fraudulent information, notify in writing the three primary credit reporting agencies: Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion. Once the issuing agency receives your notification, it has 10 days to investigate and must notify you within three days of completing its investigation. Visit consumer.ftc.gov to better understand your rights.

If you want to transfer some of the risk to an Identity Theft Protection service, you have dozens of choices, including LifeLock, IdentityForce, and IDShield.

This protection has become so important my own wealth management practice now offers annual identity theft reviews and access to concierge monitoring service to our clients. This is a trend that is bound to continue, where identity theft-related services will be as common as a financial or estate plan.

This is a huge topic. A quick Google search for "identity theft" yields 179 million hits. If you, a family member, or a friend have been a victim of identity theft, send me an email and I'll do my best to steer you in the right direction. jaimie@jaimieblackman.com

Jaime Blackman – a former music educator and retailer – is a financial advisor and succession planner. Blackman helps music retailers accelerate business value now through team building, coaching & mentoring. Blackman is a frequent speaker at NAMM's Idea Center. Visit jaimieblackman.com to preview his value-creation tools and to subscribe to the Unlocking the Wealth newsletter and webinars. If you have ideas for a future column, email Jaimie at jb@jaimieblackman.com

Accessories

Cleveland Mallets' New Lines

Cleveland Mallets are made in Cleveland, Ohio, and are designed for players ranging from student level to professional performers. The Symphonic Series is designed for college students, amateurs, and professionals alike. This series includes the well-known bamboo timpani mallets, and finely crafted keyboard mallets. The Concert Series is designed for middle and high school music programs, and offers exceptional playability and affordability. The Marching (Drum Corp) Series is a collection of durable and proven mallets which are suited for high school and college marching programs. The Parade Series is designed for use in swing-type marching bands, and even Celtic pipe bands. The bass drum and tenor mallets are fitted with hardwood handles and hand straps to allow for "stick-tricks."



www.grotrio.com

Whirlwind's WDT12SKB Snake

Whirlwind has introduced a new generation of industry standard DT12 connectors as a key part of its new WDT12SKB series snake, which is fully compatible with all earlier generations of this connector. Whirlwind's innovative termination box has also been designed to offer a new set of features to front line technicians. Housed in a briefcase-like SKB case, the drop box is easily portable, fully waterproof when closed, and the lid can act as a rain shield while in use. Like all Whirlwind Snakes, these are built to last, built to trust, and made in America.



www.whirlwindusa.com

GE300 Multi-Effects Processor from Moer Audio

Moer Audio's GE300 Amp Modelling, and Synth and Multi Effects board combines everything Moer has to offer in one all-encompassing unit. It comes with 108 digital amp models based on Moer's non-linear amp modelling technology, 43 factory cab sims, and a full-featured IR loader. Tone Capture is also included in the GE300 but with three different modes. Amp Mode allows you to sample and capture your real-life amplifier, Guitar Mode enables you to capture the EQ characteristics of your instrument, and Cab Mode provides an all-in-one tool to sample speaker cabinets and create your own IR files. Two Sharc DSP chips and an NXP crossover processor with an intuitive UI and a whole host of professional control features drive these core features. Additional features include 10 customizable footswitch controls, programmable stereo effects loop, 30-minute looper station with storable loop sessions, and external device switching. MAP \$799

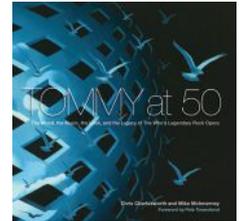


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Print & Digital

Apollo Publishers' *Tommy at 50*

Tommy at 50: The Mood, the Music, the Look, and the Legacy of The Who's Legendary Rock Opera by Chris Charlesworth and Mike McInerney looks back on how *Tommy* came to be and sheds light on its ongoing, phenomenal power. Chapters of this volume explore the heady and turbulent mood when *Tommy* was born, the origins and creations of its music, the development of the artwork, and *Tommy's* legacy – both in its original "rock opera," double-LP form, and in new incarnations onstage, on screen, and beyond, including the "Pinball Wizard" of Elton John and a *Tommy* ballet, choreographed by Les Grands Ballet Canadiens. \$26.99



www.apollopublishers.com

Pansicles from Row-Loff

The latest addition to the 'Sicles library from Row-Loff is a collection of seven steel band tunes (grades II-IV). *Pansicles* includes complete score and seven player books.



www.rowloff.com

Excelcia Music Publishing's First Band Music Release

Excelcia Music Publishing's first band music release comprises 50 new and inspiring concert band pieces. The release includes pieces by well-known favorites, including Sean O'Loughlin, Carol Brittin Chambers, Larry Clark, and Carl Strommen. These new releases offer educators high-quality choices ranging in difficulty from beginner to advanced. Each score and its accompanying parts are set for ease of reading and include unique features to facilitate rehearsals, like oversized time signatures in the scores and measure numbers at every measure on each part. Published in a color-coded series, the concert band music is meticulously edited and follows the strict and standardized six-part grading system developed by Clark and Arcari.



www.excelciamusic.com

Drums & Percussion

Sabian's Center-Hammered Triangles

Manufactured from heavier gauge phosphor bronze than other Sabian triangles, new premium center-hammered triangles allow for more projection and offer more clarity in any performance venue. In addition, the dense center hammering technique produces a rich timbre with overtones, rather than a single penetrating pitch. For occasions where a consistency of timbre is required – such as a sequence of notes – Sabian has provided un-hammered areas at the corners where percussionists typically play for this effect. For a single rich sound, percussionists can play on the multi-surfaced, center-hammered area.



www.sabian.com

Drums & Percussion

New from Pearl

Pearl now offers a new series of signature congas and bongos from artist Jesus Diaz. Designed for the seated player, the Thai Oak drums measure 30" tall and from the Quinto to Tumba feature added girth to the belly of each drum for a fuller sound. Seated conga players typically have to tilt the drum to achieve the desired projection, but the Jesus Diaz designed drums feature a 4" port on the front that is strategically positioned to deliver the maximum base frequency while the drum remains flat on the floor.



The drums also feature a newly designed Quick Release lug that is slotted to allow removal of the tension rod without fully removing the nut. Player comfort was also an important ingredient in the design of the hoop. A new ergonomically friendly design reduces the impact to your hands while an internal ring centers the head for accurate placement. The 7" and 8.5" bongos deliver cutting clarity and feature the same Quick Release lug design. The Quinto, Conga, Tumba and Bongos are finished in a matte lacquer titled Brushed Platinum #580 and feature natural buffalo skin heads.

Also new is the Black-To-Color wrap finishes with the Varsity Finish program for Championship Marching Series products. As an expansion of Pearl's popular Varsity Series finishes, ensembles can now achieve the powerful Black-to-Color look on Pearl's industry leading marching percussion products paired with either polished aluminum, chrome, or Blackout powder coat hardware. Varsity Black-To-Color Sparkle finishes let players choose top-fade, bottom-fade, and burst patterns fading from solid black to one of seven striking scholastic colors: red, blue, yellow, green, purple, orange, or garnet.



www.pearldrum.com

Pro Audio

IK Multimedia's UNO Synth

IK Multimedia's true analog, monophonic UNO Synth offers massive sound, a wide sound palette, and easy programmability in an ultra-portable, battery-powered format for on-the-go music creation, live performance, or studio recording. The powerful synth engine features professional sound and a full analog audio path on par with more expensive synthesizers. It includes two independent oscillators; a 2-pole OTA-based, analog, resonant, sweepable multimode filter; seven LFO waveforms, and more. Made in Italy, UNO Synth also features 100 presets, an easy-to-play capacitive-sensing keyboard with selectable scales and an arpeggiator. Its ultra-compact dimensions make it among the smallest monophonic synths. Its light weight (400g) and battery power (4xAA included) or USB power-supply (for battery power banks) offer the freedom to make music anywhere. \$199.99 www.unosynth.com



Amplification

New Amps from Hughes & Kettner

The Black Spirit 200 Combo contains all the features of 2018's award-winning Black Spirit 200 head, built into a compact 1x12" Thiele/Small enclosure which houses a UK-made Celestion G12H-75 Creamback speaker. In the sounds and features departments, the Black Spirit 200 Combo offers four all-analog channels – clean, crunch, lead, and ultra – as well as a comprehensive range of built-in reverb, delay and modulation effects, and a unique sagging control that lets players adjust the amount of power amp sag regardless of the volume level.



The TS 112 Pro is the new cabinet of choice for those wishing to unleash the full 200 watts of power from the Black Spirit 200 combo, or simply players looking for a full sounding 1x12 solution. Featuring a UK-made Celestion G12H-75 Creamback speaker, the TS 112 Pro also fits perfectly with the Black Spirit 200 head – two of them creating a compact, yet enormous-sounding stack – and its punchy yet balanced frequency response also makes it the ideal choice for players of amps of all types.

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By Dan Daley

It's Complicated – Being a Musician in the 21st Century Requires so Much More than Music

The first great technological paradigm shift for musicians occurred when they went from saving up their money to go into the studio to, instead, using that money to buy the studio, in the form of home recording platforms that have gotten progressively smaller/faster/better/cheaper over time. It was a momentous inflection point: musicians were now recording artists on their own terms. They had to learn a lot of new skills (and make some difficult assessments as to whether they were really able to be both their own engineers and producers, too), but for the most part they did. In the process, an entirely new MI category was created, as pro audio entered the music shop.

But if adding production to playing skills was a big deal, it was nothing compared to what musicians in the second decade of the 21st century have to contend with. Building a career in music requires not just talent and technical chops, but now encompasses a constantly widening range of online and social media resources. These putatively enable musicians to monetize their musical talents, by selling recordings they've made or promoting gigs they're going to do, or promoting themselves as music teachers. However, the sheer scale of all of this may leave less and less room for the actual music.

A Day In the Life

A typical indie musician now may spend time on Bandzoogle as he or she cobbles together a website that accurately reflects their talents and differentiates them from others in their genre(s). Then it's on to Spotify's Artist Insights, the streaming giant's analytics tool designed to help musicians understand who's listening to their music over the platform, and let musicians tailor the content on their websites to better reach audiences and sell merch, tickets, and recordings. Next stop: BandsInTown, which keeps audiences up to date on the timing and locations of live shows, also engaging them through videos. (You did remember to make a video, right?) Make sure you also do Songkick, a mass automated updater that brings that same kind of info to fans' Spotify, Shazam, Bandcamp, Pandora, Hype Machine, and other mobile apps. GigMailz is basically MailChimp for musicians, and woe to the guitar chimp who forgets to maintain a current mailing list to maintain constant engagement with fans. And of course, don't forget SoundCloud, for those fans who haven't yet signed onto Spotify or Apple Music.

“Building a career in music requires not just talent and technical chops, but now encompasses a constantly widening range of online and social media resources.”

The list could go on and on, and it does. Musicians are bombarded by online career accelerators that may or may not boost their professional fortunes, but will certainly cost them, in dollars for those services and in terms of the time it takes to learn and implement the nuances of each of these resources. MI retailers can help with this surprisingly burdensome digital workload by becoming aware of it and talking to customers about it. Just the local MI store is the clearinghouse for scuttlebutt about the relative merits of instruments, amps and accessories, it can also help customers navigate a bit of the maze of online offerings they face as they develop their careers. You don't have to become an expert in online career accelerators, you just have to know they're one more thing that musicians have to face in the digital landscape.

I cannot let this month's "Last Word" go without a shout-out to MI retailer All County Music store in Tamarac, Florida, west of Ft. Lauderdale, which worked with Conn-Selmer to provide 50 band students from 50 South Florida schools with \$50,000 worth of trombones honoring Alex Schachter, one of the victims in the 2018 Marjory Stoneman Douglas school shooting in nearby Parkland, and a 'bone player in the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Eagle Regiment Marching Band. The specially designed Alex Tribute Trombones, engraved with a motif combining Alex's name and a trombone icon, were awarded during a ceremony on May 11 at the store. For the event, 50 band directors from the region's schools were asked to nominate students to receive the instruments. All County Music, which also has a store in Pembroke Pines, has been the go-to for school band directors in the area for over 40 years. Props to All County Music president Fred Schiff and Conn-Selmer company president John Stoner for their generosity. 

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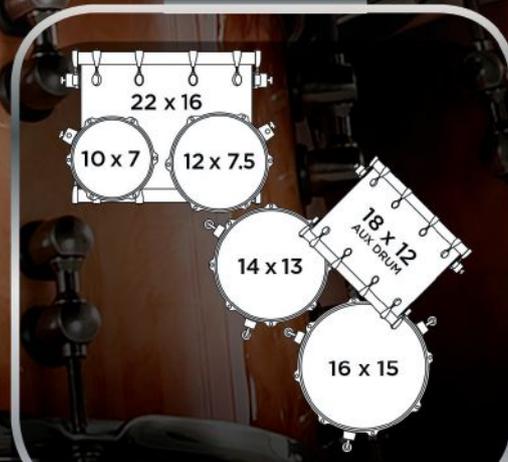


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