

MMR

MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

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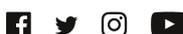
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C O N T E N T S



MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

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Tariffs, Trade War, and MI



by Christian Wissmuller

In January of this year, America began imposing tariffs on primarily Chinese-built goods and China-sourced materials and, in July, the U.S. initiated 25% tariffs on \$34 billion worth of goods imported from China – which, in turn, resulted in Chinese tariffs similar in scope on U.S. products.

Just today, as I write this (October 25), another line in the sand has been drawn. “The U.S. is refusing to resume trade negotiations with China until Beijing comes up with a concrete proposal to address Washington’s complaints about forced technology transfers and other economic issues, said officials on both sides of the Pacific,” reports *The Wall Street Journal*.

“The impasse threatens to undermine a meeting between Presidents Trump and Xi Jinping scheduled for the end of November at the Group of 20 leaders summit in Buenos Aires. Both sides had hoped the gathering would ease the trade tensions. U.S. businesses have been counting on sufficient progress at the meeting for the Trump administration to suspend its plan to increase tariffs on \$200 billion of Chinese imports to 25% on Jan. 1, from the current 10%. Such a move would be a blow to U.S. importers and consumers.”

The reasons behind these moves are varied, nuanced, and deeply complex. Personal politics aside, in an industry such as ours, with increasingly interconnected global ties, it’s worth paying attention when the leaders of world’s two largest economies are increasingly pushing one other’s buttons.

I know that I was certainly keeping an eye on developments between the two countries before I headed to Shanghai for the Music China show this October – not that I was expressly concerned for my own safety or anything quite that dramatic; it was more a case of, “Hmmm... I wonder how all of this ‘Trade War’ stuff may

change the tone of the show, if at all!”

“There certainly were a lot of rumblings of discontent and eye-rolling at the current state of affairs between the U.S. and China [at Music China],” says Colin Schofield of JodyJazz, Inc. “I don’t see the trade tensions having much effect at the current time. But – and this is a big ‘but’ – if the Chinese government urges a boycott of USA-made goods among Chinese consumers, as they have threatened, you get the sense that the mood could change suddenly and quite drastically and that, to us, could be quite devastating. It is a very real concern and quite unnerving!”

Markus Theinert of Conn-Selmer expressed similar concern, observing that, “The current escalation in tariffs is certainly not helping for the global trade with musical instruments, components, accessories, and even raw material. Our industry is very connected across all borders and the potential impact on the business in both countries is definitely something we will have to watch closely.”

It would be difficult to argue against those points.

All of that being said, nobody I spoke with expressed having encountered anything in the way of a “hostile vibe” between attendees or exhibitors, of any nationality – which is both unsurprising and, nonetheless, somehow reassuring. Heads of state may rattle their financial sabres at one another, but that type of aggression need not extend into the world of MI.

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Industry News

Jam Industries Partners with DCC

Jam Industries has announced its partnership with the technology division of DCC plc, a £14.3 billion revenue, London Stock Exchange (LSE) listed international sales, marketing, and support services group.

Tim Griffin, DCC Technology managing director said, "The partnership with Jam represents the next step in DCC Technology's strategy to extend its geographic footprint and product range, strengthening our relationship with new and existing suppliers while also broadening our base of customers. Importantly, the very strong service capability of Jam represents a significant step in DCC Technology's continued execution of its plans to provide specialist val-



ue added services to all its vendors, resellers and retailers – bringing extensive brand reach and market access whilst simplifying the complex supply chain in our sectors. Following the acquisition of Stampe in July 2018, our investment in Jam adds an exciting new brand to our portfolio and means that we now have a \$600m+ revenue business in North America with a strong, service-led specialist focus on pro audio and visual technologies, musical instruments and consumer electronics."

Jam's experienced and highly respected management team including Marty Szpiro, CEO, who remains a shareholder, and Stuart Frenkel, CFO, will continue to manage the business post acquisition and are committed to leading the business through the next phase of its development. In addition, Jam founder Martin Golden and his son Matthew Golden will also remain involved with the business adding to the continuity.

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- Supplier Scene
- Letters

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- People on the Move
- Trade Regrets

Gibson Names Curleigh as President & CEO, Appoints New Senior Leadership

Gibson Brands, Inc. has announced the appointment of James "JC" Curleigh as president and chief executive officer. Curleigh joins Gibson from Levi Strauss & Co., where he served as president of the Levi's brand, and was a member of its worldwide leadership team. Gibson also announced the appointments of Cesar Gueikian as CMO (chief merchant officer); Kim Mattoon as CFO (chief financial officer); and Christian Schmitz as CPO (chief production officer). The appointments of Curleigh and the new Gibson senior team are effective November 1, 2018.



James "JC" Curleigh

Curleigh will lead a new Gibson senior team of proven global professionals with broad experience across brand building, product quality and innovation, and business development to establish operational excellence and build a strong team dynamic across the enterprise. They will collectively focus on setting the conditions for success for Gibson Brands to continue to create high quality instruments, develop meaningful partnerships and deliver profitable growth across the core

business of guitars and beyond. "As a musician, I have always treasured my Gibson guitars and I have the utmost respect for the iconic Gibson brand and those who choose to play Gibson guitars," said Curleigh. "Gibson has been a pioneer of craftsmanship and innovation in musical instruments and has been synonymous with shaping the sounds of generations and genres for more than 100 years. I am very honored to play a leading role with this iconic brand."

Nat Zilkha, incoming chairman of Gibson's Board of Directors and representing the new majority ownership group (KKR), said, "JC's track record speaks for itself – he's a rock star when it comes to understanding consumers and shaping a marketplace, working with retail partners and building world class brands. JC, Cesar, Kim and Christian bring new energy and vision to Gibson, fueled by authentic passion for the company and music. On behalf of Gibson's Board of Directors, I look forward to partnering with them to

continued on page 8

Leslie Ann Jones to Receive NAMM TEC Hall of Fame Award

The NAMM TEC committee is pleased to announce that Leslie Ann Jones, the groundbreaking engineer, producer, and director of music and scoring for Skywalker Sound will be inducted into the NAMM TEC Hall of Fame at the 34th Annual NAMM TEC Awards, January 26 in Anaheim, California. Jones joins luminaries Rose Mann Cheney, Skunk Baxter, Hal Blaine, Jack Douglas, Nathan East, Geoff Emerick, and others with her induction, the industry's highest honor for pioneers of audio technology, as well as the music industry's most accomplished producers and audio technicians.



"I am so honored to have been selected for this year's TEC Hall of Fame," shared Jones. "It is quite humbling to know I will be joining a list of past inductees whom I have admired, respected and looked up to my whole career."

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D'Addario Foundation Establishes College Scholarship Fund

Partnering with hundreds of music programs serving thousands of kids, data has shown conclusively that immersive music education programs could be the single, most effective way to engage students, build self-confidence and create community. This phenomenon is backed up by neuroscience that tells us that active music training consistently improves brain function and literacy. As we know, literacy is a strong indicator of economic success. A 2018 report from the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading found that students who do not read at grade level by the end of 3rd grade are four times more likely to leave high school without a diploma.

"We have spent the last 30 years making it possible for kids to join and participate in music instruction programs in their communities multiple days per week for as long as possible in their education," says D'Addario Foundation Executive Director, Suzanne D'Addario Brouder. Thanks to an incredibly generous

donation from the late Rita and Herbert Z. Gold through their Charitable Trust, the D'Addario Foundation can now encourage students to dream even bigger. "This scholarship fund allows us to say to our students, 'Not only will we provide you with music education, if you work hard and dedicate yourself to your academics and your music, we will help you

pay for college.'" The scholarship fund will cover the soft expenses of college such as books, food, and transportation and does not require a student to

declare music as their major.

To receive college assistance scholarships, students must be actively participating in their community music program for at least three years, maintain a certain number of class hours, a minimum GPA, and mentor in their local community program. Students will be actively involved in choosing a higher education option that works for them and their families; many will represent the first generation in their family to attend college.

D'Addario Foundation College Scholarship Fund



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Gibson *continued from page 8*

help Gibson achieve its strategic vision and forge a successful, bright future for the Company and all of its stakeholders."

A lifelong guitarist and avid Gibson collector, Gueikian joins the company as the new chief merchant officer (CMO) after a 20-year career as an entrepreneur and financier, investing in the growth of companies around the world. He has led teams at global investment houses culminating with the founding and successful growth of his own firm. In his role, Gueikian will focus on product and its evolution, commercial solutions and connecting fans through marketing strategies to drive profitable growth.

As CFO, Mattoon will support Gibson by ensuring the company builds and maintains the financial, human and other resources necessary to sustain a growth trajectory and invest in the future. She joins Gibson from Richemont North America where she served as chief operating officer, and brings deep financial

acumen, proven brand-building experience and an enterprise-wide understanding of strategy and execution to Gibson.

As chief production officer, Christian Schmitz will take on the challenge of driving best practices in manufacturing, creating supply chain synergy and establishing operational excellence across Gibson's U.S. and global production platform. Schmitz has been a key member of the transition team at Gibson over the past year and his operational leadership, experience and focus on collaboration and teamwork will immediately benefit the company.

Gibson will emerge from bankruptcy protection on November 1, 2018. Upon emergence, KKR will be the majority owner with the controlling interest of the Company. KKR is a leading global investment firm that has an extensive track record of successful investments in the retail and consumer industries, helping its portfolio companies achieve sustainable longterm growth.



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Best Communities for Music Education Sought by NAMM Foundation

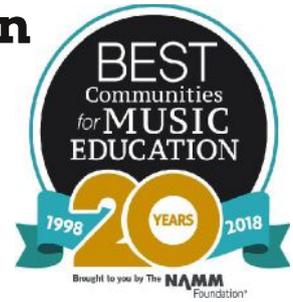
The NAMM Foundation is seeking school districts and schools with an exemplary commitment to music education to be recognized as part of the Foundation's Best Communities for Music Education (BCME) program. Now in its 20th year, the Best Communities for Music Education (district level) and the SupportMusic Merit Award (school level) offers national recognition and visibility for school music programs, and honors the efforts of educators, administrators, students and community music education champions who share in the common goal to ensure access to music for all students as part of the curriculum.

Over the past two decades, the awards program has served as a catalyst to rally and expand music education programs, as well as to gain additional community support and funding. To date, two districts, Henrico County Public Schools (Virginia) and Fulton County Schools (Georgia), have earned the title of "Best

Community for Music Education" for 19 consecutive years.

The SupportMusic Merit Award is another designation which has been given for six years, and in that time, has recognized numerous individual schools for their administrative and educator efforts to help students realize their full potential through music learning.

For the twentieth anniversary, the national survey was redesigned by leaders in music education today, including: survey administrator, Dr. Christopher Johnson, University of Kansas; Dr. Carlos Abril, professor of Music Education and director of Undergraduate Music Education at the Frost School of Music (University of Miami); Music Therapy and Music Education professor Alice-Ann Darrow (Florida State University); Dr. Glenn E. Nierman (University of Nebraska-Lincoln); Denise Odegaard, National Association for Music Education (NAfME) president (2016-2018) and Fargo (North Dakota) Public Schools



performing arts curriculum specialist; as well as Dr. Rebecca L. Tast, assistant professor of Music Education (Texas State University).

The designations will be awarded based on a school or district submitted survey process, and evaluated on funding, staffing of qualified teachers, standards, curriculum, community support, participation, facilities and other factors which affect access and demonstrate a commitment to music education.

District officials, music educators and school staff in the domestic United States are invited to complete the survey by January 31, 2019 by visiting www.nammfoundation.org/bcme.



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Christian,

A quick note in regard to your September 2018 editorial. I do think the guitar is on the upswing and will continue to be an important piece of our culture, both musically and visually. I have been in the music retail business since 1985. Our store sold Gibson when Guns 'n' Roses broke back in 1986/87. We sold Fender when Stevie Ray Vaughan was king. We had Mustangs on the guitar wall

when every 14 year-old boy wanted to be Kurt Cobain.

Do we still guitars? You bet. Do we still sell those brands? Not anymore.

What we do today is offer other electric brands besides Fender, Gibson, or PRS. We give 300+ lessons a week (one third are guitar by the way), we offer lots of used gear that we upload to Reverb, Craigslist, et cetera, we do 550 band rentals a year, and we offer recitals, workshops, summer rock band camps, and a host of other events to keep music alive and well in our community.

Has the guitar market changed? Of course. Retail is always in a state of disruption, and I believe more than anything disruption is what has brought about the change to the guitar landscape. Never in the history of commerce have we seen the likes of anything close to what is currently available for the taking at every consumer's fingertips. Kids still play guitar. Kids will always play the guitar is my hope. Music is what makes us human. I don't think that will get disrupted anytime soon.

Scott Mulrooney
The Music Shop
Southington, CT 06489

Hi Chris,

I just finished reading your editorial in the September 2018 *MMR*. Our shop is tiny: one brick and mortar location. Over the years, we've changed direction many times to stay afloat as other stores in our area have closed. We don't carry electric guitars, so I can't comment on that. What we have seen in the past 18 months is an interest in guitars made in North America. We still carry Alvarez, and do really well with them. But it's the Larivees, and the Godin/Art&Lutherie that we can't seem to keep in stock. Our customers want a better quality guitar than they did a few years back when it was all about price.

Being made in Canada has been a huge plus for our customers, too. If there were U.S.-made acoustics in our price range, I'm sure they'd go flying out the doors. Don't know if this info is helpful, but thought I'd share.

Best regards,
Lee Raymond, Owner
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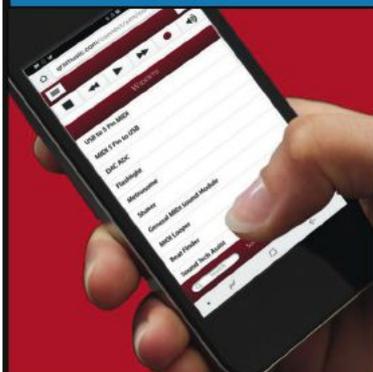
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Sweetwater Plans Major Expansion, Adds 1,000+ New Jobs to Indiana HQ

Sweetwater Sound is expanding its operations and investing \$76.4 million dollars into two new facilities on its 163-acre Fort Wayne campus. The move will add 1,009 new jobs over the next five years.

Sweetwater will construct a new, 350,000-square-foot warehousing facility that will provide product storage as well as gear testing, gear photography, offices, staff amenities, customer pickup and more. An additional structure will house a new 35,000-square-foot conference center with room for up to 1,000 people that will accommodate continuing education sessions for employees. The facility will also be available for members of the community to use for other events.

"This new warehouse facility will accommodate the tremendous growth we've experienced recently," said Chuck Surack, founder and president of Sweetwater. "Our sales continue to increase each and every year, which means we need more room to be able to serve our customers in the way to which they're accustomed. We are delighted to be able to continue to expand in Fort Wayne, where it all started."

The buildings will be operational by the summer of 2020. The company, which employs more than 1,300 associates at its Fort Wayne headquarters, plans to hire additional distribution, logis-



tics, sales, marketing, merchandising, programming/IT, and various other administrative roles over the next five years to support its growth.

CORRECTION

On page 6 of our October issue, the news item regarding Hal Leonard's acquisition of Groove3 had an incorrect headline relating to a story from our September issue. We regret the error.

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"Our year-over-year sales increased by 35% after switching to Rain Retail"

~Jeremy Chapman, Owner, The Acoustic Shoppe

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Roland Honored with 2018 Good Design Awards

The Japan Institute of Design and Promotion has honored the Roland Boutique series and the just-released



LX708 Digital Piano each with "Good Design Award 2018" accolades. The Roland Boutique series was also chosen for the "My Favorite Choice for Good Design 2018 – Good Design Award 2018 Jury's Personal Selections Exhibit." This exhibit, held in Tokyo from October 3 to November 4, showcases a select group of Good Design Award 2018-winning products that were personal favorites of this year's jury members, and the Roland Boutique series will be there on display.

"In a product category that is dominated by digital products, the Roland Boutique series synthesizers are based on an enthusiasm for the analog feel. Incorporating the latest technologies, this series recreates – in a compact form factor and without sacrificing their ease of use – the flavors of vintage synthesizers that cannot be expressed on their digital counterparts. The entire series is designed on a unified theme which is sure to pique the fascination of collectors," stated the Good Design jury.

"The LX708 garnered praise for its developers' approach of pursuing a new interpretation for digital pianos," added the Good Design jury. "Instead of hiding its speakers and controls, this product adopts a design where they are made visible in a clear and aesthetically pleasing way, also giving it the elegance that pianos are known for. Meticulous attention has also gone into the keyboard touch, making this product a beautiful fusion of digital and acoustic."

Audio-Technica, Recording Connection, and Clyne Media Host Second Annual Csaba Petocz Master Class Scholarship

Audio-Technica, the Recording, Radio and Film Connection (RRFC), and Clyne Media, Inc. recently hosted the second annual Csaba Petocz Master Class Scholarship at Mix LA studios in Los Angeles. The scholarship, which has become an annual audio education event created to honor the legacy of the beloved producer/engineer, was held in September, and six lucky scholarship winners were selected by the Recording Connection to attend this advanced audio workshop conducted by five-time GRAMMY Award-winning mix engineer Chris Lord-Alge.

A three-time GRAMMY nominee with 37 number-one record credits and 32 platinum or multi-platinum albums, Csaba was one of the greats, living and recording in Los Angeles and Nashville while working closely with the top names in the industry, from Metallica to Larry Carlton, John Michael Montgomery to Alanis Morissette, Aretha Franklin to Elvis Costello, Morrissey, Al Stewart, and more.

The workshop, which was open to advanced audio engineering and music production students, had Lord-Alge focusing on the essentials of being an engineer/producer, with special emphasis on mixing, production and gear, along with a focus on the "business" side of the job – a subject that is often overlooked as part of an audio education program.

The day began with Lord-Alge, who was a longtime friend of Petocz, addressing the students about Csaba, his work ethic, and what it takes to make it in the industry.

"I have always viewed my work as not just a job but a full-time gig – it's a life, and that's how my friend Csaba viewed it as well. You can't just put your toe in the water – you have to dive in with both feet and swim your butt off," stated Lord-Alge. "That type of attitude, that kind of vibe and commitment comes through the second you walk through that studio door and that's the kind of engineer/producer clients are looking for."

The sessions then began with Lord-Alge taking the students into the control room of his Mix LA studio and giving an overview of the session, followed by discussing his view on recording, the various audio formats, the importance of choosing the right piece of gear for the job and melding analog with digital. Throughout the day, Lord-Alge interacted with the students, always explaining



L-R: Simon Guevara (student); Dawnette Scolari (student); Uriel Soto, Jr. (student); Corey Titov (Recording Connection Academic Facilitator); Mitch Villalva (student); Matthew Barth (student); Milton Abreu (Recording Connection Academic Facilitator); Luke Davies (student); Robbie Clyne (Clyne Media); Roxanne Ricks (Audio-Technica); Lisa Roy (Csaba's wife); and GRAMMY Award-winning producer/engineer Chris Lord-Alge.

CHRIS SCHMITT PHOTOGRAPHY

in detail the various aspects of what he was teaching. Of particular interest was when he began discussing the business aspect of the recording process and being confident when dealing with clients and record labels.

"I would say the most important thing you need to have is organization and confidence," stated Lord-Alge. "Even if you keep your work organized and know how to engineer and how to do this or that – that's just mechanics. But if you can do all that, but can't keep your face forward, your attention up and be confident, it's a complete failure. Because the confident one is the one that stands out and wins."

Michael Edwards, Audio-Technica vice president, stated, "We are so glad that we are able to continue to honor Csaba. Working with some of his closest friends like Joe Chiccarelli last year, and Chris Lord-Alge this year exposes a new generation of audio professionals to his experience and work ethic, while acknowledging and paying homage to Csaba's accomplishments throughout his career. CLA and his staff couldn't have been any more accommodating, and the event was so successful that we are planning to do it again in 2019 with the goal of honoring Csaba's achievements and passing on his philosophies and work ethics to the next generation of audio professionals."

Brian Kraft, chief academic officer/COO of Recording Radio Film Connection & Casa Schools, stated, "This year's event with Chris Lord-Alge gave the students a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to learn from one of the greats of our industry while honoring the legacy of Csaba. Everyone here at the Recording Connection is looking forward to participating in next year's event and keeping this scholarship going for years to come."

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Pioneer DJ Updates KUVO

Pioneer DJ has updated KUVO, the community-based social network for dance music. KUVO offers club-culture entertainment services for venues, DJs, and clubbers via the official website and iOS app. In this update, Pioneer DJ has added the Convo feature – a communication tool that helps clubbers share their experiences – and the Event Map, a feature that makes it easy to find club events you want to go to.

Social networks make it easy for event organizers to share details of their parties, but with so much content out there, it's difficult to get the right information to the people who might actually want to attend specific events. Thanks to this update, KUVO provides a place for people who are interested in club events to communicate with each other. DJs can connect with fans on a deeper level, venues and promoters can spread the word about their events to people who are most interested, and clubbers can contribute to the dance music community.

The event information page is where you can connect with other people who are attending a specific event. With the latest update, users can now post photos and write comments on the event page. This new update is part of KUVO's constant evolution as it grows as a community platform linking not only clubs, DJs and clubbers, but event organizers too.



Yamaha, Quinlan & Fabish, and Mads Tolling Bring Fusion Improv to VanderCook

Acclaimed violinist and Yamaha artist Mads Tolling dazzled students and concert attendees alike at his appearance last Thursday at VanderCook College of Music in Chicago. Tolling presented a master class on improvisation to VanderCook students in the afternoon and performed with the school's Philharmonic Orchestra in the evening.

Approximately 250 people attended the September 27 concert, which opened with a rousing version of Mark Ronson's "Uptown Funk" arranged by Tolling. Other highlights included Richard Rodgers' "My Favorite Things," Duke Ellington's "C-Jam Blues," and pieces by Oliver Nelson, Swedish folk legends Väsen, and Brian Balmages.

Tolling's appearance was sponsored by Yamaha and Quinlan & Fabish Music Company as part of an ongoing initiative to bring Yamaha artists to VanderCook for specialized master classes. The initiative is the third of its kind among Yamaha's outreach programs. Yamaha, Quinlan & Fabish, and the 109-year-old VanderCook College of Music all share the philosophy of enriching lives through high quality music education, and empowering musicians and music teachers at all levels. Yamaha also provided Boston Brass and Jeff Rupert as artists in the past two years.

Tolling performed on an electric violin for the both the concert and the afternoon's master class. Tolling demonstrated many techniques and encouraged several students to improvise – a first for many – to Herbie Hancock's "Watermelon Man." Both the master class and the concert were held at the college's performance space, a historic Mies van der Rohe building on the Illinois Institute of Technology campus. VanderCook has secured almost half the funding needed to renovate the building in its \$5 million capital campaign.



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Seth Thiesen Hosts CHAUVET Professional WFX Learning Session

Seth Thiesen of the multi-campus North Point Ministries outside Atlanta will be offering practical advice on meeting the challenges of lighting worship services for video in a WFX learning session sponsored by CHAUVET Professional.

Thiesen's session, "Lighting for Video," will take place from 5:00 pm to 5:45 pm on Wednesday, November 14, in room W221B at the WFX Conference and Expo Center in Orlando. As one of the Lighting Directors at the 30,000-member North Point Ministries for the past decade, Thiesen oversees a crew of volunteers at two performance venues. In addition to designing sets and lighting for ministry activities, he produces the technical experience for the church services.

Drawing on this experience, he will cover a range of topics, like balancing light to achieve depth of field and avoid having video images look flat; delineating foreground and background on camera; avoiding "shadowy eyes;" using fill light, balancing colors for the camera and live audience; and the relationship between camera and light.

"Video has become essential to the mission of many churches," said Thiesen. "To realize the full benefits of video, a house of worship has to know how to navigate the differ-

ent demands that video makes on a lighting system. I'm excited to share these insights at Chauvet's WFX learning session."

This sentiment was echoed by Albert Chauvet, CEO of Chauvet. "Our company has been a big supporter of education in the House of Worship market for many years," said Chauvet. "Lighting is a significant investment for churches, and we want to help make sure that our products are used to the best effect. We're humbled and honored that someone like Seth has agreed to do this important learning session with us."



Seth Thiesen

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Teaching Guitar Workshop Celebrates 25th Anniversary with Expanded Programming and Locations for 2019



To commemorate 25 years of teaching school teachers to start guitar programs, Teaching Guitar Workshop (TGW) is greatly expanding their reach with more information and more free gear. TGW's ongoing mission is to have the greatest impact possible at this level of guitar marketing.

TGW's annual campaign will now include ukulele training and a free guitar to every teacher. The free guitar is contingent on registering at least 30 days prior to the start of the workshop.

Teaching Guitar Workshop was started by members of the Guitar and Accessories Marketing Association (GAMA), NAMM, and NAFME to help school music educators start or enhance classroom guitar programs and deliver more music making opportunities to children. Between 1995 and today, over 4,000 school music teachers across the United States and Canada have enjoyed TGW.

TGW is growing from 12 locations in 2018 to over 20 in 2019. Locations include Colorado Springs, Colorado; Chicago, Illinois; Lynwood, Massachusetts; Cornelius, North Carolina; Omaha, Nebraska; Nazareth, Pennsylvania; Mitchell, South Dakota; Nashville, Tennessee; Reston, Virginia; and Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

D'Addario Debuts New Season of 'Guitar Power'

D'Addario presented a brand new season of "Guitar Power" with returning host Dweezil



Zappa, which premiered Wednesday, October 3 on the D'Addario & Co. YouTube channel. The series features influential, innovative and highly informed guitarists who provide a unique and important perspective on the endless possibilities the guitar offers.

"'Guitar Power' offers a unique opportunity for guitar fans as well as music fans to be a fly on the wall for distilled stories of inspiration from new and established artists along with spontaneous performances," says Dweezil Zappa. "It's a treat for me to be a part of the show because I love meeting the different guitarists and discovering the common ground we all have."

This season includes chats with Kaki King, M'Dou Moctar, Daniel Lanois, Yvette Young, Nir Felder, Paul Franklin, and Aaron Marshall.

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Def Leppard Drummer Welcomes PMC's 'Roadie for a Day' Grand Prize Winner

September 23 marked the conclusion of the Percussion Marketing Council (PMC) 2018 International Drum Month promotion. The "Roadie for a Day" grand prize winner met legendary drummer Rick Allen of Def Leppard at the San Diego, California concert. Contest winner Bradley Biggs from Anaheim, California, spent the day at the Petco Stadium, meeting with Allen backstage, and experiencing what it's like to be a professional touring drummer, including band sound-check and all-access Def Leppard concert.

Biggs was one of more than 1200 entries submitted online through the Percussion Marketing Council's PlayDrums.com website. The PMC's International Drum Month promotion reaches beyond the music industry through targeted social media marketing to create excitement for drums and drumming, while helping drive new drummer-customers to local music stores or drum shops during the month-long May campaign.

"This year the International Drum Month campaign and 'Drum Roadie for a Day' contest received tremendous interest and support from the entire percussion industry," says PMC executive director Karl Dustman. "We had 125 participating retailers use the life-size Rick Allen standup in their stores to attract additional entries for the 'Drum Roadie for a Day' contest. This year we more than doubled the number of entries that were received during the 2017 International Drum Month (IDM) campaign. With over 1200

contest entries, this is the largest consumer participation in IDM history."

The "Roadie for a Day" backstage experience started early in the day with a detailed tour of Allen's drum kit with Def Leppard drum tech Jeff Diffner. He went in-depth on the inner workings of Allen's drums as well as the Def Leppard live show.



Rick Allen and winner Bradley Biggs

Biggs commented after the concert, "While it's music that makes a band, it is an enduring spirit of perseverance that makes Def Leppard. Rick Allen particularly embodies this spirit and serves as a fountain of musical and emotional inspiration in my life. While I have previously attended other Def Leppard concerts, but this year on behalf of the Percussion Marketing Council, I got to experience my favorite music in an entirely new way. It was truly an honor of a lifetime to be chosen as the winner of the PMC's 2018 Roadie for a Day contest."

Plans are already developing for the May 2019 International Drum Month campaign with the goal of recruiting more retailers and attracting even larger consumer participation.



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KORG USA, Inc. Attends Annual Synthesizer Convention

KORG USA, Inc. sponsored the seventh Knobcon event, Chicago's annual synthesizer convention that includes music workshops, artist performances, and more. KORG's growing analog family was showcased at the event, including the newly released prologue series, announced earlier this year at NAMM. Waldorf Music made their debut appearance at Knobcon, displaying the popular STVC and Streichfett string synthesizers, as well as their digital-analog hybrid synth, Quantum.

Product specialist Nick Kwas was front and center at the Korg USA, Inc. booth to answer product questions and to demonstrate the key features of the presented gear. Kwas also participated in the opening reception with a live electronic performance.

"Knobcon is an event Korg USA, Inc. supports because we believe in the gathering of like-minded individuals interested in creating new and interesting art with synthesizers," says Kwas. "The event is an absolute blast. I've created many meaningful connections with fellow synth enthusiasts and we look forward to being a part of it again next year."

2019 Knobcon dates have yet to be announced.



Aguilar Amplification Adds Rhonda Smith as Endorsing Artist

Aguilar Amplification has announced the addition of bassist Rhonda Smith to their family of endorsing artists. Smith has been using the DB 751 amplifier with the DB 810 cabinet on this past year's tour dates with guitar icon Jeff Beck.

In addition to her years working with Jeff Beck, Rhonda spent over a decade on stage and in the studio



Rhonda Smith

with Prince where her command of jazz, funk and in particular, fretless bass was incorporated into the mix. Smith's impressive resume also includes work with Beyonce, Patti Austin, and Lee Ritenour.

Of her Aguilar gear, Smith says: "I never leave home without my Aguilar! It always gives me the power, presence and that tone."

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E.K. Blessing Adds Woolverton to Artist Family

E.K. Blessing has added touring musician and composer Doug Woolverton to its family of artists. Woolverton regularly plays an E.K. Blessing BFH-1541RT Flugelhorn.

"It means a lot that Doug has chosen our BFH-1541RT as his go to flugelhorn," says Phil Baughman, brand manager at E.K. Blessing. "We've worked hard to provide musicians at his level an instrument that can respond to every demand. Having Doug's endorsement means we're doing something right and it's really an honor to have him aboard."

Woolverton earned a BA in trumpet performance from Northern State University and then went on to perform



Doug Woolverton

with some of the industry's greatest acts, from Aretha Franklin, The Temptations and John Scofield to Warren Haynes and They Might Be Giants. He is also the former trumpet player for the award-winning band Roomful of Blues. Woolverton also tours with his own band, Groove Merchants, and has been nominated for multiple awards.

He says of the E.K. Blessing BFH-1541RT, "This flugel offers an even blow with rich, warm characteristics that inspire me to translate ideas I hear in my head whenever I play it. My Blessing 1541 flugelhorn is so enjoyable and easy to play. I love it."

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Jean Genie?

Looks like Gibson has a rock 'n roller in charge of the company once again. Well, if his hairstyle is anything to go by, that is.

James "JC" Curleigh joins from iconic jeans brand Levi Strauss, which is sort of rock n roll in itself. Certainly it's more 'rock 'n roll' (admittedly a very loose concept) than Fender's Andy Mooney, who joined from er... Disney.

But, I should point out that I interviewed Mooney when he was at Disney and can confirm that his love of guitars genuinely is no convenient affectation and precedes his appointment at Fender. He's a real guitar nut.

Does it matter, however, if the CEO is in love with the product? It certainly helps to have someone at the helm that can appreciate the product from a musician's point of view. But it is by no means a guarantee of success. Let's face it, the MI industry is chock full of guys and gals who are key components of a rocking tribute act by night and failing business directors by day. In other words, it's about more than enthusiasm.

What matters more is that JC has handled a brand with history, tradition, and iconic, culturally significant products that has to innovate while staying true to a specific set of values. Which is exactly the challenge facing him at Gibson.

The bigger task is a target market largely dis-engaged from guitar products, something outside of the control of whoever is in charge of Gibson – whatever the hairstyle.



Orange Signs Rough Trade Deal

Orange Amplification is partnering with music retailer Rough Trade to provide sound equipment for in-store artist performances.

The firm's three Rough Stage live stage areas are now equipped with an amplification selection that includes Rocker 32s, 4 Strokes, OBC410s and more. The Rocker 32 is a portable, all valve stereo amp combo for guitarists, offering the classic Orange sound in a small stage footprint. The 4 Stroke is a bass amp which, combined with the classic OBC410 produces a highly focused sound giving lots of low end and prominent mids. Previous Orange Ambassadors to have graced the Rough Trade stages include Slaves as well as Everything Every-



thing and The Cribs. Upcoming in-store events include Jon Spencer, Connan Mockasin, John Grant, and Bobby Gillespie.

Stephen Godfroy, co-owner, Rough Trade commented: "Rough Trade are proud and excited to partner with Orange Amps for all our UK in-store live events. Their independent heritage and five decades of craftsmanship are qualities we're proud to celebrate with our extensive programmed of events, featuring their iconic amps in our Bristol, Nottingham and East London backline spec for bands to enjoy. We look forward to celebrating their 50th Anniversary with them later in the year – here's to another 50!"

Yanagisawa Strengthens Sax Lineup

Yanagisawa Saxophones has launched WO Baritone and Curved Soprano saxophones in the UK through distributor Barnes and Mullins.

Designed as upgraded replacements for the 90 Series Baritone range and previous Curved Soprano instruments, the new WO Professional and Elite saxophones offer new features that improve tone and increase playability, according to the distributor.

The new WO Series Baritone instruments are suitable for both student and accomplished players – available in brass lacquered, bronze lacquered, brass silver-plated and solid silver options.

Improved compound materials, adjusted tone hole sizing and positioning and an added neck pipe plate are all designed to achieve a cleaner tone, improved note intonation and ensure the new instruments are easier to play. The angle of the right pinky finger keys has been modified and the low A thumb key redesigned for smoother fingering while a repositioned strap ring allows for a more comfortable playing position. A wider right hand key guard exclusive to Baritone models, a redesigned bow brace and additional feet under the B \flat and C levers complete the design improvements.

Curved Soprano models are made up of Elite models in brass lacquered, brass

unlacquered, bronze lacquered, brass silver-plated and solid silver options. They also benefit from improved compound materials and adjusted tone hole sizing and positioning for improved note intonation. Modified right pinky finger key angles and left palm key angles ensure smoother fingering. Additional improvements come in the form of an adopted



German silver rod to strengthen the G key, a redesigned G# key cup for adjustable pitch and a new body and bow detaching system.

Design changes also extend to WO Series cases with a new backpack style Baritone case that features an added exterior accessory compartment and wheels for easier transportation. An exterior accessory pocket and shoulder strap have been added to the new stylish Curved Soprano cases.

They retail from £4,109 and are available through Barnes & Mullins.

Audio-Technica Rolls Out New POS Units

Audio-Technica recently began installing more than 60 new point-of-sale display units destined for leading EMEA MI retailers, with the first being unveiled at Andertons Music in Guildford.

Other early adopters include Reidys (Blackburn) and Music Matter (Preston) in the UK, La Boutique Speciale in Paris, and Musikhaus Kirstein in Schongau, near Munich.



Audio-Technica's investment in the new POS display allows store customers to get hands-on with no less than 30 of the company's key headphone, microphone and wireless products. Those featured include the M-Series (including M50x and new M60x) and new PRO DJ-oriented headphones, Artist, Artist Elite and 20 Series microphones and System 10 wireless.

The unit design incorporates smartphone Plug In & Listen connectivity for headphone demos and video screen content allowing for meaningful engagement both with the displayed equipment and the Audio-Technica brand and its professional users.

Tim Page, Audio-Technica marketing manager EMEA, professional audio said: "Retail stores, with their ability to offer great advice and customer service, remain of crucial importance to Audio-Technica's presence in MI. And I'm really pleased to be able to support our work with key stores across EMEA with the significant investment in this new interactive point-of-sale unit. It's due in stores in South Africa, Russia and Scandinavia soon, which I'm delighted about.

"The unit is designed to be a powerful sales tool for staff and an educational demo experience for customers - we're looking forward to installing all 61 by the end of the year, in time for the pre-holiday season sales period."

Radial Makes Big Design Signing

Radial Engineering has appointed Craig "Hutch" Hutchison as a senior design engineer to help develop the next generation of Radial Engineering products.

Hutchinson joins Radial Engineering with over twenty years of audio design experience. He began his career as a FOH mix engineer for the Guess Who and Burton Cummings. He later moved on to the chief engineer position at the world-famous Electric Lady Studios in New York. Eventually he found his way to Manley Labs, where he became the chief designer responsible for products such as the Massive Passive EQ, Variable MU, SLAMI, VoxBox, and more. After several years at Manley, Hutch joined the team at RND, where he spent five years working under Rupert Neve on a variety of products. He

has also consulted and designed for several other companies including Fredenstein, Adamson, SSL, A-Designs, Waves, and BAE.



Craig "Hutch" Hutchison

He commented: "Like many working professionals, Radial has been on my radar for over 20 years. I've always respected the products and their quality. I took special interest in the company when I heard about the Key-Largo keyboard mixer and the new leadership of Mike Belitz. The company is propelling forward and I'm excited to be working with new products that leverage the latest technology while meeting the needs of professionals."

Tanglewood Relaunches Window Competition

Following on from last year's successful Tanglewood Window Display promotion, won by Plectrums, Pens & Paints in Folkstone, Tanglewood has now launched its 2018 competition. Tanglewood dealers have been encouraged to dress their windows in a manner that will engage customers and draw much needed traffic to their stores.

The marketing team at Tanglewood are using images of the windows to promote every participating dealer in a free international social media campaign on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, reaching over one million dedicated musician consumers during October.

"Anything we can do to drive more customers into our partners stores, we will do, and we hope that the Tanglewood Window Display promotion puts the spotlight on all these great stores and encourages people to shop local" said Shea Rider, Tanglewood Guitars sales director.

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Antelope Audio Unveils New Modelling Mics

Following the success of the Edge and Verge modelling microphones, Antelope Audio has unveiled the next generation of its mic modelling technology.

The new Edge Family consists of three large-diaphragm condensers – the fixed cardioid pattern Edge Solo, the multi-pattern Edge Duo, and the dual-capsule Edge Quadro.

Together with Antelope's continually expanding range of vintage mic emulations, available both as native plug-ins and as FPGA FX running on Antelope's own audio interfaces, the new Edge mics deliver the characteristic sound of some of the most sought-after mics of all time. Developed specifically for each mic, the emulations are based on exacting measurements of the original mics made in anechoic chambers.

Set to ship in October, the Edge Family makes Antelope's unrivalled mic modelling technology available at a variety of different price points while expanding the range of possible recording applications — from mono to stereo to 3D audio.

Antelope Audio founder Igor Levin commented: "We are constantly looking to innovate and deliver greater value to our users. With the Edge Family, we've grown our mic modelling ecosystem into a complete recording solution. We set out to deliver not just the best modelling mics available but the best microphones in the industry, period."

Built at Antelope's European headquarters and featuring electronics designed by Levin himself, Edge Solo is the simplest of the three new mics. Connecting via a regular mono XLR cable, it houses a single large-diaphragm capsule with a fixed cardioid pickup pattern. It's specifically designed to work hand-in-hand with Antelope's mic modelling plug-ins to emulate some of the greatest cardioid-pattern mics in history.

Edge Duo features a dual-membrane capsule with independent outputs, allowing the signal from each membrane to be individually processed and recombined. It means users can vary the polar pattern from within the plug-in, even after recording, it also allows the Edge Duo to accurately emulate the characteristic pickup pattern and on- and off-axis response of each mic for multi-dimensional mic modelling.

Edge Quadro is a stereo/surround mic with two dual-membrane capsules and a rotating head. Delivering four channels for independent processing will allow for stereo techniques like M/S, X/Y, Blumlein, and even 3D sound. Users can select a different emulation and polar pattern for each head. The upper head can be rotated noiselessly even while the microphone is actively recording, delivering variations in tonality and stereo image.

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Big Launch for Moog as Moog One Hits



Iconic U.S. synth brand Moog has launched one of its biggest products for some years, with the introduction the Moog One synthesizer. Moog One comes in either eight or 16-voice configurations and its polyphonic sound engine is built on the most powerful synthesizer architecture ever employed by a Moog instrument, according to the firm.

Per voice, it offers three newly-designed analogue VCOs, two independent analogue filters, a dual source analogue noise generator, analogue mixer with external audio input, four LFOs, and three envelopes. Each of the three timbres can be easily split or layered across Moog One's 61-note keyboard, each with its own sequencer, arpeggiator, and onboard effects library, including a suite of professional reverbs from Eventide.

The synth comes in a hand-finished ash cabinet and aluminum enclosure. The front panel is equipped with 73 knobs and 144 buttons, inviting physical connection with every sound shaping and performance control. Extended functionality is easily accessed via a per-module "More" button that brings additional parameters into focus using the Moog One center panel.

The Moog One 8 Voice will have an RRP of £6,859 inc VAT, while The Moog One 16 Voice, will have an RRP of £8,959 inc VAT.

SABIAN Hails Drum Show Success

SABIAN's Education Network (SEN) has declared its first live event for drum teachers at the UK Drum Show in Manchester a success.

The event saw two sessions: one on Saturday with panelists Derrick Mckenzie, Stanton Moore, Ralph Salmins, and Erik Stams; and one on Sunday with panelists Toni Cannelli, Felipe Drago, Pat



SEN director Joe Bergamini and Stanton Moore at the London UK Drum Show SEN Event

Garvey, and Paul Hose. Both were moderated by SEN director Joe Bergamini. The events were held in the SABIAN Experience Room at the UK Drum Show. UK distributor Westside Distribution assisted with staging and support.

The events consisted of a brief overview of the benefits of SEN from Bergamini, followed by each panelist speaking about a specific area of education aimed

at benefitting the attendees. A Q&A session followed the presentations at both events, and the teachers and panelists mingled and networked each afternoon.

In addition to the panels, Joe Bergamini and Stanton Moore went live on SABIAN social media to discuss drum education, the UK Drum Show, and Stanton's

new line of Crescent cymbals by SABIAN. "We've been gaining members in the UK for a couple years," said SEN director Joe Bergamini, "so I was thrilled to accept the gracious invitation of the UK Drum Show to host SEN events there. It's exciting to see SEN helping teachers across the globe, and to experience the connection we all have through the love of drumming and teaching."

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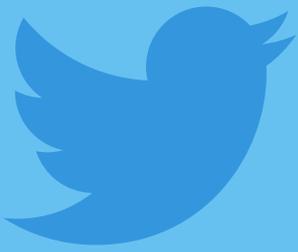
Trade Regrets

On October 17, we received the following from NAMM's Dan Del Fiorentino:



Giorgio Giannini passed away yesterday October 16, 2018, leaving a blank space in our industry. Mr. Giannini proudly recalled the beginning of his family's involvement in the music industry as part of his interview for the NAMM Oral History collection. Mr. Tranquillo Giannini was a well-respected luthier in Italy who had the vision to set up his workshop in South America. In 1900, he established a small factory to produce musical instruments in Brazil, and Mr. Giorgio Giannini and his family continue doing the same. What Giorgio grew up in was a very innovative and creative environment and what he learned in his early years were the skills and way of thinking that he passes forward to his family. The Giannini story is one of taking chances, trusting in your passion, and following your dreams, which is why this story fits in nicely into the passion-driven music products industry!

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ON THE MOVE

Marc Lopez joins **d&b audiotechnik Corporation** as vice president of Marketing Americas. In this role, he leads the US-based marketing team and is responsible for d&b marketing activities in North, Central, and South America. Lopez is a veteran of the professional audio industry, with more than 20 years of experience working with Yamaha Corporation of America in applications support, product management, R&D, and – for more than a decade – marketing management.



Dr. Hendrik Müller has been appointed director of the Marketing Communication Department of **Musikmesse and Pro-light + Sound** as of October 1, 2018. Accordingly, he is now responsible for the strategic conception, development and implementation of all marketing and communication measures relating to the company's worldwide activities for the Entertainment, Media & Creative Industries Business Unit of Messe Frankfurt. He reports to Michael Biwer, Group show director, Entertainment, Media & Creative Industries.



The Guitar Center Music Foundation, a non-profit organization focused on granting instruments and other musician services to various music education non-profit organizations, has appointed industry veteran **David A. Helfant** as chairman of the board for the Foundation.



Korg USA, Inc. continues to expand their growing sales team with the hire of **Brian Beck**, a seasoned musician and sales rep for the role of Central Territory sales manager. Beck will manage all new and existing dealer relationships in the central region of the U.S., handle the sales of all brands and work with Marketing to create beneficial B2B promotions.



Prior to working at Korg USA, Inc., Beck managed Main Drag Music, a boutique

music store based in Brooklyn, New York known for their wide range of vintage and specialty products.

Chauvet has announced that **Daryl Sutton** has joined the company as its national worship resource manager. A founding director of the Worship Arts Technology Summit (W.A.T.S.), Sutton brings a wealth of experience in serving churches to his new position. Prior to joining Chauvet, he was with Martin Professional/HARMAN International for 17 years, filling a number of positions related to the house of worship market, most recently as Global Business Development & Solutions manager – Worship.



KHS America continues its growth and expansion in the MI market by announcing several new appointments and promotions that span across their enterprise.

Andy Strayer has been promoted to VP of Sales and Marketing. This new position was created specifically for Strayer based on his prior history of success and growth of sales for the company. Andy's new responsibilities will have him overseeing these core divisions with a focus of creating a synergy between the sales, marketing, and product development teams.



Christopher Hanks has been promoted to the position of brand development manager. In this newly created position, Chris has assumed responsibility for the leadership of the KHS America Product and Brand Management team. This team is responsible for U.S. strategic and tactical marketing efforts, as well as product development and line management for all KHS America brands.



A.K. Kist has been appointed as national sales manager of the Education Division. His new role will have him overseeing all strategic and tactical sales initiatives for the school music division. He will also be responsible for sales training and facilitating the success of dealers representing KHS America owned and distributed brands.



Steve Grecco joined KHS America as their national accounts manager at KHS America and will be working with Guitar

Center/Musician's Friend, AMS, and Sweetwater. Grecco's role will be an important conduit to develop and support national accounts for sales and marketing initiatives.



Bailey Holmes joined KHS America as marketing coordinator. She will assist with content planning, marketing campaigns, social media marketing, and global marketing communication projects.



Chris Hoerauf joined KHS America as the digital marketing coordinator. In this position, Chris is responsible for the development, implementation, tracking and optimization of marketing initiatives across all digital channels for the KHS America family of brands.



Randy Wilhelm was promoted to the newly created position of sales & customer service lead. His new responsibilities involve coaching the inside sales team with a focus on growing current and new retail partner relationships, identifying and fulfilling partner needs, and improving the customer experience.



Brent Rosborough has been appointed as the show and events manager for KHS America. Rosborough will be responsible for the planning, logistics, and execution of trade shows, special events, and conferences.



Ryan Rehnborg joined KHS America as a videographer. He will be responsible for video marketing content across the KHS America family of brands.



Ken Fuente joined KHS America as national sales manager of the Combo Division. In this role, Fuente will be responsible for developing strategic and tactical sales initiatives for combo drums, harmonicas, and ukuleles, among other products. Ken will also be responsible for sales training and facilitating the success of dealers representing KHS America brands.



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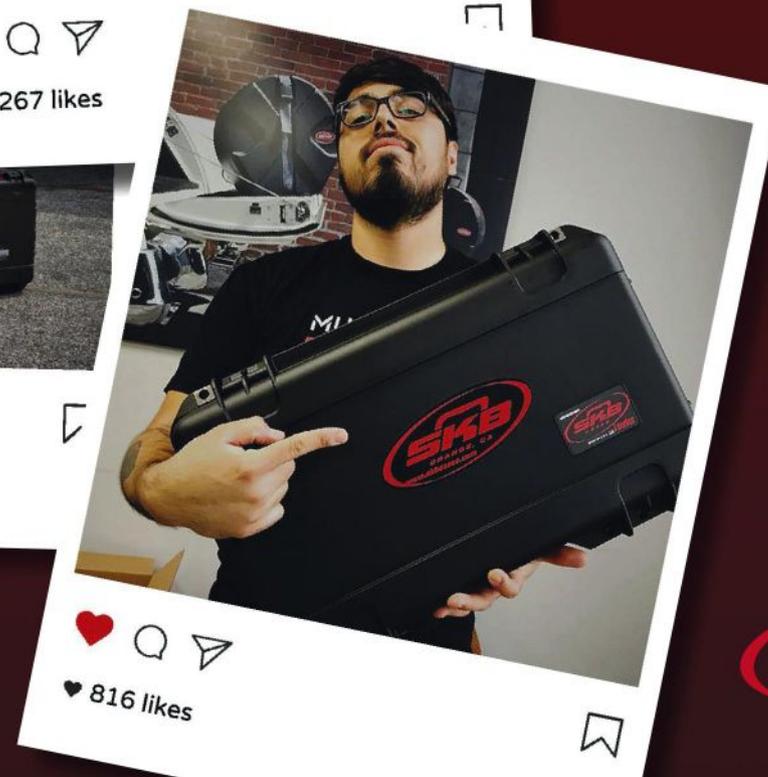
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Innovate or Fade Away

Michael Ciravolo's Balancing Act at Schecter Guitars

By Denyce Neilson

Michael Ciravolo began his career at a small music shop in New Orleans. In 1995, he decided to take a leap and move to Los Angeles. He quickly scored a job at Lab Sound, a guitar and amp retailer on Sunset Boulevard, where he was schooled on guitars. Ciravolo eventually changed jobs and climbed a rung or two, becoming a manager at Sunset Custom Guitars. It was around this time that he met Hisatake Shibuya, owner of Schecter Guitars and, as he puts it, "I guess I was at the right place at the right time with the right skill set."

That also took place in 1995; now fast forward a couple of decades to 2018, and you'll find Ciravolo playing guitar on stage with his band, in a recording studio laying down some tracks for a new record, or at his desk carrying out his role as Schecter Guitars' president and CEO, where he says, "I am ultimately responsible for all aspects of the company. I have assembled a great team here that I'm very proud of. Most of our employees have been with the company for over 10 years."

Currently, Schecter Guitars has 42 employees, but was a smaller organization when Hisatake Shibuya took ownership. Michael explains the trajectory: "It had been a decent-sized company in the 1980s, but like many of the great companies of that era - B.C. Rich, Dean, Hamer - Schecter made some foolish decisions and almost faded into oblivion. When I was the director, my vision was to expand the growth of the company, which I did. Eventually, becoming the CEO was part of that success."

The Early Days

Schecter Guitar Research (the official company name), was founded in 1976 by David Schecter in Van Nuys, California. At the time, they manufactured guitar parts such as necks, bodies, pickups, bridges, pickguards, et cetera. In 1979 Schecter began manufacturing their own fully-assembled electric guitars. Michael explains, "It was during that time, that no one would ever play an off-the-rack guitar. You had to customize and modify your guitar. Schecter was the first to do all of the crazy, exotic wood

bodies and necks along with heavy brass parts. Almost by accident, it became an official guitar company when some dealers began assembling completed guitars from all the Schecter parts they had. Pete Townsend and Marc Knopfler discovered Schecter Guitars at Rudy's Music on 48th Street in New York City. This was certainly a pivotal point in the history of the company." Schecter marketed these new guitars as Dream Machines.

'I Can Never Let Us Rest on Our Laurels'

Today, Schecter continues to innovate, as Michael says, "I can never let us rest on our laurels. You innovate or fade away. We are always prototyping new ideas, shapes, and colors. Right now, we are focusing on our 2019 lineup. For us, that timeframe has

moved up and sort of follows the auto industry in terms of announcing and, in some instances, already shipping to dealers." The majority of Schecter's inventory is custom. A few years ago the company moved their operations to Sun Valley, California. The new location hosts a 14,000 square-foot manufacturing center, where they are able to build 40 production guitars and five, completely hand-made, masterwork instruments. In addition to the manufacturing space, there is a main building dedicated to a custom shop and pickup department. As for their pickups, Michael says, "Over the counter sales are good, but our main focus is winding our pickups, for not only our U.S. custom shop guitars, but also some of our Diamond Series models, which includes our popular Apocalypse Collection. Basically, we use every pickup we can wind."

So who is Schecter's typical customer? Michael explains, "I think it is hard to really define the Schecter customer. We have a really diverse lineup of endorsed artists that other companies don't have, since we have a wide variety of instruments to choose from, such as a semi-hollowbody with Bigsby vibratos, a nine-string extended scale with active pickups, or an electric 12-string to a six-string fretless bass. Since the majority of our endorsed artists are rock and metal players, we do have a big contingent of younger players from that genre. I think if a music store only carried our brand, they could satisfy most, in not all, of their customers. This is definitely a luxury that not all companies have."

In 1998, Schecter introduced their Diamond Series of guitars



The Hellraiser C-1 FR in Trans Purple Burst



at Summer NAMM. The series gained the attention several popular bands, such as Papa Roach, Powerman 5000, and Stone Temple Pilots, who eventually attracted new, heavier-sounding bands to the Schecter artist lineup. Schecter's artist roster does feature many heavy metal players, but there are others too. They have casted a wider net with artists like Morris Day and The Time, Cheap Trick, The Cure, and none other than Prince. Over the past 20 years, Schecter built many guitars for Prince, including the purple one he played at the 2007 SuperBowl halftime show.

An Artist at the Helm

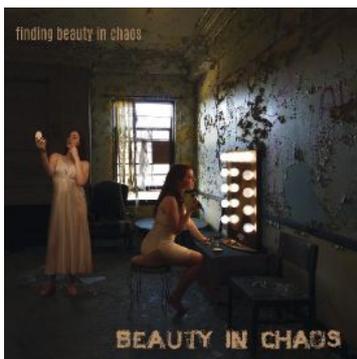
Michael Ciravolo is also a "Schecter artist," so to speak. He has recorded several albums and toured across the U.S. and Mexico. In September, he released a full-length record, *Finding Beauty in Chaos*, and as he describes it, "It's not really a Michael Ciravolo solo album, but a beautiful collection of extremely talented artists. It has been a lot of work and a year of my life." The lineup of the artists who contributed to the recording is quite impressive – they include Robin Zander of Cheap Trick, Al Jourgensen of Ministry, Wayne Hussey of The Mission, Doug Pinnick of King's X, Ashton Nyte of The Awakening, and Ice-T. As for Michael's favorite guitars, well, "Schecter Guitars of course. I love our Corsair and TSH-1 models. These have been my main studio and live guitars for the past decade. I have about six of each, plus a couple of 12-string prototypes. Those are put through several Roland and Supro amps with more pedals than I can count." Yes, there are many perks to being the CEO of a guitar company, especially if you play them.

In addition to his roles as CEO and musician, Michael is the father of two teenage daughters and the husband of Tish Ciravolo, who just happens to be founder and president of Daisy Rock Girl Guitars.

Michael explains, "My role at Schecter is more than a fulltime job, as is being a parent with my wife to two teenage daughters – this is our first priority. With both daughters heading off to college, I will have more time on my hands. As far as the balance goes? Besides having an amazing team I can count on, I have an incredible wife who supports me, and I live close to my office and studio, but I don't get much sleep, and there's lots and lots of coffee."

The Future is Bright

Ciravolo's life is certainly a balancing act, but he says that it's made easier at Schecter with an owner who trusts his abilities and allows him to do what he feels is best for the company. As Ciravolo sees things, "We don't always do everything right – and really, who does? – but I think we get more things right than wrong." Looking ahead, he is enthusiastic. Heading into 2019, Schecter will be launching new models with their artist, Keith Merrow, offered at multiple price points. "We have a lot of great, new guitars and basses hitting the market.



The new recording, *Finding Beauty in Chaos*



The Reaper-6 FR in Satin Inferno Burst

The V-1 Apocalypse in Rusty Grey

The SLS Elite in Antique Fade Burst

These are all set up and personalized by a staff who actually cares and has pride in what we do here at Schecter Guitars," Ciravolo says.

Continuing in a positive light, he adds, "Counter to all of the talk about Gibson and the gossip of the eclectic guitar being dead, I think the guitar market is fairly healthy. Schecter is certainly up double-digits over last year, and that trend seems to be continuing. Guitar prices are going up because manufacturing costs are going up, but that is nothing new in our industry. The CITES issue regarding rosewood certainly threw a monkey-wrench into most companies' plans last year." As most *MMR* readers are aware, CITES, the Convention of International Trade of Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna, is the 2017 law regulating the movement of rosewood and other endangered woods and it is believed that over-use in manufacturing musical instruments has contributed to their endangerment. Ciravolo continues, "Now California's Prop-65, requiring caution labels regarding possible chemicals in the product, is causing issues and concerns for manufacturers. There is never an easy or dull moment in this industry!" *MMR*

"As far as the balance goes? Besides having an amazing team I can count on, I have an incredible wife who supports me, and I live close to my office and studio, but I don't get much sleep, and there's lots and lots of coffee."



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Note From Zach

The Innovation Summit

Photos from left to right:

Retailers will deep dive into the latest strategies in the new Retail Innovation Summit.

The NAMM Idea Center is a hotspot of retail ideas with sessions every half hour.

The 2019 NAMM Show delivers 400-plus educational sessions to help you innovate and fine-tune your competitive edge

In a world of Spotify and streaming, I recently came across a record-store chain in full-on expansion mode. Based in the northeast, Bull Moose Music successfully competes with its 12 large-format stores, finely tuned inventory and boatloads of data about customer buying patterns. Shop its website for a record, and you'll see which locations carry the album in real time. And like Amazon's physical stores, Bull Moose stocks each location differently based on local consumer behavior.

Bottom line, it's a record store competing on its own terms in a disrupted industry. Yet it got there by taking a hard look at the direction of retail, and finding ways to innovate in that ever-changing world. If you're inspired by its story—I know I am—then you'll want to be at The 2019 NAMM Show. There, NAMM U will hand-deliver the big ideas, best practices and tools to help you innovate in *your* business, and forge your own competitive edge.

In fact, we're launching a new program to jump-start your process: the Retail Innovation Summit. Held the day before the show, on Wednesday, January 23, this daylong education experience is designed to immerse you in trends, strategies and ideas to transform your business. Expect a future-forward workshop that explores new ways to amplify your success and dramatically reshape your future.

Fast-forward to Friday morning, and we're bringing you a NAMM U Breakfast Session with world-famous innovation expert Daniel Burrus. He'll dive into disruptions in the marketplace and how you can seize game-changing opportunities to succeed in the new normal. Add to that the NAMM Idea Center, which will deliver convenient sessions every half-hour throughout the show on such critical topics as online marketing, employee motivation, music lessons, finance and much more. Think of the Idea Center

as a source for practical building blocks to create your next breakthrough.

Of course, retail innovation sometimes comes in the form of capitalizing on new markets and services. Bull Moose, for instance, diversifies its core product category, recorded music, with toys, games and books. Likewise, I've heard from NAMM members who've added festival production, installations, and stage and theatrical lighting to their retail business. For that reason, The 2019 NAMM Show rounds out its program with a suite of education opportunities in audio and event technology.

For pro audio professionals, free sessions at TEC Tracks offer big-picture topics with industry thought leaders. Or, you can dive deep into skills-based training at AES@NAMM, an exclusive education opportunity for audio veterans and aspiring professionals alike. As a bonus, A3E (Advanced Audio + Applications Exchange) has expanded its program on the future of audio, readymade for anyone interested in music technology and forward-thinking concepts.

For the event tech community, The NAMM Show features education in lighting, lighting networking, safety and rigging, curated by a range of partners: ESTA (Entertainment Services and Technology Association), Timeless Communications, *Lighting & Sound America* and PLASA (Professional Lighting and Sound Association).

All told, it adds up to more than 400 education opportunities for every major community in the music, sound and event technology industries. You'd be hard-pressed to find that anywhere else. We hope to see you there—and be part of your next innovation.

Zach Phillips
NAMM Director, Professional Development

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Staccato Outburst

Snare Drum Sales, Trends, and Best Practices in 2018 By Christian Wissmuller



It's the 2 and 4 that provides the "snap" for the backbeat in popular music, the defining sound of the classic military marching beat, and an integral catalyst behind any number of mosh pits, dance halls, and swinging lounges throughout the decades. While there are any number of varieties of snare drum, for the purposes of this article, we're not talking about marching, piccolo, tarol, tabor, or anything else – we're focusing on the "regular old" kit snare.

MMR recently connected with representatives from four major players in the snare drum market today to learn what they feel is driving consumer interest in 2018, how important artist endorsement relationships are as a brand's marketing tool, what sales methods successful snare retailers are embracing, and what new products are on the horizon.

Read on to learn all there is to know about this important segment within the larger "drums & percussion" segment of the MI world...

What trends or preferences have you been noticing – either with respect to players, dealers, or suppliers – when it comes to snare drums lately?

Zach Matook: For us, we're noticing a resurrection of earlier custom styles that were really popular back in 2008-12! A lot of barbershop wrap finishes, striping, wood burned, et cetera. In terms of sonic preferences, we're also doing a lot of metal shell snares – particularly brass and aluminum.

Steven Fisher: Metal snare drums are still more popular than wood snare drums. We also see more drummers using deeper snare drums, especially for side snares. For dealers, those I see selling more snare drums are the dealers with the greatest selection and knowledge-

able sales staffers who can educate and advise customers on the products.

William F. Ludwig III: Classic '60s sound is very much in vogue. This includes thin-walled maple snares and classic sound metal shells.

Gary Ingraffia: Now more than ever, drummers have an amazing amount of choices when it comes to snare drums. A number independent drum companies have emerged over the last few years offering some very unique, higher-priced snares, and, in my opinion, invigorating the market for premium products. Even though the majority of snare units sold are below \$300 street price, higher-end snares are seeing a significant increase in popularity.

For your own brand – or, in Gary's case, brands – what are your current "hot" snare models?

WFL: Our Generations shell 1728N maple snares have been very popular, along with the 1909 Aluminum snares. Both have sold well in 5.5"x14" and 6.5"x14" sizes. The classic sound of both instruments seems to appeal to drummers young and old.

GI: For Mapex, the Black Panther Design Lab snare drums have really become a hot seller, with three different models that have very distinct sound characteristics. The 14"x 5" Equinox has a 6-ply Maple shell and single flanged hoops, the 14"x 6" Heartbreaker is an 8-ply African Mahogany snare with Sonic Saver hoops, and the Cherry Bomb, available in 14" x 6" and 13" x 5.5" is 8-ply Cherry with Sonic Saver hoops. These snare drums are the best that Mapex offers and the first products in the Design Lab series of instruments.

For SONOR, the SQ2 Custom snare drum line has taken off



Zach Matook, brand manager, SJC Drums



Steven Fisher, marketing manager, Yamaha Drums



in 2018 due in large part to the new 3D configurator that was launched in late 2017. Drummers can build their snare from Birch, Beech, Maple, or Acrylic. Each wood shell choice is available in 4-shell thickness and an amazing array of sizes and finishes and exotic veneers. End users have no hesitation spending a premium on a quality product they can customize.

SF: We have new wood drums for Recording Custom and Tour Custom, which we launched in October and will arrive here in the U.S. in Janu-

ment's little brother) does very well, as it's a single spec import snare with high-end features (die-cast hoops, 40-strand snare wires) for only \$399.99!

How important are artist endorsement relationships for your brand?

ZM: Incredibly important, as we pride ourselves on fostering some of the closest manufacturer/artist re-

be where we are today. We solicit their input from the beginning, during the concept phase (not just after we've made the drums), and translate it into the products you see and hear today.

GI: Our relationships with our artists for both SONOR and Mapex continue to be an important part of our marketing efforts. We want to always be sure we align ourselves with people that are playing our products because they choose to. These artists are our best brand ambassadors, sharing their love for playing and the instruments they play to an audience that connects with

“ The best retailers are making product videos about these drums, so people can really hear the product and get as much genuine feedback and professional input as they can before they go ahead and buy. ” – Zach Matook, SJC Drums

ary 2019. There's an 8" x 14" model that's an incredible drum, in itself, as a deep-sounding side snare, or for those Recording Custom fans who want matching snares for their sets. We've seen the demand for deeper drums – especially side snares – and the 8" Recording Custom is a winner. The Recording Custom metal drums (stainless steel, aluminum, and brass) are doing well, and our Stage Custom Birch snare drum is a great value that sells very well.

ZM: Element Aluminum and Goliath Bell Brass. These are both USA series snares that you can choose size/hardware, color, et cetera. We simply can't keep the Goliath in stock; people LOVE it and it's only \$899.99. Otherwise, the Alpha Aluminum (the Ele-

relationships in the business. Through positive word of mouth, we've been able to meet so many fantastic drummers who hear about how we handle endorsements, communicate with our drummers, and consistently meet their needs. When you really connect with these artists and discover what it is that drives and inspires them, it creates a sense of trust that really helps propel the relationships and, in turn, the brand.

SF: We credit our Drum Artists for the 51 years of success we've enjoyed at Yamaha Drums, and hold them in the highest regard. Our top Artists focus on sound, as well as expressiveness, versatility, et cetera, which is why at Yamaha, the sound is our priority. If it were not for our Artists, we wouldn't

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“Those I see selling more snare drums are the dealers with the greatest selection and knowledgeable sales staffers who can educate and advise customers on the products.”
 – Steven Fisher, Yamaha Drums

them on a level that we, as a brand, alone may not be able to. I believe if utilized properly, it can be a brand's most important marketing asset.

WFL: Endorsements are very important if done right. It must be understood by the endorser that first and foremost it is a “partnership.” Endorsers must understand that they need to contribute to the brand and not just look to the company for special pricing and clinic exposure. When an endorser understands this and works to help promote the company, it is like having a brand ambassador talking up the product at every stop of a tour, as well as at conventions. It can really add credibility to your brand when support comes from someone using your instruments day in and day out. I feel they are still a very valuable marketing tool when both parties are working together to help each other.

“When an endorser understands this and works to help promote the company, it is like having a brand ambassador talking up the product at every stop of a tour.”
 - William F. Ludwig III, WFLIII Drums

Have you noticed any particular “best practices” when it comes to MI retailers who are exceptionally successful in promoting, displaying, and selling snares?

GI: With social media becoming as intertwined as it is in many people's daily lives, I have found that retailers that produce frequent, high quality, great sounding videos and related content have been extremely successful in growing their snare business. The opposite effect has occurred when this

William F Ludwig III, president and founder, WFL III



content is not up to par. It's very similar to a bad experience with service in a restaurant or retail store: it will take some work to get that customer back.

WFL: Training is the number one differentiator separating the best from the rest. Those dealers that train their employees on the

products they are selling, sell more product. This includes not only the details of the instrument, but the story behind the brand. We try hard to provide our dealers with all the information and support they need for effective training.

ZM: Videos – more and more videos! It's the number-one consumer practice when in the research process before purchase. The best retailers are making product videos about these drums, so people can really hear the product and get as much genuine feedback and professional input as they can before they go ahead and buy.

SF: The dealers we see who are successful stay consistent with our philosophy of providing an exceptional experience for customers. They are not only providing an exceptional experience in-store – with models ready to try, knowledgeable sales staff, and responsive service – but also reflecting that experience online with helpful, valuable information, as well as service and support.

Do you have any recent or upcoming snare models that you'd like to let MMR readers know about?

ZM: Copper... that's all we will say for now.

SF: We will ship the two new Recording Custom birch models and two new Tour Custom maple models to match the series' colors in January 2019. We'll also have snare drums for a

Marching Percussion

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Gary Ingraffia, combo drum product manager, SONOR & Mapex

new series of sets we will launch in 2019.

GI: As mentioned earlier, the Mapex Black Panther Design Lab line of snare drums are a step away from what Mapex has done in the past. Mapex has taken the “sound first” approach, using its knowledge in drum building, to design these sounds. This same “Concept Hybrid” approach was used in the creation of the Design Lab drum kits as well.

WFL: We will be introducing several new models at the upcoming NAMM

“ I do feel that we will continue to see the average selling price and margins go up, as well as an increased interest in the premium pricing slot of \$700 and above. ”

– Gary Ingraffia, SONOR & Mapex



show in January, including 8”x14” and 5.5”x13” 1728N maple models along with many new finishes.

Expectations for the snare drum market in 2019?

GI: The snare drum market will become even more crowded than it is now in 2019. I do feel that we will continue to see the average selling price and margins go up, as well as an increased interest in the premium pricing slot of \$700 and above.

WFL: Although the overall acoustic drum market has struggled over the last several years, I think the future is bright. Snare drums are like an artist’s canvas... you can always use another! I see drummers at gigs with four-to-six or more snares in a case, depending on the music, the gig, indoors/outdoors, or just what they are feeling at that moment. Quality, affordable snare drums will always be in demand.

SF: Drummers are into creating new sounds and enhancing the texture of their snares for specific musical needs. While today’s market is full of great accessories, there is also a growing demand for the perfect snare sound that’s likely to continue into the next year. As we expand our catalog, we’ll be producing snare drums with enough variety and versatility to give drummers the range and freedom to make music according to their own sound.

ZM: I’d like to think we’ll continue to see a focus on metal shell snares; they are incredibly popular at the moment. For SJC, we will continue to focus on the customer and their “custom” needs, but we’ll always be looking at the market and figuring out what we should do next to stay competitive! **MMR**

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Reed Between the Lines

The Reed Market in 2018

By Christian Wissmuller

With 67 percent of participants in this month's survey reporting that sales of reeds are either up or level when compared to this same time of year in 2017, it appears that this is a fairly robust market segment.

However, as is the case with many smaller items, such as MI accessories, many simultaneously observe that they're seeing an increase in online purchases of reeds. "It seems that more customers are buying on Amazon," notes Amy Goodden of Mukwonago, Wisconsin's The Music Cafe. "Free shipping, less hassle, and often pricing is less than what I can afford to offer in the store."

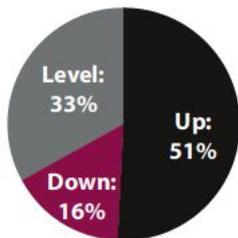
While there are any number of smaller and "boutique" brands out there, when discussing reeds, there are a few names that are clearly the industry leaders – and none bigger than Vandoren. With nearly 87 percent of those responding to this poll citing Vandoren as one of the best-selling reed brands for their store, it's a dominant showing. Vandoren's reputation and longevity make it a favorite – particularly for older players and other traditionalists, such as band directors and other music instructors. As Bonnie Dowdy of Music World in Lufkin, Texas noted: "Several of our area schools have asked us to carry [reeds], so the band directors didn't

have to worry with money and inventory. They have all indicated: Vandoren reeds, only." Chick Music's (Athens, Georgia) Steve Shepherd has observed a similar trend, claiming that, "More directors are telling their students to use Vandoren reeds."

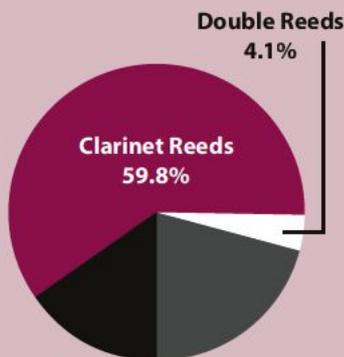
However, two other companies, in particular, are knocking at the door. Shuffield Music Company's (Arkadelphia Music Company, Arkadelphia, Arkansas) Paul Shuffield says that, "Consumers are requesting different brands than they have historically. We normally will sell Vandoren reeds five-to-one over other brands, but Rico is slowly reducing the gap."

In addition to Rico appealing to many, another brand is making major inroads of late. "I'm selling more D'Addario reserve reeds than Vandoren," says Ray Noguera of Laconia Music Center in New Hyde Park, New York. "Once customers try them, most switch." Chris Teesdale of Lexington, Kentucky's Willis Music Company agrees that D'Addario's presence in the market is on the rise: "The quality of the reeds manufactured by D'Addario Woodwinds has improved over the past five years and they are getting the word out to reed players & band directors. This has ensured an increase in sales!"

Compared to Fall of 2017, reed sales for your store are...

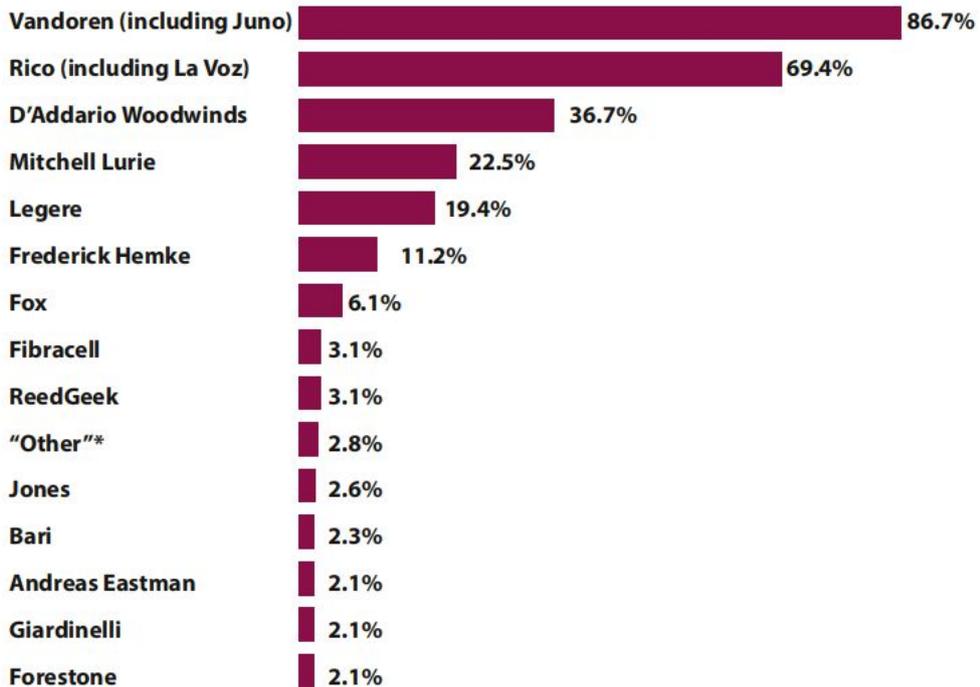


Which category/type of reeds do you sell the most of?



A roughly even split across all categories: 20.6%

What brands of reed are selling best for your store?



*(of respondents selecting this option, the most common answers were, in order: Emerald, My Masterpiece, Brad Behn, and Populaire)

Have you been noticing any trends when it comes to instrument reeds – either on the supplier or consumer side?

"Glad to see MAP prices being enforced, but why must we look like an industry of massive discounts when reeds MAP at less than 50 percent off retail? Why not lower retail or raise MAP?"

Clint Diffie
Boogie Music
Phoenix, Arizona

"Synthetic reeds are still a tough sell because of the price point, but we consistently offer the FAB of the product in our presentation. We also discuss the virtues of, and suggest the purchase of a reed guard, if the customer does not own one. We have always offered a discount on a full box purchase, or a 'Buy 10, get 2 free' on Nova pack product in an attempt to bolster the sale."

Jerry Vesely
Vesely Music
Parowan, Utah

"Juno is really taking off in our market. Directors like the fact that it's a Vandoren product and parents like the price point."

Jeff Young
Marshall Music Company
Lansing, Michigan

"In our area, the band directors are being less flexible as to brands and requiring students to purchase certain brands."

Dan Patterson
Roger's Music
Fort Payne, Alabama

"We are selling more synthetic oboe and bassoon reeds."

Gregg Chartier
Chartier LLC
Albuquerque, New Mexico

"As prices continue to rise on boxes of reeds the 3-pack reed option has helped ease sticker shock for the consumer."

Allan Jankowski
Marshall Music
Traverse City, Michigan

"Everyone complains about the prices, and we sell them under list price. People are looking for the best deal around, simply because they don't really understand. Our best transactions occur if there is a discussion about the reeds themselves, and how to increase their longevity. When they don't know what to get, we can ask the children and parents some quick questions to help them make the right decision, based on our teaching expertise."

Karen Janiszewski
Music Room
Cheektowaga, New York

"Reeds production continues to improve each year and the use of more technology has improved the sizing and consistency."

Mike Guillot
Mississippi Music, Inc.
Flowood, Mississippi

"More consumer interest in buying smaller quantities: 3-packs versus 10-packs, buying individual reeds, sampler packs, et cetera."

Eric Downs
PM Music Center
Aurora, Illinois

"10-packs are selling more this year."

Mark Johnson
Welch Music Co.
Twinfalls, Idaho

"Although we don't move a lot of reeds (primarily as most of our area band programs are fairly small), the trend appears to be more towards a premium brand. Even first year students."

Bob Leichner
Dixie Music Center
Old Town, Florida

"The quality of traditional cane reeds has gotten better over the last several years, and our customers have become more discerning shoppers as well. Interestingly, the popularity of synthetic reeds has skyrocketed over the last few years as well. The overall trend is toward higher quality products, as opposed to inexpensive options."

Steve Gibson
Absolute Music
Reno, Nevada

"We sell mostly whatever the local school band directors recommend. We sell primarily to 4th-12th grade students, so as long as our prices are competitive on the middle of the road reeds and accessories, and parents feel good about shopping local, then we get the sale."

Paul Rodriguez
Suburban Music
Wheaton, Illinois

"Today, for convenience, consumers are purchasing reeds more and more online."

Tony Leonard
Playground Music Center
Fort Walton Beach, Florida

"The majority of our reed sales are at the student level (middle school and high school) with the lion's share of sales tilting towards Rico and the My Masterpiece Reeds from Tennessee... Nice reeds, made in the USA, and the 5-pack is affordable for even the economically challenged students.. We also stock Vandoren and Mitchell Lurie reeds – it seems the more advanced players prefer these. Sales are definitely up, overall."

Tim Bascom
Morgan Music
Lebanon, Missouri

Music China 2018

Global MI Market Converges on the 'Pearl of the Orient' by Christian Wissmuller



A record number of attendees and exhibitors were on hand at the Shanghai New International Expo Centre this October for the annual Music China gathering.

With a reported 110,381 visitors from 81 countries and regions visiting 2,252 international and domestic exhibitors – a respective increase of 5.0% and 5.4% compared to the 2017 show – Asia’s largest MI trade show exhibits no sign of slowing down. The show’s exhibition space also was bigger this year, having grown 10.4% to 452,756 square feet across 12 halls.

“We couldn’t be happier with how the show has gone this year,” said Judy Cheung, deputy general manager of Messe Frankfurt Shanghai Co. Ltd. Outlining which areas of the show provided the best results, she added, “Our live performance stages have been busier than ever before, and people seem to love the combination of getting business done in an engaging environment. We’re also satisfied with how our stronger focus on music education and culture has been positively received. The fringe event topics have drawn people to learn, share, and network more efficiently at the fairground.”



1. Franck Bichon of **BG Franck Bichon** 2. **Conn-Selmer’s** Markus Theinert 3. Steven Wick of **Denis Wick Products Ltd.** 4. Rune Holst Jacobsen of **Dynaudio** 5. The **Hailun Pianos** team 6. Jeroen Verbeek, Tina Hsiao, and Doug Lady of **Hal Leonard**



7. Jammy Guitar's Dmitry Shemet 8. JodyJazz, Inc.'s Colin Schofield and Jody Espina 9. Shredder Joe Stump drew a crowd at Tellmusic's booth on Friday afternoon 10. Lee Oskar of Lee Oskar Harmonicas 11. Dr. Hendrik Müller and Michael Biber of Musikmesse Frankfurt 12. The NS Design China team 13. A crowded session at the Recording & Production Workshop sponsored by PLSS Academy at this year's show 14. Performances at the P. Mauriat booth were consistently swamped with admirers 15. Roland's Chris Halon and Ken Ryo 16. Ugis Vilcans of SE Audiotechnik 17. Registration 18. The show floor

VOICES FROM THE SHOW FLOOR

"This year's Music China was better for BG with a more mature market that is educated about fakes and more open to comparing options, which are key points for accessories. Being European, I do not feel any difference due to the tension between America and China and wish the best to U.S. makers. I have been [attending] MI trade shows for over 30 years and traveling up to six months a year to show our products, but there is absolutely no need for too many shows. For woodwind accessories specialists, Russia Musikmesse is 95 percent, for rock and roll [related gear], Summer NAMM is great, but so useless for our market. Frankfurt is dead. After doing it for 29 years, renting a booth, and coming with eight other employees it has become a no-man's land and far too expensive. They've missed the boat to transform [the Show] into a "meet and talk" place. It's too late to show new items for BTS, too

expensive to display products mainly to small Eastern European markets, and they made lot of mistakes – cutting Sunday, charging too much to visitors, and all the changes have added confusion. It's too late now to have us changing our mind, although it could still be the most useful [trade show at which] to meet European agents, but it would need to be at a much more reasonable cost.

Shanghai is the place to be – just like Winter NAMM. But nowadays with internet and social media platforms, do we need two annual shows? I think we do need bi-annual MI trade shows, for sure: one year, Shanghai; one year NAMM. We see the same customers. I am confident the market will end up this way because it would be cost-effective for both exhibitors and visitors."

Franck Bichon
BG Franck Bichon

"We did notice significant growth for Music China over the past decade. Not only has the number of exhibitors increased, but the show definitely feels better attended by qualified visitors both on the retail, supplier and consumer side. There is no doubt that the emerging markets in Asia contribute significantly to this change and for us here at Conn-Selmer this year had a very special touch, of course, as it is the first time we have had our own booth since we opened our distribution subsidiary company in April of this year.

"Everybody is naturally anxious to see where these developments are leading towards. The current escalation in tariffs is certainly not helping for the global trade with musical instruments, components, accessories and even raw material. Our industry is very connected across all borders and the potential impact on the business in both countries is definitely something we will have to watch closely.

"I don't disagree that we may have some redundancy with our industry trade shows globally. And it is a considerable investment for all participating vendors and buyers to go to all these events. But on the other hand, we have always been a relationship industry and meeting your best partners, competitors and customers in person is not only important in order to stay in touch with each other but the face-to-face experience and communication is the very fabric our musical world is made of."

Markus Theinert
Conn-Selmer, Inc.

"The show continues to be growing, and is attracting more and more customers and strategic partners of Hal Leonard's – not only attendees from China and Southeast Asia, but also major players from Japan, Australia, Europe, and the U.S. have been converging on Shanghai the last several years. The fact that Music China takes place during the second half of the year, it is distanced on the calendar from NAMM and Frankfurt, so it serves as an important time-frame to 'touch base.'

"I didn't sense any obvious vibe, per se, related to political tensions, but there were some discussions and concerns about how potential tariffs would impact pricing and/or potentially force the shifting of manufacturing and sourcing to other territories if required.

"Although NAMM has clearly risen to become the largest and most important international music products trade show over the last few years, it doesn't seem like Music China has been negatively impacted by a decrease in attendance. Although there a much larger percentage of consumers in attendance, I can tell you that our booth was packed for the entire show, and we had a good amount of dealers, distributors, and publishing partners whom we met with throughout the show. As for the Frankfurt Musikmesse, the show has had struggles these last few years, due to a number of factors as we know, however Hal Leonard had an extremely productive Musikmesse based on our growing European business."

Doug Lady
Hal Leonard

"I come to Music China because I know that I will be able to find every possible thing here, and still discover new products and people that I wouldn't be able to find anywhere else in Asia. The speed at which this show is growing is phenomenal. It's all about having fun and meeting with the people who can boost your presence in your respective musical field."

Hap Kuffner, Kuffner International

"It was the first time the Jammy Guitar team exhibited at Music China, so we can't compare it to the previous fair. However, we had participated in both winter and summer NAMM Shows. So we definitely have some thoughts on how Music China differs from the main U.S. music industry event. Above all, we were impressed by the number of pavilions and the size of the area occupied by Music China – it was really huge compared to the NAMM Show. Although, the pavilions were crowded with visitors. Talking about the type of visitors, there were much more representatives of the educational sphere at Music China than at the NAMM Show, namely, music teachers.

"The other thing that was notably different at Music China is the number of stands with the traditional instruments. Chinese ethnic musical instruments occupied two separate pavilions – that's incredible. At the NAMM Show, national instruments are less represented.

As it usually happens at the U.S. music fairs, several industry leaders have the biggest booths that stand out from the crowd. It's interesting that we didn't identify any distinct industry leader at Music China – most stands were roughly the same size. As we realized later, it reflects the market situation. According to recent data, there are 250 manufacturers present in China, with the top four accounting for only 12.7 percent of the total industry revenue, compared to over fifty percent in the U.S.

"To be honest, we didn't feel any tense atmosphere – probably because China had been shifting towards the internal market for a long time. In 2017, export revenue declined to only 22.4 percent, compared to almost 70 percent in 2005, according to IBISWorld's report. That's why it seems to us that the external economic tensions are not a big deal for Chinese business. At least for those whom we met at Music China.

"I don't really think that the music industry is overwhelmed with trade fairs. It is still a nice place for showcasing your product, networking, achieving a deeper understanding of the state of the music industry in a certain country, and getting valuable insights and feedback from consumers."

Dmitry Shemet, Jammy Guitar

Next year's edition of Music China will take place October 10-13, 2019. Visit www.musikmesse-china.com for more information.





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Massachusetts' Drumming Punk Pioneers



Tré Cool's drums, SJC

From a Basement to Backing Rock's Modern Drumming Icons, SJC Keeps it Close to Home

By Victoria Wasylak

When Mike Ciprari was 15 years old in 2000, he was a par for the course punk, dreaming of meeting Green Day's Tré Cool. Now Tré Cool plays drums made by Ciprari's company, SJC Drums. It's amazing what some DIY elbow grease can do in a couple decades.

SJC Drums, founded in Dudley, Massachusetts by Ciprari and his brother Scott, started as an underground endeavor to get local bands the gear they needed – literally. Scott first set up shop in his grandmother's basement to refurbish drums, initially fixing up a kit he had found in his cousins' attic. In 2018, the biz has blossomed into a lucrative company that has a handful of Mike's adolescent faves on board.

"I remember going to see Green Day when I was 15 and being a fan. Like, how cool would it be to meet Tré Cool?" Mike recalls. "And now he plays our drums. I remember getting my license and listening to Sum 41 while driving in my car. All things that I thought were so cool when I was a kid and starting this, we're living that out now on a daily basis. I would have been stoked for myself, I think."

In recent years especially, SJC's artist roster has grown exponentially. Yet the pair (and their team of employees) are locked in to Worcester County in Massachusetts, churning out the goods locally, but keeping their market international.

A Punk Starting Point

Like most punk-based endeavors, SJC started with flyers – a lot of 'em. Pre-social media, that's how the word got out, Mike was the advocate and salesman while Scott did the handiwork.

"I think we had dial-up AOL back then, so it was really just flying – [it was] super DIY, spreading flyers at high school," Mike says. "Then

when the internet became a little bit more of a thing, I would look at websites like PureVolume and stuff like that, or Myspace, and I'd find bands, hit them up, and promote what myself and my brother were doing and see if they'd be interested. We didn't have quotas to hit, we didn't have overhead, we didn't have to worry about paying bills and things like that. If we got an order a month, we were happy."

At the time, the little project represented more of a music-related afterschool activity than any sort of entrepreneurial task for the brothers. Their main mission was to get drums in the hands of area bands that needed them rather than to make much of a profit; musicians often paid for parts, but not the labor. The Aquabats!, Strike Anywhere, and A Wilhelm Scream all were some of the first bands – and customers – for SJC.

"It was just a hobby. We were mainly refurbishing drums back then. My brother would take apart snare drums and stuff like that and refinish them and repaint them," Mike notes. "My brother was really charging what the drum wrap cost. We had literally zero overhead at that point because it was in our grandmother's basement and none of us were getting paid."

It wasn't until five years later when Mike hungered for something more, although he says the decision to dig deeper into the business was a smooth and natural one. And, fortunately, orders were coming in far more than just "once a month" at that point.

"As the years progressed and Myspace came to be, I started getting the itch to hit up bands and go after my favorite bands. Probably when I was 20, so five years later in 2005-2004, is when we started to hit the ground harder and run with it. We never really talked about it, it just happened super naturally and organically. The demand was just there."

That demand, in part, spurred from a very special performance in 2006 from a somewhat unknown band called Panic! At the Disco.

After bumping elbows with folks at Crush Management at local rock venue The Palladium, SJC was offered the chance to design and build some snappy drums for an onscreen performance for the new group.

"That was huge for us, and that all was just through networking," Mike explains. "I had gone to a show at the Palladium in Worcester to go see the band called Midtown. The drummer's name is Rob Hitt. He and I were pretty good friends and I liked that band a lot, so I wanted to make him a drum. At that show, Hidden in Plain View was there playing, and then I met the Butcher, who was playing with The Academy Is... and all the bands that night ended up getting SJC drums after that show, and Rob Hitt actually ended up working at Crush Management... so I just became friendly with all the people that worked there and Panic! was on Crush Management, so this guy named Scott Nagelberg hit me up and said, 'We've got this band, Panic! At The Disco, and it's gonna be huge... can you build them a kit?' and we did. A year later, they just blew up."

It was the Ludwig-Beatles phenomenon all over again.

"That was a huge look for us. They're a super extravagant band, so when they sent me their press photos and album art, it was so fun to design drums that really pushed the limits," Mike says. "After that happened, my phone was just blowing up with emails and people calling me, and I had to make a decision – stay on the road or focus on this company? It was massive for us."

Mike, who had gone on tour with his band No Trigger after graduating high school, elected to take on the family business full time after the incident. Once he had chosen task managing over touring,

the brothers buckled down and embraced the steadily increasing demand and attention.

More than ten years after Panic's fateful performance, SJC Drums is at their fourth factory. The newer facility offers a tremendous jump for the family affair – their previous building offered roughly 7,000 square feet, whereas the new digs stretch across 60,000 square feet.

"We've got some really exciting things that we're going to be rolling out in 2019-2020 [and] we just needed more room for equipment," Mike says. "The layout of it is awesome and it just allows us to grow in the future."

SJC now has an office on the West Coast, but the main factory remains in old mill buildings in Southbridge, Massachusetts, in the same county where the entire operation began. The company's artist roster may be dotted with A-list drummers, but their priorities are still tied to their home.

"We'll backline shows at local cafes and jazz clubs, stuff like that. We'll bring a drum set to let the drummers play, or we'll let the venue hold the kit for a couple months to let the kids use it," he adds. "That is something that is very special to me, and that will never go away."

Mike also noted that SJC is hoping to use their new space to help facilitate DIY shows at new factory – a fun and safe environment for potentially hosting battle of the bands-type events: "We've got a lot of local Massachusetts bands that are getting bigger. Four Years Strong from Worcester was one the first bands we ever made drums for, and they were on the main stage at Warped Tour this year, they headlined shows all around the world. We'll always support the local music scene, for sure."

What's "local" to the brothers remains vague. Given the close-knit (and otherwise small) aspect of New England, being located in Central Massachusetts means being a drumstick throw from a myriad of different musical communities – all of which SJC is still involved with today.

"We're in such a great location, and that helped me hustle even more when I was a kid," Mike adds. "[I could] literally go to a show in Boston, Providence, Worcester, Lowell, Albany, New York City – all within three hours. There were some nights when I was going to two or three shows in different cities a night, spreading the SJC name, and that helped."

Drumming Up Anticipation

There's a catch to starting with such DIY roots, though: the second you catch a whiff of mainstream success, there's a word on everyone's lips: sellout. Some folks are quick to call the company "cake decorators," while others are content to just hate on the fact that the brothers actually graduated out of the grandmother's basement.

"There are people out there that are negative online and think that we 'sold out,' but to me I can still go to sleep at night and feel fulfilled and good and positive about what we're doing," Mike says. "Our message is still the same. We're building more drums, which to me is awesome, because that means we're changing more kids' lives, impacting more people to create music and be a part of our family the culture. There are going to be negative people all the time. I don't know where it comes from, but there's always going to be someone that has something negative to say."

One particular source of contention has been that SJC doesn't currently make their own drum shells, an issue that Mike says will be resolved in a few years. As of now, their acrylic drum shells are made nearby in Connecticut, and many of their raw parts facilities are located in New England as well.

"By 2020, we will be making our own drum shells. That's one of the bigger, more exciting things we're working on," he explains. "We're not doing it to shut the haters up, we're doing it because we're craftsmen."

In general, Mike says the things have especially picked up since 2014-2015, and the timeline on their website tends to agree with him; from re-launching their SJC tour series kit, collaborating with Shepard Fairey of OBEY for Sum 41 drummer Frank Zummo, the last couple of years in particular have crammed in a lot of news for the company.

He explains: "The last three or four years have been very fast for us. We've got Sweetwater pushing us now, which is massive. We've got a great handful of dealers around the world that are stocking our drum sets."

Just recently, SJC brought on new general manager John Shand, who previously worked as the international managing director of KMC Music, Inc. Also on deck for SJC this year was the "Loyal To The Craft" tour, which ran from July 30 to August 10 across the U.S. The tour partnered with Vans to take Sum 41's Frank Zummo on the road with Mike to meet with drummers at free events that mixed elements of drum clinics, concerts, and Q&A panels.

Each tour date boasted pop-up shops and chances for guests to chat and learn from both Mike and Zummo about drums and the music business. Looking at the dynamic of the event, it's hard not to draw parallels between young Mike dreaming of Tré Cool and kids today meeting some of their musical heroes on the tour – Mike and Frank, specifically.

"This tour that we're on – it's so special," he says. "We made a 13-year-old kid cry when he got to play drums with Frank. It's so impactful and special. It's something that's never been done before in this way."

And that's exactly how SJC intends to keep things. **MMA**



Inside the SJC workshop

Morley Mini Power Wah Volume

Morley's Mini Power Wah Volume pedal is a shining example of Morley's reputation for high quality innovation in the wah space. The wah pedal is a staple of any pedal board. An effect with roots that go back to Cream and the Jimi Hendrix Experience, the wah effect has stayed relevant during the disco days of the '70s, hair metal's glory days and through to popular guitar-based songs of today. Morley's latest offering is a two-in-one pedal with a great sounding optical wah and a super clean volume pedal. It's got a compact footprint and a suite of features that any musician will love.

First off, like all Morley products, this pedal feels indestructible. With a Cold Rolled Steel housing, Morley's custom HQ2 inductor and electro-optical circuitry, you can tell the Morley engineers designed with touring musicians in mind. The optical circuitry means fewer moving parts which makes for an incredibly dependable, and exceedingly usable, pedal. The wah circuit sounds great; it's rich and luscious with a great range. Wahs are generally straightforward in the buttons/knobs department and this Mini Power Wah Volume is no exception. There's a footswitch that toggles between Wah and Volume and then a Wah level control knob

for players who are looking to add some extra oomph to the wah effect. Also, there's a red LED that lets players know that they have the Wah engaged. The LED is a small thing, but one that is critically important for any musician who's ever played a stage with a rough stage mix. Also important, at a pedalboard friendly 5"x8", players will have plenty of room on their board for other gear.

When the Wah is switched off, the pedal behaves as a true bypass volume pedal. There's no buzz or hum and it feels great under the foot. The Volume pedal is a nice bonus, adding functionality that many guitarists covet, but don't necessarily want to give up precious pedalboard space to obtain. With the Mini Power Wah Volume pedal, that choice is made unnecessary.

At the end of the day, this pedal does exactly what it sets out to do. Morley has provided a very competitive offering, with all the features a player needs in a very attractive footprint. (Daniel Sussman)



C.F. Martin & Co. Authentic Acoustic Strings

"Authentic" has been something of a go-to phrase for Martin Guitars the past few years. Their limited series of instruments build to prewar standards – as determined by forensic analysis of the historic guitars they replicate – was termed "Authentic" and now we have these new Authentic Acoustic strings ("Our best strings ever," claims the company).

Three lines are being offered – SP (Superior Performance), Marquis Silked, and Lifespan 2.0 – and I sampled a set of each.

I tested out a light-gauge (12) set of SP first. Featuring a phosphor bronze wrap with a tin-plated core wire beneath (the unwrapped strings also get the tin-plating treatment), I have to admit these strings immediately improved the tone of my Fender Tim Armstrong acoustic. To be fair, I hadn't changed strings on that one for a while, so *any* new strings would have made a positive impact, but I do think these Authentic Acoustics sounded better than the previous set (the brand of which will be left unsaid, in the name of diplomacy). As for that tin plating, allegedly it aids in corrosion resistance, but I can't really speak to that one way or the other since I've only been playing with this set for a few weeks. I can attest that I see no rust on those strings, so... success? That said, I haven't been playing that guitar under stage lights or in the sun; I doubt I sweat all that much while sitting and playing in my living room.

On to the Lifespan 2.0! These are coated strings and purportedly the "longest-lasting" string ever offered by Martin. I am not a big fan of coated strings on electrics, but was surprised at how quickly I warmed to these – mine featured 80/20 bronze wrap, by the way – on my ancient Washburn acoustic: they play nicely and easily, stay in tune, and... yeah, there you go! As for how long they last, it's way too soon for me to be able to confirm or deny, but the folks at Martin have never given me any reason to doubt them – let's assume the best.



Lastly, the most inappropriately matched and poorly planned-out pairing of the bunch (on my part, not Martin's): a medium gauge (13) set of Marquis Silked strings on my... snatched-from-an-office-that-was-closing-before-they-tossed-it-in-the-dumpster, cheap-o, late '90s Chinese-made "New York Pro" acoustic. Marquis Silked strings are about as "fancy" as you can get in terms of mass-produced acoustic guitar strings, with a silk wrap on the ends to ensure against damaging the finish of expensive, vintage instruments. In other words, way nicer than the guitar they're currently on deserves. Also engineered to resist corrosion (and, once again, I'm sorry to say I can't provide any real-world yes/no opinion on that), these strings held their tuning well, and – as with the SP set – had this cheap beater of a guitar singing with greater clarity and fullness of sound than in a long while.

Ranging from just around \$7-10 (SP and Marquis Silk) and \$13 (Lifespan 2.0), these strings are priced competitively and, coming from a beloved and trusted company such as C.F. Martin & Co., I'm sure many players will want to give Authentic Acoustics a shot. All retailers who carry acoustic fretted instruments would be wise to consider stocking these new strings. (Christian Wissmuller)

The Element of Surprise - A Humbling Teacher

By Menzie Pittman

When you embark on a new, creative undertaking, it's possible that success may be your biggest downfall. It lulls you into a false sense of confidence, so when you say, "Yes, we have taken everything into consideration and we are prepared." That is the time you need look no further than the weather to be quickly reminded that we are never truly prepared for the elements of surprise.

Too Big to Fail

The Pilgrimage Festival takes place every September just outside of Nashville in Franklin, Tennessee, and it celebrates the music and culture of the area. This year, Mother Nature provided this cultural celebration with the opportunity to recognize a few design flaws.

Historically, the organization of this event has seemed fluid; when problems have arisen they were addressed quickly and effectively. For example, last year the temperature broke the mid-nineties, putting the attendees at risk for various heat-related issues. Immediate steps were taken to increase the number of watering stations. That speedy decision promptly dispelled complaints and won great praise from the patrons.

Rain or Shine

Harlinsdale Farm Park – an old, respected horse farm, currently owned by the Town of Franklin – hosts Pilgrimage. In their fourth year, thanks to respected artists such as Justin Timberlake, the festival attendance had grown exponentially – from roughly 14,000 to an estimated 28,000.

Keep in mind, the festival parks eighty percent of the cars on grass at the Harlinsdale property.

This year, when inclement weather and lightning interrupted the festival, Pilgrimage wasn't sure whether to suspend performances and re-open, or completely cancel the rest of Saturday's show. Around three o'clock the organizers made the announcement for patrons to go to their vehicles and wait for further instructions. We all did wait – literally, for hours.

The First Surprise Pilgrimage Encountered

When 28,000 people sit in their cars under those circumstances, what do they do? Everyone and his brother decides to get on their cell phones. Cell service is then overloaded and the signals disappear entirely. What does that mean exactly? In trending mode, the festival communicated through a phone app, text announcements, and phone messages. Now all communications had come to a screeching halt. Also, because of the rain, there was no longer a public address system, or outside lighting, and as it darkened, the festival's problems escalated.

The Second Surprise Pilgrimage Encountered

After patrons sit in their cars for a few hours waiting for the official announcement but have no communication or direction from their host, they suffer a loss of civility. Add to that problem low-paid, young labor deciding they don't want to direct traffic in the rain, toss in families that have children who have had to wait in cars for hours with limited access to restrooms – bingo! You have the perfect storm. The fight to get out of the parking lots became as competitive as the L.A. freeways during a problematic rush hour.

The Third and Fourth Surprise-Raining on Sunday

I use the title of the Keith Urban song "Raining on Sunday" for the third and fourth surprises for the festival organizers. If someone advertises an event as "rain or shine" and sells tickets accordingly, your patrons expect you to keep your word.

The town has huge money invested in Harlinsdale Farm Park. However, few, if any of the festival attendees understand the fact that after a night of heavy rain, parking the cars on the grass the next day would devastate the grounds. While the organizers did not share that specific information with the patrons, what they did say is that the town had made a request that the festival on Sunday be cancelled due to "unsafe conditions." Sunday brought gentle rains, no lightning, and many upset patrons.

Now the Fourth Surprise

Probably pressured by the city to cancel the Sunday events, Pilgrimage elected not to impose the rain or shine agreement and, as you can imagine, folks plastered the Pilgrimage social media pages with a firestorm of criticism.

At that point, Pilgrimage had a major PR problem on top of everything else. At first they offered a fifty percent refund to two-day ticket holders. Obviously, Sunday ticket holders were offered 100 percent refund, but patrons had only experienced half of the first day's entertainment, and none of the second. Realizing the inequity of the return policy, the ticket holders immediately harshly criticized the promoters' suggested refund, and *only then* did Pilgrimage adjust the refund to a 75 percent refund for the two-day pass holders.

Lessons Learned (Hopefully):

Never guarantee something that's beyond your control. You can't control weather, and you can't control municipalities or their decisions.

Always return what you truly owe

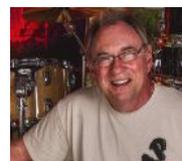
Had Pilgrimage done that first, they would have saved a lot of face.

Always have a 'Plan B'

Perhaps a better plan would have been to use a shuttle system for parking (with event partners) where the patrons could access a hard surface parking area instead of grass. That would cause Pilgrimage to incur additional expense, but look at the expenses now. The bottom line: the promoters were aware of the rain prediction and should have prepared with an alternative plan.

Final Thought

In business, surprises are not usually like birthday parties; you are well-served never to make promises you can't keep. **MMR**



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



How to Retain, Grow, and Recruit Top Performers

By Jaimie Blackman

I was recently talking to an MI retailer with his two successors. Here's how the conversation began.

Jaimie: *So tell me about store #2. How's the team?*

Owner: *They have their challenges.*

Successors: *They are not motivated. They don't jive with our culture. They are negative. We think there needs to be some changes.*

Let's face it: your few top performers are responsible for most of your profit. That means your mediocre players are responsible for most of your losses. According to the 2016 Conference Board CEO Challenge Survey, the number one concern of CEOs was *retaining and growing talent*.

Jeff Hyman, author of *Recruit Rockstars*, says getting talent right in your company demands spending 30 to 50 percent of your time on recruiting and retention. You say you don't have the time? Ask yourself how much time you spend putting out "people fires?" I'm talking about staff that blame others, staff who come in late, staff who are not fun to be around. Now think about if you had more top performers. You'll have extra time for retaining and identifying and recruiting other "Rockstars" because top performers don't need to be micromanaged. They love to be challenged and have strong people skills.

How are Rockstars measured?

There are two metrics. Metric #1: Those producers that are in the top five percent of performers in your store. Let's call metric #1 "competency." While revenue and profit are critical, top star status is not limited to numbers.

For example, let's say "Joe" is your top revenue producer. He passed the first Rockstar metric. Joe is extremely competent. However, Joe by nature is negative, a knowledge hoarder, and unwilling to help others, so he fails the second metric. Metric #2: "values alignment." Values alignment simply means to what extent your team embodies the owner's personal positive values which help to define the corporate culture. If beliefs and behaviors are not in alignment with those values, the culture is out of balance and begins to erode. When the culture erodes, going to work is no longer fun. On the other hand, if the culture reflects a caring, people-focused vision, the company culture promotes employee happiness, turnover is reduced, your current team will be more productive, and newer Rockstars will want to work for you.

Owners naturally want to gravitate to employees who match with their core values. As a result, even though Joe is a top producer, he doesn't get top gun status.

Remember – it only takes one bad apple to spoil the bunch.

On the other hand, let's say "Sally" has numbers that are not as good as Joe's. So, for the competency metric, Sally is identified as a "B" player. However, when it comes to aligning with positive values, Sally is very different than Joe. Sally is first to share what she is learning with the rest of the team.

Sally always has an encouraging word, and most of your team enjoy working with her. You decide that Sally, with some coaching, can grow into Rockstar status. While Sally gets a B for her sales skills, she gets an A+ for being a team player. Here's the formula: Competency + Values Alignment = Status = A, B, or C.

Well-begun is half-done

The first job I had in the financial services industry was off to a strange start. The owners shook my hands, wished me good luck, and pointed me to my office. That was it. The owners were busy, and offered little direction.

According to Hyman, to help employees improve, owners needs to help the employee know:

- 1) Functional job skills: How to do their job, the way your company expects it to be done
- 2) Interpersonal skills: How to deal with people
- 3) Organizational skills: How decisions are made

Require an audition

Whether you are thinking about promoting a current team member or you are considering recruiting a new team member, think about requiring an audition. By "audition" I mean requiring the candidate perform an aspect of the job in a real-world scenario. This can last for three hours, or three days. The idea is for you to see how your candidate can solve problems, interact with your team, and evaluate how successful your candidate is at putting out fires so you don't have to.

Ask for a referral

Employee capital is your most valuable asset – more valuable than your inventory. As an intangible asset, you're not seeing it on your balance sheet, and what you don't see you're not managing. I recommend you manage your employee relationships with the same attention you manage your client relationships. Using a customer relationship database to capture nuggets from your conversation is key. And during these conversations, ask your "A" players, to refer other "A" players. Your bottom line will thank you.

At the Winter NAMM Idea Center this January, I'll be doing a deeper dive on this topic. Stop by and say hello. 



Jaimie Blackman – a former music educator & retailer – is a licensed financial advisor and succession planner. Blackman helps music retailers accelerate business value now and maximize value when it's time to exit. Blackman is a frequent speaker at NAMM's Idea Center and writes *The Sound of Money*, a monthly column for MMR. Visit jaimieblackman.com to preview his value creation tools and to

subscribe to *Unlocking the Wealth* newsletter and webinars.

FRETTED

Reverend's New Guitars

The Reverend Airwave is a large semi-hollow 12-string that was designed with playability in mind. With a fully intonateable bridge, a wider nut, and 24 $\frac{3}{4}$ " scale length, the Airwave is just as easy to play as any other Reverend Guitar. It has a Blackwood Tek fingerboard and Tortoise pickguard.



The Reverend Pete Anderson Eastsider T is the company's take on Pete Anderson's vintage T. The classic-style guitar offers lots of modern updates: a chambered body around the neck joint, stainless steel saddles, a compound radius fretboard, and a push-pull phase switch. On all Reverend Guitars, there is a Boneite nut and locking tuners, and a dual-action truss rod – all for maximum performance. It is available with either a Pau Ferro or a Roasted Maple fingerboard, both on Roasted Maple necks and with parchment pickguards.



Also new is the Lefty version of the Reverend Mike Watt Signature Wattplower in emerald green. It is a 30" scale bass with a smaller body that echo the short scale vintage basses that Watt gravitated towards. Features include an adjustable Hipshot A Style bridge, a brass bridge spacer for sustain and balance, and a front-mounted output jack with an oversized, heavy-duty jackplate. On the fretboard, there are extra dots at the fifth and twelfth frets for increased positional visibility, with an anchor inlay at the first fret and "wattplower" at the seventeenth.



www.reverendguitars.com

DDUK11 Ukulele from Amahi

This new ukulele model from Amahi, the DDUK11, is a soprano ukulele with a mahogany top, back and sides, and a satin finish. The model comes with open-g geared tuners, Aquila Super Nylgut strings, and a nylon gearing bag. MAP \$49.



www.amahiukuleles.com

Alvarez's Cádiz Series

Alvarez Guitars' brand-new Cádiz Series of Classical and Flamenco guitars feature Flamenco and Concert models in various configurations, including cutaway/electric and hybrid models with a slimmer nut width. Each model features a graduated solid AA grade Sitka top, asymmetric fan bracing and Spanish Heel neck joints. Flamenco models feature Cypress backs & sides, while Concert models are constructed with walnut backs and sides. With the exception of the hybrid designs, Cádiz Series stays true to traditional classic design choosing three-piece mahogany and ebony neck construction to achieve optimal strength and weight instead of opting to use a trussrod.



www.alvarezguitars.com

ACCESSORIES

Pure Technologies' Pure Tone Barrel Jack

The Pure Tone Barrel Jack is comprised entirely of highly-conductive copper and with greater surface area at all contact points. This new panel-mount jack boasts full contact for optimal signal and lowest possible noise. The patented jack design creates a more stable connection, locking the cable securely in place and carrying more signal. The Pure Tone Jack eliminates the infamous "crackle" noise caused by pressure grounds. This long-threaded jack can be used in both mono and stereo applications. This panel mount jack joins the popular Pure Tone lineup of mono and stereo $\frac{1}{4}$ " jacks.



www.puretonetechnologies.com

The Signature Series Reeds from Légère Reeds

Légère Reeds' newest and smallest reed is The Signature Series for Sopranino Saxophone. This is the first synthetic soprano saxophone reed ever commercially released. The reed shares the same bright and responsive tonal qualities as found in the rest of the Signature Series product line. The Sopranino Signature Series is the first reed to be fully designed in conjunction with Légère BETA Testers. Using both testers and artists helped speed up the refinement process by many months and has become the standard process for all future releases.



www.legere.com

ACCESSORIES

Authentic Acoustic Strings from Martin

Martin Authentic Acoustic strings are engineered with the performer in mind and they will always stand up to rigorous practice and performance schedules. Available in 80/20 Bronze and 92/8 Phosphor Bronze.



Martin has added a soft silk wrap to the ball ends of their Authentic Acoustic strings to prevent wear and tear on the bridge and bridge plate as you play. The silk wrap puts a comforting layer of protection in place every time you change your strings. Available in 80/20 Bronze and 92/8 Phosphor Bronze.

Martin's next generation Lifespan 2.0 strings are engineered using a new, patented technology only available from Martin, developed to protect the core wire and the wrap wire to prevent corrosion without compromising tone. Authentic Acoustic Lifespan 2.0 strings look better, sound better, and feel better, providing a smooth playing experience that reduces finger drag. Available in 80/20 Bronze and 92/8 Phosphor Bronze.

www.martinguitar.com

Electro-Harmonix's New Pedals

The Grand Canyon delay and looper pedal delivers 12 effect types with programmable presets, up to three seconds of delay time, tap tempo and nine tap divide settings, high-quality analog bypass with soft switching, and programable EXP pedal settings. Price: \$249.



The Mod Rex Polyrhythmic Modulator is a pedal equipped with four independent modulation sections synced in time. MOD delivers vibrato, flanger, chorus or phaser. TREM features tremolo, PAN modulates between left and right in stereo operation, and FILTER offers a choice of a modulated LPF, HPF or BPF. Each section provides four LFO shape options plus dedicated functions to maximize the Mod Rex's expressivity and control. Its tempo (displayed as BPM) is adjustable with the Tempo knob, Tap Tempo footswitch or by using an expression pedal into its EXP input. It can also be synced to an external device with MIDI Clock or an external pulse clock. It features a full stereo input and output plus full MIDI control of all parameters including recall of the pedal's 100 presets. It is also equipped with an external foot controller input to bank up and down thru the presets. The pedal is available now, comes with a 9.6VDC/200mA power supply and carries a U.S.A. street price of \$249.



www.ehx.com

New Stratocaster Pickguards from EMG

EMG Pickups' two new passive prewired Stratocaster pickguards are the ST-54 and ST-65. The two systems come in both vintage and classic styles and are the newest passive additions to EMG's SRO Series. Both Feature EMG's solderless technology and are drop in ready for a seamless install.



The EMG ST-54 pickguard is loaded with pickups featuring Alnico 2 magnets for an alternative to classic Strat tone. Benefits of the ST-54 include: Alnico 2 magnets that provide a warmer and fatter low frequency response, a more pronounced mid-range for a smoother flow from the lows to mids, a lower resonance, but a higher Q resulting in a sharper high end, a different feel and attack than traditional Strat pickups, and half the magnetism of a typical Alnico 5 magnet giving the Strat player a nice "squish."

The ST-65 pickguard is loaded with pickups featuring Alnico 5 magnets for a classic Strat tone. The ST-65 offers the following features: a magnetism of 1,000 Gauss giving the pickup a much more direct attack, as well as an overall more classic Stratocaster tone.

Both the Alnico 2 and Alnico 5 pickups are built in the traditional fashion with original style construction but feature a two pin connector for easy installation & tinkering. Made in California, both passive systems are on a three ply, 11 hole pickguard with a 5 position switch, master volume and tone controls on the neck and middle positions. The pickguards are available in black on black or white on white, giving them a classic and clean look that matches their tone. MSRP: \$359.99

www.emgpickups.com

Michael Amott Signature Mini Wah from Morley

Morley's Michael Amott Signature Mini Wah is a Limited Edition Wah from the Morley Custom Shop with only 500 pieces available worldwide. The Wah uses Morley's new custom



MQ2 Inductor and True Tone buffer circuit to prevent signal loading or tone suck. It has a cool blue LED that can be seen outdoors, built into heavy metal cold-rolled steel housing, an easy access "Quick Clip" battery door and most notably, covered in Michael's signature blood splatter design as seen on his signature Dean Tyrant X Splatter guitar. Measuring in at 6.85" in length, 4.5" wide and 2.75" in height, it's perfect for pedalboards, gig bags, and crowded stages.

www.morleypedals.com

PRINT & DIGITAL

Alfred's *Smallfoot* Choral Arrangements

Alfred Music's new choral arrangements from the movie *Smallfoot* include *Perfection*, *Moment of Truth*, and *Wonderful Life*. Each is a delightful, energetic performance piece that teachers, students, and audiences will love. *Perfection* is complete with whistling and hand claps, and captures all of the excitement of the Kirkpatrick's sensational song. Andy Beck's catchy arrangement of *Moment of Truth* features pop rhythms and a sure-fire "Yeti oh-oh" hook for singers of all ages. *Wonderful Life* is powerful ballad arranged by Lisa DeSpain encourages us all to be curious about the unknown. *Perfection*, *Moment of Truth*, and *Wonderful Life* will all be available in SATB, SAB, and 2-part voicings for \$2.10 each. SoundTrax CD accompaniments for each arrangement will also be available for \$29.99.



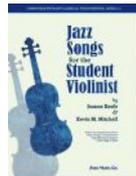
www.alfred.com

New Releases from Sher Music

With *New Orleans Trumpet: A Down Home Conservatory Method* by Jim Thornton, students can learn the essence of trad jazz from an insider. This book includes music theory, fingerings, an engaging history of the music and much more. \$26 list.



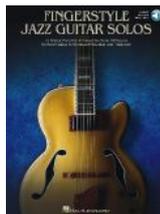
Jazz Songs for the Student Violinist by Joanne Keefe and Kevin M. Mitchell offers seven jazz pieces, levels 1 - 5, with both violin parts and piano accompaniments included, and is compatible with any classical violin method. \$22 list.



www.shermusic.com

Fingerstyle Jazz Guitar Solos from Hal Leonard

Sean McGowan's expertly arranged book, *Fingerstyle Jazz Guitar Solos*, includes standard notation and tab for solo guitar for a dozen songs. McGowan also includes performance notes for each song in the collection, giving players unique insight into how to effectively master each arrangement. In addition to the songs, the book includes access to audio examples online, which are available for download and streaming using a code found in the book. Unique to this book, the demonstration tracks included are full versions of each solo performed by McGowan himself. The audio files include PLAYBACK+, a multi-functional audio player that allows you to slow down audio without changing pitch, set loop points, change keys, and pan left or right. Price: \$19.99.



www.halleonard.com

ACCESSORIES

New from D'Addario Accessories

D'Addario Accessories has extended their strap line in three new patterns: Classic Tweed, Sunrise/Sunset Hootenanny, and a Padded Garment Leather Strap. The Classic Tweed Collection features variations of the industry favorite tweed design including standard, grey, and blue tweed. The Hootenanny straps are in a legendary hootenanny style with vibrant colorful designs. The Padded Garment Leather Strap is a comfortable thick padded strap perfect for heavier guitars. It is 2.5" wide and comes in soft garment leather.



D'Addario Accessories' *Yellow Submarine* anniversary collection comes in a collectible tin with four straps and one pick pack with three different gauges. The straps come in four designs printed on polyester. The designs are inspired by the appearance of each Beatle in the movie. The straps come in a commemorative tin that features art, characters, and imagery from the movie. The picks come in five designs inspired by art from the film printed in 4-color on celluloid picks. They are available in three gauges: light, medium, and heavy. The straps are retailed at \$60 MSRP, and the picks are retailed at \$11 MSRP.

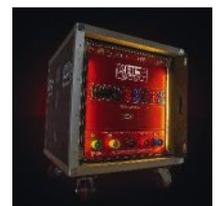


www.daddario.com

CASES & STANDS

Whirlwind's Rack Lightning, Adjustable LED Rack Illumination System

The Rack Lightning system from Whirlwind is a rack rail lighting system that can illuminate your equipment rack in six different color settings, with an adjustable dimming control. An expansion to Whirlwind's renowned Power Link line of power distribution products, the Rack Lightning system is designed to get you out of the dark ages and into the light. The system is available as a rack rail version, or as an overhead single space unit. Attain enlightenment with the new Rack Lightning system from Whirlwind. The company stands behind its Whirlwind brand; they didn't earn customer's trust cutting corners, and they're not about to start.



www.whirlwindusa.com

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MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

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ACCESSORIES



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By Dan Daley

Practice Makes Perfect

When Retail and Rehearsal Studios Combine

Much has been written (especially by me) about the decline of the recording studio business. As the ability to make high-quality multitrack recordings moved from expensive, high-tech and acoustically perfect environments into people's spare bedrooms and garages, the need for those marvelous palaces of sound faded, making places like New York's Hit Factory and L.A.'s Sound City just pleasant memories and/or fodder for Dave Grohl's auteuristic aspirations. In the process, however, it also laid the foundation for every pro audio department in every MI retail store in the world seeking additional revenue channels.

Lightning seems to be striking again. Even as recording studios fade in number and significance, rehearsal studios are on the upswing. Those often-grungy rooms that every teenage musician whose parents didn't own a garage or a dry basement had to turn to for band practice, where the rack-tom skins had more dents than a 1989 Honda Civic and the bass amp had to have at least one blown speaker, are on the decline. Instead, as live performances continue to be the economic driver for music, rehearsal studios are the new currency – places where bands can create not just better sound, but also build shows that include their own lighting and special effects. They're also becoming the places where musicians hang out and interact, as they did in the 1970s and '80s in the multiroom recording studios. The rehearsal studio is music's new rooftop bar, and MI retail can find a place in this cultural shift.

While the rehearsal studios of S.I.R., which dates back to the mid 1970s, are now seemingly ubiquitous, they were outgrowths of the company's backline rental business. On the other hand, newer venues like Soundcheck, a 162,000-square-foot rehearsal facility in Nashville, and Chicago's Fort Knox, which has grown to a massive 165,000 square feet, with 125 rehearsal "suites" that range from 250 square feet to a canyon-esque 5,000, are designed to serve what have become big, complex shows that have become the norm at the apex of touring pop music. And they all need amps and drums and PA systems, and more.

Retailers are the front-line resource for rehearsal-studios start-ups and upgrades – there is no data on the number of new rehearsal studios, but a quick look at any town's local alt-weekly classifieds will reveal the steady growth in this sector, and every time a new one opens, everyone already there has to up their game, with new amps and better PAs. The connection for MI retail is obvious, once you recognize how the rehearsal sector is mushrooming. And it's one that's safe from the same DIY dynamic that overtook recording studios: rehearsals need to approximate the live experience – they need to push a lot of air around, and you can't emulate that with a plug-in.

So it's not surprising that some MI retailers have seen the potential for an even deeper connection with rehearsal facilities. Notably, Guitar Center now offers rehearsal spaces in eight of its stores, including Louisville, New Orleans, and the Bay Area. They're also offering some of the same perks that other aggressive rehearsal facilities are, including free wi-fi and a two-track master recording of the rehearsal session, along with multitrack recording as an option. But perhaps the biggest attraction is

“The rehearsal studio is music's new rooftop bar, and MI retail can find a place in this cultural shift.”

the ability to pick to some extent amongst a store's copious selection of equipment. That's why we're seeing brands like Fender, Gibson, Shure, and Taylor setting up mini-shops of their own inside larger rehearsal complexes. Where better to put their wares in front of customers?

Not every MI store can pull this hybrid off. Rehearsal takes a lot of space, and the costs of that can be hard to square against the \$25 to \$50 an hour that most rehearsal studios can charge. It's also a time- and equipment-heavy business that requires managers and techs on constant call, to set up rooms and PA systems, and repair or replace equipment that's going to get treated like a rental car, and provide security. I've never met anyone who got rich off of owning a rehearsal studio. But if that were ever going to happen, now – with live music as the music industry's prime moneymaker – is the time. **RAM**



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