

MMR

MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW



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- HCLF880 Quilted Ash
- HCLF990 Ebony
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Mahogany Spruce Zebrawood Bamboo Bocote Flamed Maple Koa Spalted Maple Quilted Ash Ebony

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MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

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As your store prepares for NAMM's first-ever "Believe in Music Week," held from January 18 to 22, 2021, peruse some of the new MI offerings that will be virtually on display

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One Last Goodbye

By Christian **Wissmuller**



There have been encouraging developments in the past weeks, as it pertains to the ongoing pandemic – vaccines getting approved and distributed, therapeutics advancing and strategies evolving to help those infected with COVID-19, and even glimmers of hope for economic recovery.

In a recent report, David Bailin, chief investment officer of Citi Private Bank, said, “Our optimism going into 2021 is buoyed by strong financial institutions, high household savings and growing confidence levels among businesses and consumers alike. We’re also seeing increased investor optimism due to low global interest rates that will enable a full economic recovery.”

While we all hope for a much (much!) happier year, before we charge fully into 2021, I want to acknowledge just a few of the significant musicians that we lost in 2020 – a year that was particularly devastating in this area. I’m bound to miss a few (or more), but RIP to these talented men and women who helped drive interest in music and musical instruments for generations:

- Neil Peart - drummer, songwriter: Rush (1/7/2020)
- David Olney - singer, songwriter (1/18/2020)
- Bob Shane - singer: The Kingston Trio (1/26/2020)
- Buddy Cage - pedal steel guitarist: New Riders of the Purple Sage (2/5/2020)
- Lyle Mays - keyboardist: Pat Metheny Group (2/10/2020)
- Joseph Shabalala - singer & founder: Ladysmith Black Mambazo (2/11/2020)
- Paul English - drummer: Willie Nelson (2/11/2020)
- Mac Benford - banjoist, singer: Highwoods String Band (2/14/2020)
- McCoy Tyner - pianist (3/6/2020)
- Eric Taylor - singer, songwriter (3/9/2020)
- Kenny Rogers - singer, songwriter (3/20/2020)
- Eric Weissberg - banjoist, multi-instrumentalist (3/22/2020)
- Mike Longo - pianist (3/22/2020)
- Manu Dibango - saxophonist: from Cameroon and France (3/24/2020)
- Joe Diffie - singer, songwriter (3/29/2020)
- Bill Withers - singer, songwriter (3/31/2020)
- Wallace Roney - trumpeter (3/31/2020)
- Ellis Marsalis - pianist, composer (4/1/2020)
- Bucky Pizzarelli - guitarist (4/1/2020)
- Adam Schlesinger - singer, songwriter: Fountains of Wayne (4/1/2020)
- John Prine - singer, songwriter (4/7/2020)
- Hal Willner - music producer (4/7/2020)
- Tony Allen - percussionist: Fela Kuti, Afrobeat groups (4/30/2020)
- Little Richard - singer, pianist, cornerstone of Rock n’ Roll (5/9/2020)
- Betty Wright - singer (5/10/2020)
- Lucky Peterson - guitarist, singer (5/17/2020)
- Jimmy Cobb - drummer (5/24/2020)
- Bucky Baxter - pedal steel guitarist: Bob Dylan, Steve Earle (5/26/2020)
- James Hand - singer/songwriter (6/8/2020)
- Charlie Daniels - fiddler, singer, songwriter (7/6/2020)
- Mickey McGee - drummer: Goose Creek Symphony, Flying Burrito Brothers, Linda Ronstadt (7/20/2020)
- Dan Kelly - fiddler: Tennessee Mafia Jug Band (7/22/2020)
- Peter Green - guitarist, singer, songwriter: Fleetwood Mac (7/25/2020)
- Kenny Ingram - banjo player: Lester Flatt & Nashville Grass, Jimmy Martin’s Sunny Mountain Boys, Larry Stephenson Band (7/26/2020)
- Steve Gulley - guitarist, singer, songwriter: Steve Gulley & New Pinnacle, Mountain Heart, Doyle Lawson & Quicksilver (8/18/2020)
- Todd Nance - drummer: Widespread Panic (8/19/2020)
- Justin Townes Earle - singer, songwriter, guitarist (8/23/2020)
- Sean Mason - drummer: Snozzberries, Vertigo Jazz Project, Zansa, other Asheville area acts (8/29/2020)
- Gary Peacock - bassist: Albert Ayler, Paul Bley, Bill Evans, others (9/4/2020)
- Toots Hibbert - singer/songwriter: Toots & the Maytals (9/11/2020)
- Helen Reddy - singer (9/29/2020)
- Mac Davis - songwriter, singer (9/29/2020)
- Eddie Van Halen - guitarist, songwriter (10/6/2020)
- Johnny Nash - singer (10/6/2020)
- Spencer Davis - guitarist, bandleader: The Spencer Davis Group (10/19/2020)
- Jerry Jeff Walker - singer/songwriter (10/23/2020)
- Billy Joe Shaver - singer/songwriter (10/28/2020)
- Hal Ketchum - singer/songwriter (11/23/2020)
- Charley Pride - singer (12/12/2020)
- Leslie West - guitarist, singer: Mountain (12/23/2020)
- Tony Rice - guitarist, singer, icon (12/25/2020)


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Godin Receives the Order of Canada Honor

Robert Godin has received the Order of Canada Honour (C.M.) by the Governor General for his research and development activities in guitar manufacturing. Established in 1967 by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the Order of Canada is the cornerstone of the Canadian Honours System and recognizes outstanding achievement, dedication to the community, and service to the nation. The Order recognizes people in all sectors of Canadian society. Their contributions are varied, yet they have all enriched the lives of others and made a difference to this country.



Robert Godin

Robert Godin, C.M. has been designing and building guitars for nearly 50 years and has earned the reputation of being a global pioneer and a constant innovator in guitar manufacturing.

In Brief

TRADE REGRETS

Bernice Ash

More details at mmr.news/berniceash

Scott Summerhays

More details at mmr.news/summerhays

NAMM has announced the global livestream of artist performances at Believe in Music Week.

More details at mmr.news/globallive

Hoshino U.S.A. Inc. to begin distribution of Ibanez, TAMA, and other associated brands in Canada.

More details at mmr.news/hoshinocanada

Fender appoints Boggs to Board of Directors.

More details at mmr.news/boggs

RBI Music has been appointed the worldwide distributor for **Silvertone**.

More details at mmr.news/rbisilvertone

KORG USA hired Minetti and Echizen as product specialists.

More details at mmr.news/korghires

Worldful of Pianos to gather global pianists for **NAMM's Believe in Music Week**.

More details at mmr.news/worldful

Correction

The writeup for **Allen & Heath's** "Product of the Year" Dealers' Choice Award can be viewed online.

More details at mmr.news/avantis

Hal Leonard Expands MI Products Distribution Division

Hal Leonard has been growing its representation of MI products steadily for over 10 years and now announces further expansion of its MI Products Distribution Division.

Hal Leonard has been using the skills they've developed over the years in processing, warehousing and shipping millions of small goods into the music trade, to capitalize on those strengths by now distributing products for other companies. Starting with a few accessories and gift items in the 1990s and music notation software in the early 2000s, the division started to grow more substantially in 2009. Since that point, every year has seen significant new distribution lines, including software and technology relevant to musicians from companies such as Avid and IK Multimedia. Hal Leonard also began expanding into gear and instruments including Blue Mics, Samson, Line 6, Presonus, Flight Ukuleles, Warm Audio,



The Hal Leonard MI Products Distribution team: Brad Smith, VP MI Products; Peter Carlson, Sales Mgr MI Tech; Brian Swinehart, Sales; Scott Brooks, Sr Key Account Mgr MI Products; Tyler Bartelt, Acct Mgr Drums; Sue Stull, Buyer/Inventory Control; Joe Hujet, Acct Mgr MI Tech; David Cywinski, Sales Manager, Drums; Randy Foat, Acct Mgr Drums; Joe Howard, Key Accts Mgr MI Tech

Michael Kelly Guitars, Cordial Cables, TASCAM, and more.

With double-digit growth YOY in 2020, plans are in the works for 2021 to expand into more product categories and lines, including DJ and Lights, Live Sound, more guitar gear, and more digital delivery of software products. To ensure the same high level of customer service Hal Leonard has always provided, they have also added additional warehouse support for inbound and outbound shipments, quality assurance inspection at the warehouse for fretted instruments, and added purchasing agents to work with product ordering and inventory management.

Guitar Center Concludes Fast-Track Reorganization

("Guitar Center") announced that it has emerged from bankruptcy following the successful consummation of its plan of reorganization (the "Plan") under chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code.

The Plan, which was confirmed on December 17, 2020, implements a series of previously announced recapitalizations, including exit financing and the extinguishment of all of Guitar Center's pre-petition debt. Guitar Center emerges with a stronger balance sheet as a result of the elimination of nearly \$800 million of debt and \$165 million in new equity funding. In addition, the recapitalization transactions boost Guitar Center's liquidity, supporting the company's ongoing operations and enables it to invest in its strategic growth initiatives and execute its business plan.



Key elements of the recapitalization transactions include:

Guitar Center's indirect parent issued a new series of senior preferred equity plus cash to holders of Guitar Center's prepetition secured notes and a new series of junior preferred equity to holders of Guitar Center's unsecured notes in satisfaction of such holders' respective claims;

Guitar Center's indirect parent received a \$165 million common equity investment from a fund managed by Ares Management Corporation, funds managed by Brigade Capital Management and a fund managed by The Carlyle Group. These investors now indirectly own all of the common equity of Guitar Center;

Guitar Center entered into a new secured asset based revolving financing facility that provides for borrowings of up to \$375 million from time to time; and

Release of the net proceeds from Guitar Center's \$350 million note issuance consummated on December 15, 2020, which were used to support the consummation of the recapitalization transactions.

Following a Trying Year, Flute Suppliers Look to a Brighter 2021

By Christian **Wissmuller**



Certain instruments have actually seen increased sales during the pandemic and lockdowns/partial lockdowns throughout most of 2020. Has this been the case for your brand with respect to flutes?

Daniel Sharp: The flute market has been hard hit by the pandemic. I think a few factors contributed – first the confusion and fear surrounding aerosols in the early months of the pandemic, followed by the economic insecurity experienced by many of our professional customers. Flutes, especially in the handmade category, can be some of the most expensive instruments on the market.

We have seen some new sales from the amateur musician market. These players usually enjoy playing by themselves (naturally social-distanced) and may find themselves with more disposable income due to less opportunities for leisure activities or travel this year.

Brian Petterson: Our most important goals are to redouble our efforts to understand our customer and dealers' needs to deliver market-leading support, particularly given the immense challenge the band & orchestra community has faced this year. This means working together to sell (or rent) a Yamaha flute or providing market-leading after-sale support for warranty service, parts needs, or answers to questions the hard-working salespeople send our way. Despite the difficult economy, we are striving to generate demand, grow dealer sales, and develop new and innovative products that will support the long-term health of the market.

Michael Summers: Since most of the nation has moved to full or hybrid virtual learning, and most live performances have temporarily ceased, sales for Jupiter, Azumi, and Altus are down compared to last year.

For your brand what are currently the top selling flute models?

BP: Yamaha offers a strong lineup in the flute segment. Across the range from student to artist-level, it's almost impossible to single out a limited selection of top-selling models. Our continuous efforts in research and development drive our success, and the entire line-

up of Yamaha flutes has been updated in the last decade. Yamaha gold and silver handmade flutes are a beautifully crafted option for the most discerning players. The lessons we learned in crafting those instruments were applied to our professional level flutes, which offer an outstanding combination of features and price, especially at the 600-series level. Flutists all over the country will be familiar with Yamaha 300 and 400-series flutes, which have been a market leader for decades and are also popular with woodwind doublers. Not to mention our extremely well-crafted student models that thrive in dealer rental pools.

MS: Our best-selling flutes have always been our JFL710A student flutes, which are ideal for the rental market. Before the pandemic, Azumi flutes had enjoyed a steady increase in sales over the past five years. All Azumi flutes feature Altus professional headjoints, making them very popular with teachers and advancing students. Altus flutes are played by some of the world's finest flutists. Each Altus flute is handmade in Azumino, Japan. 907 and 1107 flutes lead this category.

DS: Our intermediate line of flutes, Sonaré, leads with top numbers both globally and domestically. The Sterling Silver body and headjoint models (601 and 705) are the most popular. In the handmade category, our Conservatory Flutes are top sellers domestically while the Custom Flutes do better internationally.

Have you been noticing any significant trends in the flute market – either on the supplier side, or end-user side (materials, designs, production techniques, preferred price-points, etc.)?

MS: There have been no new innovations, however some manufacturers have introduced some proprietary alloys. The flute market has been decreasing for several years now, and increases in brands and models has challenged all companies' market share.

DS: While our Silver, Aurumite, and Gold flutes are always popular, we have seen a recent trend towards sales of our wooden flutes. Our Grenadilla Wood flutes have been an industry leader since their launch in the late '90s. Now that we are a part of the Buffet Crampon



“Of course, in-store traffic is a huge challenge right now and other tactics are needed to drive sales conversions.”

– **Brian Petterson,**
Senior Marketing Manager, Yamaha Winds & Strings



“Aside from keeping instruments clean and polished, having a dedicated space within the retail environment for flutes will attract more serious buyers.”

– **Daniel Sharp**, General Manager, Powell Flutes



Group, we look to improve upon the work we’ve done and to gain more of the French *savoir-faire* which makes the Buffet instruments so special.

We have also spend a lot more time customizing instruments or headjoint for players. Musicians at the highest level have a great appreciation for personal attention and tailoring. Knowing that their instrument was made for them, by skilled craftsmen in the USA, is an attractive attribute.

BP: It’s all about the sound and the craftsmanship – at all levels. Tracking trends in sound preferences is ongoing work that is especially a priority for our world-class Yamaha Atelier research and design team. And the level of craftsmanship over the whole Yamaha line includes an extremely high level of precise adjustment. At the premium levels we are starting to notice customer preferences back towards more traditional materials like silver, at the expense of some of the more exotic metals that have caught such a strong market hold in recent years. In other levels it’s all about value, which is why Yamaha flutes will always remain a part of the conversation. An excellent example of this is a feature like pointed key arms, which used to be limited to higher-end flute designs but are now ubiquitous on even student-level flutes. Our combination of features and price is appealing to many customers who are worried about a lot of other financial challenges that this past year has thrown at us.

What promotional or display strategies do you find especially successful MI retailers adopt when it comes to flutes?

BP: One thing I’ve always appreciated about the flute market is the beautiful presentation of the products in-store. Many flute displays would fit in at the local high-end jeweler’s shop! The attention and care are admirable. Of course, in-store traffic is a huge challenge right now and other tactics are needed to drive sales conversions. The most impactful promotional strategy we see Yamaha dealers using is creating exciting, can’t-miss sales events. We’ve been very impressed by the dealers who are doing their best to provide an excellent customer experience, whether

through a one-on-one scheduled appointment, over the phone, or in a simple email exchange.

DS: Visibility is incredibly important. The “shine” factor to flutes is actually quite essential and aside from keeping instruments clean and polished, having a dedicated space within the retail environment for flutes will attract more serious buyers. Having a flutist on staff who can also “speak” flute can also help customers feel more confident when making what is often an expensive purchase.

Digital promotion is just as important, and having beautiful photos on your website is vital. We invest a lot in beautiful and artful photography of our instruments and we’re happy to share these marketing assets with our retailers.

MS: During the pandemic, our promotions included a free lesson and an instant rebate with the purchase of an intermediate or professional flute. The free lesson was part of our successful “Stay-Learn-Play at Home” campaign.

Expectations for the coming months regarding this market segment?

DS: We expect flute sales to grow as we return to our pre-pandemic life next year. The flute market is tied very closely to the flute community: flute clubs, conventions, competitions, lessons, auditions, summer festivals, et cetera. Once these activities can be safely resumed, we expect big improvements.

MS: The short and long-term effects of the pandemic are really unclear. KHS America believes that music is an essential part of life, and like many other musicians, flutists are artists who enjoy performing for people. KHS America will continue to offer help and support to the flute market any way possible to get through the current challenges.

BP: Our expectations for the flute market for the next few months and beyond are that demand for Yamaha flutes will continue to be high. Even in a very challenging market, we see a strong community persevering and creating great music. The most important thing for us is to continue providing the flute community with valuable products and services that foster this creativity. 



“The short and long-term effects of the pandemic are really unclear.”

– **Michael Summers**,
Wind Instrument Brand Manager, Altus, Azumi, Jupiter, and XO



GAMA'S

Skip Beltz and Glen McCarthy

By Christian Wissmuller

During a challenging year for in-person teaching The Guitar & Accessories Marketing Association (GAMA) has been hard at work continuing to promote greater access to playing and learning guitar. We recently touched base with two key officers of the organization to learn more about Teaching Guitar Workshops (TGW), the 2020 recipient of the Guitar Ambassador Award, as well as how GAMA has been adapting to an altered and limited reality in the past many months.

For those who didn't get a chance to participate, how did the two TGW events in July (Nashville and Chicago) go? Were they well-attended? Any post-event feedback?

Glen McCarthy: They were both very successful. We had 30 attendees in Nashville and 20 in Chicago. The TGW clinicians revamped the program. As many of us had taught virtually we had experience on what would help to make it a worthwhile experience for the participants. We now include ukulele in our workshops. We modified the start time to 9:30 Central Time and the length of each session. "In person" TGWs start at 8:30. If we started at that time in New York it wasn't very nice for our attendees on the West Coast. We addressed six different topics each day, such as setting up a guitar/ukulele class; playing chords; reading music including classic notation, tablature, and chord grids; as well as addressing any specific questions from the attendees. The feedback from our attendees was extremely positive. Comments included:

"Thanks for my box of goodies. With all the methods received, I feel ready to start my guitar class. All the accessories were an added bonus."

"I was concerned about staying focused considering the length of time but the day flew by. I'm looking forward to signing up next summer."

"I'm a TGW veteran. Taking the class a second time was a great idea for me. I felt much better playing along with the clinicians. I felt a little self-conscious not being able to play with the rest of the in person class but being online eliminated that anxiety!"



Skip Beltz, President of GAMA

The absence of Summer NAMM this year meant that the traditional announcement of GAMA's Guitar Ambassador didn't take place. Can you talk about who this year's honoree is?

“We can only hope that things continue to move in a positive direction and learn from the situations we have been through.”

– Skip Beltz



Glen McCarthy, GAMA Board Member & Executive Director, Teaching Guitar Workshops

Skip Beltz: This year Lee Ritenour is the recipient of the GAMA Guitar Ambassador Award. Lee was nominated and unanimously approved for his commitment to music education and his Six String Theory Organization. Lee has long been an influential musician in our industry, starting as early as age 16 in a recording session with The Mamas and the Papas. Lee has been nominated many times for Grammy Awards, winning one in 1985 for "Best Arrangement of an Instrumental." Aside from his notable career as a musician, it is his devotion to helping aspiring musicians with the Six String Theory Competition. It is a Biennial contest that includes amazing opportunities including a full ride to Berklee College of Music and other unique prizes. We at GAMA, and on behalf of all our MI partners, thank Lee for his contributions to our industry.

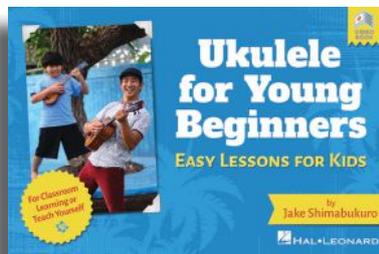
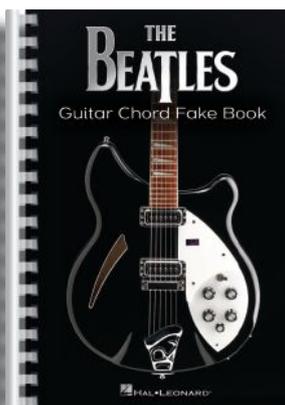
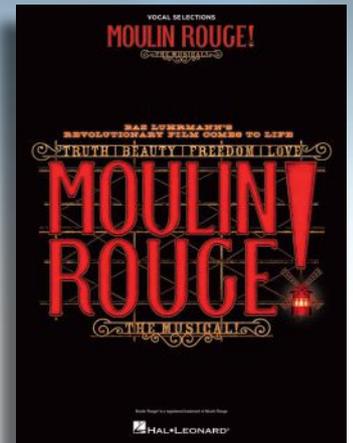
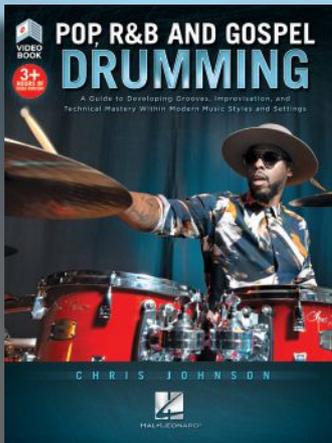
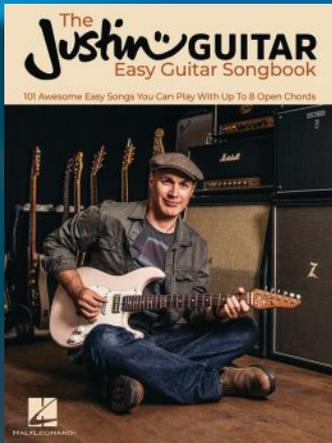
One of the only positive byproducts of the pandemic and lockdown has been an increased interest in music-making. Sales of fretted instruments, in particular, have skyrocketed. What are your thoughts and observations on this trend?

SB: Yes, this has been a very positive trend for the makers of fretted instruments. We are also both happy and intrigued by other areas of the MI landscaped that have also benefitted. There are obvious outliers that help like travel subsiding and people stay-

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ing home much more than they usually would. In that time people were able to have an opportunity to turn to things that maybe they once loved, but lost the time to be able to do it. Life happens. It may have helped all of us to step back and focus on things we just weren't able to find time to do. That certainly helped and also, for those that were dedicated musicians, it improved platforms for them to share their music or learn to share their music

digitally. Those changes led to interest in new equipment whatever that was for them. Fretted instruments benefitted as well as others. A silver lining of sorts.

Relating to the above, many instrumental lesson programs temporarily (hopefully) migrated to online, streaming, et cetera in the spring. How is GAMA getting involved in helping to facilitate teacher/student

connection during these strange times?

GM: There are numerous online fretted instrument teaching opportunities for consumers to take advantage of. This is not the objective of TGW. Studies have shown the average music teacher that teaches guitar is trained as a band, orchestra, and/or choral director. TGW is designed to give a strong foundation to start or reinforce a guitar class for these teachers.

What are the current plans for TGW in 2021 or is it still a "wait and see" type of situation?

GM: With all things being "wait and see" we are working on "in-house" locations for summer 2021 and hope they can happen. If you are a music store that would be interested in hosting a workshop please contact us. We will have virtual sessions as well.

Thoughts on the current state of the guitar and guitar-related products market? What have you been hearing from suppliers, distributors, and dealers?

SB: We have been experiencing nice demand considering what the world has been through. I do, as well as my colleagues, hear from others in our industry that they are experiencing more of the same. There certainly has been a supply issue related to all of the effects of having to shut down for a period of time while inventory was still able to be shipped once that cleared up and things started moving. The gap in shipping to producing caused some supply issues and that is subsiding and for many are we are getting out in front of it better. We can only hope that things continue to move in a positive direction and learn from the situations we have been through. Who could have really been prepared for what really came up on us pretty fast? All of us should and will be more prepared as best we can to work through these types of issues in the future. All in all, things are much more positive than they initially seemed back in April and May. Cross our fingers that we have seen the worst!

Final thoughts/expectations for the coming months?

GM: I'm hoping that science will be able to conquer the pandemic, I will be able to be in public without a mask, shake hands, hug my family and enjoy the energy of a "live and in person" guitar class. 

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The Kanile'a 'Ukulele storefront

Kanile'a 'Ukulele's New Showroom Shines in Dark Times

By Victoria Wasylak

We'll put it plainly: 2020, it seems, was not the year to make any extravagant business plans come to fruition. Even among MI brands, who stepped up to the plate to rev up instrument and gear production to serve bored musicians during their lengthy quarantines, very few companies were able to execute what they had hoped for the year.

That is, with the exception of Kanile'a 'Ukulele. The Hawaii-based ukulele brand built their flagship retail store last year, which was unveiled in October. After hoping to create a showroom for years, 2020 created a unique need for a safe, relaxed place where guests could select the instruments that would get them through the doldrums of social isolation.

"2020 was the right time to open this showroom for us because through tough times people needed something to lean on, and for a lot of people, that was the ukulele," CEO Kaimana Souza says. "We have wanted to open a showroom of this scale for about five years now. Instead of cowering in the face of fear, we as a company stood strong and thought long and hard about how we can do something different to keep the power of music alive."

Located inside Kaneohe's Windward Mall, the showroom spans 2,000 square feet, complete with classroom space for ukulele lessons. Despite the pandemic, the store is open seven days a week, as Souza says that most retail operations that cater to locals are still open. All Kanile'a instruments are assembled only a few streets away at the Kaneohe factory.

Much like the continental U.S., more folks in Hawaii are turning to at-home recording, and Souza notes that he's seen an uptick in folks asking about pickups, recording, and achieving the best sound when recording. Premium Koa ukuleles have been especially popular this year, too.

"We wanted to think differently and open ourselves up to new possibilities," Souza explains. "During COVID-19 shutdowns, a lot of people were playing their 'ukuleles and we saw a resurgence of people bringing out their old instruments that had been sitting and we had a lot of demand for people who needed new strings, or new tuners, or new accessories to get them back into playing. Being able to offer those things to the community is important to us. We also wanted to give ourselves some time to be in a position to take on visitors who have pent up buying energy for when tourism in Hawai'i opens back up. We are already seeing more and more visitors who want to simply come and experience what we have to offer."



Inside the Kanile'a 'Ukulele showroom



Kaimana Souza

Perhaps even more importantly, Souza hopes the space helps encourage the preservation and growth of traditional Hawaiian music and art forms.

"We have always been an integral part of our community when it comes to ukulele and music in general," he adds. "In our previous location we were able to do that, but not to the scale that we had always dreamt of. And now, being able to create a showroom in the local mall less than half a mile from our factory brings us closer to the heart of the community. This means that we are digging in for the community to make sure that Hawaiian ukulele and Hawaiian music thrive. Being able to provide products for music was one major step. And to top it all off, we pushed to collaborate with a local group who is opening a school of music right next to us in which they will offer lessons on ukulele, guitar, bass, piano, voice, engineering, and even hula."

Souza, who also led the design team for the new retail space, says he's especially excited about its clean, spacious layout.

"The interior design and the ability to have more than 100 of our instruments is what really makes our showroom special," he says. "We steered clear of having a cluttered showroom and opted for more spacing with more area for people to try out the instruments apart from other customers. Ninety-nine percent of the people who walk into our showroom are blown away by the beauty of the store and by the quantity of instruments that we have. I jokingly (but seriously) tell customers who are not familiar with our brand that 'We have that blue children's ukulele in the window for \$110 and we have this blue custom instrument behind the counter for \$8,000. And we have an 'ukulele for you anywhere on that spectrum.' So really, the ability to offer exactly what someone needs on their 'ukulele journey' is what excites me."

Along with ukuleles available at a variety of price points, the store also stocks beginner Islander mini guitars, Tiny Boy Basses (mini electric basses from Japan), and branded apparel and accessories. In addition, the space features room for in-store performances and a VIP lounge, which offers guests some privacy and quiet when selecting some of Kanile'a 'Ukulele's more expensive models.

Combined with regular music performances, classroom area, and \$59 to \$8,000 selection of ukes, the new Kanile'a 'Ukulele showroom doesn't feel like a store – it's a complete, family-friendly experience bringing light to an otherwise dark time. 



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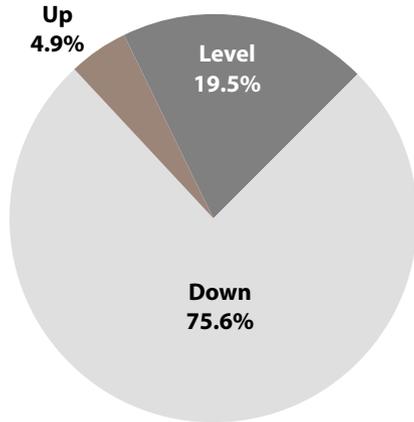
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Sales of Mouthpieces for Brass Instruments During the Pandemic

By Christian Wissmuller

“It would be easier to run a fancy steak house in Somalia than to be an exclusive band and orchestra retail store right now.”
- Anthony Mantova,
 Mantova's Two Street Music

Compared to last year, sales of mouthpieces for brass instruments for your business are...



In terms of volume (number of units sold) which mouthpieces for specific brass instruments sell most at your store?

Trumpet: 84.2%

Trombone, baritone horn, and euphonium: 9.8%

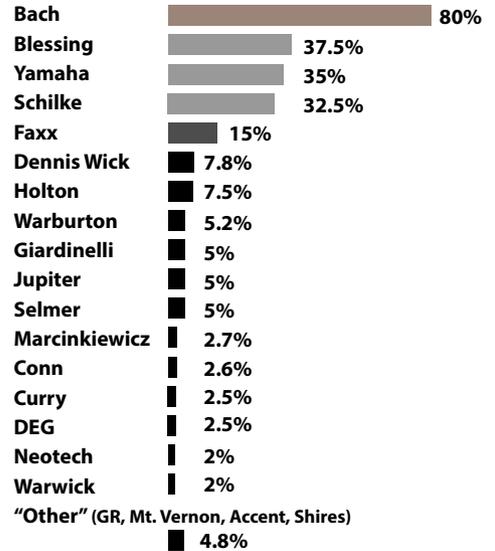
Tuba and sousaphone: 2.1%

Tenor horn: 1.3%

Alto horn: .4%

“Other” (cornet, flugelhorn, French horn): 2.2%

For these sorts of products, what brands are selling the most at your store?



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Accessories

Wall Panels from Gator Frameworks

The 2"-thick pyramid style acoustic foam wall panels by Gator Frameworks improve the acoustics of a room by absorbing and controlling unwanted reflected noise for an enhanced recording and listening experience. The panels are perfect for spot treating your studio or listening space, making them perfect for podcast and broadcast studios, home offices, small home studios, conference rooms, vocal booths, control rooms, and similar applications. Each foam panel features a 3D pyramid design for maximum sound absorption with an acoustical performance rating of 0.45 NRC. The acoustic foam series includes 12" x 12" pyramid foam panels offered in packs of two, four, and eight. Choose between burgundy, charcoal, or red.



www.gatorframeworks.com

Studio Class Closed-Back Headphones from ddrum

The ddrum Studio Class closed-back headphones fill the need drummers have for superior Db attenuation and studio quality fidelity all in an incredibly comfortable design. While other isolation headphones may provide protection from harmful sound levels and the ability for audio playback, the ddrum Studio Class headphones take performance to a new level. These professional headphones utilize comfortable ear cushions that house 40mm drivers, producing high precision audio and a frequency response of 20-20,000 Hz. These headphones also provide 36.7 dB of passive sound isolation.



www.ddrum.com

Roto-Grip Locking Super Rotomatics from Grover

Grover's new Roto-Grip Locking Super Rotomatics (509 Series) feature a three-step button and utilize the famous 18:1 Rotomatic design with a "thumb screw" mechanism, which locks the string into place. Insert the string through the post hole, wrap around once, then lock by tightening with the thumb screw. These are the perfect replacement for the most standard machine heads. Includes all mounting hardware. Available finishes include: nickel, black chrome, and gold.



www.groto.com

Godlyke's Maxon Custom Shop SSD-9 Super Sonic Distortion Pedal

Godlyke's Maxon Custom Shop SSD-9 Super Sonic Distortion pedal was developed based on suggestions from professional Guitarists

as to how the stock SD-9 circuit could be improved. The Super Sonic Distortion modifications produce a rich, thick guitar tone with tube amp-like qualities and response. This pedal offers dramatically increased output level to push signal chains harder and allow for use with a wider variety of guitar and amp combinations, as well as true bypass switching and attenuation of the 1K range that can make the stock version sound "fizzy" in higher settings. Several component tolerances changed to allow for operation at 18 VDC – a popular request from guitarists looking for improved headroom and less compression. \$199



www.godlyke.com

Whirlwind's IMP Line Level Combiner

Use the IMP Line Level Combiner box when you want to create a mono mix from a stereo source but need to keep the original stereo signals isolated. It's great for feeding a DAT player or CD into a mono system or single channel on a board. The IMP Line Level Combiner not only combines two line-level signals into one line level output, but it also compensates for the 6dB of gain that occurs when two in-phase signals are combined. A handy ground-lift switch breaks the shield connection between the inputs. Connections are socket XLRs in, plug XLR out.



www.whirlwindusa.com

Unify from PlugIn Guru

Unify is a revolutionary new type of instrument that lets you layer, play, and combine AU, VST, or VST3 plug-ins to create new, inspiring, and outrageously creative sounds. Not only can you load your own plug-ins, but Unify also ships with its own built-in library of virtual instruments and audio effects, making it immediately ready to use right "out of the box." Including 500-plus stock patches crafted by renowned sound designer John "Skippy" Lehmkuhl, Unify's core library is already extremely versatile. However, when blending Unify's core library with your favorite plug-ins, the creative possibilities are truly endless. \$79



www.ILIO.com

Eddy Analog Vibrato & Chorus Pedal from Electro-Harmonix

The Eddy is a new analog vibrato and chorus featuring a classic liquid modulation sound with modern control functionality. Familiar controls like Rate and Depth control the speed and intensity of the effect while Tone and Volume adjust the Eddy to fit your setup. Extended controls like Shape and Envelope let you customize the sound and response.



www.ehx.com

Joe Satriani Swivel Straps and VENN Reeds from D'Addario

D'Addario Accessories' new Joe Satriani Swivel Straps swivel out of any tangle to keep your strap from popping off your instrument while always keeping you in comfort and style. The Joe Satriani Swivel Strap comes in three original designs created by Joe Satriani including Crosses, Black Paisley, and Black. \$45



D'Addario Woodwind's VENN is a new species of reeds that combines the stability and longevity of a synthetic reed with the



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sound and feel of natural cane. To mimic the organic structure of cane, D'Addario reverse-engineered cane itself, layering different strengths of polymer fibers with resin and organic reed elements to make up the reed blank. VENN lasts far longer than a cane reed, is consistent from reed to reed, and is less subject to splitting, chipping, and breaking from use. VENN requires no prep, care, and maintenance and is resistant to environmental conditions including temperature, humidity, and more. Available initially for B♭ clarinet, alto, and tenor saxophone.



www.daddario.com

Hosa Techology's A/V Work Gloves

Hosa A/V Work Gloves protect your hands without limiting your abilities. Synthetic leather tips on the thumb, index, and middle fingers allow use of touch screen devices. The stylish Hosa "H" silicone grips on the palm also make grabbing and gripping heavy gear easy while providing extra protection. Hosa A/V Work Gloves are form-fitting so you don't have to sacrifice dexterity while wearing them. Unlike other gloves, Hosa A/V Work Gloves utilize a breathable fabric on the back of the hand to help ventilate and keep your hands from overheating. Hosa A/V Work Gloves also feature an adjustable hook and loop strap for adjustable security and comfort. Available in four sizes. MSRP: \$27.95 per pair.



www.hosatech.com

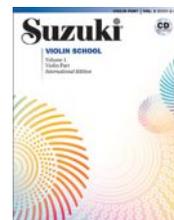
Print & Digital

Music-Go-Round and Suzuki Violin School Recordings from Alfred Music

Music-Go-Round is a 100-page book overflowing with creative musical activities for elementary students. This book includes Color-By-Note coloring pages, Word Wizard word searches, Musical Mix-Ups, Colorful Beats, Music Note Spelling Bees, Puzzling Pitches, and more. *Music-Go-Round* covers facts and concepts that are already part of music curriculums, these attractive reproducible worksheets are perfect for bell work, simple assessments, extra credit exercises, homework assignments, quick lesson extensions, or ready-to-go substitute teacher plans.



The International Suzuki Association, in conjunction with Alfred Music, has released the recordings of the Suzuki Violin School, Volumes 1-3 by internationally renowned violinist Hilary Hahn in collaboration with pianist Natalie Zhu. The new recordings and the Suzuki Violin School International Editions are available as: Violin Part Book, Piano Accompaniment Book, Violin Part Book and CD, and CD only. The recordings feature tracks that include violin and piano, as well as piano accompaniment only tracks for play-along purposes.



www.alfred.com

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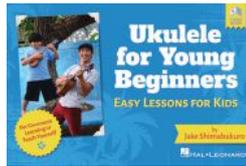


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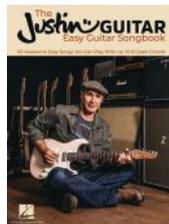


Hal Leonard's Latest Releases

Ukulele for Young Beginners: Easy Lessons for Kids by Jake Shimabukuro is designed to inspire and excite kids with their first step into a lifetime of making music. The books can be used by families or in a classroom setting. Each chapter includes a video lesson by Jake that's accessed online where he provides age-appropriate instruction. The full-color book 9-inch by 6-inch book includes simple lessons with fretboard photos and fun supplemental activities to reinforce what the kids are learning from the videos. The songs include optional teacher chord frames so an adult can play along with the student making them sound more professional. \$9.99

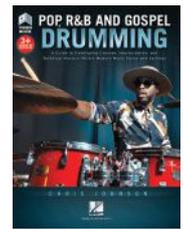


The *JustinGuitar Easy Guitar Songbook* features 101 popular songs that can be played with up to eight open chords. Songs are presented in sequential difficulty order in chord/lyric format with lesson tips, chord diagrams, and more. The collection includes top hits, including "Eleanor Rigby" (The Beatles), "Free Fallin'" (Tom Petty), "Good Riddance (Time of Your Life)" (Green Day), "Perfect" (Ed Sheeran), "Shallow" (Lady Gaga), "Zombie" (The Cranberries), and dozens more. \$24.99



Pop, R&B and Gospel Drumming: A Guide to Developing Grooves, Improvisation, and Technical Mastery Within Modern Music Styles and

Settings by Chris Johnson is a unique "video book" from Hal Leonard. The video is accessed by using the unique code within each book. In the book, Chris gives advice on playing techniques and approaches, and shares experiences of playing in both live performances and studio sessions. The accompanying videos showcase Chris playing pop hits along with original music and arrangements played by his band as well as bonus material featuring interviews with iconic drummers and other industry professionals. Chapters touch on topics such as technical development, groove development, stylistic/genre awareness, tune memorization, improvisation and soloing, working with backing tracks, life tips for musician, and more. \$29.99.



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ative expression. Drummers can take videos of their performances and share them without leaving the drum throne, while developing their drumming skills with unparalleled training tools. The DTX6 series – including the DTX6K-X, DTX6K2-X, and DTX6K3-X models – offers drummers new professionally-sampled sounds and effects recorded around the world in renowned studios. For easy modification, the series features a Kit Modifier within the new powerful DTX-PRO module. With a simple turn of a knob, players can alter sounds dynamically with EQ effects including ambiance and compression. The Yamaha DTX6K-X (MSRP: \$1,360), DTX6K2-X (MSRP: \$2,020), and DTX6K3-X (MSRP: \$2,420) are currently shipping.

www.yamaha.com

Limited-Edition CRX AIR Low-Volume Cymbal Sets

TRX Cymbals has released a limited edition, four-piece set the popular AIR Series low-volume cymbals with a custom, Sky-Blue finish. The set, which is recommended for practice rooms, teaching studios, and low-volume playing situations, includes 14" hi-hats, 20" ride, 18" crash-ride, and 16" crash plus a cymbal bag. MSRP: \$499.99



www.trxcymbals.com

Saturn's Evolution Series of Drum Kits

The new Saturn Evolution Series of drum kits offers hybrid shell technology, presenting both birch/walnut blended shells and maple/walnut blended shells in the same series, giving the player unprecedented selection in sound character. The new "Halo" mounting system, a unique lateral "under lug-line" suspension mount allowing the shell to fully resonate with an open, pure tone. Each Halo Mount is equipped with the new Sustain Adjustment Knob which acts as a built-in equalizer slightly dampening the resonance of the shell when needed, producing a tighter and quicker decay, and eliminating the need for external muffling. Saturn Evolution also includes a host of Mapex Innovations developed through the acclaimed Black Panther Design Lab project. Floor tom legs feature a 90-degree static angled leg and the Sonic Pedestal Foot reducing the transfer of energy through the hardware keeping as much resonance in the drum as possible. The air flow venting system ensures optimal tone by locating the air-vents at the nodal points of each shell keeping each drum breathing perfectly from the slightest touch to the most brutal stroke. The Chamber Specific Design concept gives each part of the instrument its true voice as shell plies get progressively thicker, depths increase by 1/2", and SONIClear bearing edges graduate as the drums get larger in diameter.



www.mapexdrums.com

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..... Piano & Keyboard

Yamaha's EZ-300 Keyboard

The EZ-300 personal electronic keyboard features 61 light-up keys, an expandable playlist of built-in popular songs, and the unique Keys to Success lesson mode. Thanks to the light-up keyboard, even someone who has never touched a musical instrument before can play along with a song within seconds of turning the EZ-300 on, just by following the lights. The keys are also touch-sensitive, meaning that playing them with more force makes the notes louder, just like on an acoustic piano. Although the EZ-300 comes right out of the box with 140 songs built in, users can expand its song library via simple drag-and-drop of MIDI song files (downloaded from the Yamaha online shop) from their Mac or PC directly via a USB connection.



www.yamaha.com

ES920 and ES520 Digital Pianos from Kawai

Combining Kawai's Responsive Hammer keyboard action and Harmonic Imaging sound technologies, the ES920 and new mid-range ES520 reproduces the touch and tone of a concert grand piano, providing an authentic, rewarding playing experience for musicians of all abilities. In addition to other fine features, including brand-new lightweight body design, these portable instruments are suitable choices for home, stage, or classroom. The ES920 and

mid-range ES520 feature a brand-new modern body design with a flat panel surface complemented by rounded edges. With their modern design, sturdy body, and lighter weight, the ES920 and ES520 are some of the most portable pianos in their respective classes making them excellent choices for the gigging or studio musician. In addition to their portability, when attached to their dedicated HM-5 designer stand and F-302 triple pedal bar, these instruments transform into stylish and compact piano replacements.

www.kawaius.com



..... Fretted

The Exile from Dean Guitars

The Exile from Dean Guitars is a beast in playability and sonic flexibility. A high access heel joint on an Alder body offers the ability to reach every note. Equipped with a set of Fishman Fluence Modern series pickups, you can add additional sounds by utilizing their dual modes with the push/pull tone knob. This model also features a Floyd Rose 1000 series tremolo system, a black satin finish complimented with a 3-piece maple neck, 24-fret ebony fingerboard, bound neck and headstock, plus a chrome foil logo.

www.deanguitars.com



Luna's Safari Vista Stallion Acoustic-Electric Travel Guitar

Luna's Safari Vista Stallion acoustic-electric travel guitar displays a skillfully-crafted top made from attractive tone woods on a travel guitar body (¾ size). Handmade from a combination of Lacewood, Padauk, maple, burl sapele, abalone, mother of pearl, and burl maple, this model comes equipped with Fishman electronics and a built-in tuner. Padded gigbag included.

www.lunaguitars.com



Deluxe Guitar Models from D'Angelico

D'Angelico's Deluxe Mini DC LE is a 14-inch-wide double cutaway semi-hollow model offering the perfect balance between semi-hollow construction and ergonomic comfort. The Mini DC's undersized body, sleek headstock and slim C-shape neck profile combine to create a lightweight design perfect for players who want total control over their instrument. Strapped with Seymour Duncan Seth Lover A4 humbuckers and coil-splitting push/pull tone knobs, the Deluxe Mini DC Limited Edition offers a wide palette of lush, colorful tones. Emerging as a fan favorite in the solid-body collection, the Deluxe Brighton Limited Edition is a curvy double-cutaway offering warm vintage tone. Featuring deep cutaways that provide easy access to the entire fingerboard and a lightweight body design, the Brighton prioritizes playability in every sense.

www.dangelicoguitars.com



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House of Troy

Warwick's RockBass Alien Deluxe Hybrid Thinline Series

Eight new models join Warwick's RockBass Alien Deluxe Hybrid Thinline Series. Two key-features of these models are a thin body for excellent playing comfort and two different pickups (magnetic and piezo) for great sound flexibility can be found on every model. These 4- and 5-string acoustic basses feature solid AA Sitka spruce tops, walnut backs and sides, mahogany necks, wenge fingerboards, and chrome hardware. Each model comes with a Student Line gig bag, a tress rod tool, and 1.5 mm hex key wrench. Starting at \$999.



www.warwick.de

New Finishes for Reverend Guitars

Reverend Guitars has new colors on some of their models for 2021. The Reverend Warhawk DAW will now come in two more bursts – Silver Burst (pictured) and Purple Burst. The Reverend Roundhouse will now come in several solid colors, available in Midnight Black, Italian Purple (pictured), Venetian Gold, and Deep Sea Blue. Outfield Ivy has found its way across the Reverend line. A color developed with Chicago Music Exchange, the deep green color will be on the Reverend Jetstream 390 and the Reverend Double Agent W. Like all Reverend Guitars, these guitars have Korina bodies. A Boneite nut and locking tuners are for maximum performance.



www.reverendguitars.com

Fender's Spark-O-Matic Jazzmaster

Fender's Spark-O-Matic Jazzmaster boasts a nitrocellulose lacquer finish in three-color sunburst. Its custom three-piece body features a mahogany core and chambered ash wings, delivering warmth, sustain, and resonance. The satin lacquer maple neck with 9.5" radius, 22-fret rosewood fingerboard ensures smooth, effortless playability. The high-performance engine at the heart of Spark-O-Matic is a calibrated triple set of chrome-covered Seymour Duncan SM-1N and SM-3BMini-Humbuckers. The American Pro Jazzmaster bridge and classic offset vibrato tailpiece is smooth and expressive, with a tasteful range of motion. ClassicGear tuners offer a modern 18:1 gear-ratio for precise tuning accuracy and stability. \$1,999.99



www.fender.com

Recording King's Parlor Metal Body Resonator

The new Recording King Parlor Metal Body Resonator puts traditional reso style in a small but powerful design. True resonator tone begins with a classic nickel-plated bell brass body and Recording King's own full-size hand-spun 9.5" cone, the same one used in Recording King's Swamp Dog resonators. Its smaller body size provides a different voice from other metal body instruments, offering all the swampiness and midrange of classic biscuit-style metal bodies.

www.recordingking.com



Pro Audio

Yorkville's SA102 Full Range Loudspeaker and SA115S Subwoofer

Yorkville's two new additions to the Synergy Array Series are the SA102 active full range loudspeaker and the SA115S active subwoofer. When paired together, these components make a smaller, lighter, and more portable version of the Synergy Array Series. Equipped with a 10" LF woofer and 1 HF Compression Driver, the SA102 delivers 1,200 Watts (Program) and 2,400 Watts (Peak) and provides a 7 Degrees Up, 38 Degrees Down coverage pattern. The cabinet can be turned 180 degrees from top to bottom to flip the coverage pattern. The Danley patented 15" tapped horn allows for the SA1153 to deliver an astonishing 6,400 Watts (Program) and 13,000 Watts (Peak) in a compact cabinet. The SA102 can sit secure on the sub using interlocking feet or can be raised up by connecting a speaker pole to the SA115S mounts.



www.yorkville.com

Blackbird 40 Guitar Speaker from Jensen

The Jensen Blackbird 40 is a new 12" guitar speaker with a 1.26 inch copper-wound voice coil and a reinforced AlNiCo magnet in the classic "horseshoe" format. Featuring



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Patents. See website. www.rovnerproducts.com.

Jensen's exclusive Reinforced AlNiCo magnet technology, a magnet which has been reinforced and made more efficient, raising the overall Flux Density (the "strength" of the magnet) by over 30 percent. This results in the behavior of a much bigger and more expensive magnet without the added cost. The outcome is that the Blackbird 40 delivers the classic, unmistakable voice of a Jensen AlNiCo speaker, supported by a stronger, firmer foundation that reinforces the bass range. It's great for an upgrade to a classic vintage amplifier, yet is equally suited to modern, more versatile amplifiers. \$195

www.jensentone.com

..... **Band & Orchestra**

The Blues Bander 586BX from Hohner

Hohner's newly- redesigned Blues Bender Harmonica, the Blues Bander 586BX, features a clear plastic comb with classic "sandwich style" construction for a traditional feel. The coverplates are made from stainless steel and include improvements from harmonica models costing three times as much. As a finishing touch, the reedplates are chrome plated, adding to the sleek classiness of the instrument. This model will be available in Hohner's most popular major keys: A, B♭, C, D, E, F, and G. All Hohner Diatonic harmonicas come with 30 days of free online lessons from www.bluesharmonica.com. MAP: \$19.99



www.hohner.com

Roland's Aerophone Pro

Roland's Aerophone Pro packs entire brass and woodwind sections into a single digital instrument. Aerophone Pro's thin, ergonomic design looks great on stage and is easier to hold for a more confident playing experience. Controls are easy to reach, and the streamlined body and aluminum accents exude an understated-yet-classy presence. The discrete OLED screen provides quick visual access to various parameters and can be viewed at any angle and in any kind of lighting. The stock fingering on Aerophone Pro is the same as an acoustic sax and includes a high-F# key. Multiple user-customizable fingerings are supported as well, and configurable controls for both hands and a MIDI input for footswitches greatly expand performance options. \$1,499.99



www.roland.com

P. Mauriat's PMST-600XJ Tenor Saxophone

P. Mauriat's PMST-600XJ tenor saxophone features yellow brass construction throughout, as well as straight tone holes which offer just the right amount of resistance. The 600XJ is a raw brass instrument which allows for maximum vibration. Finally, P. Mauriat finished the 600XJ with selected parts in silver-plate in order to set it apart from anything else on the bandstand.



www.pmauriatmusic.com

..... **DJ & Lighting**



COLORado Batten Q15 from CHAUVET Professional

The IP65 rated COLORado Batten Q15 from CHAUVET Professional features an array of rigging options that make it right at home in a wide range of designs. The adjustable trunnions on this one-meter long RGBW LED batten, which can be adjusted without tools on its integrated track, have been given an even greater degree of versatility with the addition of 1/4 turn omega brackets. Adding to the COLORado Batten Q15's adaptability is a new system for joining different units together. Integrated into the end caps of the fixture is a system to connect units seamlessly for perfect row alignment. Since these attachments are weight bearing, the COLORado Batten Q15 can be hung "icicle style," or arranged in tower configurations using the included hanging/floor mount plate. Capable of transitioning quickly from a smooth color wall wash to a stunning effect, the COLORado Batten Q15 features an elliptical 42 – 15-degree beam spread, a stowable glare shield, color temperature presets from 3,200 K to 10,000 K, and selectable smooth dimming curves.

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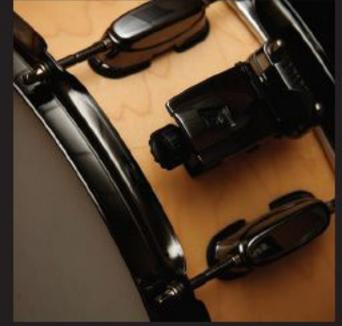
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Creativity vs. Duties

The Best Tools for 2021



By Menzie Pittman

Like the Grinch Who Stole Christmas, the year 2020 stole a great deal from us. In January 2020, this Grinch committed its first crime when it gave us a false sense of hope that a good business year lay ahead. Except for big online retailers, I think we would all agree that the answer to whether that hope materialized wound up being a whopping “no.” However, if you study wrestling you know that even if you’re down on the mat, you must be pinned for two seconds before the match is called. Has it been two seconds yet?

At the 2020 NAMM show, I had the opportunity to moderate a panel for Advanced Audio + Applications Exchange (A3E). This organization provides exposure for fast rising high-tech companies who offer unique platforms and tools designed to provide solutions for the young, touring, music community.

The buzz from the attending young artists and the entrepreneurs at the show was at a fever pitch. After all, why not? At that point the economy was good and new thinking abounded. So, for three days A3E shed light on clever new products for rising companies. It was very 2019: hopeful and expectant.

Now we are entering 2021 and we have a new and tremendously challenging landscape. We have had to make different types of choices, and we have had to make them effectively with very little time to vet them. The truth is for the past many months, we have been in survival mode and honestly, we will remain in survival mode for a while.

On a positive note, hopefully we are in the early phases of our new direction – AKA “recovery.” The absolute best advice I can offer is: be creative and be open to new thinking. While many people believe that kind of advice is too “hocus pocus,” I have always included a healthy serving of hocus pocus in my creative diet. So, let’s kick the tires of some good practices for the year ahead.

Phase I: Comprehension and Adaptation

Comprehending workable solutions for the year ahead means you must embrace new and different ways of assessing what’s possible, what’s vital, and what’s realistic. Relationships in the current environment have a renewed importance, and conversation has a newfound respect as well.

The one thing taken from all of us over the last year was human interaction; therefore, its value is at an all-time high, whether that is on the phone, email, text, or Zoom. Civility and courtesy will net you a better result, and I believe it stays that way going forward.

Adaptation, as I use it here, means surrender. However, I don’t mean “surrender” in a weak sense. I mean quite the opposite. Surrender in this case means, you stop fighting the currents and flow in the direction of the current. Surrender is accepting reality and harmonizing with it. It is not always our prerogative to call the tune, but it is our responsibility to dance. Embracing and adapting to surrender is to think like Gregory Hines.

Phase II: Understanding Creative Process vs. Duties

This is the phase that gives me the most trouble. It’s trick-

ier than you think. In the last year, duties for all leaders have increased exponentially – thus, so has stress.

As I create my personal calendar, within hours, a plethora of new demands (be they legitimate or just hollow echoes that are parasitic to my time) distract me from creative flow and, as everyone is aware, current circumstances have most small businesses running on a skeleton crew with less opportunity to delegate. This creates a stick in the spokes of the wheel.

What can we do about that? I believe the best tools we have are admission and reduction. For most overachievers, admission is harder than reduction. Admission means you must honestly admit you are human. There is no perfection. Keep in mind, we are all competitive. However, working through the lens of admission is coming to grips with being okay with where you are in the cycle of success. It doesn’t mean you abandon worthwhile goals. It means you put down true markers of where you really are in accomplishing meaningful success.

Meaningful success is a lifetime achievement and a long-term strategy. Reduction is a skill that is newer to most businesspeople, and it is a skill that takes a minute to understand. The first goal in accomplishing reduction is making more mental room. Therefore, mental clutter must go.

What exactly is mental clutter? Mental clutter is any distraction that takes up creative energy—it is anger, worry, frustration, fear, exasperation, or doubt. These all fall into the category of mental clutter along with distraction. They take up space in your mind and rob you of your creativity – so say goodbye to that. Once these nuisances are purged, your creative energy rises, and presto, creative ideas improve. Duties are necessary, but they are a lot like running in place. You end up exhausted and make no progress forward.

Phase III: Implementation and Maintenance

Implementation of new ideas and creative solutions takes courage, and we are at a time when the status quo no longer works. Apologies have lost their capital, and we have grown numb to justifications for poor performance. Implementing and maintaining a new and better way will take all the steps listed above.

Maintenance means staying pledged to the quality of new thinking and embracing strategies where quality is the first priority, but in this instance, I am referring to the quality of better ideas: a philosophy where duties are not competing for our creative time. Don’t let the stink, stank, stunk of the 2020 Grinch steal everything from you.

I leave you with my New Year’s Resolution and hopes for you...

Here’s to a creative year ahead! 🍀

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.”

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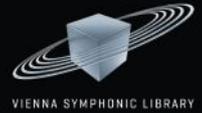


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