

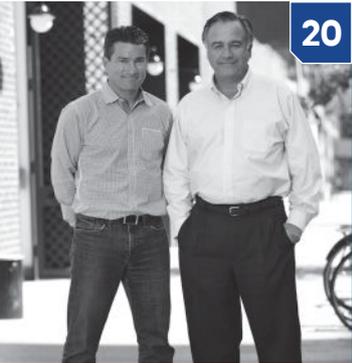
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2020

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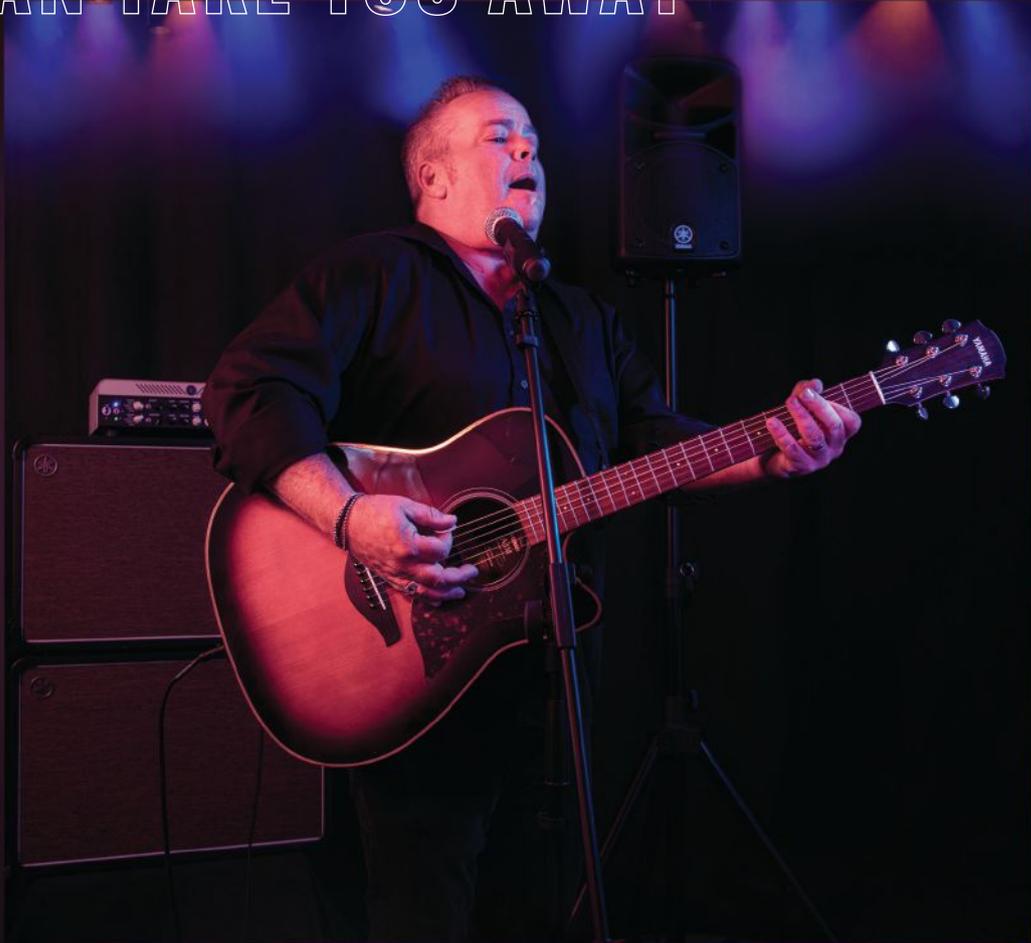
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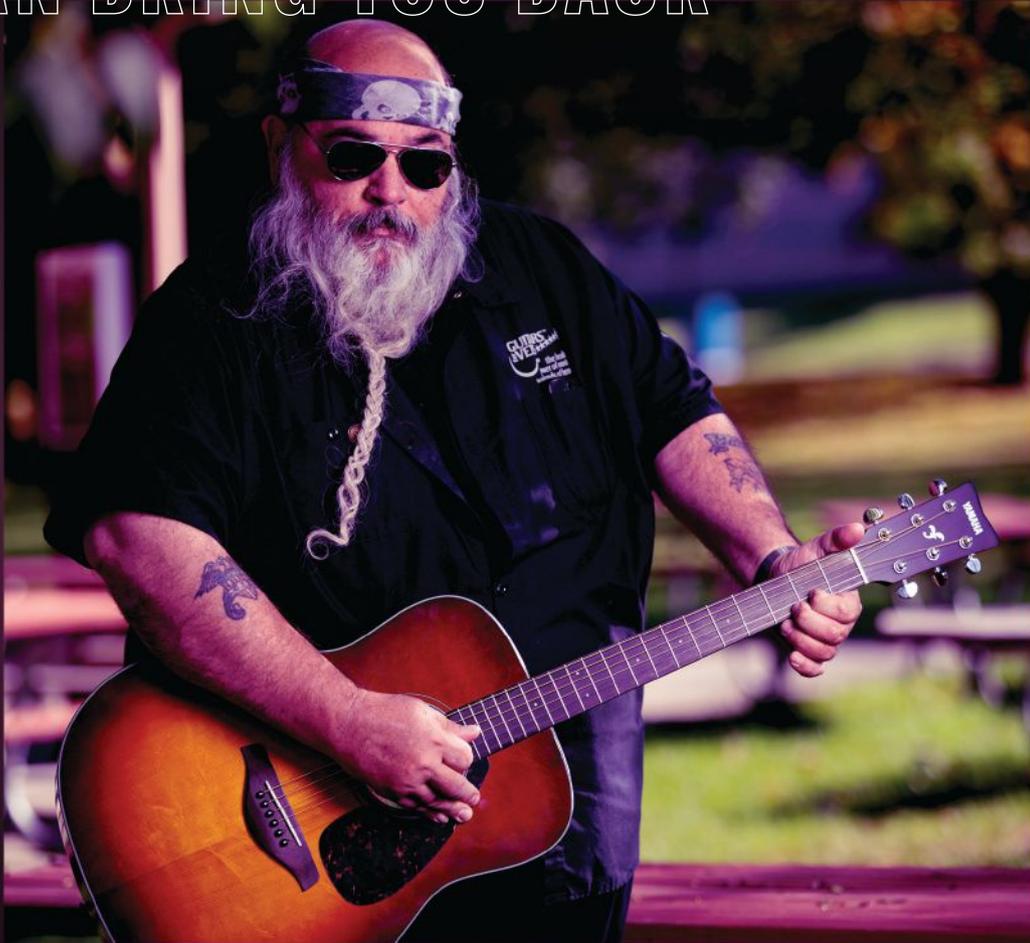
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Sailing Into Destiny



By Christian
Wissmuller

As you read through this issue of *MMR* you'll run across the newest installment of award-winning retailer Menze Pittman's excellent "Small Business Matters" column, which discusses – from a dealer perspective – the influence of the late Neil Peart.

Since I'd already begun this editorial and because we're approaching the subject from different angles (and because I *am* going to write about Peart's passing, goddamnit!), I will be covering similar ground. Take it as equivalent to when publications or sites run two album reviews of the same disc, maybe.

I am a Rush fan. I'm not the biggest acolyte and my interest sags considerably after *2112* and almost completely after *Moving Pictures*, but the band's – and Peart's – influence on my "musical life" really can't be overstated. I learned to *listen to music like a musician* thanks to Rush.

By ninth grade I was already a fully formed music geek, metalhead, hard rocker, et cetera. I regularly got detention for drawing my favorite groups' logos on school desks, I poured over articles in *Hit Parader*, *Rolling Stone*, *Circus* (fun fact: I later wrote for *Circus!*), *Maximumrockroll*, and *Flipside*, and I had taken up guitar. It wasn't until a buddy of mine introduced me to Rush in freshman year, however, that I turned a significant page in my fandom – and, more importantly, as a musician and music aficionado.

"Did you hear that drum fill?" asked this friend as we listened to *All the World's a Stage* that fall.

Did I *hear* it? Well, I mean, I know there were drums there and, yes, I heard it, but... what?

Again: I was already a bigtime music fan (snob, even!), but the act of parsing out what individual instruments and components were doing in a particular song or passage – this was new stuff for me and it opened up an entirely larger comprehension.

In subsequent decades I've been told (frequently) by significant others, friends, co-workers that when I say something along the lines of, "That bass line right there – Oh, man!" they have no idea what I'm talking about (and, more often than not, find it eye-roll worthy). As it turns out, "close listening" to music does *not* equate to "listening as a musician" and the latter is a skill (or curse. Ask my ex) that I owe almost exclusively to Rush.

We talk a lot in this industry about "Where are all the guitar gods now?" and "When's the next truly big band going to come around?" to drive sales. These are valid, important, and reasonable questions because those individuals and artists ultimately generate interest and profit for the MI industry.

Bands like Rush and musicians such as Neil Peart create the true, life-long music makers that we also are so often seeking out.

I'm not one of the many I met while a student at Berklee for whom Rush was a gateway drug to prog and jazz. I'm not someone who – after absorbing the virtuosity of Peart, Lee, and Lifeson – went on to spend hours upon hours honing my own chops to near-perfection.

I'm someone who was introduced to Rush and the playing of Neil Peart as a young dude and learned how to hear and understand the language and nuance of music in an entirely new and bigger way which has enhanced my life immeasurably.

In the weeks since he died, it's become clear – albeit in no way surprising – that many others shared that experience.

Thanks, Neil.

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“The act of parsing out what individual instruments and components were doing in a particular song or passage – this was new stuff for me and it opened up an entirely larger comprehension.”

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Industry News

JodyJazz, Inc. Acquires E. Rousseau Music

JodyJazz, Inc. has announced the acquisition of Rousseau Music Products, producer of the E. Rousseau range of saxophone mouthpieces and ligatures. E. Rousseau mouthpieces were designed and developed by legendary saxophonist and teacher Dr. Eugene Rousseau, and are played by many of the world's foremost teachers and performers today.

Through his playing, teaching, mouthpiece design, and contemporary saxophone design with Yamaha, Rousseau is considered by many to have had more influence on the saxophone than any living person.

"I am honored and humbled to be able to continue the mission of Eugene Rousseau," said Jody Espina, president of JodyJazz Inc. "Dr. Rousseau designed and created these legendary mouthpieces so that he and his students could achieve the sound and playability he knew was possible but didn't yet exist with commercially available mouthpieces. I want to sincerely thank Eugene Rousseau and Lisa-Marie Rousseau for allowing me to continue this mission."

Lisa-Marie Rousseau commented, "We are very pleased to announce that Jody Espina will continue to support the mission and legacy of my father's work. We appreciate Jody's respect and admiration for both the Eugene Rousseau legacy and the commitment to saxophonists across the world through excellence in performance, teaching, and design."

"I can distill our plans for the E. Rousseau brand into three main goals," Espina continued. "To produce the mouthpieces in the same manner and specifications that Dr. Rousseau intended, to be of service to Dr. Rousseau's students and the community at large with the same dedication as the Rousseau family and, lastly, to perpetuate and foster the story and legacy of this great man of the saxophone, Dr. Eugene Rousseau."

E. Rousseau mouthpieces are distributed exclusively worldwide by Conn-Selmer, Inc. For Dealer inquiries, contact Conn-Selmer, Inc.

- Industry News
- MMR Global
- Trade Regrets
- Supplier Scene
- People on the Move
- Letters

PreSonus Celebrates 25 Years of Innovation

A quarter century ago, two former high school and LSU School of Engineering classmates were inspired to found a new company called PreSonus, where they would design innovative audio products with professional sound



quality and features without sacrificing affordability. Working in a borrowed garage space in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Berklee-trained guitarist, producer, and audio engineer Jim Odom and fellow engineer (currently vice president of manufacturing) Brian Smith started by creating the DCP-8, which was the first product to offer digital control over analog audio circuits – a design PreSonus patented in 1995.

"At the time we designed our DCP-8, other options were esoteric gear costing tens of thousands of dollars," recalls Odom, now the company's president and chief strategy officer. "We were recording

and wanted the same equipment as the big studios but we couldn't afford it, so we built our own, starting PreSonus with three employees and an output of five or six units a week. Then and now, our philosophy has been to design products

that people can afford."

Over the following 25 years, PreSonus went on to create a steady succession of breakthrough products. Odom and Smith introduced such innovative products as DigiMax (2000), the first 8-channel microphone preamplifier with ADAT Lightpipe output; Central Station (2004), the first monitor controller with talkback; and some of the first multi-channel FireWire interfaces, including the FirePod (2004) and FireStudio series.

Not content to rest on its laurels, PreSonus took a leap into the next generation of audio technology, including

See **PRESONUS** page 13

Alpha Distribution to Acquire Amptweaker Pedal Brand

Alpha Distribution is acquiring the Amptweaker pedal brand, which was founded by engineering icon James Brown and his wife Phyllis. Brown recently accepted a position to join the EVH Amplifier division of Fender Music Instruments Corporation as principle analog design engineer.

"In the spring of 2019, I was diagnosed with Psoriatic Arthritis, which is hereditary, incurable and requires expensive ongoing treatments, and this strained the limits of our health insurance. Shortly afterwards I was approached by Fender with this new opportunity and it's been nothing short of a blessing," said James.

"I met Jack Thompson, owner of Alpha Distribution at Winter NAMM 2019 regarding possible distribution. I decid-

ed to approach Jack about taking over Amptweaker realizing that he and his team shared the same enthusiasm about working with players to create innovative musical tools."

"I collaborated with Jack and his design team on some upcoming new versions that will help kick off their next generation of Amptweaker pedal designs, and I'm excited to see what other cool ideas they come up with next."

"Working with James has been exceptional," explained Jack Thompson, owner of Alpha Distribution, "From the moment I played through the pedals, I knew this was a company I wanted to be associated with. We look forward to building on the legacy that James created and working with the players worldwide that compose the Amptweaker family."



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Daisy Rock Girl Guitars Celebrates 20th Anniversary

Daisy Rock Girl Guitars is celebrating 20 years of changing girls lives by designing the very first girl guitar in 2000 that was subsequently inducted into the Museum of Making Music in 2006 and signed by Courtney Love. It all started with a drawing by Nicole Ciravolo at the age of 2 and Tish Ciravolo turned that simple cloud drawing into a daisy guitar, then into a guitar company which is still

the only girl guitar company, to this day.

"Since Daisy Rock Girl Guitars mission statement has always been 'doing whatever it takes to get more girls to learn how to play guitar and/or bass' and that is why over 500,000 new girls play both the guitar and bass since 2000. Also, we've been endorsing artists from The Bangles and Wanda Jackson to Miley Cyrus and The Sippy Cups and we've seen Daisy Rock's

artist roster grow to over 600 female artists. We started the Girl Guitar Revolution when the consensus stated in 2000 that four percent of the guitar playing public was female and now, according to the latest reports, over 50 percent of females are buying and playing guitars. But, we've only just begun. Watch where we go in the next 20 years!" said Tish Ciravolo, president/founder of Daisy Rock Girl Guitars. 2020 will bring new surprises coming from Daisy Rock Girl Guitars with a new worldwide reach underway with Ciravolo speaking in several countries.

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MOUTHPIECES FOR CLARINETS AND SAXOPHONES



Blue Mics and Hal Leonard at a MasterClass clinic at Blackbird Studios in Nashville. (from L-R) Tim Wright (HL sales), Peter Carlson (HL sales manager – tech division), Mark Rubel (co-director of education for Blackbird Academy), John VonRentzell (Blue Mics head of sales – AMR region)

Blue Mics Expands Hal Leonard Distribution

Blue Microphones has announced that Hal Leonard will serve as principle distribution partner for Blue in Canada and Latin America. The announcement came from Mike Huckler, head of Pro Sales for Blue Mics and Brad Smith, VP of MI Products at Hal Leonard.

Since 2012, Blue Mics and Hal Leonard have had a highly successful U.S. distribution partnership. In that timeframe, Blue has carved out a major market share in the audio production industry producing award-winning mics, including the Ember XLR Studio Condenser Mic and Yeti Pro USB Studio.

Huckler says, "Hal has been a trusted partner in the U.S. for Blue since 2012, and in parts of Europe and Australia for several years. We feel the opportunity to utilize their distribution reach is a natural extension of our partnership and growth strategy. Hal works closely with both retailers and the education channel, supporting the growth of music education through technology, which aligns with our vision to increase our sales footprint and revenue growth plan. We expect they will have similar success in the expanded territories as well."

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PreSonus

continued from page 8

software. In 2006, a Hamburg, Germany, startup company founded by ex-Steinberg developers began working on Capture and Studio One for macOS and Windows in cooperation with PreSonus, leading to the acquisition of the company as PreSonus Software Ltd. Initially released in 2009, and now in version 4.6, Studio One quickly became one of the world's most popular DAWs.

In 2009, PreSonus also launched its revolutionary StudioLive series of digital mixers, which then, as now, was tightly integrated with included Capture and Studio One. Since then, PreSonus has continued to focus on integrated hardware and software, developing free multi-platform UC Surface control software and offering built-in AVB networking for its current StudioLive Series III digital mixers, supported by an entire ecosystem of AVB products.

In 2013, PreSonus acquired the assets of Notion Music, adding Notion music-notation and composition software to its product line. These innovative products were the first notation apps to run on iOS, as well as on macOS and Windows.

The same year, the Louisiana manufacturer surprised yet again, establishing itself as a maker of studio monitor speakers. The company's Eris and Sceptre series studio monitors quickly garnered praise and popularity for their clarity and accurate frequency response. More monitor lines soon followed that exploited an assortment of speaker technologies. Today, Eris-series monitors are among the best-selling studio monitors in the world.

In 2014, PreSonus acquired WorxAudio, a respected manufacturer of sound-reinforcement speakers. PreSonus' WorxAudio, ULT, AIR, and CDL loudspeaker lines, along with StudioLive Series III mixers, form the basis of PreSonus' commercial division.

Today, PreSonus continues to develop its product lines and create innovative new ones. Its award-winning Quantum-series Thunderbolt interfaces and Studio USB-C series interfaces have succeeded its pioneering FireWire interfaces, and StudioLive Series III digital mixers and Studio One are regularly updated and improved. PreSonus' ever-popular FaderPort DAW controller line has been updated and expanded, and its ATOM pad controller quickly became a hot item.

L-ISA Technology Expands Console Partnership with Yamaha

As L-ISA technology continues to be adopted by live events like the recent Bon Iver and Mark Knopfler tours, and in permanent installations such as Sydney Coliseum, L-Acoustics is pleased to announce the expansion of console partners, adding Yamaha Professional Audio, which has co-developed an L-ISA DeskLink for its flagship Rivage PM7 and PM10 mixing systems.

"Collaborating with the creative team of experts at Yamaha has resulted in an exceptionally sleek integration of the L-ISA object controls into Rivage mixing workflow. The new DeskLink is a great example of collaborative design," explains Sherif El Barbari, director of L-ISA Labs.

Within the Rivage consoles, for every mono or stereo input channel, a direct control of L-ISA Objects or Groups will be available on the console control surface and touch screens. The five main L-ISA parameters—Pan, Width, Distance, Elevation, and Aux send—will also be stored for each object in the console Scenes, with dedicated recall scope.

The L-ISA DeskLink provides a seamless workflow on two of the industry's leading consoles, allowing for immersive hyperreal mixing in a familiar environment, making adoption of L-ISA technology even easier.

"It has been a real pleasure to collaborate with the team at L-Acoustics to create a dedicated, deeply integrated and flexible user interface. As the reputation of Yamaha Rivage PM mixing systems for outstanding sound quality and traditional Yamaha reliability continues to grow, this project will benefit our many joint customers throughout the world," comments Chris Angell, Yamaha Pro Audio R&D.

Letters

Dear Christian and Terry,

Congratulations to Joe Lamond for receiving the 2020 Don Johnson Service Award.

Thank you for continuing to honor my husband's memory with this tribute to people in the music industry. It's truly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Charlene L. Johnson and family



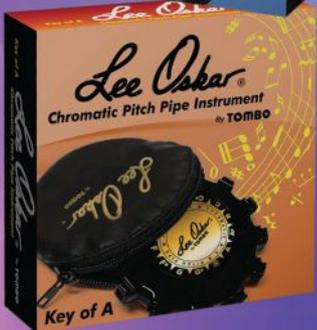
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NAMM Foundation Gifts Anaheim Elementary School District with Donation to Expand Music Making Program

On January 14, The NAMM Foundation and NAMM member companies presented the Horace Mann Elementary School in Anaheim, California with a monetary donation and musical instruction as part of the organization's Day of Service. Held in correlation with the annual NAMM Show (January 16-19), the service event is now in its sixth year and celebrates the Anaheim Elementary School District's (AESD) commitment to its music education program and supports its efforts to reinstate music curriculum for all students.

Superintendent Dr. Christopher Downing shared that, "Since 2015, NAMM has generously brought together a group of dedicated musicians who volunteer in Anaheim Elementary School District as part of the Day of Service. It's incredible to witness the magic that music education brings. It provides a creative language that will not only expand your world but will help you more deeply understand it. To say that music has been transformative for the district is an understatement. I'm proud to say we're the only district in the United States where [students] learn how to play up to six different instruments. Isn't that incredible?!"

"The Day of Service brings the mission of The NAMM Foundation to life," said Mary Luehrsen, executive director of The NAMM Foundation.

The day began with a welcome from principal Louie Magdaleno, followed by superintendent Downing, Mayor Harry Sidhu, a representative from the office of California State Senator Ling Ling Chang and chair of The NAMM Foundation, Joel Menchey, followed by a special performance from the kindergarten class and then YouTube sensations Melodica Men who performed a melody of well-loved hits on melodicas.

A \$10,000 check was presented to benefit continuing music education in the district. In addition to the check presentation, more than 40 NAMM member volunteers provided guitar, ukulele, melodica, choral and movement and drum instruction to 125 sixth grade students during the facilitator-led sessions. At the end of the presentation, the group of students, school administrators, and NAMM volunteers participated in a drum circle.

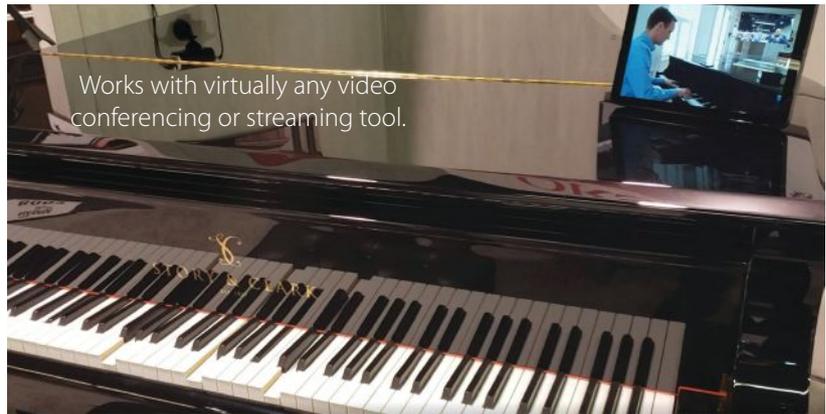
The event marked the sixth Day of Service in the AESD. For NAMM Member participants, the excitement and ability to give back and inspire the next generation

of music makers is a transformative experience.

The Day of Service holds special significance as the Anaheim Elementary School District has reinitiated its music education curriculum program for its 16,000 students. In 2019, the district grew its music staff to a total of 24 certified music educators

serving all 24 sites. The increase in staff has allowed the number of students receiving weekly music instruction to grow from approximately 11,000 students to nearly all students. The vision is for all AESD students to have access to both general and instrumental music education during their TK-6 elementary experience.

Q-SYNC LIVE DEBUTED A NEW QRS-CONNECTOR FEATURE



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Shown above QRS Artist Mike Jones is interacting with NAMM attendees while playing in New York, as the Story & Clark piano at the NAMM show plays along in – **PERFECT SYNC.** Using the Amazon "Drop In" Feature on the Echo Show, a remote piano can play without the receiver even touching a screen, logging in or remembering passwords, all without complicated hookups.



Shown here using Skype and PianoMarvel on the multi-touch workstation

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Supplier Scene

Guruz Media Rebrands as Amplify 11

Guruz Media is rebranding as Amplify 11, a new name to better capture what they do – amplifying their clients’ businesses and products. The “11” refers to making sure to turn up each marketing effort to 11. This rebranding is part of an expansion by the company to offer more services to musical instrument dealers along with new programs to manage social media efforts, digital ads, and video content expansion.



Guruz Media was initially founded by musical instrument industry veteran, Tracy Hoeft. His experience in the trenches at retail and several instrument brands was the reason the marketing agency focused on marketing to musicians. Tracy and the rest of the Guruz Media team remain as part of the rebrand and expansion as Amplify 11. Meet the team, see samples of their work, and get more information at amplify11.com.

“MI is, of course, my favorite industry to amplify! Our industry has the most beautiful looking and sounding products and we at Amplify 11 love that we can leverage today’s media outlets to let our clients’ message be heard and ultimately, turn more customers into musicians. It’s about getting results from every marketing effort,” explains Hoeft. “We are constantly exploring innovative ways to make our client’s message distinct above the noise that can be today’s media.”

Guitar Center Partners with WMC and MMW

Guitar Center (GC) has announced its partnership with the 2020 Winter Music Conference (WMC) and Miami Music Week (MMW), as the official music instrument retailer of the world-renowned electronic music conference and event series.

The 35th Annual Winter Music Conference returns this March 16-19 to Miami’s Faena District Resort, and Guitar Center will be bringing its signature popup store to Miami (at the Faena Forum), allowing guests to review, demo, and purchase the latest DJ equipment and products from brands such as Pioneer, Roland, Korg, Native Instruments, Denon, and several others.

Following product announcements at The NAMM Show this January 16-19 in Los Angeles, Winter Music Conference will be the first opportunity for fans to purchase the latest DJ and production equipment/software to hit the market. WMC badge-holders will be able to ex-

perience the popup store before anyone else, with an exclusive window prior to the store opening up to the public. Guitar Center will also sponsor Winter Music Conference’s official opening party on Monday, March 16.

Guitar Center will also partner with the 10th Annual Miami Music Week’s new Oasis at the Miami Generator just steps away from the main hub of WMC. The MMW Oasis is a five-day industry retreat taking place from March 16-20, hosting exclusive pool parties, label showcases, an artist gifting and media lounge, workshops, yoga, daytime barbecues, and more. The MMW Oasis will be open to WMC badge holders and by invitation only.

Jeannine Davis D’Addario, Guitar Center’s chief marketing and communications officer, says, “We’re excited to partner with both the Winter Music Conference and Miami Music Week for the first time this year.

see GUITAR CENTER on page 16

Ovation Custom Shop Opens

Ovation Guitars has announced the opening of the all-new “Ovation Custom Shop.” This purpose-driven shop is located in New Hartford, Connecticut and features a small team of dedicated luthiers and technicians who have a truly specialized focus – custom-made, USA built Ovation guitars. These craftsmen have well over 100 years of combined Ovation-specific expertise. Utilizing their unique cumulative knowledge, cutting-edge technologies and the most sophisticated construction techniques available, the resulting Ovation and Adamas guitars offer a playing and performance experience that is completely off the charts.



The first products to come out of the Ovation Custom Shop are a very limited run of the sought-after Adamas 1687GTs and Adamas 2087GTs. These Adamas instruments are just the beginning for the Custom shop that plans to

create an ongoing assortment of limited run, USA built Ovation instruments. In the near future, the Ovation Custom Shop will have the ability to fulfill orders on variety of custom built guitars for Ovation connoisseurs.

Also located in this New Hartford shop is the new “Ovation Workbench.” Customers with Ovation and Adamas guitars that need repairs, set-ups or updating can get fully authorized repair work by the most knowledgeable luthiers and technicians in the world. This can include the simplest set-up to the most complex repairs. The Ovation Workbench is ready to make your Ovation guitar the best it can be. Instruments can be shipped to/from the Ovation Workbench and all associated costs can be discussed before any work takes place.

Ovation general manager Rick Hall said, “The luthiers in New Hartford represent the ‘best-of-the best.’” Hall continued, “They not only hand-craft these premium instruments but also help in the design process to bring custom guitars to reality. This simply could not be accomplished without their years of highly specialized experience.”

Gibson Launches Gibson TV Worldwide on Gibson.com

Gibson has announced Gibson TV, the American-made guitar maker's first-ever all-original network. Featuring original series from the world's best storytellers, Gibson TV launched worldwide with the first episodes of the series titled "The Process" and "The Collection" available for streaming.

All Gibson TV original shows will be streamed via Gibson.com.

Gibson TV will offer an inspiring and powerful lineup of all-new exclusive, original shows, including: "The Process," which takes a cinematic look at Gibson's crown jewel, the main Gibson USA Factory; "The Collection," a series where host Mark Agnesi will take viewers on a deep dive into the personal guitar collections of music's biggest artists; "The Scene," a travel and lifestyle series follows that host Mark Agnesi to cities around the U.S. and aboard to find the coolest music destinations that help make up that city's music scene; "My First Gibson," a series that gives the artists the stage to tell the story of how and why they acquired their first Gibson guitar, delving into their musical history and influences and playing style; "Icons," a longform interview series sits down with some of the most iconic artists, producers and music business pioneers; "Behind the Board,"

an "in the studio" series that gives both musicians and producers a chance to look back and discuss the recording process in detail of their most ground-breaking and inspired albums; and "The Songbook," a special, acoustic all-performance series showcases stripped down performances shot in beautiful spaces from world renowned artists and up-and-coming musicians.

Subscribers can watch Gibson TV originals on demand via Gibson.com. Viewers can subscribe to Gibson TV, so they can be notified when new episodes become available.

"We are excited to be launching Gibson TV, our own online network. Our production team, led by Mark Agnesi and Todd Harapiak, has been working to make this happen for the last year, creating original programming and working closely with our artist community. Our objective is to make the journey of making music matter more than ever through storytelling. Music lovers around the world will now have access to engaging shows, created with iconic artists, on Gibson TV. And this is just the beginning, we have a lot more coming," says Cesar Gueikian, chief merchant officer of Gibson Brands.

The Drum Workshop Music Foundation Launches

Drum Workshop Inc. (DW) recently announced the unveiling of the DW Music Foundation (DWMF). The goal of the new charitable arm is to provide the gift of music to underserved communities worldwide.

Over several decades, DW has supported numerous music-related charities by donating instruments and educational resources. Past support includes artist mentoring and resource collaboration designed to foster an appreciation of music as a life enhancing and life changing activity. The formation of DWMF will enable the company to build on this legacy of giving and expand its impact by supporting these same organizations, as well as a host of other endeavors including youth outreach, health and wellness, scholastic music and arts programs, and more.

Scott Donnell, DW's VP of marketing notes, "The DWMF will allow us to formalize our charity efforts and cement some of our long-term partnerships. It will also set the stage to connect with other organizations that are aligned with our mission."

A select group of business and music industry leaders including DW's founder Don Lombardi and DW president and CEO, Chris Lombardi, will be part of the foundation's board of directors. Michele Abrams has been tapped as executive director and will head efforts to establish the foundation as a self-sustaining entity that will work in tandem with key partners in the coming years. Abrams' expertise in nonprofit development, fundraising, and creating memorable world-class events, concerts and fundraisers, will be a valuable asset to the DWMF team.

"Both music and philanthropy have been my life's passion. This extraordinary opportunity will open so many doors for so many. I'm truly thrilled and honored to be joining the DWMF on this rewarding journey," commented Abrams.

Soundcheck Celebrates the Holidays with Allen & Heath

Soundcheck Nashville combined its 2019 Holiday Celebration with a charity drive, collecting over 700 toys and bikes for needy children in the Nashville area. The event's audio featured Allen & Heath dLive Digital Mixing Systems at both FOH and monitors. In-house audio engineer Caleb Rose described his experience with the dLive systems at the event.

"Before working at Soundcheck, the only experience I had with Allen & Heath was with their older analog desks," Rose said. "But, after spending less than an hour with the dLive, I felt right at home. Unlike other digital desks, the dLive is very approachable and easy to understand. Every setting and feature is, at most, two button presses away, a vital key to why these consoles are so easy and fast to operate."

At FOH, Soundcheck used a dLive C3500 Surface with CDM48 MixRack. "I placed the FOH MixRack offstage next to the monitor position giving me a super clean and uncluttered FOH setup," said Rose. At monitors, Soundcheck used an S5000 Surface with DM48 MixRack. Allen & Heath's gigaACE network made the connections and Rose adds, "The CAT6 cabling was a lifesaver as we had a short time to setup and tear down the system to coordinate with our normal rehearsal schedule. Also, because gigaACE can handle bi-directional digital audio, I had a lot of flexibility to patch anything I needed from FOH."

Sixwire's appearance included guests John Elefante and Derek St. Holmes and Rose notes, "I was able to drag their inputs onto the Surface without pause or stress and I added FX to their mix to give the guest singers a more identifiable sound. The dLive made this a breeze." Overall, the Soundcheck system had over 40 inputs, 14 outputs, and more than 10 FX units running simultaneously and Rose says, "There wasn't any noticeable slowdown or lag. With all the flexibility, power, and the ease of use of these consoles, you would be hard pressed to find a situation they couldn't accommodate."

Genelec Helps The Lennon Bus Inspire the Next Generation

The 2020 calendar year is set to be very big for the John Lennon Educational Tour Bus, with events centered around what would have been the former Beatle's 80th birthday. The Lennon Bus, which is a state-of-the-art mobile audio and HD video recording and production facility, regularly provides free digital media production workshops to schools across the U.S. and Canada – enabling students to learn how to write, record, and produce original songs, music videos, documentaries, and live multi-camera video productions. To ensure that students experience the best possible audio quality, the monitoring systems in the Bus' two onboard studios have recently been upgraded to Genelec's "The Ones" coaxial three-way point source models.

"We go to a lot of under-served schools and a lot of communities that are under-resourced, so bringing something that really represents the best of the industry is eye-opening and can be life-changing for kids and communities," explains Brian Rothschild, co-founder and executive director of the Lennon Bus. "Having the new studio monitors onboard continues that trajectory for us."

Genelec has been a long-term sponsor of the Lennon Bus with the two-way 8240A Smart Active Monitors and 7260A subwoof-



er having originally been installed in each of the Bus's 5.1 studios. "When we installed those Genelecs, the difference in the sound was just readily apparent and really impressive, and we thought that it had to be as good as it could get," recalls Jeff Sobel, creative technology director for the Lennon Bus. "Then when The Ones came out and we had the opportunity to use the 8341s, we thought we would give it a try. I think we were all

expecting there to be a subtle difference in the sound, and we didn't really see how it could be too much better. But it was remarkable. The first time that we played some music through them after installing them, it was really eye-opening how much clearer they sounded and how much better the imaging was."

The upgrade has seen the U.S. Lennon Bus move to the same technical setup as its European counterpart, with all 10 of the original 8240As having been directly replaced by 8341A coaxial studio monitors, with the 7260A subwoofers being retained.

Genelec's Smart Active Monitoring technology has been particularly important for this project, since this has enabled the Lennon Bus' technical team to create specific calibration presets for different configurations of the bus, using Genelec's GLM software.

Hosa Technology Announces New Online Dealer Portal

Hosa Technology, Inc. has announced the launch of its online dealer portal. The new dealer portal grants Hosa official resellers, distributors, and contractors the ability to review all pertinent details of their account including billing, order status, and shipment tracking.

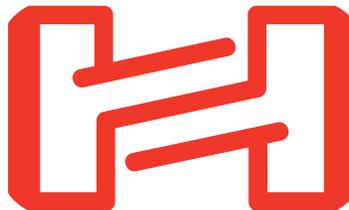
Commerce runs quickly and the need to access details in a timely fashion is more important than ever. Thanks to the fully integrated Hosa dealer portal, inquiries into stock and account details are always up to date. Customers will be able to avoid backorders, confirm order status, review invoices, and find tracking information from one convenient site.

Also available is the ability for authorized dealers to place orders directly through the portal. This minimizes errors by eliminating the amount of times information has to be re-interpreted when placing orders via phone, email, or fax. All submissions will go directly into the order queue for fulfillment.

Customers will also be able to submit requests like return authorizations through the dealer portal. The form will include the necessary information needed that often requires a number of back-and-forth communications to resolve.

"Hosa takes pride in being accessible to our customers," said Jose Gonzalez, Hosa's director of Marketing & Product Development. "Today, this means more than phone and email, as customers expect direct access online. Our dealer network is extensive and the ability for all of them to access information and submit requests online will be a huge asset in increasing efficiency on both ends."

The Hosa Online Dealer Portal can be accessed at dealer.hosatech.com.



Hosa Technology

Guitar Center

continued from page 14

As a premier Omni-channel resource for the latest gear for electronic music artists, we are thrilled to debut the industry's top DJ music production equipment and software all week to music producers, artists, and fans at the country's leading electronic music industry conference."

David Ireland, executive director for Winter Music Conference, says, "We are extremely excited to be working with Guitar Center for the 35th edition of the WMC and the 10th year of MMW. Our badge holders will be getting exclusive access to some of the best new DJ and production gear on the market, along with cutting edge educational programming and events with some of today's most exciting talent. This partnership will provide a one-of-a-kind experience for our attendees that perfectly reflects the new vision of the Winter Music Conference."

In addition, Guitar Center will provide a local DJ equipment and lighting rental service, allowing venues, promoters and artists to rent gear from Guitar Center's South Florida locations.



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ON THE MOVE

Alfred Music and MakeMusic, both part of **Peaksware Holdings, LLC** portfolio of companies, have announced that **Andy Stephens** has transitioned from chairman of Peaksware and strategic advisor to each of the portfolio brands to CEO, leading both music and sports brands. The previous CEO, Gear Fisher, is stepping down to pursue new projects and opportunities within the tech industry.



In addition to the transition in the CEO role, Stephens has also appointed a new executive team that is responsible for managing the company's core business operations. The newly developed Music Brands executive team is comprised of Greg Dell'Era (VP Product Development), Heath Mathews (VP Content & Licensing), and Johann Gouws (VP Global Customer Team). The appointment of this new executive team positions both Alfred Music and MakeMusic for strategic alignment which reinforces the entire ecosystem for learning how to play music from physical products to technological solutions.

Alfred Music and MakeMusic will continue to operate independently while sharing resources to advance innovations, provide additional content, and leverage distribution channels

Long-time **Kawai** senior vice president **Brian Chung** announced his retirement at the Kawai Awards Reception held on Thursday, January 16 during the 2020 NAMM Show. Chung spent 31 years in management roles for Kawai America Corporation and Kawai Canada Music and plans to remain active in the music making profession as a composer, arranger, consultant and speaker following his retirement.



Chung joined Kawai as contemporary keyboards manager in May of 1988 with responsibility for digital pianos, organs

and portable consumer keyboards. His early focus on consumer keyboards led to a relationship with the QVC Shopping Network, where he spent over 40 hours of cumulative broadcast time as an on-air guest selling over a quarter million keyboards to viewing customers. After becoming senior VP, his focus shifted to the acoustic piano side of the business, where he helped to develop the Kawai Keyboard Academy (that provided product training for dealers and salespersons) and oversaw the launch and development of several generations of grand and upright pianos including the luxury-class Shigeru Kawai Grand Pianos in 2000.

Following Chung's departure, Kawai will be led by a newly-structured team of senior managers including Cory Callies (national sales manager), Frank West (director of operations) and Chad Schumacher (director of marketing).

K-array has welcomed

Sam Spennacchio as national sales director at K-array USA. His appointment comes at a time when the Italian designer of discreet audio solutions continues to build its U.S. subsidiary to meet the needs of its rapidly growing business in that market. Spennacchio will be responsible for assisting in the overall increase of K-array business in the U.S. and will concentrate his efforts in the event productions and live sound verticals.



K.H.S. Group recently

announced the appointment of **Andy Wang** to the position of CEO. Wang takes the reigns of the company from retiring CEO Karl Leong after a successful, tenured decade leading K.H.S. Group global operations.



Wang has been a part of the K.H.S. music instrument family for over 18 years since joining the company in 2001. Having served in a variety of roles during that time, Wang is uniquely qualified to lead K.H.S. Group forward. After initially proving himself as a leader in supervisory and management roles, he became special assistant to K.H.S. Group chairman Wu Hsieh in 2004. In the ensuing years, Wang demonstrated vision and leadership as vice president for K.H.S. Musical Center Co. (a subsidiary of the K.H.S. Group for music retailing), vice president of the global mar-

keting division, and most recently as CFO of the K.H.S. Group globally.

As part of its blueprint for building an agile, innovative new pro audio company, **ASI Audio, Inc.** has hired industry veteran **Evan MacKenzie** as vice president, marketing & sales. With a strong background across the full range of branding, marketing, and sales management disciplines, MacKenzie will drive integrated marketing while building the company's sales network and brand. Previously, MacKenzie has directed marketing and communications efforts for industry stalwarts including DPA Microphones, Gibson Professional Audio, QSC, and American Music & Sound.



Additionally, ASI Audio has announced the hiring of **Charlene Clements** to the position of manager, client development. In her new post, Clements will help build the company's sales operations across both the music industry and audiological channels.



Trade Regrets

We received the following message from NAMM's Dan Del Fiorentino:

Bob Saunders passed away on Sunday January 5, 2020



at the age of 78. Bob began working in the accounting department for Kaman Corporation. He was asked by the company's founder, Charlie, to work with his son Bill for the Kaman Music Corporation. After Bill retired, Bob took over as CEO and President of Kaman Music and ran the company for over a decade. During Bob's time as president, the company acquired the Latin Percussion (LP) brand, which was a complimentary product to the guitars they were manufacturing, and oversaw the acquisition of Musicorp as Kaman was the largest independent distributor of musical instruments and accessories in the United States (Musicorp was number two).



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Surfari

'We Are Not Changing Our Recipes – Just Changing the Head Chef'

John D'Addario III & Jim D'Addario

By Christian **Wissmuller**

As of January 1 of this year, John D'Addario III assumed the title of CEO in addition to his previous role as president of D'Addario & Co. As son of John D'Addario, Jr. and nephew of the previous CEO, Jim D'Addario, John D'Addario III (J3) has been involved with the family business nearly his entire life and brings those many years of experience and insight to this new leadership position. For his part, Jim will continue his duties as chairman of the board while also taking on the new position of chief innovation officer.

MMR recently sat down with J3 and Jim to learn of their new roles at the company and what's changing (and what's *not* changing) at one of our industry's most iconic and beloved brands.

John, first off: congratulations on the new position. Let's start with a little bit of history -- for those unfamiliar, can you talk about how you first began to work at the family company and how your roles evolved to the present day?

John D'Addario III: I often joke that I literally grew up at D'Addario. I worked just about every summer at the company since I was 12 years old, starting in shipping & receiving, as well as a number of industrial engineering projects. Following my graduation from the University of Richmond, I actually worked in the cosmetics business for three years as a production & operations manager before joining D'Addario full-time in a similar role.

From there, I assumed the responsibility as the D'Addario Fretted Strings product manager for a brief period before moving onto national sales. Eventually, in 2001 I became the VP of global sales and for the next six years concentrated on the restructuring of our sales organization as well as our global expansion. In 2007, I joined the executive ranks in a more of a strategic role as executive VP and eventually became the company president in 2014.

Having had the privilege of working closely with dynamic leaders like Jim and my father (John Jr.), I was also fortunate to take advantage of a number of leadership development programs, as part of our family succession planning. These experiences helped me immensely in honing my skills in advance of assuming my new responsibilities as CEO and president.

Jim, what was the catalyst behind your decision to step down and hand the CEO reins over to J3?

Jim D'Addario: Actually our board of directors, family stockholders, and management team have been openly working on succession planning strategies for many years. This is just the culmination of the work that we have all actively contributed to. Like John, I have been active in the business on some level since I was 12 or 13. My first visit to the NAMM show was 1963 when I was 13 and our family business was known as Darco Music Strings. I have been blessed on many levels, one of which was to have a job that I was so passionate about, it rarely felt like work. Sure, I had some tough times, made some silly decisions, or had to do things I just really hated doing, but for the majority of my time on the job, it was a labor of love.

I have also been blessed with many talented and passionate family members, starting with John D'Addario, III who is ready to assume



more responsibilities as we execute this transition from the third generation in America to the fourth. John and I have worked hand in hand since he joined the company full time. He is definitely ready to take the wheel.

That being said, I don't think I can ever stop working completely. I love creating new products, processes, and marketing too much. I want to keep my creative juices flowing, but I am very eager to hand over the responsibilities of the CEO to John and put my focus on future innovations for the company. I know John and the tremendous team of family and non-family members we have assembled will do a great job.

Again, for Jim: In your new, dual position as chairman of the board and chief innovation officer, what duties will you be assuming, specifically?

Jim: The chairman of the board position is something I have been doing since the early 2000s. I will just continue to assist in planning the quarterly board meetings, reviewing the board materials being submitted and working with John and the management team to make sure that we follow up with the requests of the board of directors and stockholders. This whole process of having real board meetings with real work on the agenda is something we take very, very seriously. In fact, I have learned so much from our outside board members I can't imagine running the business without it at this point. I just plan on helping to maintain continuity of leadership in this role without interfering with management in any way.

As for the director of innovation position, this is the part of my work that I have always loved the most. I plan on continuing to oversee new product development, machine, and process design and creating innovative marketing initiatives in the same way I have in the past. We are also planning on expanding our research department to bring on a couple of more people that will be focused on true research projects that may result in products that are completely different than anything we have developed and offered in the past. I am excited to be able to just focus on this area.

John, similar question: what actual changes in your day-to-day activities are involved in becoming CEO? Are there certain previous responsibilities that you'll be handing off to others?

J3: The key to success in my new role as CEO is the team I surround myself with. We have built a highly complex, global business that requires a team of sophisticated, talented leaders to oversee it. Over the course of the last few years, Jim and I have been working very hard with our board of directors and our family business advisors in

reengineering our reporting structure and building a very strong, capable team.

For example, we hired an experienced, savvy chief revenue officer in Bob Horvath and promoted Chris Griffiths to our new chief sales officer, both of whom will partner with our CMO, Jonathan Turitz and our business unit and regional leaders in managing all of the commercial aspects of the business. On the operations and administrative front, Glen Stalter recently joined us as our new CFAO and DJ Rettman as our new chief information officer, both of whom bring a wealth of experience in their respective fields and will partner with my brother Michael, who has stepped up to our VP of operations. The aforementioned individuals, as well as our diverse group of emerging middle management talent all, allow me, in my new role, to focus less on the day-to-day details and more on the future strategic direction of our global, family business and aligning our team to it.

In addition to being one of the leading names in MI, D'Addario & Co. is also one of the most prominent family-owned businesses in the industry. How important is maintaining that dynamic to you both?

J3: Extremely important and our reputation as a family and business is something I am passionate about. Our family and family of employees have worked very hard and re-invested considerably in the business for many years to earn the respect as an industry leader, and I am very excited about the opportunity to not only sustain, but hopefully strengthen it. We're the first to admit that we are far from perfect, but at the same time we strive for perfection each and every day, as part of our continuous improvement culture. We are also very proud of and committed to giving back to the industry and community, particularly through the D'Addario Foundation, which generously supports music programs around the world. All of this would not have been possible if not for our family's commitment to the sustainment of the business and the important succession planning we have done to prepare next-generation leaders like myself to be responsible stewards of the business.

For both of you: when you look back on your careers thus far and the growth of D'Addario & Co., what are some of the moments or achievements you're most proud of, or that you think were particularly significant in growing the company?

J3: A number of things come to mind. A catalyst to building world-class manufacturing operations has been our commitment to re-investing in automation and vertical integration opportunities, but the primary driver in attaining a strong reputation as a high quality, low-cost manufacturer was our commitment to Lean, continuous improvement in 2007-2008. When the Great Recession was at its peak, we used this slow period to invest heavily in the training of our employees in Lean as a philosophy which ultimately enabled us to not only save, but grow job opportunities. We were also able to re-shore products that we had previously outsourced overseas. This commitment to Lean has continued in a big way, across our entire organization and we still believe we have tons of room to improve. This mentality has enabled us to remain globally competitive as a U.S. manufacturer.

I'm also very proud of what we have accomplished in the last decade, the magnitude of which is arguably more than any period in the company's history. In addition to doubling the size of the business, over the last 10-years we also integrated several acquisitions, developed our own string raw material manufacturing capability, and conducted a comprehensive rebranding which culminated in a brand book, new logos, and new packaging, all of which reinvigorated our

brands and business in general. During the last decade, we also expanded our global footprint in a big way with the establishment of our own distribution companies in Europe (UK, Germany, and France), Australia, and China, in addition to a sales and marketing office in Singapore. All of this work has enabled us to think more globally as a company and realize the amazing opportunities we have to grow.

Jim: As an answer to this question I immediately start to run down a list of accomplishments, but that is a bit of a narcissistic exercise.

On a higher level, one of the things I am proudest of is the way we have kept our family together while continuing to run and grow a successful business. My parents and my siblings were truly blessed with healthy, passionate and talented children; many of whom now have important roles in our family businesses. In 1997 when my brother John, Jr. decided to retire, I was really frightened. Essentially, when John was full time in the business I had the innovation role that I am re-inheriting now. My job was easy. His departure made it necessary for me to learn every aspect of the business. I realized without some kind of family counseling, I probably would not succeed. I also realized I needed an outside board of directors. I did not study business in college. I studied music. I needed professional help.

Embracing open communication with our family business advisors, board, and family employees has paid off tremendously and is one of the accomplishments we are all proud of.

Of course, our four-decade-long, continuous string of new product and technology innovations is also something I am equally proud of; from Half Rounds, to phosphor bronze, to Pro-Arte classic strings, to NYXL, to XT, to Planet Locks, Level 360, UV coatings, to our in-house printing, wire making, nylon extruding. our new Venn synthetic reeds we are introducing at NAMM and more.

I most proud of the culture of continuous curiosity we have created that has made these technological advances possible.

In a practical sense, what changes (if any) can D'Addario dealers and end-users expect in the coming months as a direct result of this shift in leadership?

J3: First let me reassure our customers as to what they can continue to expect from us. We are committed to not only exceeding their expectations with phenomenal customer service but also providing highly innovative, premium quality products they can rely on. Though our relentless efforts to make it easy to do business with D'Addario will continue, what will change is how we engage them through new, creative content and experiences. For example, our plans are to continue to invest heavily in digital strategies such as our new, consumer loyalty program called Player's Circle, in our dynamic B2B e-commerce site called Inner Circle, in our newly launched website and in a content library where our customers can easily attain digital content that can be used for the merchandising, promotion and marketing of our products.

Jim: I don't think our customers are going to notice anything but continuous improvement. We are not changing our recipes – just changing the head chef.

Any parting thoughts, previews of coming developments, or anything else you'd like to share with our readers?

Jim: I believe our company is positioned to see unprecedented growth in the coming years and our B2B customers will have the opportunity to profitably share in that growth. We are committed to continuing to develop the most innovative products, but we are also committed to helping our B2B customers grow and make a profit. We will continue to build equity in our brands, and continue to work closely with our B2B partners. 



Note From Zach

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2020 Retail Resolutions

2020 marks a new year, new decade and new normal. It also means an opportunity to look at your business with clear, 2020 vision. Are you ready?

To give you a jump-start, we've rounded up a handful of New Year's resolutions. Think of these ideas and best practices as your business roadmap, so you don't look back with 2020 hindsight at what could've been.

Seek out and eliminate friction. Online retail giants have amplified consumer expectations in everything from checkout and returns to shipping and reorders. Identify any and all points of friction in your customer experience, and work toward eradicating them. And whenever possible, involve staff in creating—and owning—the solutions.

Consider new music education opportunities. Spotify and streaming have spawned an age of niche musical tastes. You might host a rock camp in your lesson program, but what about students of musical theater or the blues? More and more, there's no one-size-fits-all.

Embrace tough conversations with staff. Don't hold back on discussing touchy topics with your team, such as pay ceilings and promotions. Short-term discomfort will often create clarity, dispel common myths and even get employees aspiring to positions within your company that they wouldn't have otherwise.

Optimize Instagram. One in 10 Instagram users now shop using the platform, according to Hootsuite's stats. If you're not already, make sure you're harnessing the full power of Instagram to increase sales. Optimize your business profile with a strong bio and link to your website—or a particular product. Likewise, consider experimenting with Instagram ads within your feed or in your Stories.

Re-examine your policies. For instance, do you have a strict no-makeup-lesson policy in your education program? In the age of Uber and on-demand everything, will that policy alienate customers? Again, fight friction, even when it's tough.

Hey, Alexa, focus on voice search. These days, nearly 30 percent of all internet searches are done without a screen. That impacts how your customers find you. Are you preparing your search engine optimization for voice search?

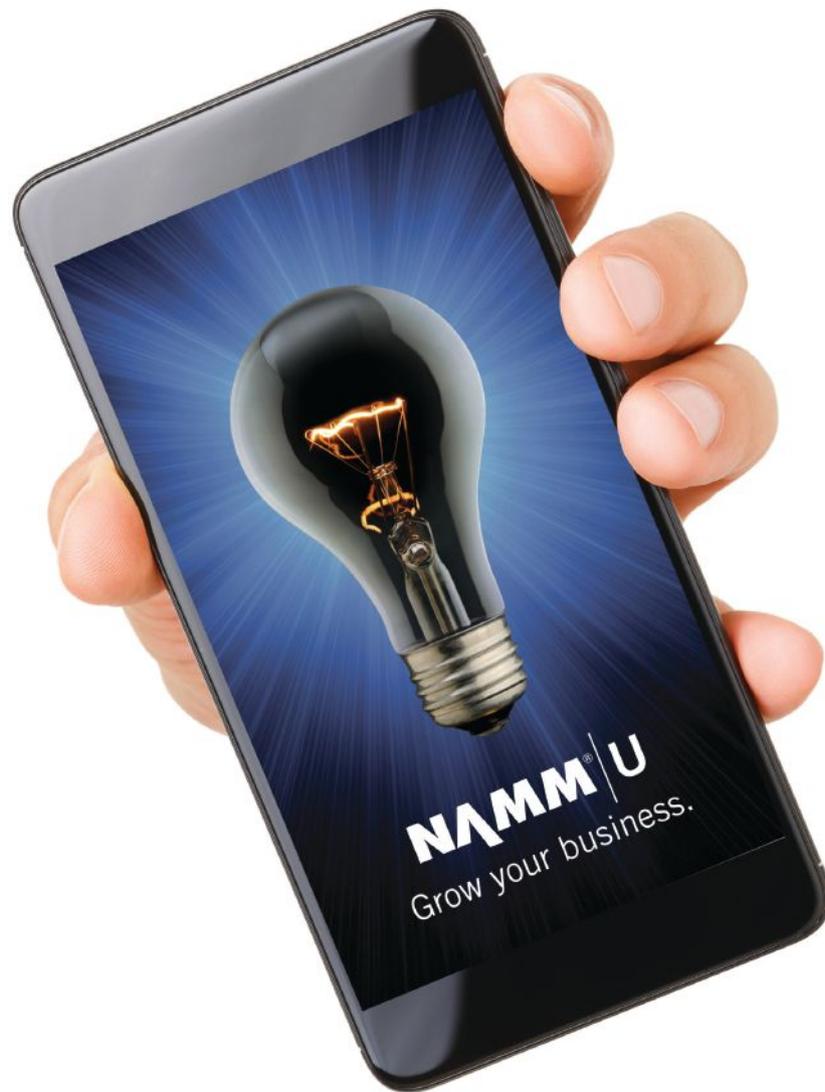
Think content. Content (creation) is king. Musicians now think in terms of music *and* video. Does your product mix and lesson program reflect this shift? Also, chances are you have expertise in a particular area, be it repairs, an instrument or a brand. Is there a marketing opportunity to present your insight via a company podcast or video series?

Mobile first. On Black Friday 2019, mobile orders surged by 35 percent, according to Salesforce—and it's a trend that's unlikely to abate. If you're thinking about redesigning your website, think beyond just mobile-friendly. Successful websites are now mobile-first, as opposed to built for desktop and re-engineered for mobile later. This is a big project, of course, but figure it into your long-term planning.

Also, pick up more ideas to transform your business at Summer NAMM. This year's show will be held in Nashville at Music City Center from July 9–11. See you then!

Zach Phillips
NAMM DIRECTOR OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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The 2020

NAMM Show

The Dawn of a New Decade Finds the Industry's Biggest North American Gathering Characterized by Positive Momentum

By Christian **Wissmuller** and Victoria **Wasylak**

"NAMM retailers who came to Anaheim and participated in the incredible NAMM U offerings undoubtedly came away with valuable insight, skills, and strategies for success in 2020," says NAMM president and CEO Joe Lamond. "The new financial and innovation sessions along with the breakfast and idea center sessions, many taught by the industry's most progressive dealers themselves, were packed from Wednesday all the way through Sunday, clearly our members are committed to life-long learning!"

Those committed members came out in droves to this Winter's Anaheim gathering. Over 2,000 exhibitors representing 7,000 brands were visited by 115,888 attendees (roughly in keeping with 2019's tally of 115,301). International members accounted for nearly 20 percent growth over the past two years. Registrants were an invited mix

of industry professionals from across the crossroads and included domestic and international retail and distribution buyers and employees, exhibitors, entertainment tech, and pro audio buyers and professionals, media, artists, invited guests, and The NAMM Foundation GenNext (college music students and faculty), Music Education Days (school music administrators and buyers), and Nonprofit Institute (NAMM grantees and nonprofit affiliates) participants.

"The NAMM Show is the ultimate opportunity for industry professionals to come together to share their passion for music, build relationships, and learn from each other through the vast array of educational and networking opportunities that The NAMM Show has to offer," said chair of the NAMM Board of Directors, Chris Martin of C.F. Martin. "It's a place where we hold each other up, cheer each other on, and strengthen the industry as a whole."

The Most Important Meal of the Day

Each day of the Show began with a NAMM U Breakfast Session in the Pacific Ballroom, inside the Anaheim Hilton. On Thursday, January 16, NAMM President and CEO Joe Lamond hosted the "Breakfast of Champions" with a panel of industry leaders and innovators, including Bryan Bradley, Group One; Whitney Brown Gristaffi, Ted Brown Music; Noel Lee, Monster Cables; and David Schwartz, TEC Tracks offering their insight on the Crossroads and opportunities. Jason Mraz was presented with the Music for Life Award, an honor annually given to a musician or creative luminary whose body of work and artistry has inspired more people to make music.

Friday's Breakfast Session welcomed digital marketing pioneer, Ann Handley as she addressed the fast-paced and always-on nature of modern marketing and answered the question, "Is 'fast' really the best path to drive marketing transformation at your business?" in her presentation, "Transformative Marketing," and on Saturday, global customer experience expert and musician Scott McKain shared the five key characteristics of iconic organizations in "How to Build an Iconic Business."

Pro Audio Represented

At A3E: The Advanced Audio + Applications Exchange, 13 sessions and 13 workshops explored how advanced audio applications are transforming the music industry, production, and performance. Future-focused sessions included "The Future of Game Audio: Music and Sound Design for Mobile Gaming," where A3E explored the tools and techniques that are specific to

mobile gaming and surveyed the landscape of opportunity for audio developers, musicians and sound designers; "The Future Indie Artist: New Technology for Independent Success," which focused on emerging technology that every gigging musician must know to maximize their revenue, and more.

AES Academy at NAMM returned for its third year, with hands-on training, technical presentations, and career development from leading pro audio experts. In total, 11 Academy subject areas – Audio Education, Audio Career, Control Room, Electronic Dance Music (EDM), House of Worship, In-Ear Monitor, Line Array, Live Console, Microphone, Measurement and Optimization, and Wireless Academy – were presented by top thought-leaders, including Sylvia Massy, Leslie Ann Jones, Karrie Keyes, and Mark Frink, among others. Colleen Harper, executive director of AES, says of this year's event: "The AES is uniquely positioned to provide authoritative audio training and education for NAMM attendees and our west coast membership, which is reflected in this year's strongest-ever registration for Audio Engineering Society events during The NAMM Shows. The Society appreciates the resources and opportunities that NAMM made available for the AES Academy as we assembled leading audio experts to bring in-depth session content to our attendees, be they long-time AES members or our new members who now have access to AES resources for on-going professional growth."

For audio pros seeking big-picture sessions with big names, TEC Tracks uncovered topics ranging from "Mastering in L.A." to "Recording Vocals Outside of the Studio" with world-famous producer/engineers Ken Caillat, Joe Chicarelli, and special guests as they discussed their favorite vocal mic chains in getting optimal sound in less than optimal settings.

2020 Parnelli Awards



Garth Brooks

Friday also saw the return of the Parnelli Awards to The NAMM Show. The Parnellis recognize the pioneering, influential professionals and companies for their contributions to the live production industry. The event brought together the live entertainment community in a vibrant annual gathering to recognize the best-in-class across 22 different categories, with Karrie Keyes (Pearl Jam monitor engineer, founder of Sound Girls) receiving the Parnelli Audio Innovator Award; Mark “Springo” Spring (production manager, Paul McCartney, and others) receiving the Parnelli Lifetime Achievement Honor; and Michael Strickland (Bandit Lites) the Visionary Award, which was presented by one of his first early clients, Garth Brooks.

“If there was any doubt that being part of NAMM was a good move, it is unequivocally removed now,” says Terry Lowe, *MMR/PLSN/FOH Magazine* publisher and executive producer of the Parnelli Awards. “We’ve sold out shows before, but the demand was such now we had to add tables for 200 more and turned around and sold out again.” He added that being able to attract top talent has also been a boost. “With John Waite as host and Pearl Jam guitarist Stone Gossard, drummer Carmine Appice (Rod Stewart, Ozzy Osborne), and Brent Smith (Shinedown) presenting, the show shattered all expectations. Being at this ‘crossroad’ of artists, people, technology, and the creative infusion of the young people entering is not only extremely good for the Parnelli Awards but rewarding.”

TEC Awards



Herbie Hancock and Joni Mitchell

JESSE GRANT/GETTY IMAGES FOR NAMM

On Saturday, the 35th Annual TEC Awards recognized 31 categories of products and projects in the areas of Technical or

Creative Achievement, and the individuals, companies and technical innovations used in sound recordings, films, broadcast television, and video games.

At the TEC Awards, Joni Mitchell was recognized with the Les Paul Innovation Award, an honor which is given to individuals that have set the highest standards of excellence in the creative application of recording technology in the spirit of the famed audio pioneer, inventor, and musician, Les Paul. Of the award, Michael Braunstein, executive director of the Les Paul Foundation, offered “Like Les, she has been a trailblazer and a true renaissance woman – a songwriter, musician, producer, and influencer who made her mark with very influential songs in the 60s. She has pushed the boundaries of what it means to be a female singer-songwriter over the course of her four-decade career, and like Les Paul, she’s never been scared to take creative risks. We are thrilled that Joni Mitchell will join the list of extraordinary recipients that represent the spirit of the legendary Les Paul.”

Mitchell was introduced by Herbie Hancock, who spoke fondly of their decades of friendship, creative collaboration, and impact: “it’s hard to imagine a world without this courageous woman’s brave songs and records.” Mitchell remarked that she was “truly honored,” as several artists took the stage to give the folk songwriting heroine a musical celebration worthy of her long and revered career.

Eight New Board Members Announced at NAMM’s Annual Meeting of the Members



Joe Lamond, president and CEO, NAMM; Chris Tso VP of Merchandising and Marketing, Full Compass Systems, Ltd.; Helen Culleton director, DiGiCo UK, Ltd.; Saul Friedgood president, Eastman Music Company; Abby Kaplan VP, Global Retail Sales, Shure Incorporated; John Hopkins EVP and COO, Sweetwater; Tim Spicer owner, Spicer’s Music, LLC; David Via VP of Marketing, Zoom North America; Shawna Wingerberg retail manager, Antonio Violins and Ukes; Chris Martin NAMM Chair chairman/CEO, C.F. Martin & Co., Inc.

On January 18 at the Annual Meeting of Members at The 2020 NAMM Show, NAMM welcomed eight new board members to the organization’s Board of Directors. Each board member will serve a three-year term and provide oversight, input, and direction to the organization.

The new board members are: Helen Culleton, DiGiCo UK Limited; Saul Friedgood, Eastman Music Company; John Hopkins, Sweetwater; Abby Kaplan, Shure Incorporated; Tim Spicer, Spicer’s Music, LLC; Chris Tso, Full Compass Systems, Ltd.; David Via, Zoom North America; and Shawna Wingerberg, Antonio Violins and Ukes.

The meeting also celebrated the service, leadership and the many contributions of the outgoing members of the board, including Bryan Bradley, Group One, Ltd.; Philip Cajka, Audio-Technica U.S. Inc.; Lauren Haas Amanfoh, Royalton Music Center, Inc.; Alun Hughes, British Band Instrument Company Ltd.; Scott Mandeville, Tim’s Music; Eric Matzat, Palen Music Center, Inc.; and Chris Syllaba, Jordan Kitt’s Music.

Steve Vai Discusses His New 'PIA' Models With Ibanez at the House of Blues



Steve Vai shows off his new PIA models with Ibanez Guitars at the House of Blues on January 18

Members of the press gathered in the Foundation Room of the Anaheim House of Blues on January 18 to hear Steve Vai discuss the new additions to his JEM guitar line with Ibanez: the PIA models.

"I built the [first] JEM around my idiosyncrasies as a player," Vai said. "When it came time to start evolving this guitar, I was so excited about it, and I just thought, 'What is that, what would be the evolution?' Because the JEM, as successful of an instrument it is, it's a 25-year-old Steve Vai when I see it. And it was time for a 60-year-old Steve Vai."

Vai discussed many of the changes made to this new version of the JEM, including the grip, the slight adjustment to the volume pot placement ("for 35 years I just kept hitting it a little bit," he said), and the inlay.

"I wanted to smooth out the body a bit," he explained. "I love the JEM, but it's got the hard edges. So, all the edges are beveled a bit. We beveled this back a bit, which is nicer to the feel when you sit. This was the first time I've ever done anything like this. I didn't realize it was going to feel so nice. I would have done it 35 years ago."

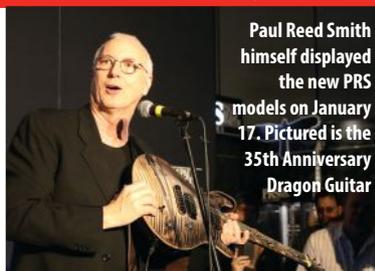
Explaining the name of the series – which stands for "paradise in art" – Vai mentioned how the model errs on the artistic side, from its shape to the overall feel.

"The PIA started to take on more of an artistic shape, as opposed to like a badass metal shape. That's just what came out. I don't fight it. I just let it come out, because Steve Vai gets the fuck out of the way," he said. "Why did I call it the PIA? Because it's a very artistic guitar. It's a kind of art, and it feels like paradise to me. These guitars will probably be around perhaps long after us, but I cannot be more pleased with the response from the fans, and from the people who have seen it."

Paul Reed Smith Celebrates 35th Anniversary

There was much to discuss at the PRS Guitars booth on January 17, when the company shared its abundance of new models and celebrated 35 years in business.

Paul Reed Smith start-



Paul Reed Smith himself displayed the new PRS models on January 17. Pictured is the 35th Anniversary Dragon Guitar

ed the press conference honestly: "I'm somebody that lives in the moment and doesn't worry about the past." Still, he was moved not only by the company's notable milestone this year, but also by their growth in recent years.

"PRS has grown almost 60 percent in the last three years," he shared at the press conference, in between showing off new PRS models. Among the new models on display was the 35th Anniversary Private Stock Dragon guitar, the ninth installment since PRS' first Dragon model in 1992.

"I don't want to just make guitars that are art, I don't want to just make things that are beautiful, I want instruments that you can't keep your hands off of," he said after finishing a demo.

Fender and Jammcard Provide a 'Jamm Jam' for the Books



Bassist Yuki Hayashi joins the frenzy of this year's Jammcard x Fender Jamm Jam on January 17

Fender and Jammcard made the art of the jam session into a more arena-ready ordeal on Friday, January 17 for their "Jammcard x Fender Jamm Jam" event at the Marriott's Platinum Ballroom. Musicians like Mateus Asato, Gina Gleason, and Ana Karina Sebastiao made musical magic together at the center of the ballroom, while onlookers watched the spectacle from a bleacher-like setup.

Celebrating Fender's new American Ultra Series of guitars, players also paid tribute to the majesty of the Telecaster, Jazzmaster, and Stratocaster.

Some starpower highlights included playing from Mark Lettieri (Snarky Puppy), Ari O'neal (Beyoncé), Nik West (Prince), Nicole Row (Panic! at the Disco), Dmitry Gorodetsky (Charlie Puth), and Daru Jones (Jack White).

Roland and BOSS Present Fifth Annual Lifetime Achievement Awards

On Wednesday, January 15, Roland and BOSS prepared for the official start of the 2020 Winter NAMM show by presenting their fifth-annual Lifetime Achievement Awards.

This year's award recipients included drummer Omar Hakim (Roland) and Swedish guitarist, Yngwie Malmsteen (BOSS), both of which have worked with Roland and BOSS for decades.



Brian Allie, Jun-ichi Miki, honoree Omar Hakim, and Jules Tabberer-Stewart




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Malmsteen was awarded his BOSS lifetime achievement award first, accepting the honor from BOSS president Yoshihiro Ikegami.

Malmsteen commented, "This was very unexpected for me. I've been long time friends with everybody here and in fact, I've been using the Roland/BOSS products for 40 years. The first time I actually used something that became a staple in my sound was a Roland DC-10 and one of the biggest things that might be overlooked is when you play guitar, especially the way I play, you need a lot of gain. When the gain goes up, so does the noise. Way back in the '80s, I went to sound check and I didn't know my tech had replaced the noise gate with a BOSS NS-2, and I thought the amps were off because they were so quiet and when I made a sound, I almost scared myself. If you want good high-end sound, you need the NS-2 in the chain. I also use the BOSS switching system, which is absolutely fantastic, and I couldn't do a show without it."

Hakim – who has drummed for legends like David Bowie, Michael Jackson, Journey, and Miles Davis – accepted his award from Jules Tabberer-Stewart, the global strategic product marketing manager (drums), at Roland.

Hakim added, "This means the world to me. What I realized when I reviewed my time as a Roland artist, what came to mind right away is the importance of relationships. It's one thing to discover gear and to figure out how you are going to deploy it into your professional life but what's really made this journey with Roland special is all the friendships I've developed over the last 25 years. I've always been a fan of Roland's gear and even more importantly, what we don't realize is that Roland gear has been part of the foundation of a lot of the music we've been listening to for the past 50 years. And the thing about Roland is that the passion has always been about creating inspirational tools that make music and musicians want to create. It's that relationship you have with an instrument when you pick it up and it makes you want to play. . . I always felt like Roland supported me in my passion for creating music and it's that passion that moves everything forward."

Summing up the evening, Roland vice president of Artist Relations & Business Development Brian Alli noted, "Roland and BOSS are honored to recognize Omar and Yngwie. These individuals personify the timeless, yet ever-changing nature of music and have demonstrated a truly lifelong dedication to creating their own sound while inspiring others. Sincerely thank you for helping make Roland who we are today."

Sennheiser Toasts to 75 Years

Sennheiser celebrated their 75th anniversary with a party on the NAMM show floor on Friday, January 17. CEO Daniel Sennheiser opened the celebration with some remarks of gratitude, followed by a set from Florida-based act Ari and the Alibis.

"We're here to celebrate 75 years of innovation in the audio industry, and that wouldn't happen without all of you," he said to buyers, retailers, members of the press, and general fans.



CEO Daniel Sennheiser addresses the crowd gathered at the Sennheiser booth for their 75th anniversary celebration

Summer NAMM will be held July 9-11, in Nashville, Tennessee, and The 2021 NAMM Show will take place January 21-24 in Anaheim, California.

BEST & WORST



BEST TIME-SUCK

The little island of vintage effects at the Reverb.com booth absolutely had nothing to do with me being five minutes late for my next appointment...

WORST LETDOWN

For those of us in colder portions of the country (and beyond), part of the appeal of Winter NAMM is getting a chance to enjoy some summer-like weather. So **what's with the lows in the mid-40s this January?**



WORST PROOF THAT NAMM REALLY IS THAT BUSY

By all accounts, the Gibson Concert on Thursday was a rager – too bad I couldn't make it in time because, **after my Uber app finally connected me with a driver, the estimated arrival time to pick me up was 28 minutes(!).**

BEST ECO-FRIENDLY INITIATIVE

In an effort to reduce the use of single-use plastic, **Martin, REVERB, and the NAMM show offered free water refill stations throughout the convention center, allowing guests to top off their water bottles.** The initiative no doubt reduced the sales of bottled water at the show, but also saved NAMM-goers a significant amount of cash, too.



BEST SKATE-INSPIRED DISPLAY

As far as over-the-top NAMM displays go, **the skate park-inspired setup from Pearl on the second floor certainly was among the most memorable.** Complete with a matching bass drum decal and skateboard, this was one display of creativity that was hard to miss by even the busiest NAMM-goer.



BEST EYE-CATCHER

Cannonball's colorful saxophone display with the knight in shining armor protecting it



BEST USE OF SPARE PARTS

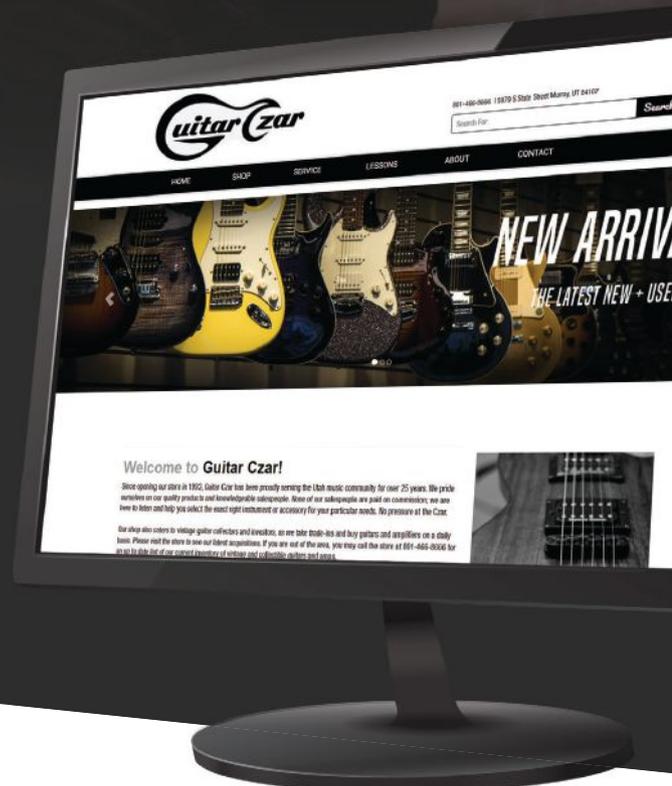
Gibson's giant guitar, made from guitar components **served as the background for many a selfie at this year's Show.**



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Voices from the Show Floor ...

"The Show seemed much busier – it also seemed like it was more consumer-driven than buyer-driven on the floor. It definitely is more of a media event now. More like a conference for displaying products instead of buying products..."

Tish Ciravolo, Daisy Rock Girl Guitars

"The Show was good. Probably more positive of [an] outlook than we have seen for while in relation to the guitar market. I would say this was one of the better shows we have had in last four or five years, overall. My takeaway is that dealers and distributors are not as fearful as they have been for the last few years about the business. Concerns would still be lack of younger players and consumers for the guitar market to grow at faster pace."

Tim Pfouts, S.I.T. Strings Co.

"We felt the show was stronger than 2019 and our attendance and orders from our retailers was up over last year. In particular, we heard a lot of retailers say that November and December were good months, so they came into NAMM with optimism and openness to talk about new products and sales programs."

"We also noticed an increased amount of international attendees, especially from Asia and South America. Pro Audio and Recording buyers were higher than last year as well, so that's a trend that seems to be going up."

Larry Morton, Hal Leonard

"The show was much busier than [in] years past. We had a great energy around us. I think the economy doing well helps a lot. Our rock stations were also big game-changers for us."

Owen Matthews, Electro-Harmonix

"NAMM definitely seemed busier this year and I think it may be the start of a trend. Last year felt crazy-busy as well. Thursdays are typically pretty low-key with light traffic, but this year, Thursday had the feeling of a typical Friday at NAMM... booth traffic was heavy and steady all day long. The PRS booth was buzzing from start to finish each day and the vibe was strong and positive. We're celebrating our 35th Anniversary this year and we had several anniversary models that added some extra excitement to the mix, especially the 35th Anniversary Private Stock Dragon. We were also extremely honored and humbled to receive the MMR Dealers' Choice Award for the Silver Sky model which was timed perfectly with the expanded offerings of Silver Sky that we launched at the show (limited run of Silver Sky Nebula and Silver Sky Maple). All in all, this year's show was one for the books and quite possibly one of our best shows ever."

Bev Fowler, Paul Reed Smith Guitars

"This 2020 Winter NAMM presentation felt like a banner year with so many companies bringing out their best and brightest to face the coming year. While much in the evening news seems to paint a grim picture of society, if this NAMM Show is an indication, musicians from every corner of the world are finding solace and inspiration in the music they're making and the community of fellow musicians and instrument makers. As an industry, we're fortunate to be looking at the future with the momentum and encouragement of fresh growth. This year feels like an expansion in our industry as more players than ever enjoy the experience and camaraderie of making music."

Andy Powers, Taylor Guitars

"This year's NAMM Show was very successful for Yamaha. We expanded our presence at the Grand Plaza Stage adding to our Friday Night All-Star Concert on the Grand a superb night with Tower of Power on Saturday. What a great show for the NAMM audience. We also presented the Night of Worship with Michael W. Smith to a sold-out and overflow house in the Hilton. NAMM attendees stopped me the rest of the show to say what a moving performance Michael gave."

"It's always great to be able to show our dealers the new gear and let them get hands on with our instruments – we're really proud of them. This year dealers were really attracted to our new B&O products including our new bari the YBS-480 and new silent bass YBS-300. Dealers presented both those items for Sunday's Best-in-Show."

"We were also really happy with the performances on the stage in our booth. Performances from Daniel Ho and Antonio Sanchez were specifically memorable and they drew big crowds in our booth."

"We had our first planning session for The NAMM Show 2021 the Sunday morning of the 2020 show..."

Tom Sumner, Yamaha Corporation of America

"As always, I think the best part of NAMM is the opportunity to meet with the sellers, manufacturers, and buyers that make up the Reverb community. While we're in constant contact with our users throughout the year, we love hearing success stories and feedback in person at the NAMM Show. This year, we had the opportunity to preview our upcoming documentary, "The Pedal Movie," which is in many ways a love letter to some of the people and brands that have helped us grow Reverb into what it is today. We got some great feedback and are feeling energized as we head into 2020."

Kevin Drost, Reverb.com

"This was a show full of energy – and a lot of excitement about the gear releases for the year ahead. We're also seeing more partners zeroing in on creating great content and developing their brand and ours through storytelling – and the appreciable impact on their sell through. Brands like Harmony, Heritage Guitars, Teisco and MONO have such rich histories that the dealers have a lot to choose from. And we are extremely passionate about that. Quality brands need quality content. This year's NAMM really brought that to life!"

Randy Couvillon, Bandlab Technologies

"Winter NAMM 2020 was a great success for Adam Hall and our brands. The show was well attended and we enjoyed the diversity of industry professionals who spent time with us. We received many complements (and pre-orders) on our new LD Systems Maui 44 G2 Column PA System, and our new ICOA Loudspeaker. We also received special interest in our new wireless Microphone systems that were used for scheduled performances at both our Indoor and Outdoor stages. We are already looking forward to next year!"

Paul Narvaez, Adam Hall

"We were extremely encouraged by the high turnout and the enthusiastic audience. The vibe was incredible, and it was great to have so many musicians hanging out with the Peavey family this year. Dealers seemed optimistic and generally in good spirits. One item of particular note was comments I received from our European dealers and distributors: they commented on how good it felt to attend a show with such high traffic and a positive vibe. I'm not sure what that says or doesn't say about trade shows in Europe, but it was interesting nonetheless."

Fred Poole, Peavey

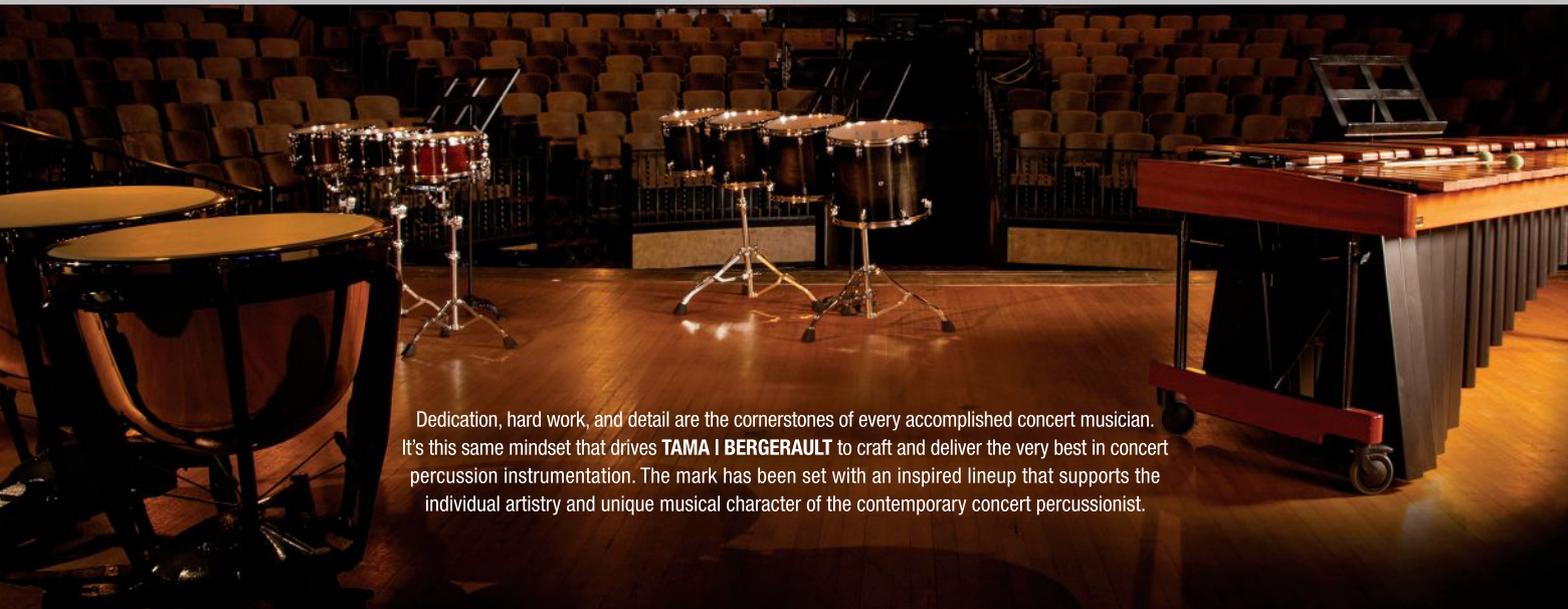
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1. Andy Powers of Taylor Guitars 2. The Breezy Ridge team 3. Adrian Ashton and Jeremiah Ensminger of Davitt & Hanser 4. Allen & Heath's Jeff Hawley with the Dealers' Choice Award for "Product of the Year" 5. Mike Martin and Richard Formidoni hold Casio's Dealers' Choice Award for "Microphone Line of the Year" 6. The Chauvet team with "Lighting Line of the Year" Dealers' Choice Award 7. Jim D'Addario, Mike D'Angelo, and John D'Addario III with the Dealers' Choice Award for "Accessory Line of the Year" 8. John Good, Chris Lombardi, and Don Lombardi with DW's Dealers' Choice Award for "Percussion Line of the Year" 9. Richard Heins and Tammy Van Donk of Fender Musical Instruments Corporation with the DCA for "Amplifier Line of the Year" 10. Joseph Brasler and Tammy Van Donk with Fender's Dealers' Choice Award for "Electric Bass of the Year" 11. The Hal Leonard team with the DCA for "Print Music Publisher of the Year" 12. Pioneer DJ's David Arevalo with the company's Dealers' Choice Award for "DJ Line of the Year" 13. The gang at PreSonus with the Dealers' Choice Award for "Recording Equipment Line of the Year" 14. Paul Reed Smith, Jim Cullen, and Bev Fowler with PRS's DCA trophy for "Electric Guitar of the Year" 15. QSC's team with the DCA for "Sound Reinforcement Line of the Year" 16. Mike Petrucci and Soren Pedersen with Shure's Dealers' Choice Award for "Microphone Line of the Year" 17. Michael Grant and Arthur Morin of Yamaha with the DCA for "Acoustic Line of the Year" 18. Yamaha's Ken Dattmore, Brian Petterson, Jonathan Goldman, and Austin Snowden with the DCA trophy for "Band & Orchestra Line of the Year" 19. Travis Mitchell and Gary Klugman with Yamaha's Dealers' Choice Award for "Acoustic Piano Line of the Year" 20. MMR's Lauren Byrge presents Hiroataka Kawai with the Dealers' Choice Award for "Pro Digital Keyboard Line of the Year"



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21. Heidi Blackmer Robichaud and Gareth Krauser of **Earthworks, Inc.** 22. Larry DeMarco, Owen Matthews, and Ralph Trimarchi of **Electro-Harmonix** 23. Harvey Levy of **Levy's Leathers** 24. **IK Multimedia's** Enrico Iori and Gary Kerzner 25. JC Curleigh of **Gibson** with **MMR's** Christian Wissmuller 26. Chris Martin of **C.F. Martin & Co.** 27. Josh Berger and Jeremy Payne of **On-Stage** 28. Peter Giles of **Giles Communication** (center) receives an plaque in recognition of years of service to the MI industry from **NAMM's** Joe Lamond and Dan Del Fiorentino

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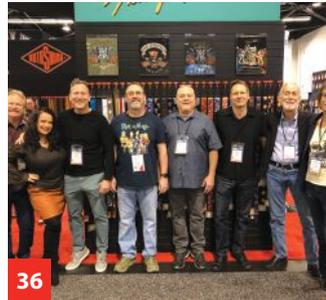
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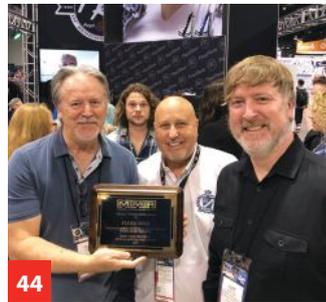
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29. Brooke Kovanda of **Reverb.com** 30. **Sennheiser's** Daniel Sennheiser speaks at the company's press conference on Friday 31. **Sonotone's** TK 32. Tish Ciravolo of **Daisy Rock Girl Guitars** and **Schecter's** Michael Ciravolo 33. **Bedell Guitars, Breedlove Guitars, and Weber Mandolins'** Tom Bedell 34. David and Stephen Hepple of **Oasis Humidifiers** 35. Lee Oskar of **Lee Oskar Harmonicas** 36. Piers Munro, Tammy Munro, Brett Marcus, Mark Blasko, Ben Myron, Pete Schmidt, Ken Peveler and Larry Greene of **OMG Music** 37. Krista Nunnally, Dave Kurtiak of **eMedia Music** 38. Anthony Perri of **Perri's Leathers** 39. Erich Barto and Colleen Harwood of **Zoom** 40. Chris Kortschot, Hannah Woodhouse, Mark Kortschot, Juli Mandelbaum, Gregory Agid of **Légère Reeds** 41. Gerard Serafini and Morgan Miles of **Music Nomad Equipment Care** 42. Brett Rosborough, Dawn Niven, Mark Bennett, Bailey Aldrich, Dana Bell, Dan Holm, Dave Watkinson, Sarah Mondt, and Drew Lewis of **KHS America** 43. CJ of **WingmanFX** 44. Floyd Rose, James McCaffrey, and Andy Papiccio of **Floyd Rose** 45. Matt King from **MMR** 46. **Tim Pfouts, Eddie Speedy, Jeremy "Hoogie" Donais, and Ed Michalec** of **SIT Strings** with Toshi 46. Julian & Andy Bloch of **ElectroPhonic Innovations** 47. Bryan Fishman, Gary Lopez, Ryan Fitzsimmons, Jason Cambra, Gary Lenaire, and Tom Ostrander of **Fishman** 48. Scott Peterson of **Peterson Strobe Tuners**



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49. Dmitri Antos of **Lee Oskar Harmonicas** 50. Jerry Goldenson, Dawn Niven, and Brent Rosborough of **KHS America** 51. James Greenspan of **Yorkville** 52. Billy Jasmer of **Billy Jazz Guitars** 53. Jo Benson, Brandon Reynolds and Andy Kamentz of **Tri-Tech Retail** 54. Laurie Abshire and Nicolas Wilfer of **Framus Warwick Music USA** 55. Taylor Harnois, Eric Thornton and Milo LeBaron of **Rain** 56. Ann, Alan & Tim Hodge of **Hodge Products, Inc.** 57. Jon Tenca of **Cousins Concert Attire** 58. Steve Rorie and Dominic Massaro of **J.J. Babbitt** 59. Al Maniscalco, Chris Coppinger, Warren Kus, Josh Landress of **Buffet Crampon** 60. Jody Espina and Colin Schofield of **JodyJazz** 61. George and Lynn Reeder of **Rovner Products** 62. Beth Horton and Asaf Ben Yehuda of **Tonara** 63. Jeff Mazza, Rich Zimmerman, Curt Altarac, and Matt Budd of **MusicMedic** 64. Stormie Chapman, Allen Gatchell, and Jon Doyle of **Gatchell Violins** 65. Jose Gonzalez and Kyle Lassegard of **Hosa** 66. Travis Thieman, Anne Tainter, and Stephanie Thieman of **String Swing** 67. Pete LaPlaca, David Benedetto, and Tim Price of **F.E. Olds** 68. Sam Zheng and Paul Chu of **Hunter Music**



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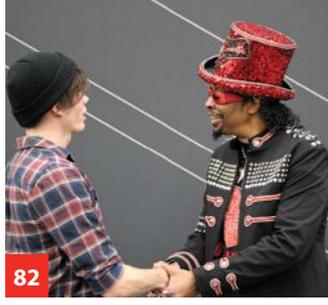
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The Ride Cymbal Market in 2020

By Christian **Wissmuller**

A standard component of most drum kits, ride cymbals are often considered by percussionists to be a more “personal” choice of cymbal than others. The subtle coloring and nuance of a ride pattern and sustain certainly can be more immediately identifiable with a given player compared to, say, the brash accent of a crash cymbal.

MMR recently got on the horn with representatives from four prominent cymbal suppliers to learn about what trends are hot in the ride cymbal market, how successful dealers market and display these items, and what to expect in the coming months.

For your brand, what specific ride models are doing particularly well at the moment?

Mark Love: As we move into 2020, we have had great success with the AAX Thin and Medium Rides in 20”, 21” and 22”. The biggest buzz on rides recently is around our new HHX Complex Rides, especially the Thin and Medium versions 20”, 21”, and 22” models. Over the past year we also had great success with the Todd Sucherman Limited Edition Sessions ride, the demand far surpassed the production run of 250 cymbals.

Andy Tamulynas: Our most popular ride cymbal at the moment is the 21” K Sweet ride, which was released two years ago as part of the K Sweet series. It’s our #1 ride in sales, and we’re seeing a tremendous amount of drummers talking about it on social media. We are definitely noticing trends start to follow in K Sweet’s footsteps.

Also among our top ride cymbals are the tried-and-true 21” A Zildjian Sweet ride and the meticulously crafted 22” K Constantinople Medium Thin Low.

Brian Blood: Big and warm does very well and Dream’s Bliss and Vintage Bliss series rides are on fire right now. Specifically the Bliss Series 22” Ride and the 24” Small Bell Flat Ride are selling extremely well right now here in the U.S.

Gabriel Harris: For Meinl, our new Byzance Foundry Reserve Rides and Light Rides have been selling well since their introduction at the beginning of 2019 with the 22” sizes just edging out the 20” sizes. Additionally, the Byzance Dual 20” Crash-Ride, the Byzance 21” Polyphonic Ride, and the 20” Classics Custom Dark Ride have all been very popular. Finally, the 21” Mike Johnston Transition Ride continues to be a perennial top seller for us.

Do you have any new or “on the horizon” ride cymbals that you expect will be impactful?

AT: Zildjian’s first-class Innovation Team is always bringing amazing prototypes to life. If you’ve ever seen or heard something labeled “Soundlab” in one of our YouTube videos or social media clips, you know what I’m talking about. There are certainly some ride cymbals in the mix here that are pretty special, and I expect will see the light of day in the market.

GH: The only new ride cymbal for 2020 is our 22” Pure Alloy Custom Medium-Thin Ride. The Pure Alloy Custom line was developed from requests for thinner models in the Pure Alloy line along with a unique finish we developed called custom smoked-bronze. The medium-thin weight makes a great all-around ride, easily opens for crashes and crash riding, and has a clear, punchy bell.

BB: Yes! We are extremely excited about the new 21” and 23” Eclipse Series Rides that Dream debuted at Winter NAMM. This series was a result of the success of their Dark Matter Eclipse ride and are quite different from anything else out there. These unique, repeatedly fired half-lathed cymbals are already getting a lot of attention on social media and at the dealer level. We’ve already received numerous inquiries about these cymbals after only two days of their announcement.

ML: We are working on two Limited Edition Flat Rides at the moment: one with Chick Corea, replicating a cymbal that was used on the classic Roy Haynes track, “Now He Sings, Now He Sobs.” The original 18” flat ride was given to Chick by Roy Haynes and has become a highly desired cymbal sound.

We are also working on a 21” Flat Ride with Dave Weckl. It captures the complexity and richness of the darker, thin flat ride cymbals that haven’t seen much attention since Ed Thigpen used our Crystal Ride many years ago. We also have a few other ideas in our back pocket that we haven’t worked out the timing on, but as always, stay tuned!

What’s your overall impression of the market for ride cymbals, and cymbals in general?

BB: Cymbals are a steady, consistent, high value accessory. Drummers are always looking for the perfect personal sound and always take three things to every gig; cymbals, sticks and usually a pedal. We are seeing constant growth with Dream month over month. Spectacular musical performance at a fair price is a working formula.

ML: To me, ride cymbals are always the most personal, and every drummer has a sound in their head that they imagine to be the holy grail. And of course, they are all a bit different. This is why cymbal craftsmanship never gets boring. Cymbals in general still allow drummers to create their own sound and the models we develop each year make this creative process enjoyable and exciting for both drummers and cymbal manufacturers.



“Put Dream cymbals next to the most expensive similar cymbals on the wall, and hide the price until dealers and customers hear them. The product speaks for itself.”

– **Brian Blood**



Brian Blood, Product Merchandising Manager, KMC Music



“We see many more role and niche specific ride cymbals on the market today than ever before.” – **Gabriel Harris**

Gabriel Harris, Sales Manager, Meinl USA L.C.

GH: The market for ride cymbals has become fragmented and specified based on the individual music a drummer is playing whether that is specific to jazz, fusion, metal, praise and worship, et cetera. However, if there is one overall growing trend we see, it would be ride cymbals that are thinner and used additionally as crashes or for crash/wash riding on the edge rather than articulate sticking on the bow only. And a good bell seems to always be in demand regardless of how thin the ride is, which is what has made our 21" Polyphonic Ride so unique and popular. It features a prominent unlathed bell that receives additional hand-hammering for a solid bell tone to contrast the tapered bow and thin edge for crashes that open easily and intense crash riding patterns.

AT: The ride cymbal is one of the most personal aspects of a drummer's setup – and since there are so many different types of players out there, this is a hard question! I think that two of the strongest gravitational forces in cymbals right now are: 1) the traditional K sound and 2) dry and trashy sounds that emulate electronics.



Andy Tamulynas, Brand Manager, Zildjian Cymbals and Drumsticks

“At retail, I think that having gloves in the cymbal room is a fantastic idea. A ride cymbal can be a big investment, and a store showing that they care about the appearance of the instrument goes a long way for a picky buyer.”

– **Andy Tamulynas**

What promotional/display/sales strategies have you noticed dealers who are particularly successful in selling ride cymbals enacting?

GH: Selection and stock on-hand still seem to be the best strategies for selling ride cymbals. Online retailers who offer a wider selection of stock or information through demo and comparison videos definitely have an advantage reaching potential customers. It can be tough for brick-and-mortar retailers to keep several rides in stock, so dealers have to be picky about what to stock. Not every market has a happening jazz scene, but most-to-all markets have churches nearby where musicians and drummers are playing on a regular basis. In modern worship music, there is a growing trend for drummers to play big, dark, washy ride cymbals. While there are several great



Byzance models that fit that bill, one of the more budget friendly options Meinl offers is the 22" Classics Custom Dark Crash-Ride. Even though it's called a crash-ride, the weight is distributed like a thin ride that opens up easily for crashing and wash riding, and the overall sound lends itself to this style at about half the price of a same sized Byzance.

AT: At retail, I think that having gloves in the cymbal room is a fantastic idea. A ride cymbal can be a big investment, and a store showing that they care about the appearance of the instrument goes a long way for a picky buyer. For online shoppers, the most successful dealers are the ones who are utilizing all the video and photo assets they can get their hands on – whether it's supplied by the manufacturer, or created in-house. Ideally, both!

BB: Simple. Put Dream cymbals next to the most expensive similar cymbals on the wall, and hide the price until dealers and customers hear them. The product speaks for itself. On top of this, Dream's recycling program (get one dollar per inch of any broken cymbal from any brand towards any Dream cymbals) is the secret weapon of every successful drum shop for driving traffic and building relationships between the dealer, customer and brand.

ML: The promotions around Limited Edition Rides have worked well for and continue to generate great interest in addition to very innovative sounds. Also, cymbal sets that include a unique Ride help propel sales in both ride cymbals and cymbals in general. Our custom shop program is also a great tool to allow drummers to create their own sounds and be different than everyone else, and really use their ideas to create masterpieces that they can claim as their own.

Expectations for this market segment in the coming months?

ML: As always, Ride cymbals will continue to be among the type of cymbals that generate the most interest, and along with the ideas listed above we are working on a number of fronts to keep the development ideas coming. Stay tuned...

AT: Thin weights, big sizes and dark and rich sounds are in, so I think we'll continue to see drummers gravitating towards cymbals that deliver on those trends in the coming months.

GH: It's fun to watch the evolution of the drumkit right now. We are seeing stacks and other effects continue to increase as time keeps which means less time on the ride cymbal. But I don't think it has diminished the ride's importance. Instead, I think it has made the ride more important. We see many more role and niche specific ride cymbals on the market today than ever before. As well, we are seeing a growing segment of ride cymbals that do multiple things very well as mentioned before. All of this means that drummers have a much better chance of finding that "perfect" ride – whatever it may be for them. I think we will continue to see the ride evolve in these two ways as both more specific and more multi-functional.

BB: Continued double-digit growth for Dream cymbal sales.

PHOTOGRAPHY



“To me, ride cymbals are always the most personal, and every drummer has a sound in their head that they imagine to be the holy grail.” – **Mark Love**

Mark Love, Director of Research & Development, SABIAN





Evan Rubinson took over the reins of Armadillo Enterprises in early 2017, succeeding his father, the late Elliott “Dean” Rubinson – a much-loved and missed industry icon. Drawing upon a lifetime of experience that found him working at all levels of employment at Armadillo, as well as the wisdom passed down from his father, Evan has helped grow the company’s three MI lines – Dean Guitars, Luna Guitars, and ddrum Percussion – to unprecedented levels of success.

We recently spoke with him after the company’s “Armadillo All Access” (AAA) event in mid-December of 2019 to learn about his own background, how he’s navigated the stewardship of some truly legendary brands, and what’s on tap for Armadillo in the immediate future.

Let’s start at the beginning, Evan. Can you talk about your own background in music and in the MI industry? When did you first become interested in music? Who were some early, significant influences? As far as MI goes, when did you first become aware of and involved with your father’s professional activities?

My background in music started with very humble beginnings. I remember being obsessed with this metallic silver Dean Razor bass when I was 10 years old. My father agreed to give me the bass after I had worked off 50 percent of the cost of it, so I swept the floors in his warehouse every summer throughout elementary school until I could finally get my hands on it. After I got that bass, I was on cloud nine – I thought I was a rock star. I played that thing non-stop while I gargled water, trying to sing Weird Al’s version of “Smells Like Teen Spirit” with my band at the time.

When high school rolled around, I made my case to my father that I wanted more responsibility within the company, but needless to say, he wasn’t a big fan of that idea. After a little healthy back-and-forth, I finally convinced him to let me graduate from sweeping floors to beginning to pick orders and learning how to drive a forklift (probably to the horror of many of my co-workers at the time). I kept

‘2020 is Going to be a Year of Reckoning’

playing bass on the side throughout my high school years, but as the prospect of college approached, I turned the vast majority of my focus toward my sports scholarships with track and football.

During my time at Duke, I remember one of my fondest college memories being the day I got a call from my father asking me to intern with him in the corporate offices at Armadillo, as well as to travel with him to Asia to visit some of the factories that summer. I can’t entirely put into words the feeling that this call left me with, but let’s just say I felt like even more of a rock star than I did when I was 10 years old jamming on that new Razor bass. From that point on, I was hooked – not only was the music industry, itself, incredibly intriguing and invigorating, but the fact that I had the opportunity to learn from a legend (Elliott) and bond with my father at the same time, served to be a priceless experience.

Some of my biggest influences growing up were Steve Jay, John Entwistle, Flea (Red Hot Chili Peppers), Alexi Laiho, Joe Satriani, and Zakk Wylde. I know that’s quite an eclectic mix of players, but I appreciate and enjoy a lot of different genres, as well as bass and guitar players, alike. I especially respect players that have the ability to do things I couldn’t dream of doing, and are willing to push boundaries.

Without meaning to dredge up what I’m sure are painful memories, can you talk a bit about Elliott’s illness and the changes that ultimately led to at Armadillo?

My father fell ill in late November of 2015 – I will never forget the call that I got from him. He was always such a big personality, a role model, a leader – almost like an untouchable presence when I was growing up – that when I heard him confused, out-of-sorts, and scared on that call, it was truly shocking to me. The next day, I flew back home to Florida to attend the initial doctor’s appointments. At the time, the last thing on my mind was the company and succession planning. This entire circumstance came so out-of-the-blue for me that I just went into survival mode and began tapping into all of my biotechnology connections from my time in finance, in attempts to find some clinical-stage trial that might be able to work a miracle. After the initial tests, it was horrifying to realize that the same, incredibly aggressive brain cancer that was currently affecting my father was the one that killed his sister just a year prior. After taking the time to really understand the severity of a glioblastoma brain tumor, it was clear that the prognosis was a 99 percent mortality rate within 14 months or less.

During the next 12 months, my father and I had many discussions regarding his future, my mother, the family, and Armadillo. Being an only child, my father asked me if running Armadillo was something I felt pas-

sionately and strongly about – despite the fact I was in finance at the time – and my response was a resounding “YES!” The next few months were some of the most difficult of my life, but also some of the most rewarding. I dedicated all of my heart, soul, and effort toward doing anything I could to improve my father’s chance of survival, while in tandem putting my best foot forward toward the long journey of adequately filling my father’s shoes.

I’m so sorry for your loss, Evan. For whatever it’s worth, I think you’ve done very well upholding your father’s legacy and taking Armadillo even further. Real quickly, what are some “vital stats” for Armadillo Enterprises in 2019: total employees, square footage of main facility, location/size/nature of outside production partnerships/factories, et cetera?

Total employees: 58; HQ: 118,000 sq. ft. – all under air conditioning – in Tampa, Florida with a full USA custom shop. We build our USA guitars here in Tampa from scratch, starting in our in-house woodshop led by Dan Russel, and finishing in our in-house USA assembly shop led by Pat Baker.

As far as overall volume – not money, but units sold – what is the current percentage breakdown in total sales for Armadillo Enterprises across the three main brands: Dean Guitars, Luna, and ddrum?

Great question. The rough breakdown is as follows: Dean – 40 percent; Luna – 50 percent; ddrum – 10 percent.

We have seen tremendous growth from the Luna brand, in particular, over the past eight years, with it expanding by more than 770 percent. Dean revenue is projected to see a large increase over last year, primarily credited to a 14 percent bump in USA guitar sales, strategic expansion across international market places, as well as a renewed brand focus toward quality over all else with the ultra-high-end Dean Select Series.

Artist endorsement/ partnerships/ association are significant for Armadillo brands – particularly for Dean Guitars. Can you talk about how important it is to cultivate and maintain these relationships and how it benefits both your brands and dealers?

Think of iconic artists in the same fashion that we do professional athletes – how important is it for Nike to be associated with the best of the best in sports? It’s the same way in the music industry. There’s no better way to gain credibility amongst dealers, players, and consumers, alike, than to have the third-party verification of a legendary artist who’s willingly endorsing and promoting your products for no other reason than they genuinely love them. Great players want to be associated with great brands, and vice-versa, but of course in music, “great” can be a pretty subjective term. With that in mind, I strive to cultivate artist rosters that are uniquely suited to each of the Armadillo brands in their respective niches. There’s nothing more important to me than ensuring that an artist truly aligns with my brands’ mission statements and core identities.

In recent years, Gibson has taken legal aim at a number of suppliers, including Dean and Luna – in those cases for the V and Z, and ES-335 shaped guitars, respectively. What is your reaction to the initial filings and ongoing litigation?

We believe Gibson’s claims are entirely baseless and its attempts to assert ownership over commonplace guitar shapes (some of which Dean and others have used for decades) are unfortunate. Dean will continue to vigorously defend its brands, products, and legacy.

Across all three brands (Dean, Luna, ddrum), what are your current “hot sellers” for each and what new or upcoming releases are you most excited about?

I don’t have enough room to write about all of our top-sellers and exciting new stuff, so I’ll try to focus in a few key points for each brand! Let’s start with Dean.

Last year in 2019, we launched the Select Series, which is the absolute highest-end import guitar Dean has ever made, featur-

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In celebration of our 20th Anniversary we are proud to offer the DV PLATINUM 20th Anniversary Limited Edition models. Also new for 2020 the HR* CUSTOM DARK Tenor and HR* Clarinet.



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Limited Edition



HR* CUSTOM
DARK Tenor



HR*
Clarinet



ing our iconic Dean shapes – the V, the Z, the ML, and the Cadillac. This series starts at \$699.99 stock, with salt and pepper Seymour Duncans, satin-finished neck backs, Grover tuners, and 5A flame maple tops. This year, we rounded out that top-tier line with some classic, crowd favorite shapes: the Nash Vegas, the Thoroughbred, and the Exile. Separate of these new, ultra-high-quality product releases, the story of the year for Dean is by far the signing of Kerry King from Slayer. We are honored and humbled to have such an amazing guitar player in our camp. Kerry King, Dimebag Darrell, and Dave Mustaine under one roof makes up quite the iconic guitar roster.

Luna is celebrating its 15th anniversary this year with a beautiful new ukulele that will only be available during the 2020 calendar year. Get it while you can! A few other crowd favorites from the Luna family center around our Vista Series. The Vista guitars became so popular, in fact, that we decided to model a ukulele series off of them. Now you can get the same, beautifully intricate detail in your ukulele that you have become accustomed to in your acoustic guitar. For those that prefer a solid-top guitar, the Luna Artist Series still remains king.

As for ddrum, we have some exceptionally interesting electronics in the works, of which some are slated for a mid-year release this year, while other components are planned for a 2021 release. Separate of these incredible electronic innovations we have been working tirelessly on, we have rounded out our top-tier, acoustic Dios Series by bringing back a ddrum classic – the Dominion Series in Birch. This was a top-selling kit for us for many years, and we are proud to announce that it is officially back in our line. Lastly, for those players that crave versatility, the ddrum hybrid kit is truly one-of-a-kind with its built-in

triggers – whether you want a fully electric sound, fully acoustic, or a seamlessly integrated hybrid of both, ddrum is here to help. It's truly everything a novice-to-touring drummer could want and more.

For interested MI retailers, what's your distribution model? How does one go about becoming a "Dean dealer" or a "ddrum dealer" et cetera?

We use a pretty basic model in terms of our distribution and sales channels. We are a B2B company who greatly appreciates its dealers. In the U.S., we serve as our own distributor and sell directly to music retail stores. Internationally, we sell to country-specific distributors who then, in-turn, sell to their local music retailers.



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I am a very relationship-focused guy, so I seek above all else, to cultivate long-lasting relationships with top-notch dealers and distributors around the world. Business is best done amongst those you know and trust. By the same token, it is of equal importance to always be on the lookout to develop new relationships, as we are constantly trying to increase our brand representation globally. In short, all it takes to become an Armadillo dealer is to give us a call and place a simple buy-in order. We don't require any of our dealers to carry a specific assortment of products, nor do we ask them to maintain certain product mixes, nor do we mandate that they carry all of our brands – it's truly the dealer's choice as to what they want and what they feel will work best in their unique market. Of course, many of our dealers enjoy carrying all three of our brands, but we also have some that specialize in only one or two of the Armadillo brands.



Vista Deer Concert Ukulele

Expectations for the coming months and year for the industry, in general, and for Armadillo, in specific?

Let me start with mentioning our huge, pre-NAMM, Armadillo All Access (AAA) event that we just recently hosted at our HQ in Tampa. This was a never-before-done feat, not only for our company, but for the broader music industry as a whole. The excitement and positive feedback from dealers, distributors, industry publications, and artists alike was overwhelming. We spent the better part of a year planning this invite-only event which came complete with appearances by Kerry King, Michael Batio, and Vinnie Moore. To boot, we reassembled our entire NAMM booth in our Tampa facility and rolled out the red carpet (500 feet of it quite literally) for all of our guests, did factory tours of the facility and USA custom shop, unveiled new 2020 product, curated Q&A sessions, and put on artist clinics. This was, by far, the event of the year, and I couldn't be prouder of my team for facilitating it so seamlessly.

My primary focal point concerning the macro-industry outlook is that this a crucial weed-out year for a lot of brands and dealers alike. As the overall musical instrument industry continues to contract, it becomes ever more so a market-share game where the cream rises to the top at a rapid rate. The industry is forcing people to be at the top of their game to survive – that constitutes consumer expectations of increased quality, quicker lead times, better customer service, more robust distribution, greater operational and logistical efficiencies, more innovative product offerings, and a renewed focus on intangible value-adds. 2020 is going to be a year of reckoning that separates the men from the boys – so to speak. 

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Signature Series Drumsticks

By Christian **Wissmuller**

This month's survey – sent out to over 300 MI dealers – shines the spotlight on Artist Series, Signature Drumsticks. While apparently a pretty static market sub-segment (60.6 percent of participants reported sales as being "level" when compared to last year), there was little consensus beyond that one metric.

For every retailer who described typical Signature stick consumers as "young, wannabe players," there were others who observed that older, more serious pro or semi-pro musicians were drawn to these sticks. Of course, there are those who feel that both they and their customers are "above" being influenced by someone's John Hancock being printed on the product. "We feel that people, in general, buy the sticks for the design of the stick, not the name on them," asserts Cadence Drums, LLC's (Roch-

ester, New York) Justin Hoppe.

Interestingly, a fair chunk of those who responded to this poll pointed to *marching* Signature sticks as being where the action really is when it comes to Artist Series drumsticks. For anyone (such as myself) figuring that the likes of ?uestlove, Dave Grohl, and Neil Peart drove the Signature Series stick market – apparently there's more to it than that!

One of the rare concepts that most seemed to agree upon? There may be too damn many of these types of sticks. "They are flooding the market, and everyone has to have their own (or multiple) models all based on the decades-old, stand-by sizes," says Gus Guastamachio of East Hartford, Connecticut's Dynamic Percussion. "It seems to be nothing more than a marketing flash in the pan."

Have you noticed any significant trends when it comes to Signature Series Sticks – either on the supplier or end-user sides?

"Over the years, the importance of the 'name' on the stick, as opposed to the design of the stick, seems to have lessened. Example: a customer will buy a PM 747Oak because of how it feels rather than because of Neil Peart's endorsement."

Justin Hoppe
Cadence Drums, LLC
Rochester, New York

"There are quite a few models and many of them are very similar in size and weight. But the new, up-and-coming young drumming generation likes the different colored signature sticks."

Mark Bolos
Big Apple Music
New Hartford, New York

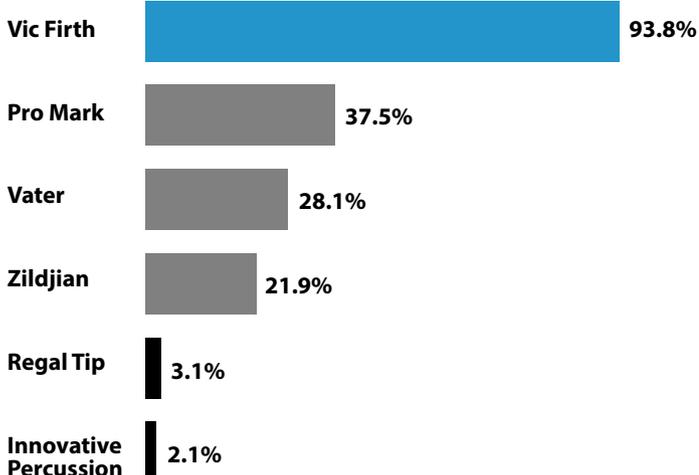
"[Customers] are getting them cheaper off eBay and other sites. I have seen them as cheap as our cost – you can't match it."

Travis McKinney
All Good Music & More Emporium
Spruce Pine, North Carolina

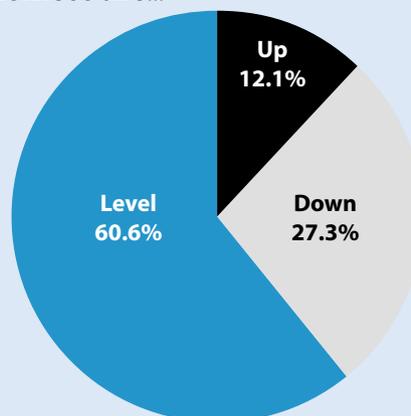
"Perhaps too many models. Everyone is trying profit on the latest rising star but, so many fade fast. It creates an inventory nightmare."

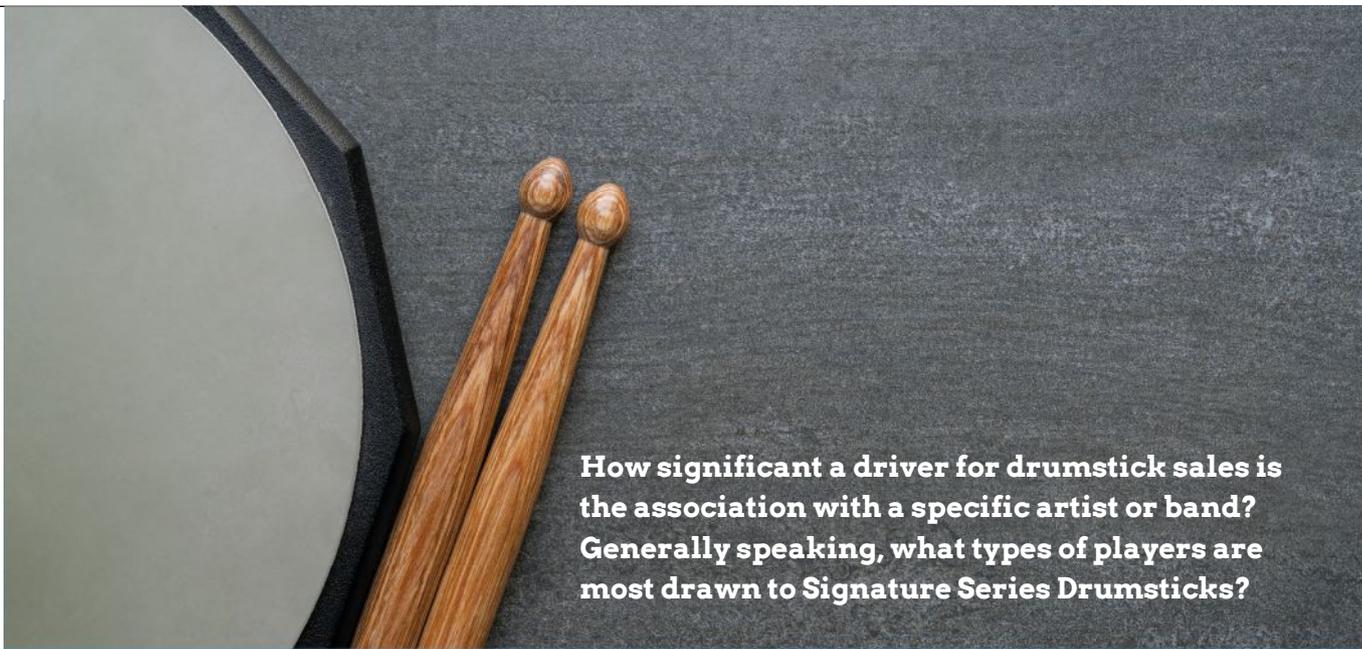
Ray Fransen
Ray Fransen's Drum Center
Kenner, Louisiana

What brands of Signature Sticks generate the most profit for your operation?



Compared to last year, sales of Artist/Signature Series Drumsticks for your business are...





How significant a driver for drumstick sales is the association with a specific artist or band? Generally speaking, what types of players are most drawn to Signature Series Drumsticks?

“Drummers of all ages are drawn to signature series sticks. Younger players by the visibility of the artist (does the artist’s band have a current hit record or are they a huge concert draw) and secondly by recommendations from friends who like a particular signature stick. Older players can be sold a signature stick by a smart sales person who can assess the players needs and put the right pair of signature stocks in the customer’s hands to try. There is another group of drummers that will choose a signature model just because the artist whose signature is on the stick is their drumming hero. A really good and knowledgeable drum department salesperson can turn a lot of pairs of signature sticks.”

John Nasshan
Vesely Music
Parowan, Utah

“For Marshall Music, most of the signature sticks sold are marching sticks, so the influencer is usually the drumline instructor.”

Jeff Young
Marshall Music Company
Lansing, Michigan

“Usually young adults to middle-aged are drawn to signature sticks, not kids. Also, usually someone who is a little more serious of a player versus a hobbyist.”

Greg Allen
Long Island Drum Center of Nyack
Nyack, New York

“Marching drum signature sticks seem to be recommended often by drum teachers to younger students. Some jazz players (mostly older and experienced) seem to find signature series sticks desirable.”

Doug Cotton
Whip City Music
Westfield, Massachusetts

“I think that attachment to an artist definitely brings attention to the specific

model and thereafter the geometry and individual characteristics of the stick play an equally, if not more important, role.”

Charles M. Waddill
Access Percussion
Columbia, Missouri

“Younger, wannabe players.”

Gus Guastamachio
Dynamic Percussion
East Hartford, Connecticut

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Drumming Up History

The Percussion Marketing Council Celebrates
25 Years of Advocacy

By Victoria Wasylak

For decades, the Percussion Marketing Council (PMC) has heralded May as International Drum Month, but for 2020, the PMC is taking their plans farther than ever before.

The quarter-of-a-century-old association has long served as an advocate for the percussion segment of the MI industry, working to create and maintain a nation of drummers and overall percussion players. Celebrating their 25th anniversary this year, the PMC looks back on their impressive history, while also keeping a firm grip on the future of the percussion industry.

"25 years ago, we had meetings like these in closets," executive director Karl Dustman told the PMC members gathered at the Hilton Anaheim's Vista Ballroom for their annual NAMM meeting on January 16.

That's not an exaggeration, either: the PMC initially started as International Drum Month, a month-long series of promotions to bring more players into the fold of the music industry and music education world.

In 1995, drum giants like Remo, Yamaha, and Drum Workshop commenced a campaign to push and raise awareness of the benefits of percussion education. After about two years, the companies formed an official non-profit trade association, keeping the already-existing International Drum Month in place as the centerpiece. As executive director, Dustman leads the PMC alongside additional board members with his 62 years of drumming experience and 54 years in the MI world.

"The fact that you're still in business, still growing, still being productive 25 years later, I think, is a key milestone," shares Dustman. "In this day and age, there are not a lot of trade associations within the music products industry that are having that type of track record. As an example, we lost the existence of the MDA (Music Distributors Association) just this year."

While growth remains an obvious and integral part of keeping any association running, Dustman says

that diversifying their roster of members has also been key. From cymbals to vibraphones, there's much more to the percussion world than just drummers, and the PMC strives to represent all of them.

"It just cannot be a drum association for people playing drums – it involves every and all types of percussion musical instruments," he notes. "And the organization has diversified in its membership, and it has, in turn, diversified in its programs that it offers to grow that market. The newest entities coming into the percussion industry, they're looking for visibility. They're looking to be part of a big pool of manufacturers, distributors, publishers, and the little guys are looking for market visibility."

Citing electronic instruments and hand percussion as major movers and shakers in the industry these past few years, Dustman sees these areas as important components for growth. Electronic percussion, of course, offers players a quieter and more portable option, and hand percussion presents a great starting point for classroom players in schools for all ages.

"We're working closely with John Fitzgerald of Remo through our Hand Drumming For Life program, which is taking an organized industry and focusing on the recreational music element, specifically for percussion, and the music therapy element, specifically for percussion," Dustman says. "Both of those areas are using John Fitzgerald's expertise and contacts to get more drums and drumming into those hands for the first time. This is not preaching to the choir that already knows it. But what about all those perimeter organizations in medical treatment and various different diseases and so on, that can all use drums and drumming, more so than any other instrument, for a form of self-gratification and release?"

Sharing the unique benefits of drumming and percussion playing remain at the center of the association's mission, namely by homing in on the ease of playing and instant gratification for beginners of all ages.



Red Hot Chili Peppers drummer Chad Smith performs at a PMC assembly

"Immediately, drums are a physical exertion, and you don't have to read music at the beginning, you don't have to know rhythms," he adds. "It is the truest form of self-expression. From the very first moment that instrument is put in a person's hands, they want to play it. And it doesn't take a huge amount of expertise, other than self-expression, to receive immediate gratification. That's kind of our slogan: 'Everyone's a drummer with a heartbeat. They just don't know it until we put a drum in their hands.' And that's true with everyone that is breathing. You can't do that with a guitar, you can't do that with a piano, you can't even do that with a harmonica. But with a drum, you can achieve that immediate gratification and connection through self-expression. And there's not a wrong way of doing it."

For 2020, they've rolled out three new initiatives to enhance percussion education throughout the country. The first is called "get your sticks together," and offers players the chance to win 12 free drum lessons at the music shop of their choice. Each month of 2020, the PMC selects one random online winner to receive 12 free 30-minute lessons. In turn, the PMC will pay whichever retailer is identified on the consumer's contest entry form for a standardized flat private lesson rate.

"It could be a starter, or maybe it's somebody that's been playing for three or four years, and wants to get better," Dustman explains. "We don't care, as long as they're over the age of 10. We have in-store counter cards that invite their own studio students to sign up for 12 free drum lessons."

Also on deck for 2020 is an ongoing giveaway of limited-edition commemorative drumming and percussion products. Starting in this May's edition of International Drum Month, the PMC will hold drawings for items like one-of-a-kind snare drums, cymbals, cajons, conga drums, and bongos, all featuring special 25th-anniversary logo badges. Winners will be selected through the end of the year.

Finally, "lesson with a master" will also launch in May, offering chances for players to win a one-hour teleconference lesson with one of four internationally recognized drummers and celebrity artists. Rich Redmond, the drummer for Jason Aldean, Rick Latham, international drum educator, player, and teacher, David Stanoch, international educator and online video teacher, and Gordon Campbell, international celebrity artist, will all be available. These new initiatives for the May International Drum Month campaign will replace the widely-recognized Roadie for a Day contest.

"You need to liven things up every so often," Dustman notes. "And in doing that, we have completely redesigned International Drum Month for 2020."

Taking a page from one of their main inspirations – NAMM – the PMC has strived to make self-analysis one of their strengths, even if that means repurposing or stopping certain initiatives. One educational program called Roots of Rhythm was even sold to its developer, Dr. Craig Woodson, who now runs and independently owns the course.



The PMC program "Drums Across America" presents at Summer NAMM 2013 in Nashville

"We divested ourselves of it and replaced it with a drum set program based on his template, called 'Drum Set in the Classroom,'" Dustman says. "[Woodsen] wrote the program, he administers the program, he takes drum sets into the same classrooms that he used to take hand drums into. And now, he's teaching how to get drum set in classrooms, both acoustic and electronic kits."

As for what's hot now, Dustman says he's seen djembes and cajons captivate the industry in recent years, followed by the current trend of electronic percussion, including electronic drum kits and mallet keyboard instruments like the MalletKAT.

"What I do see evolving is that the manufacturers and brands that make these keyboard instruments - like a vibe, or a marimba, or a xylophone, or a glockenspiel. They [brands] are looking at this, because that is a direct extension of the Orff-Kodaly classroom instruction that has been going on for decades. So if somebody is learning on a xylophone, a glock, and so on, and they're just playing it on a little eight to 12 to 15-note classroom instrument, how do we keep that interest going? The answer is to have a two-and-a-half-octave electronic keyboard that can sound like any one of the mallet instruments that are out there in the percussion section. And I see that as an opportunity, and I see that those companies are signed up to attend our meeting."

Looking ahead at the coming years of the MI world, the PMC's focus is on keeping their growth consistent as they tackle the 2020s and beyond.

"If we were sitting around the conference table, we'd probably all unanimously say, 'Figure out a way to have this thing survive another 25 years,'" Dustman says. "But the real answer to that is to maintain the momentum. And the momentum increases, quite honestly, with each year."

Still, Dustman and the PMC practice their elevator pitch whenever possible – and since the percussion market hasn't bounced back the way that other MI segments have since the recession, there's no such thing as creating too many new players.

"The long-term established companies and brands spend all of their time, money, effort, and knowledge, trying to differentiate their brand from everyone else that is competing with them," he says. "They don't have the time or the expertise to devote to creating new markets, creating new players. And yet, the entire industry realizes that if we don't create more players, we are oversaturating the market with more supply than there is demand. The answer to this industry growth is to create more players, which become consumers for any and all percussion merchandise."

It all circles back to that one, determined slogan: "Everyone's a drummer with a heartbeat. They just don't know it until we put a drum in their hands." And as long as the PMC is around, the MI world might just see the largest generation of percussion players yet. 

Brad Smith (Hal Leonard), David Jewell (Yamaha), Stacey Montgomery-Clark (SABIAN), and Karl Dustman before the PMC's 2020 Winter NAMM gathering



Rush to Judgement

The Power of an Icon



By Menzie Pittman

The line I hear most often about the unexpected passing of Neil Peart is, “Man, this one really hurts.” And that’s right – it does really hurt. Losing an icon affects those of us in the music industry differently, and, of course, for different reasons. But I believe those

that are most devastated by the unexpected loss of Neil Peart are his ardent fans: those fans that attended dozens of Rush concerts and drummers who took an interest in learning to play drums because of Peart’s magic.

I have to say, Neil’s fans were different. To Peart fans, Neil was more than a drummer and lyricist; he was a superhero. I’m truly surprised he never had his own TV series, because he made Spiderman look like a sissy. I am not just talking about his drumming – I’m talking about his persona. He was much larger than life – certainly his drum kit was. The first word that comes to mind is “gargantuan!”

But, just to say Peart was larger than life doesn’t do him true justice. So, let me share some backstories to shed light on what I mean. Personally, I always felt like I owed Neil a debt of gratitude for several reasons. I was lucky because I was deeply entrenched teaching drums when Neil and Rush were in their heyday. Neil, along with Alex Van Halen and Steve Gadd, kept my schedule full, and when I say full, I mean on average 90 students a week.

Students realized I could break down the “Peart Book” and make learning it accessible. And once one or two hotshots started playing the songs better than guys that weren’t studying with me, the phone never stopped ringing. It was like the gift that kept on giving. To this day, I am still in touch with many of those students and I can confirm that their love for drumming was genuinely fueled by the strong influence of Neil Peart.

The true impact of Neil’s influence was best displayed when I had my house appraised.

It was a crisp, fall day and I tried to ready myself for the appraiser to arrive to appraise the value of my house. I think it’s fair to say an appraiser makes you nervous because he can control your fate to some degree. The appraiser arrived around a half an hour late, and because he was running late, he was in a notably foul mood. When I greeted him, he gave no credence to the fact that I was cordial. He wanted to be in and out, and on his way to his next appraisal. I continued to attempt to make small talk, but he would just give a grunt or a moan. There was no interaction whatsoever.

Finally, I realized I would be better served if I just gave the appraiser his space, and privacy to conduct his work. I reached the conclusion that I simply had to let the chips fall where they may. As I sat reading and waiting, Neil Peart was working his magic, and I didn’t even know it.

Two years before, I had been teaching a high-profile Washington, D.C. chef. Trust me, this was no ordinary chef. He was, and still is, a magnificent chef in the region and one with strong connections. Chef Beckel had been bugging me for a while to see Rush with him, but the opportunity never seemed to align. Then one day out of the blue, he contacted me to say, “Mark your calendar” because we are going together to see Rush, and THAT’S THAT!”

What I didn’t know was that the chef had gotten backstage passes for us, along with third row center seats. A short bit after we arrived, he said, “Ok, we have something we need to do. Follow me.” When we got to the stage area, he approached security and – bingo, we were escorted backstage. As I looked up, I could see Geddy Lee and Alex Lifeson standing next to a photographer. We were the only ones backstage. Neil didn’t

“To Peart fans, Neil was more than a drummer and lyricist; he was a superhero.”

do “meet and greets” on this tour, or in general – so, no Neil. But to my surprise, I would find out Neil did one very cool thing. He had signed a snare drum head and all three members of Rush had signed the full-size *Vaper Trails* poster. At the chef’s next lesson, he presented me with a huge frame that encompassed the signed drumhead and the signed poster, along with the photo taken by the photographer at the show. Nice, right?

Naturally, I hung this masterpiece in my office, and when the appraiser saw it, he lost his mind. He apparently was a huge Neil fan. That autographed poster changed the entire way the appraiser looked at everything. His mood instantly changed – I was now his best friend. He took out his phone and took a picture of the picture, to show his friends, and now this appraiser viewed my house with a completely different frame of mind.

The appraisal came in very strong, and I truly believe I have Neil and the boys in Rush to thank for that. Crazy, right? But that’s the influence Neil had on people.

I’m not sure about you, but I miss the days of *big* heroes. I miss the days of arguing over which superhero was the coolest. No matter where you stand on Neil, this much is for sure: when Rush and Neil were rockin’, so was my drum studio, and the evaluation on my house as well.

R.I.P. Neil Peart! You will be missed.

Accessories

Grover's Locking Vintage Deluxe Guitar Tuning Keys

Grover Musical Products has introduced the Locking Vintage Deluxe (533 Series) of guitar tuning keys. The 533 Locking Vintage Deluxe series is mechanically engineered to the most precise standards of excellence, with a classic look and styling. Grover's Vintage Deluxe guitar tuning keys now come with a "thumb screw" mechanism which locks the string into place. Insert the string through the post hole, wrap around once, then lock by tightening with the thumb screw. Worm and gear are cut to mesh perfectly, thereby eliminating any backlash and slippage. The housings are self-lubricated for a lifetime of trouble-free service.



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John Bonham Signature Re-Issue Drumsticks

Barnes & Mullins Ltd. have launched the re-issued John Bonham Signature Drumstick by Promuco Percussion.



These premium hickory sticks are made to the exact same specification as John Bonham's original "Trees" from the 1970s and feature his legendary "acorn" tip. Now, with full agreement from the John Bonham license-holders, these legendary sticks are re-born through the original British brand.

www.bandm.co.uk

Updates to the StrobeStomp HD Pedal from Peterson Tuners

Peterson Strobe Tuners has announced a major firmware update (v.1.0.25) for their StrobeStomp HD tuning pedal. This firmware update adds a Remote Preset Selection feature and allows users of the StrobeStomp HD a quick way to access all their tuning presets without having to reach down to access the on-board buttons in order to navigate through their collection of presets. When the Remote Preset Selection feature is activated, by simply pressing and holding the stomp switch users can now pull any open string, or even "thump" their connected instrument, to advance to the next tuning preset.



www.petersontuners.com

Drums & Percussion

Amahi's Steel Tongue Drum Line

Amahi makes a foray into the non-stringed instrument market with the addition of a steel tongue drum line. Currently available in 8", 10", & 12" at a MAP price of \$79, \$119, and \$149 respectively. The 8" drum is tuned to a C major diatonic scale, the 10" and 12" are tuned to a D major pentatonic scale. Each drum is made from high-carbon steel and undergoes a 2-step tuning process. Available in bronze, red, blue, teal, matte black and includes a padded carrying bag and a pair of mallets.



www.amahiukuleles.com

Band & Orchestra

Majestic's New Concert Black Series 5.0 Octave Marimbas

Majestic Percussion's new Concert Black series of marimbas are packed with pro level features including black finished resonators, height adjustable frame, free floating bar posts, and 9 graduations within the bar geometry. Tunable resonators in the low end finish out the professional level appointments giving the player an unmatched level of control to blend with the ensemble or to express their soloistic sound. Available with rosewood or Padauk bar models.



www.majesticpercussion.com

Concerto DA-300 Accordion

The Concerto DA-300 is an all-new wireless digital & acoustic accordion. High quality sampled sounds can be selected and saved either from the grill of the accordion or with the included Android tablet. It features touch-sensitive keyboard, with a touchless contact system so the traditional accordion retains its natural feel. Beyond the reed sounds there are eight musical sections (four for the treble and four for the bass) with effects that allow the Concerto to layer and produce sound sets ranging from a small jazz combo to a full symphony orchestra. The Concerto is sold complete with accordion, tablet, sound generator box, a digital expression pedal, a four-way effects pedal, plus case, straps, and power accessories.



www.accordionfactory.com

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New Ukuleles from Lanikai

Lanikai's new Oak Series of ukuleles offers a triple matched grain (top, back and sides) with a satin finish and chrome open back tuning keys that make for a lighter headstock that results in less hand fatigue. The new ukuleles are available in soprano, concert, concert electric, tenor, tenor electric, baritone and baritone electric (baritones are equipped with truss rods for neck adjustments if needed). These oak ukes have a bright crisp tone with comfortable playability and striking looks from the wide bold grain patterns of oak.

Lanikai has also announced the addition of two new Purple Stained Quilted Maple ukuleles to the existing lineup of trans black, blue, red or natural. The new Trans Purple Concert and Tenor Cutaway Electric have a vibrant, yet sophisticated look, enhancing any performer's appearance on stage. The Quilted Maple ukuleles carry premium quality components that are standard for Lanikai, Graphtech NuBone XB nut and saddle, wide comfortable neck profile, D'Addario strings, Grover Machines, and Fishman pickup/tuner, foam case and a limited-lifetime warranty. From an intimate acoustic stage to a concert stage, a Lanikai quilted maple series is an excellent choice.



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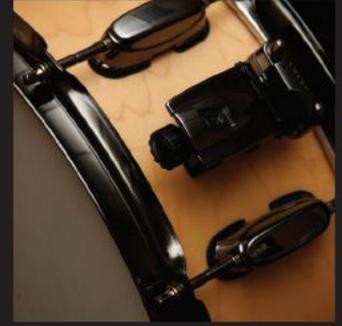


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By Dan Daley

A New Law in California Should be a Topic of Conversation in Your Shop

The music store, in addition to being a sales center and place of education, is also an excellent locus of scuttlebutt, a place where news and rumor can happily overlap, and details about things like fret size and stomp-box design become major topics. All this gossip, dish, and buzz can also help keep a store at the center of what's happening in the music community. Now, there's a case of unintended consequences coming down the pike that will impact their customer base that retailers should be aware of, and that should be the center of some serious in-store buzz.

California's new freelance law, Assembly Bill 5 (AB-5) went into effect January 1, but even before then had ginned up considerable concern among musicians, drawing the ire of the Record Industry Association of America, indie organization A2IM, and the Music Artists Coalition. The idea behind the law is that many workers are misclassified as contractors, enabling corporations that use their services to save money by not having to pay for protections such as workers' compensation and unemployment insurance. However, AB-5's wide net is falling on almost every kind of freelancer, from Uber drivers to uber drummers. Freelancers must meet certain criteria that clearly establish them as self-employed independent contractors, such as that they are free from the control and direction of the company that hired them while they perform their work. These conditions have been around for some time and used by the IRS to determine if someone is an employee or an independent contractor, which affects their tax-filing status. What's different with AB-5 is that the new law codifies a much stricter set of requirements regarding the classification of employees and puts the burden of proof on employers to show that a worker is properly classified as an independent contractor, and those corporations are not happy about that.

AB-5 is a move to make it easier for participants in the growing "gig economy," such as ride-share drivers and DoorDash deliverers, to demand the kinds of benefits that employees receive, such as minimum wage and overtime, workers' compensation coverage, unemployment insurance. But it muddies the waters around those who have been true freelancers all along. In an extreme case of "be careful what you wish for," the law could result in musicians, producers, engineers, vocalists and oth-

“A well-intentioned law meant to rectify the oppression of piecemeal workers could actually put some of those workers out of work.”

ers being compelled to be regarded as employees in many types of situations, entitled to the protections listed above. That would cost those who hire them far more, which would have the unintended effect of cutting back hiring overall.

Musicians are literally the original inhabitants of the gig economy – they play actual *gigs*. But playing a particular club or other venue regularly could trigger AB-5, as could weekly performances at churches. A well-intentioned law meant to rectify the oppression of piecemeal workers could actually put some of those workers out of work.

It Matters To Your Customers

AB-5 only affects California, but its sentiments are increasingly shared in other cities and states as drivers, couriers and other gig workers seek the kinds of benefits that employees often take for granted. They deserve what the law seeks to accomplish. But it also negatively impacts the MI customer base, and as such it's a topic that ought to be up for discussion at MI stores. Retailers don't necessarily have to share the alarm expressed by various musicians' organizations – indeed, AF of M members are essentially exempt from the law because the union's collective bargaining already represents their interests, and orchestral musicians are often already employees. But fundamentally industry-altering events such as AB-5 present an opportunity to connect with customers on another plane besides that of gear and lessons. Chances are you and your customers are not chatting about the stock market or currency trading in the store, but AB-5 is part of business that hits home for MI customers. You may not live in California, but like surf music and pineapple on pizza, what happens there often also goes everywhere else eventually. 

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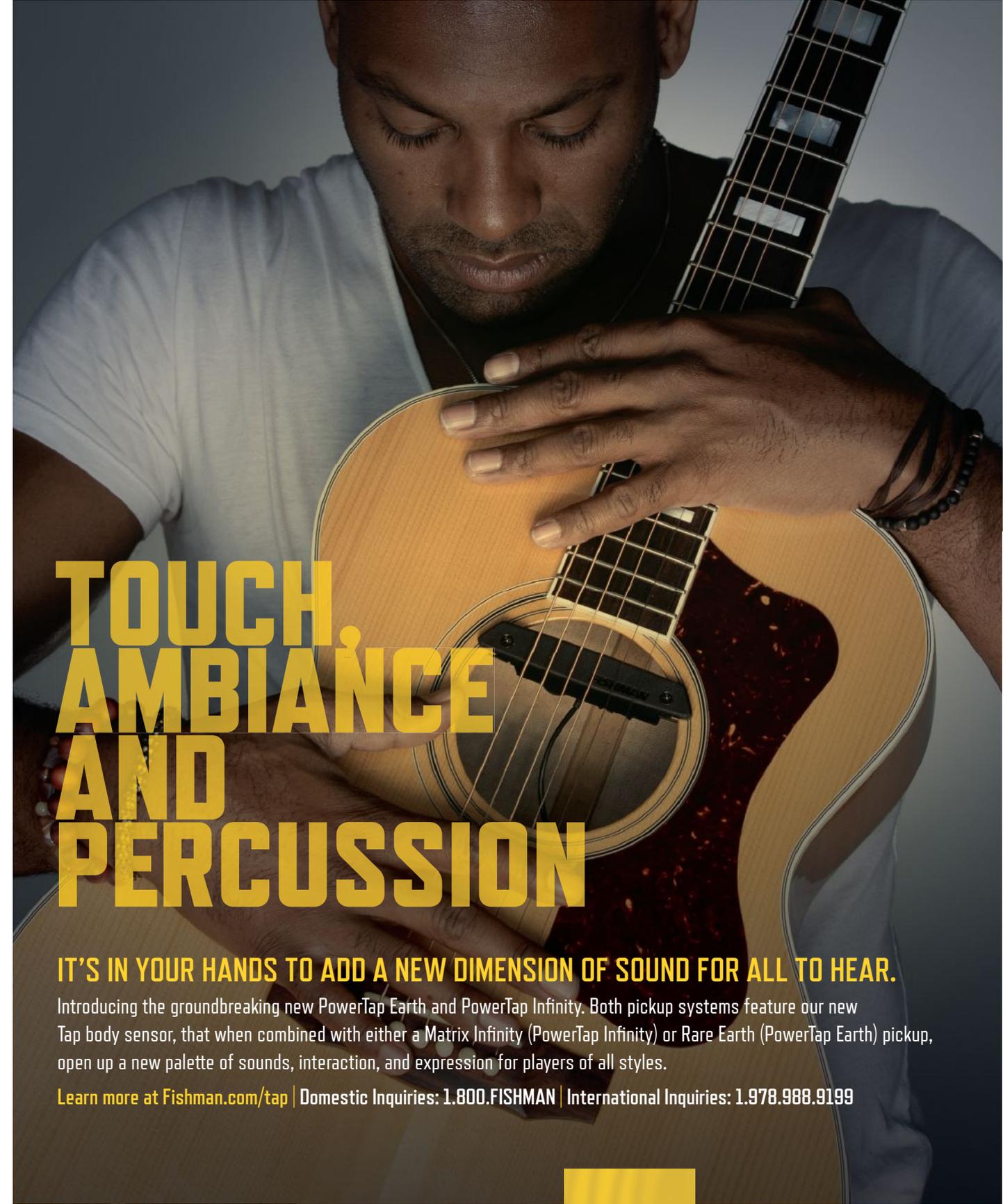
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