

# M M M R

## MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

Celebrating 145 Years of Serving the MI Industry

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# HAVE KEYS, WILL TRAVEL

## Portable Keyboards in 2024



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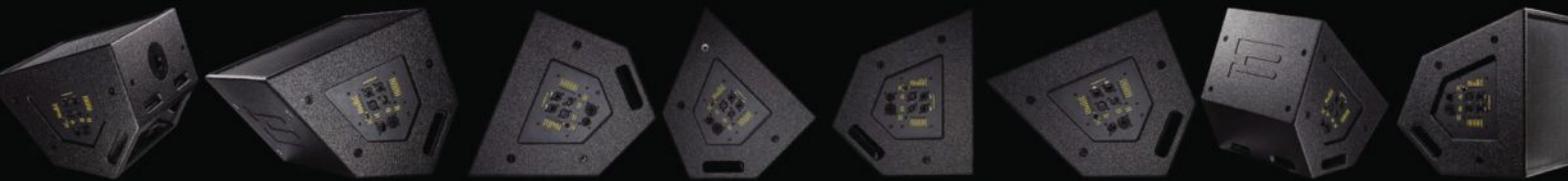


**Small Business Matters**  
The Evolving Independent Music Store – Part II

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# C O N T E N T S

# MMR

MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

**FEATURES** Vol. 183 JUNE 2024 No. 6

## Roundtable

### Have Keys, Will Travel – Portable Keyboards in 2024 14

Ideal for musicians on the go, today's portable keyboards pack a powerful punch, with ever-expanding features and functionality. We touch base with four important suppliers in this category to get the skinny on what's driving sales in 2024, which specific models are flying off the shelves, and what's on the horizon for these versatile, compact instruments.

## Small Business Matters

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Award-winning MI retailer and educator Menzie Pittman spotlights one dealer – Grimey's New & Preloved Music in Nashville – to illustrate how crafting a unique shopping experience is vital to survival in today's retail climate.

## Anniversary

### 'Instantly Identifiable and Iconic' – The Fender Stratocaster at 70 20

From Buddy Holly to Eric Clapton, Jimi Hendrix to Jeff Beck, Stevie Ray Vaughan to Billie Joe Armstrong (the list is endless), legendary players have chosen the Fender Stratocaster for 70 years – and the instrument's popularity shows absolutely no signs of slowing down. *MMR* chats with Justin Norvell, EVP of Products at FMIC, about the Strat's 70th Anniversary.

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## Dealer Survey

### Rack 'em Up! – Sales of Keyboard Racks & Stands in 2024 22

Onstage or in the living room, in the subway station or in the studio, or outside at a birthday party, keyboard players need to place their instruments somewhere – that's where keyboard racks & stands come in! We sent out this month's survey to over 600 MI retailers to learn about trends driving sales in this market segment.



18



20



22

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GIG RIDER / GR9000



88-KEY KEYBOARD BAG / KBA4088



## Summertime Blues

By  
Christian  
Wissmuller

Summer's here (well, it's not "officially" here until June 20, but it sure feels like it already)! Family vacations, camping trips, beach-days, outdoor festivals, BBQs -- what's not to love about the season?

Well, if you're in the MI trade, you almost certainly know that, while these warmer months certainly have lots going for them, it's also often the most "dead" time of year when it comes to closing a sale. As Luciano Minetti of KORGE notes in this month's Roundtable feature on portable keyboards (page 14), "Sales performance typically experiences a slowdown across various product categories during the summer season."

We're not yet at back-to-school season, well past the holiday buying rush, and soon kids will be taking a break from their school music programs (and all related purchases of needed accessories and step-up instruments). Moreover, consumers are as/more likely to be considering the purchase of a boat or budgeting for a summer rental or flight to Europe during these months than thinking about forking over hard-earned wages for a new electronic drum kit to play indoors. On top of all of that, what had once been an annual gathering that pumped life into the industry, the Summer NAMM Show, is (for now, at least) no more. NAMM NeXT in Nashville will no doubt be a valuable July event for many, but it does not have the size or scope of the old trade show.

**“Consumers are as/more likely to be considering the purchase of a boat or budgeting for a summer rental or flight to Europe during these months than thinking about forking over hard-earned wages for a new electronic drum kit to play indoors.”**

So what to do? Some MI stores follow the model of their European counterparts and simply close for at least a portion of the summer. If the amount of instruments and gear you're selling represents revenue less than the costs associated with paying utility bills and your employees' salaries (and if said employees are all right with the arrangement, or have some other income sources to sustain them during the break in business), then -- sure, why not? Others -- particularly dealers in the more northern parts of the nation where temps aren't always so inviting -- leverage the wonderful weather to their advantage by hosting parking lot or sidewalk sales, putting on outdoor performances, or holding other "outside activities" to generate business. Still others, such as Grimey's New & Preloved Music, which is featured in this month's "Small Business Matters" column (page 18), are consistently embarking on unique initiatives and distinctively compelling events that make their location a "must visit" destination year-round.

For decades, *MMR* has been clocking this yearly "dry spell" for MI retail, but we'd be curious to know: How does your business survive and thrive during these summer months? Do you have any tips, strategies, or words of wisdom to share with your fellow MI store owners? Reach out at the email address below -- I'd love to hear from you!

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# MMR

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## Sellers on Reverb See Growth in Q1 2024, Outperforming Every Quarter of 2023

Reverb, the largest online marketplace dedicated to buying and selling used and new musical instruments, has announced that its sellers saw continued growth in Q1 2024, outpacing every quarter of 2023. This success is part of a larger trend that has seen sales on Reverb increase by nearly 50% since 2020, fueled by demand for used and outlet music gear.

As interest in competitively priced musical instruments continued to grow throughout Q1 2024, sellers on Reverb saw sales of used and outlet music gear outpace their respective sales from Q1 2023, with sales of outlet music gear increasing by 20%.

To further support seller sales growth throughout the quarter, Reverb continued to enhance its proprietary seller tools, improve onsite search functionality – making it easier for buyers to find sellers’ competitively priced gear – and invest in full-funnel marketing.

In Q1, Reverb’s marketing efforts focused on driving awareness to its sellers and their competitively priced gear generated over 375 million impressions across its social media channels and paid advertising. Coupled with localized advertising, this affordability-focused marketing has resonated well in the US and the UK, Re-



verb’s second largest market, leading to a 13% increase in sales in the UK in Q1 of 2024 compared to Q1 of 2023.

“For over a decade, music makers have turned to Reverb’s seller community to find their next sound, from unique, one-of-a-kind instruments to affordable, used alternatives,” said Reverb’s CMO Kristen Cho. “We make it easy for buyers and sellers to connect over the perfect piece of music gear. Increasingly, that means supporting our sellers as buyers search for deals and affordable gear to fit their budgets. With our specialization and focus on

affordability, we help sellers continue to grow their businesses and reach the next generation of music makers online.”

In Q1, Reverb generated buzz with music makers through affordability-focused video advertising campaigns and inspirational content. Notably, a campaign with award-winning blues rock guitarist Joe Bonamassa demonstrated how music gear totaling just \$1,000 can sound as good as a nearly priceless Jimi Hendrix setup.

To learn more about connecting with the millions of music makers on Reverb looking for competitively priced music gear, contact [sellerengagement@reverb.com](mailto:sellerengagement@reverb.com).



JBL’s Michael Mauser, entertainer Chrissy Teigen, NAMM’s John Mlynczak and JBL DJs ‘Two Friends.’

## NAMM Foundation, JBL Light Up Empire State Building

From May 17–19, the annual JBL Fest returned to New York City where part of the festivities included lighting the city’s famed Empire State Building in “JBL orange” — which also paid homage to its charity partner, The NAMM Foundation. John Mlynczak, NAMM president and CEO, JBL and Harman International CEO Michael Mauser, JBL ambassadors and DJs “Two Friends,” and entertainer Chrissy Teigen all took part in lighting the Empire State Building.

“JBL Fest embodies all that JBL has to offer from groundbreaking technology and unparalleled experiences to partnerships with talents like Madison Beer and Two Friends,” said Daniel Lee, Harman’s chief marketing officer. “JBL sits at the intersection of audio and culture, and there is no better place to celebrate than New York City, especially with the launch of the new JBL PartyBox series, marking a new milestone in our commitment to innovation.”

JBL Fest is a three-day brand experience that, this year, celebrated the launch of the newest additions to JBL’s PartyBox series – JBL PartyBox Club 120, JBL PartyBox Stage 320 and JBL PartyBox Wireless Mic.

## All Sam Ash Music Locations to Close, 100 Year-Old Chain Files for Bankruptcy

Liquidation sales continue at Sam Ash, which filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy on May 8.

“Unfortunately, in today’s post-COVID environment, the challenges to our brick-and-mortar business have necessitated a restructuring,” Sam Ash CEO and grandson of the founders David Ash said in a written statement, “We are exploring a number of strategic options in conjunction with these inventory sales. Stay tuned.”

On May 2, Sam Ash posted the following on Facebook:

*It is with a heavy heart that we announce that all Sam Ash Music store locations will begin store closing sales today. This unfortunate news also presents a fantastic opportunity for great deals across our premium selection of musical instruments & pro sound equipment. We will also be offering specials on [samash.com](http://samash.com) during this time. Thank you for allowing us to*



*serve musicians like you for 100 years. With much love and deep gratitude The Ash Family*

Sam Ash Music Corp. has long been the second largest MI retail chain in America, behind Guitar Center. In MMR’s most recent “America’s Top Music Chains” report from December, 2023, Sam Ash was believed to have 44 retail outlets in operation. In September of last year, longtime COO Sammy Ash passed away.

2024 marks the 100th anniversary of the storied MI institution.

## Roland Corporation Announces Executive Leadership Changes

Roland Corporation has announced that representative director and COO, CIO, Masahiro Minowa, has been appointed representative



Masahiro Minowa

director, CEO, and CIO, effective July 1, 2024. Representative director and CEO Gordon Raison has stepped down, effective June 30, 2024, for personal reasons.

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[pearlriverusa.com/portfolio/m2-digital-piano/](http://pearlriverusa.com/portfolio/m2-digital-piano/)

## PEARL RIVER

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## Applied Research & Technology Celebrates 40 Years

Applied Research and Technology, a division of Yorkville Sound, is proud to celebrate its 40th anniversary in 2024. ART was founded in Rochester, New York by a team of engineers who first worked together at legendary pedal company MXR: Phil Bette, Tony Gambacurta, John Langlois, Richard Neutrou, and Terry Sherwood.

The company originally focused on the recording market, and the first ART products were digital reverbs. “We set out to produce good, solid, reliable products,” recalls Steve Hendee, export manager at Yorkville Sound and one of ART’s original employees. “No bells and whistles, just affordable, easy to use, and built to stand the test of time.”

This design philosophy is exemplified by the product for which ART may be best known, the Tube MP. The compact tube microphone preamp was nominated for a prestigious TEC Award in 1996 for “Outstanding Technical Achievement” in the mic preamplifier technology category. It remains in production today and has earned the title of the world’s most popular external microphone preamp.

As with Hendee’s four-decade tenure, long relationships are a cornerstone of the brand. Yorkville Sound was an original distribution partner, and ART officially joined the Yorkville family in 1999. Manufacturing relationships have similar longevity: “We have been using the same manufacturer since the beginning,” he explains, “and treat each other as family.”

On the importance of customer relationships, Hendee observes “ART users are almost like a secret society. Those who know, know. It’s a great global community, with two-way dialogue about the gear, hacks, what’s coming up, and what we should build next.”

Today, ART product development is headquartered in Yorkville Sound’s offices outside of Toronto, and the brand has grown to also serve the live sound and installed sound markets. At the 2024 Winter NAMM Show, ART announced the new Solo Series – a trio of all-analog 1U rackmount tube processors, priced to be accessible to any recording musician.

More releases are planned throughout the anniversary year, and ART is also looking forward to the 30th anniversary of the Tube MP in 2025.

## ERA Music Acquires Meters Music

Musical instruments and musical accessories conglomerate ERA Music Brands is proud to announce the acquisition of Meters Music – marketed at launch as an audio brand bringing British bass and guitar amplifier specialist Ashdown Engineering’s legacy and expertise in design, engineering, and acoustic excellence to bear upon creating unique headphone and wireless audio products unifying lifestyle and audiophile aspirations – as of May 9.

Since launching globally from Las Vegas in January 2017 at CES – itself organized by the Consumer Technology Association as an annual trade show that is widely recognized as being the most powerful tech event in the world by virtue of acting as the proving ground for breakthrough technologies and global innovators – Meters Music has certainly succeeded in creating some unique audio products perfectly reflecting its apt appellation.

Amalgamating a patented and fully integrated VU (volume unit) meter with studio-quality sound, those products present an unmistakably striking aesthetic that initially attracted ERA Music Brands to Meters Music.

## PHASE DJ Selects American Music & Sound for U.S. Distribution

PHASE has announced the appointment of American Music & Sound (AM&S) as its new US distributor. American Music & Sound, an Exertis | Jam business, will represent the PHASE brand in the United States and all U.S. territories and regions including Puerto Rico.

AM&S is a company that has a deep understanding of the US market and has a clear vision of the trends in the wider technology landscape. AM&S distributes a number of leading DJ brands, an experience which will play an important role in the further development and expansion of the innovative DJ controller brand. Their team comprises dedicated account executives who are industry thought leaders, world-class audio engineers, musicians, marketing veterans, and sales talent. This unique team is well-positioned to grow the PHASE brand, and they have worked as an extension of many of the world’s top brands across multiple verticals, such as Allen & Heath, BASSBOSS, and Focusrite, among others.

The initial focus for AM&S will center around the Phase DJ controller technology. Using the innovative phase remotes on top of any turntable allows for real-time analysis of the rotation of the turntable movement, direction, and speed using advanced sensors. Then, they wirelessly send that information to the receiver through a custom radio protocol.

## supplierscene

### Tandem Drums Receives \$20k FedEx Small Business Award

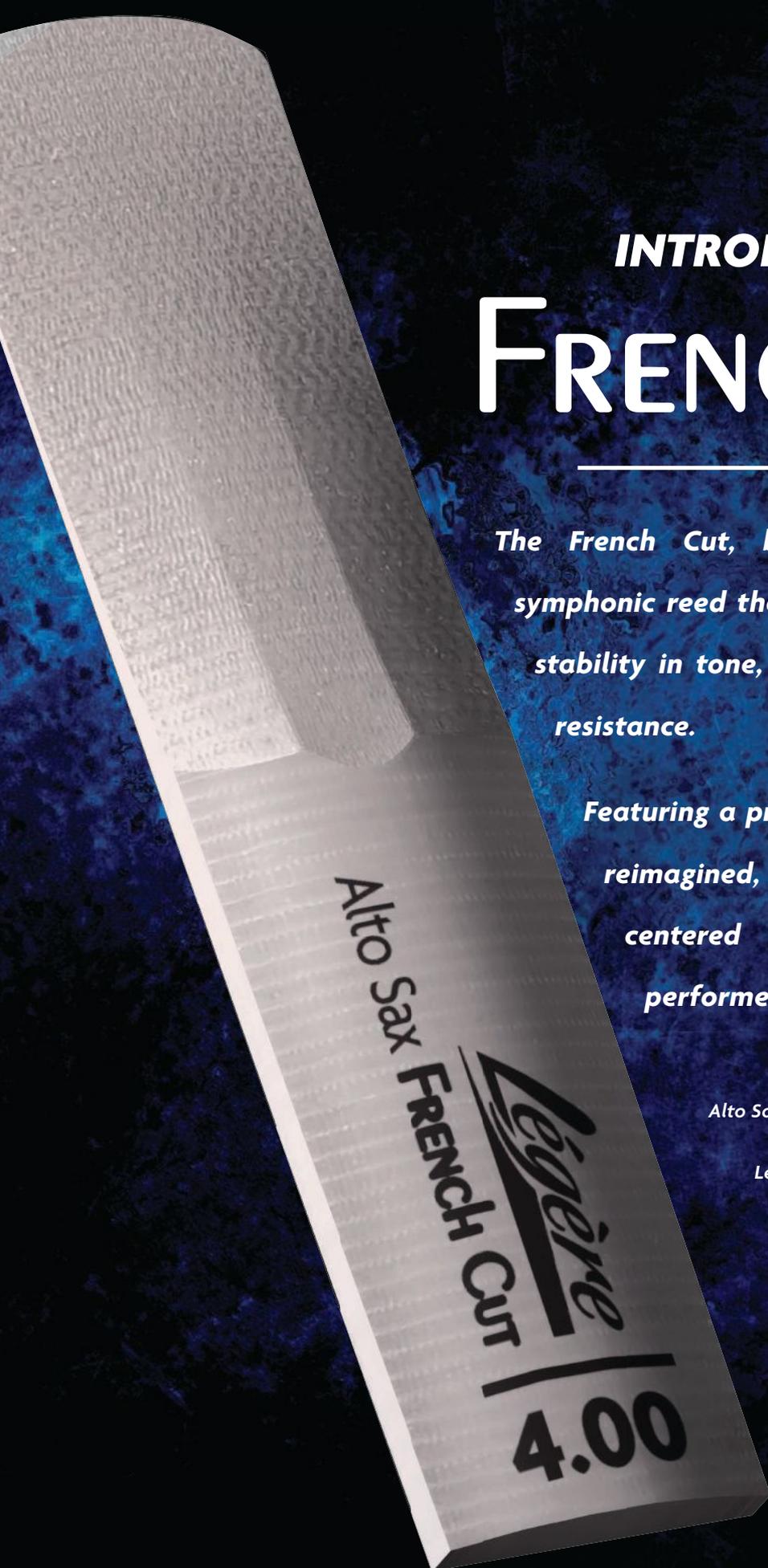
Tandem Drums has been named as a recipient in an announcement by FedEx as one of the 2024 Small Business Award Winners.

FedEx chose ten U.S.-based businesses to award its 2024 Small Business Grants. Out of the roughly 4,000 companies considered, Tandem Drums stood out and was announced as one of the recipients. Along with numerous business perks, the award includes a \$20,000 grant which Tandem will use to help grow its business. FedEx cites Tandem’s successful crowdfunding launch in 2023, its global distribution, and its commitment to using recycled materials in its product line as contributing factors to winning the award.

“We’re truly honored to be one of the few companies to win this award from FedEx. As a small business, the funds are extremely helpful, but more importantly we view this award as an important marker on our journey to building an incredible company with a compelling story. To be validated by a global brand like FedEx, from outside of the music industry, is a testament to the care and craftsmanship that we put into everything we do. We’re grateful for FedEx’s partnership both now and in the growth years ahead.” DK, founder, Tandem Drums

“At FedEx, we are dedicated to empowering our small and medium-sized business owners and equipping them with impactful resources for success. We’re thrilled to showcase these amazing entrepreneurs and are committed to helping their businesses thrive and grow.” Aimee DiCicco, senior vice president customer engagement marketing & retail channel solutions, FedEx

Tandem Drums launched in 2023 following a successful crowdfunding campaign for its first product line, Drops. Drops are a collection of drum effects designed by industrial designer and drummer Daniel Kushner, who previously founded MONO, the internationally acclaimed luggage and accessory brand.



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**letters**

Dear Christian,

This note is our thank you to *Musical Merchandise Review* magazine for your tribute to Mike Lewis in your "Trade Regrets" section of your April 24, 2024 issue, and a "Thank you, man" to Mike himself from the Gretsch family.

Mike first called me in 1997 to say that Fender was planning a special 50th Anniversary edition of their Broadcaster, Fender's first solidbody electric guitar which was introduced in 1950. Out of respect for the Gretsch Company, which owned the Broadcaster trademark, and considering the interactions and cooperation between Gretsch and Fender back in 1951 which led to Fender changing the name from Broadcaster to Telecaster, Mike was calling to ask permission to license the Broadcaster trademark to use on the 50 pieces of the special 50th Anniversary guitars that were to be introduced in 2000.

Mike called me again on August 19, 2002, to congratulate the Gretsch family on the new Gretsch/Fender licensing agreement that my longtime friend, Fender CEO Bill Shultz, and I had signed the Friday before. Now it would be Mike's job to shepherd the Gretsch Guitar brand into the 21st century, and boy, did Mike ever deliver. And with a drive and passion and determination that is now legendary.

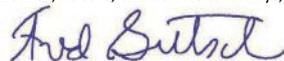
Of all the cool and important Mike Lewis vignettes, mark this one boldly as we approach Chet Atkins' 100th birthday anniversary this June: it was Mike who reconnected the Gretsch family to the Chet Atkins family so that in 2007, after a 27-year absence, a full lineup of Gretsch Chet Atkins signature guitars could once again hit the market and be better than ever.

Mike also earned the nickname of "Mikelele" around Fender Headquarters because of how well he resurrected Gretsch ukuleles, mandolins, and banjos to their rightful place of quality in the 21st century. Once while visiting Mike in his office, he made me a copy of "Uke-O-Rama," a classic ukulele CD he was listening to. Mike even autographed it for me. (If you have a cool Mike Lewis story to share, send it to me at PO Box 2468, Savannah, GA 31402 along with a mailing envelope that will fit a CD, and we'll send you a copy of that special ukulele CD.)

In the annals of legendary Gretsch greats: Jimmie Webster, Chet Atkins, Duane Eddy, George Harrison, et al., you can certainly add the name of Mike Lewis to that list. May Mike's amazing spirit, and all that he gave to this life, be lifted up by all who loved him.

In our hearts he will live forever.

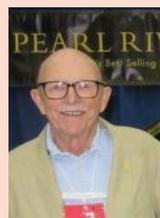
Be well, be safe, and be musical always,



Fred W. Gretsch  
4th Generation President  
The Gretsch Company

**traderequests**

Longtime MI industry veteran **David Campbell** passed away on May 18th.



Campbell graduated from Tufts University in 1957, with a degree in music and a minor in engineering, and followed up with additional music courses from the Berklee School of Music in Boston. After college he auditioned for, and became a member of the 440th US Army Band at Fort Bragg, NC. While in the Army, he performed in many concerts; served as drum major for on-field performances; and designed, built, and performed with one of the first sets of steel drums for the US Army. Throughout the years, Campbell played in all venues of music, from solo piano and organ, to trios, and large bands on his saxophone and other woodwind instruments.

As a member of the Piano Technicians Guild, Campbell developed relationships with individuals in the piano industry, which led him into a career in piano manufacturing. From Fayetteville, NC to Indiana, back to North Carolina, New York, Connecticut, and Virginia, David pursued his love for music, and developed skills for engineering in piano manufacturing. A master piano builder, Campbell designed and built both upright and grand pianos, and holds a U.S. patent in upright piano construction. Kimball, Currier, Knabe, Mason Hamlin, Chickering, Sohmer, Steinway, and Pearl River pianos have all benefited from Campbell's keen engineering mind for quality control and manufacturing techniques. In David's final commitment to the piano industry, he served as a highly preferred Steinway tuner and technician by solo artists, symphonies, and performing artists.

**people on the move**

**Lectrosonics**, the renowned manufacturer of world class wireless systems for broadcast, film, music, location sound, houses of worship, live sound and theatrical applications, is pleased to announce the appointment of **Gordon Moore** as chairman of the board of directors. He retired as president of Lectrosonics in September 2024, after a 35-year career with the company.



aged over 250 product lines, as well as multiple teams of sales, marketing, and retail purchasing professionals.

In his new role, Harris will be a brand ambassador for BASSBOSS and Ocean Way Audio's AeroWave live sound system. He will focus on dealer prospecting, support, trade show presentations, regional show support, and field rep management, among other responsibilities. His expertise in navigating both lucrative and challenging years in the MI industry will be instrumental in driving AM&S brands forward.

**American Music & Sound** is thrilled to announce the appointment of **Brian Harris** as the new market development manager, PA and Loudspeakers within the company's Pro Audio Division.



**Guitar Center Inc.** has appointed **Michael Martin** as executive vice president of Retail Sales and Operations, effective immediately. In his new role, Martin will oversee



and manage every facet of Guitar Center store operations and customer service excellence. He will report directly to CEO Gabe Dalporto.

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO

# CONQUER THE STAGE



UPGRADE YOUR KEYBOARD  
SETUP TODAY!

**HERCULES**  
STANDS

## Suzanne D'Addario Brouder Steps Down as D'Addario Foundation Director

After leading the D'Addario Foundation for 15 years, Suzanne D'Addario Brouder has stepped down, leaving the Foundation in the capable hands of Karen Shelley.

"I remain incredibly passionate about the Foundation, our initiatives, program partners, and students," Said D'Addario Brouder. "I am proud of everything we accomplished during my time here. I feel like the Foundation in many ways has been my baby, something I have nurtured to the best of my ability with the amazing and steadfast help of our team. We are at a very exciting inflection point at the D'Addario Foundation and I believe there is great potential to grow and broaden our impact."

To lead the Foundation going forward, they sought a leader with a strong background in fundraising and development. They found just that in new executive director Karen Shelley, who began on April 1.

Shelley is a nonprofit and social impact leader with more than 20 years of experience in partnership development. She began her career as an advertising copywriter for various educational publishing companies and went on to serve as a development professional for several nonprofit organizations. Most recently, she was director of development for the Harmony Program and director of strategic partnerships for the Society for Science. Other nonprofits she has served include the College Board, Single Stop, and College Advising Corps.



## Production Manager Dee Potter Marks Her 50<sup>th</sup> Year with Celestion

As Celestion, a premier manufacturer of guitar and bass loudspeakers and pro audio drivers for sound reinforcement applications, celebrates the company's 100th anniversary in 2024, it shines a spotlight on its longest-serving employee, production manager Dee Potter. With an illustrious 50-year career, Potter's journey embodies the essence of perseverance and dedication in a continually evolving industry.



Potter's start with Celestion dates back to 1974 when, at the age of 16, she joined her mother on the company's production line. In those days, Celestion was housed in an old building and conditions were less than ideal. "The roof leaked, and then the drains would leak," says Potter. "If we had torrential rain, we would get wet from the top and from the bottom. The floors were soaked. It wasn't a very glamorous place to work. At the time, we thought it was hilarious."

As Potter's exceptional career comes to a close in 2024, Celestion extends its heartfelt gratitude and best wishes for the future. Her contributions will forever be etched in the annals of the company's illustrious history.

Potter's start with Celestion dates back to 1974 when, at the age of 16, she joined her mother on the company's production line. In those days, Celestion was housed in an old building and conditions were less than ideal. "The roof leaked, and then the drains would leak," says Potter. "If we had torrential rain, we would get wet from the top and from the bottom. The floors were soaked. It wasn't a very glamorous place to work. At the time, we thought it was hilarious."

## Joshua Hernandez Joins Jupiter Band Instruments

Jupiter Band Instruments proudly welcomes renowned bass trombone and valve trombone recording artist Joshua Hernandez to its roster. Hernandez, a versatile musician based in Austin, Texas, joins Jupiter as a valve trombone artist, while also showcasing his talent on the Jupiter alto horn and XO bass trombone.



Hernandez's musical journey is marked by accolades and achievements. Perhaps most notably, he earned the bass trombone chair in the prestigious University of North Texas One O'Clock Lab Band and the Disney All American College Band. Hernandez is also a two-time Texas All-State band member, winner of the 2016 Dave Koz scholarship, and bass trombonist in the 2017 Jazz Band of America.

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INTEX

# HAVE KEYS, WILL TRAVEL

## Portable Keyboards in 2024

by Christian Wissmuller

deal for musicians on the go – be it to an impromptu session down the street, a lesson across town, rehearsals, or outdoor gigs – today’s portable keyboards pack a powerful punch, with ever-expanding features and functionality.

We touch base with four important suppliers in this category to get the skinny on what’s driving sales in 2024, which specific models of portable keyboards are flying off the shelves, and what’s on the horizon for these versatile, compact instruments.

### For your brand, what model(s) of portable keyboard is/are selling best so far in 2024?

**Rich Formidoni:** Our top-sellers continue to be our popular Casiotone keyboards, specifically the affordable CT-S200, CT-S300, and CT-S1. We’re particularly excited about the success of the CT-S1, which differentiates itself with its slim, stylish design and sound quality. It represents a bold new direction for a portable keyboard that has garnered praise and adoption from players of all skill levels.

**Leng Tshua:** Our model M2, which we launched at NAMM 2024 in January, is doing very well, indeed. We are especially excited about attracting this new type of buyers. They are

largely young artists and students, a new generation of music makers.

**Dane Madsen:** Most of our beginner portable keyboard models are transitioning to a new lineup this year. The completely redesigned PSR-E383 and its 76-key counterpart PSR-EW320 will undoubtedly carry on their best-selling predecessors’ success. There is a PSR-E283 priced below those two, but when customers decide to go with Yamaha, they don’t always choose the least expensive model. Better educational features, speakers, and touch sensitivity on the PSR-E383 and PSR-EW320 mean they get better value. Pay a little more and get a lot more. I’m sure this had something to do with those two price points being our best sellers.

**Luciano Minetti:** In the digital piano category, our top-selling portable model so far in 2024 is the Liano. This digital piano stands out with its semi-weighted keybed, built-in speakers, and ultra-thin design, measuring only 2.87 inches thick and weighing just over 13 pounds. It also offers the convenience of battery operation for up to eight hours, making it perfect for on-the-go performances, and it includes our premier Italian grand piano sample content.



**“Successful dealers go way beyond just unboxing portable keyboards for display.”**  
— Dane Madsen, Senior Manager, Product Marketing for Electronic Keyboards, Yamaha Corporation of America



In the synthesizer category, the limited edition microKORG Crystal maintains the same portable design as our all-time best-selling synthesizer, but now features a striking translucent body.

**What features – color, number of keys, built-in features, Bluetooth connectivity, et cetera – are most sought after by today’s players?**

**LT:** The M2 comes with 61-key and touch-responsive keyboard which is a winning combination for our end users. The unit is designed [to be] portable and lightweight for street performers to carry around on gigs routinely, and young music practitioners also prefer its mobility for their daily “work-out.” Our market response is very positive on the M2 piano-like experience with access to its “Support APP intelligent learning system,” enhanced with Bluetooth MIDI, and multiple built-in accompaniment. This model is flexible to suit a diverse learning and performing environment for everyone.

**DM:** If you include the more serious keyboard players, the colors are simple, and everything has drifted towards darker charcoal and black colors. Because arranger keyboards like the PSR-SX900 are Style-based, where often the left-hand controls the rhythm section and the right-hand plays more melodically, players want more keys when they can get them. Our flagship arranger, Genos 2, is only offered in 76 keys, so the musician has more flexibility with their chord voicings on the left and more keys for more individual instruments on the right. Another factor customers choose for Yamaha arrangers is the expandable content. They don’t want to be limited to the styles on the keyboard when they buy it. Yamaha has content developers worldwide, making styles in the genres that are most important to them. With so many cultures living within the U.S., they can all benefit from this downloadable content using our Voice & Style Expansion Pack.

**LM:** The features most sought after by today’s players vary depending on the type of customer and their specific needs. For digital piano buyers, keybed feel and size are critical to the performance experience. Our affordable piano models strike

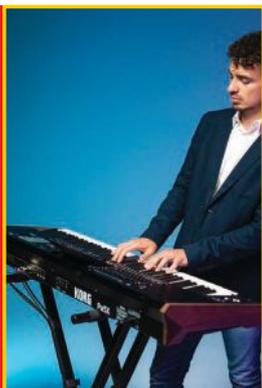
a balance between playability and portability. In contrast, our higher-end, furniture-style pianos offer elegant wood cabinetry, superior hammer action, and versatile connectivity options, including Bluetooth, USB, and MIDI.

**RF:** It depends entirely on where the player is in their musical journey. For beginners, the primary consideration is often a 61-key model with full-size, sometimes touch-responsive keys, so that the player can appreciate a piano-like experience right from the start. Bluetooth connectivity is becoming increasingly important within this segment since many customers are discovering how powerful, free learning apps significantly enhance the value of their portable keyboard purchase. As players advance, they prioritize style, portability, and the quality of built-in sounds, as depicted by the CT-S1.

**Do you feel most customers use these small portable keyboards for arranging, writing, performing?**

**DM:** Below \$500, the PSR-E series portable keyboards are more for learning or expanding upon what a customer has already learned. Above \$500, when you get into the PSR-SX and Genos 2 level of products, the uses tend to vary. For arranging purposes, the PSR-SX600 checks all the boxes with a variety of styles and the ability to put variations within a Style into a particular order. However, the quality and depth of the Voice library in a PSR-SX900 or a Genos 2 give the “one-man-band” musicians the extra sparkle they need to sound amazing live. When you’ve got an audience in front of you and are the only one on stage, you want to sound your absolute best. The higher-end Yamaha Voice and Style content delivers that experience.

**LM:** Absolutely all of the above. The ability to make music in any space is essential, making small portable keyboards ideal for arranging, writing, and performing. KORG’s product lineup is diverse, spanning multiple categories including pianos, synthesizers, stage keyboards, and workstations. In each category, we offer compact solutions to accommodate customers with space constraints. For example, in the synthesizer category, we have products like the wavestate, opsix, and modwave, which are available as keyless modules and in com-



**“The ability to make music in any space is essential, making small portable keyboards ideal for arranging, writing, and performing.”**  
— Luciano Minetti, KORG Category Manager





**“Our most successful retailers take advantage of our multi-product display options, grouping similar instruments for maximum effect.”**  
— Rich Formidoni, Product Marketing Manager, Electronic Musical Instruments, Casio America



pact 37-key, 61-key versions, and even software versions. In the workstation category, the KROSS2 61 provides a versatile selection of sounds in a lightweight, travel-friendly package. Our main goal is to provide our customers with a variety of options, allowing them to choose the size and features that best suit their needs and workflow.

**RF:** Writing is the most prevalent activity among the three options, particularly because many individuals utilize their Casiotone keyboards as USB MIDI controllers in their homes. They appreciate the space-saving design that’s essential for smaller workspaces. As for performing, it depends on the keyboard’s functionality. Given that more customers purchase a CT-S200 or CT-S300 versus the stage-ready CT-S500, live performance is less of an intended use for the category. While the arranger market is not as widespread in the USA as in other territories, many players rely on our built-in rhythms for practice, song-writing, or entertaining. All that said, our data indicates that most players use affordable, portable keyboards for learning and exploration.

**LT:** Practicing and live-performing in a given space, either at home, in-studio or on the street are all important to our end users. It is important to the new generation of “space makers” that their activity be elevated, so they may further explore their musical journey into a fruitful future, and yes: small portable keyboards are actually preferred here in this market segment – mostly used for performing in many diverse environments.

### **How do successful MI retailers go about displaying and marketing these types of keyboards? What are some strategies you’ve seen really connect with customers?**

**LM:** Live demos are essential for successful MI retailers. Customers need to experience making music on our instruments firsthand when visiting a store. This is best achieved through a dealer network that prioritizes in-store displays with powered-on and ready-to-play instruments.



**LT:** Having the keyboard set up in the showroom with a good display always generates curiosity and interest. Providing a friendly, keyboard-testing site for tryouts within the given space, with expert sales professionals on-hand to guide the customers, ensures success in sales.

**RF:** Simply having the keyboard set up at a comfortable playing height, clean, and powered on can make all the difference, especially for “I’m just looking” shoppers who prefer to explore independently before engaging with a salesperson. To address this, we’ve found success with on-product POP materials featuring quick step-by-step instructions. Additionally, our most successful retailers take advantage of our multi-product display options, grouping similar instruments for maximum effect.

**DM:** Successful dealers go way beyond just unboxing portable keyboards for display. There’s so much downloadable content, even for keyboards below \$200. Yamaha partners with Hal Leonard to make sure that easy-piano arrangements of best-selling sheet music titles have special compatibility with our keyboards. Our “You Are the Artist” library of XG song files is easy to download to a laptop ([www.yamaha.io/yata](http://www.yamaha.io/yata)) and drag and drop directly into the keyboard’s memory. This lets customers play with recorded arrangements of popular songs at any tempo on a PSR-E383 right in the store for dealers who install songs on their floor models. This gets even more important on the new lighted-key EZ-310, where it actually shows you which notes to play. Up on the higher-end keyboards, each with hundreds of Styles to choose from, the challenge is to know which songs to perform using which Style. Successful arranger keyboard dealers install a custom Playlist with actual song names. Select a song name, and in one step, the correct Style is chosen, the variation and temp are set, and even the right-hand Voice gets called up so you can start performing the song faster. This is amazing to customers; you know a few songs by heart. All the hard work is done for them, and all they have to do is play.

**Do you have any recently released or upcoming portable keyboard models you’d like to highlight or preview?**

**“We are especially excited about attracting this new type of buyers. They are largely young artists and students, a new generation of music makers.”**  
— Leng Tshua, Global Sales and Marketing Director, Pearl River Piano Group



**RF:** While we could go on about the CT-S1, let's not forget the CT-S1000V and CT-S500. Beyond the CT-S1000V's unique vocal synthesis feature, both keyboards have stories to tell that may not be immediately evident on the sales floor. Their most noteworthy features include exceptionally high-quality built-in tones, extensive DSP effect customization, and overall suitability as stage keyboards. Personally, I often tote a CT-S1000V in our SC-650 backpack case on the subway to rehearsals, and my band has been very impressed with its sound.

We don't have any announcements about upcoming models just yet, but rest assured, we're always working on something. Stay tuned for updates!

**DM:** The entry-level models were just refreshed in the spring. PSR-E273 became PSR-E283, PSR-E373 became PSR-E383, PSR-EW310 became PSR-EW320, and the lighted key EZ-300 became EZ-310. These are pretty significant upgrades, so we encourage dealers to get them in stores early to familiarize themselves with the lineup before the holiday.

**LT:** We should mention the popular P200 which was given a new make-over at NAMM 2024, and is now dressed in psychedelic green-purple-pink exteriors with enhanced features such as an Italian weighted keyboard, combined with vocal synthesis feature, and unique adaptability to live performance for professional users. We are starting to see a new emerging market for this model.

**LM:** Two of our latest releases showcased at NAMM 2024 in our portable synthesizer lineup are the KingKORG NEO and the microKORG2. Both are compact virtual analog digital synthesizers featuring vocoders. If you're deliberating between the two, the microKORG2 introduces several enhancements,

including an updated color display with animations for guiding sound shaping, alongside a loop recorder and vocal effects. The KingKORG NEO offers plenty of knob-per-function controls, full-size keys, and 18 diverse filter types including modeled filters after five classic vintage synthesizers.

**Are your expectations that sales of portable keyboards will increase, remain level, or decrease in the coming months?**

**DM:** Summer is usually a slower time for entry-level keyboards. But a ramp-up to holiday begins around the back-to-school season. Strong online competition from low-end B-brands is impacting the category for first-time buyers. Our goal is to put quality products in front of quality salespeople to help customers get the experience and guidance they expect when buying a brand like Yamaha.

**LT:** As we are relatively new in exporting to the worldwide digital market and have penetrated 112 countries, including the United States, in a relatively quick time-span, we are optimistic that growth in sales is inevitable and further development in technology [will be] the key to our success.

**LM:** Although sales performance typically experiences a slowdown across various product categories during the summer season, we anticipate a significant opportunity during the back-to-school season.

**RF:** As we continue to navigate the ongoing adjustments following the peak of the pandemic, we're observing encouraging developments. We anticipate that sales will remain steady throughout the summer and rise during the holiday season, above last year's level. 



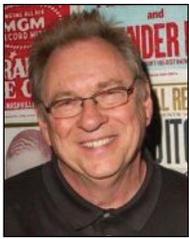
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GET MORE INFORMATION

# The Evolving Independent Music Store - Part II



By  
Menzie  
Pittman

As I wrote last month's article, Sam Ash had just announced the music store venture would be closing 16 store locations. That was certainly a shockwave, but it pales in comparison to the announcement that followed. Sam Ash has now reported it will be closing all 44 physical locations.

Readers of this column know the music retail business has only become harder and independent music stores must use unique tools to sustain any chance of growth. That is also true for independent bookstores. The

model is not dead, but it's not easy either. It takes a fair amount of hubris, as well as bold creativity, to be able to tolerate the challenges an independent store faces today.

If you think back a few years, even Best Buy wanted in on the music gear action, and although Best Buy's gear model was launched, it was eliminated within a year, and their music education attempt never got off the ground. By this point, perhaps we can all agree that the "big box" model has seen its heyday.

So, where does that leave independent music stores? The biggest challenge I see for today's independent music stores is that to sustain success, you must have a unique hook. That is the only creative capital that will differentiate you, and that only gets harder as inflation keeps stealing our lunch money.

Is the internet the only road that lies ahead? I would say no because I still think unique retailers have a good run ahead of them, although I stress the word unique! An example of a model that I believe best represents the future of independent music stores is, oddly, a pre-loved record/book store in Nashville. The shop is called Grimey's. Why is Grimey's the model that I think works in today's consumer experience? Let's look under the hood. The first capital Grimey's has is *vibe*, and it has tons of it. It also has specialized knowledge, and the shop is way cooler than a Barnes & Noble. It's because of that *vibe* that Grimey's attracts a very loyal following.

When new records are released, Grimey's picks a hand full of high-profile artists with iconic album covers and paints the cover-art in a large format on their building. Grimey's is constantly repainting the building as it changes out album covers monthly, or with special releases like Taylor Swift, or Kacey Musgraves. Both Swift and Musgraves also support Grimey's, and on occasion pop in with surprise visits or hold record release events at the location.

Grimey's first floor consists of pre-loved and new vinyl music; at the back of the room there is a cozy stage where shows by local artists, as well as high profile artists like Musgraves, take place. But the "cool factor" doesn't stop there. Downstairs at Grimey's is a bookstore, besides unique new releases, many of the titles are unusual books that may be hard to find. Both floors have great music



featured, and knowledgeable salespeople that are more than willing to help you navigate your way through the cool setup. I have no doubt David Sanborn leads their playlist this week.

So how does this all tie into the evolving model of independent music stores? The answer is simple. The market for the small box model isn't changing; it has already changed. You can thank COVID, greed, or inflation. But the shiny big box model has not worked for a while, and selling gear as a small box isn't enough to sustain the cost of running a shop as easily as it was, even just a few years ago. You need additional offerings in today's market. Multiple layers of offerings are your best defense.

In today's challenging marketplace, the new model has to have *vibe*, and lots of it. It must have "feel," and it must have specialized knowledge. If just price alone still worked, the landscape for music retail would still be thriving, and that is not the case. So, the road for the independent music store model must be based on experience, and it can't be typical. It must be uniquely creative, artful, and innovative. The good news is the unique business model is back in vogue; it's appreciated and celebrated now more than ever. That's right, we are going back in time. Aren't you glad you kept your turntable?

So, when the kitchen sink is being thrown at you, it's time to put on your tap shoes and show your customers you can also dance. Think of ways to differentiate yourself from others. Then all that is left to do is to hope that the customer recovers from the current inflation pressures and hopefully finds a way to rekindle their passion for music. It is our job to show them how! 🎶🎶🎶

*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."*

“The shiny big box model has not worked for a while, and selling gear as a small box isn't enough to sustain the cost of running a shop as easily as it was, even just a few years ago.”

# No Matter the Business, Certain Principles Apply



by **Izzy Kharasch**

Since starting my consulting business, Hospitality Works, in 1987, I have come to realize something: Most of what I've learned can be applied to almost any business in almost any industry.

Maybe you're trying to help your music retail business climb out of the red and back to profitability. Maybe you are wondering how to improve your social media reviews. If you hone in on one or more of the following three key principles, a business like yours can make a course correction, improve its operations, and start making the numbers look better.

### 1. Invest in great service

A lot of businesses attribute negative reviews to their staff having a "bad day." In actuality, it all starts with service.

If a customer to your store is left waiting, if the salesperson is talking on his or her cell phone, if the billings are incorrect, business is being driven away before a potential customer even gets to see you, and there will be a one- or two-star review on Yelp or Google. A music-related company can avoid this by investing in service training, along with training specific to their industry, and weeding out employees who can't meet the standard. Of course, the best employee would be the one with a musical background.

Another mistake is not having enough staff to provide good service. Controlling costs is one thing. Serving customers badly, or not serving them at all, by skimping on staff is a recipe for disaster.

### 2. Watch the numbers and devise an action plan if they're not adding up

It's true no matter what business you're in: the numbers are what will help you grow (or lose) a business. A owner who is investing in a business that is outside their expertise must trust their partners, but only up to a point. As the old journalism motto goes, "If your mother says she loves you, check it out."

**“A lot of business owners like to keep information about the business close to the vest and not share it with their employees. This is a big mistake.”**

If a retailer thinks, "Our business is going gangbusters, but we're still losing money," something is wrong. This could be problems with how the books are kept, problems at the bank – or even a dishonest employee embezzling funds. Profit-and-loss statements have to be reviewed at least every 30 days, and if you seem to be doing good business but are still losing money, start trying to find out why.

Beyond that, though, you must devise a strategy for addressing the issues. One way to get the information is to access and study all of the business' accounts.

### 3. Share information with staff

A lot of business owners like to keep information about the business close to the vest and not share it with their employees. This is a big mistake. A business owner should meet regularly with staff, let them know how the business

is doing, and get their ideas on how to improve. "No secrets" is my operating strategy.

Can following these three principles guarantee a business or investment will succeed? No, because there are a lot of other factors, such as a tight labor market, the economy, and technological trends that are not in an individual's control. However, the odds can be improved by applying these simple precepts.

All business is the same. If everybody is focused on the right things – costs, revenue, customer service – the business, itself, doesn't matter and the bottom line will bring music to your ears. **BARBARI**

*Izzy Kharasch is a consultant and founder of [www.HospitalityWorks.com](http://www.HospitalityWorks.com). He works with all types of businesses and is offering a free consultation by emailing him at [Izzy@hospitalityworks.com](mailto:Izzy@hospitalityworks.com)*

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# Instantly Identifiable and Iconic



Fender's new 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Stratocaster Collection includes the Player, American Professional II, American Vintage II, and Vintera II Antigua

## The Fender Stratocaster at 70 by Christian Wissmuller

Famed producer, writer, and performer Nile Rodgers plays his Hitmaker Stratocaster



From Buddy Holly to Eric Clapton, Jimi Hendrix to Jeff Beck, Stevie Ray Vaughan to Billie Joe Armstrong (the list is endless), legendary players have chosen the Fender Stratocaster for 70 years – and the instrument's popularity shows absolutely no signs of slowing down. It's, of course, not just famous names who are drawn to the iconic Strat, as guitarists of all skill levels snatch up various models of the instrument in volume, year after year.

*MMR* recently spoke with Justin Novell, EVP, Products at Fender, about the Stratocaster's 70th, how the company plans to celebrate the milestone throughout 2024, and some of the new Anniversary models being released!

**Before we get to the special anniversary models, let's start by discussing why you – someone who has quite a lot of knowledge on the subject – believe the Stratocaster became the iconic instrument it is today. Not just MI folks, but literally nearly anyone with any awareness of musical instruments can identify a Strat just by its silhouette and so many players across**

**so many genres have embraced, and continue to embrace it. Why do you feel that is?**

I think there are three main reasons why the Stratocaster has retained its relevance and remained so enduringly popular for so long. The first is that the sound of a Strat has become synonymous with so many iconic artists and songs over the last seven decades, and these artists continue to inspire new generations of players. Eric Clapton and George Harrison grew up listening to Buddy Holly in the '50s and were inspired to pick up Strats, and they in turn inspired countless others to do the same, and so on and so on. The second reason is a Strat is the perfect vessel for self-expression. You can play pretty much any genre of music on a Strat – pop, rock, jazz, blues, funk – and whilst it will sound like a Strat, you can also carve out your own unique sound. And finally, the design and look is something that was striking at the time of its launch, and has endured to become something that is instantly identifiable and iconic within the framework of music and creative expression... if people are asked to draw a guitar from their minds, many draw a Stratocaster!

**Getting down to the all-new 70th anniversary models (fun fact: I have one of the 50th anniversary Strats. I'm old...) – can you talk about why the first batch released (70th Anniversary Player, 70th Anniversary American Professional II, et cetera) right before the holidays was comprised of those specific models? What's behind the slow roll-out of the instruments throughout the anniversary year? Is it mostly just to "prolong the fun?"**

"Prolonging the fun" is a great way of putting it. As this is such a big anniversary, we wanted the celebration to last all year long and let each model have its respective moment in the sun. They are all very special to us, so we didn't want to play favorites!

**Of the anniversary model Strats you can discuss at this time which have really connected with players and what qualities do you think make those models stick out? Are any of them already sold-out or near to being there?**

With this anniversary collection, we wanted to celebrate the past, present, and future of Stratocasters, and to ensure there was a model for every kind of player. So for vintage enthusiasts, there's the American Vintage II 1954 Stratocaster with period-correct specs and the Vintera II Strat with the incredible Antigua finish.



Fender 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Player Stratocaster Nebula Noir

For players with more modern-leaning sensibilities, there's the Nebula Noir Player Strat or the Ultra Stratocaster HSS with noiseless pickups, rolled fingerboards, and locking tuning machines perfect for fast playing. There are so many different types of Strat players out there who value different qualities, but we feel we've managed to cater to lots of them, and the collection is proving very popular!

**Are there others yet to come that you are especially excited about? Aside from these special anniversary Strats, does FMIC have any special events, promotions, et cetera lined up for 2024 to mark the 70-year milestone?**

That's it for anniversary models, but we have lots more in store to celebrate the 70-year milestone. You may have already seen our hero film, "Voodoo Child: Forever Ahead of Its Time" where 10 incredible artists – Nile Rodgers, Ari O'Neal, Tom Morrello, Mateus Asato, Tyler Bryant, Rebecca Lovell, Simon Neil, REI, Tash Sultana, and Jimmie Vaughan – came together to pay tribute to one of the Stratocaster's most legendary riffs. Elsewhere, we have more content to follow – including "Strat Sessions" with some amazing players – and our "Show Us Your Strat" giveaway campaign ran from April 22-June 2, where we invited our community to share their personal Strat stories for a chance to win one of 70 anniversary guitars.

**How are savvy MI dealers leveraging the 70th anniversary – both the special models and the milestone itself – to attract customers and draw attention to their own businesses?**

There are countless methods – celebrating the last 70 years of iconic guitars, 70 years of iconic artists, sounds, songs, et cetera. It can be a year-long dialogue – pulling out older interviews, making lists (Top Stratocaster artists or songs, et cetera) – just really reminding people not of the properties of the American Pro Strat versus the Ultra Strat, but really getting back to what makes a Strat great: the sounds, the modularity and serviceability, the design... the cultural impact. Celebrating the form rather than just the specific models. Connecting the products to what people have done with them and their cultural relevance- it speaks to the value built up in what the Stratocaster has become!

**As the Strat looks to the next 70 years, how do you envision the guitar continuing to evolve with innovation and technology? To what extent do you view the Stratocaster as a "legacy instrument," which in many respects really can and should only be "tinkered**



**"Whilst the basic ingredients for a Stratocaster have remained largely unchanged for the last 70 years, we're always tinkering and trying new things, and that was the same for Leo Fender way back in the '50s."**

**– Justin Norvell  
EVP, Products at Fender**

**with" so much vs. to what extent do you think the future is an open book?**

Whilst the basic ingredients for a Stratocaster have remained largely unchanged for the last 70 years, we're always tinkering and trying new things, and that was the same for Leo Fender way back in the '50s. The '57 Strat was different to the '54 Strat, and the '59 was different again. He would experiment with different materials and specs, and that's something we think it's important to continue, so that we're always innovating and never just relying on the past. We like to use the term "coloring inside the lines." Whilst some things about the Strat will never change, we'll always continue to fine tune and try new things, like inventing new noiseless pickups. At the same time, we'll always continue to offer vintage models like the 70th Anniversary AVII 1954 Stratocaster, so we're catering to the purists too.

**Anything else on the topic you'd like to share with MMR readers?**

Just the honor it is to be in this industry and to be able to help steward such iconic and heavy legacies. I often say that here in MI, we are in the "dream business." We make our art, so people can make their art – their music. 

# Rack 'em Up!

## Sales of Keyboard Racks & Stands in 2024

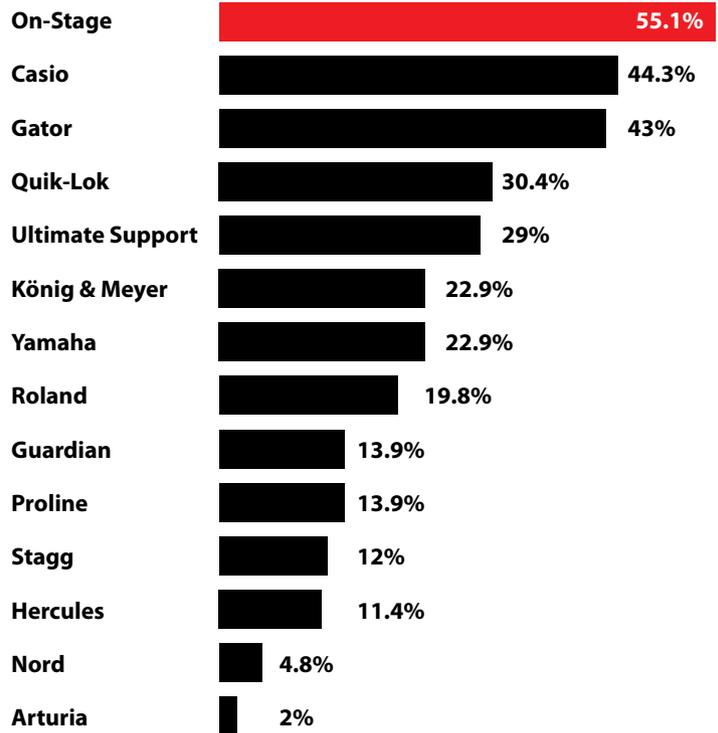
By Christian **Wissmuller**



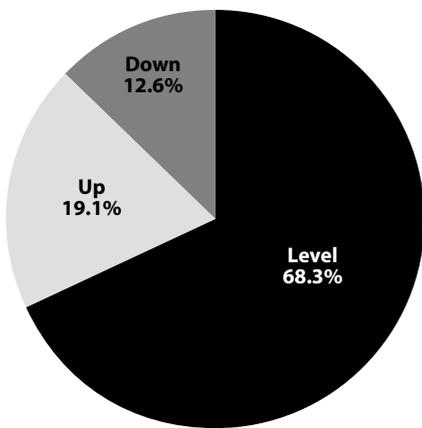
**O**n stage on in the living room, in the subway station or in the studio or outside at a birthday party, keyboard players need to place their instruments somewhere (unless you're a keytar player) – enter keyboard stands & racks!

Results from this survey were pretty consistent. Most consider sales to be level, compared to last year and the vast majority find X-style racks to be, by far, the most popular with consumers.

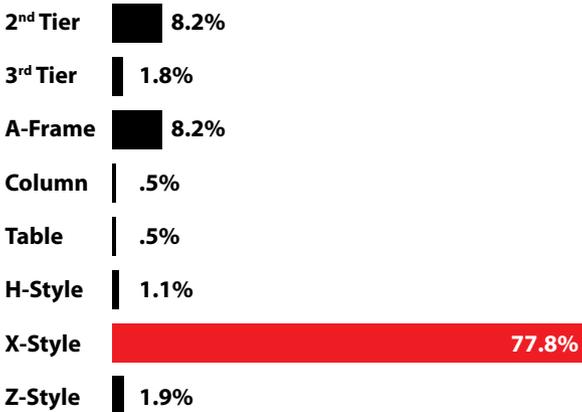
### What brands of keyboard racks & stands are top sellers for your business?



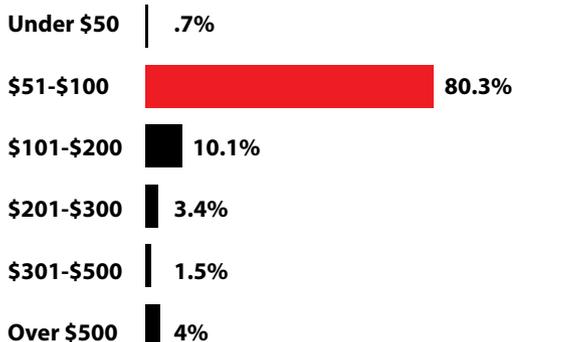
### Compared to this time in 2023, sales of keyboard racks & stands at your store are...



### What stand/rack style is most popular at your store?



### What price point for these products is driving the majority of sales?



### What trends have you been noticing when it comes to keyboard stands & racks?

"There doesn't seem to be a division between 'consumer' and 'pro' stands anymore. Most everything available, other than custom rigs, are suitable for most needs."

**Chris Crump**  
Vesely Music  
Parowan, Utah

"We sell more keyboard stands than keyboards, which tells me people come to us to buy a stand for a keyboard they bought online."

**Ed Intagliata**  
Cassell's Music  
San Fernando, California

"We have been seeing an increase in 2-tier stands in the past six months."

**Scott Gilreath**  
Musical Depot, LLC  
Florence, South Carolina

"Customer choices haven't changes much for us in the past year. X-stands from good, better, and best take up the lion's share of sales. A-frame stands are a distant second-place."

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

## PRO AUDIO

### IK Multimedia Unveils iLoud MTM MKII, the Next Generation of Its Acclaimed iLoud Monitors

IK Multimedia proudly welcomes iLoud MTM MKII into the iLoud studio-quality monitor family. While maintaining the original's iconic MTM design, the MKII further surpasses the limits of its compact size to offer enhanced sound and features that dramatically elevate performance.



Available as a pair, 11-speaker immersive bundle or individually, the MTM MKII represents a significant step forward in output and flexibility to improve sonic performance in even more environments. The MKII offers improved speaker drivers, off-axis response, power efficiency and SPL, higher onboard processing power, double the DSP and the latest award-winning ARC room correction built-in. X-MONITOR is now integrated into the workflow, giving MTM MKII users expanded options to monitor and mix confidently.

#### Ultra-nearfield for Critical Mixing

MTM MKII houses a pair of 3.5" high-performance woofers and one 1" high-definition, back-chamber loaded tweeter with improved drivers. These deliver superior volume and low end while providing increased clarity and mid-range articulation. The Mid-range-Tweeter-Midrange design (D'Appolito configuration) gives ultra-precise, defined, point-source sound that traditional 2-way systems can't achieve at close distances. The result is more balanced mixes with less ear fatigue.

#### Deeper, More Powerful Bass

MTM MKII delivers even more of the legendary "iLoud physics-defying sound", offering an improved 36 Hz bass extension (-10 dB) and higher SPL levels. The increased bass and volume allow MTM MKII to replace far larger speakers, enabling reference-quality monitoring in even more situations.

#### Work Faster with More Accuracy

Thanks to the MTM MKII's tight vertical dispersion, the acoustic impacts of desktop placement and room reflections are minimized to ensure accuracy on every project. The wide horizontal dispersion provides a broader sweet spot than the previous generation and a smoother in-room response. Improved power efficiency and an extended max SPL also offer flexibility for FOH, immersive speaker setups or other volume-dependent tasks.

#### Next-generation ARC Room Correction

The MTM MKII adds a new way to get the best sound in any room with a deeper, more comprehensive ARC auto-calibration. Using technology from the flagship iLoud Precision series, this 4-space measurement offers an unmatched level of definition and reliable translation in virtually any environment. Connecting the provided ARC MEMS microphone (included free with any iLoud MTM MKII pair or immersive bundle) to each speaker's mic input, users will be ready to go in minutes with the perfect sound for the room – in any room.

#### The World's Best Monitors in One

Featuring IK's award-winning X-MONITOR integration, the iLoud MTM MKII now offers complete control over every speaker element beyond its rear panel controls. For example, X-MONITOR gives the MTM MKII precise delay compensation between units for superior stereo imaging. Users can also A/B mixes by switching virtual monitoring voices, which emulate the frequency and phase response of over 20 top studio monitors and reference systems with breathtaking realism.

#### For the Technical Crowd

- Inside a sleek design, the MTM MKII packs innovative

technology to offer its user the best sonic experience possible from a compact monitor.

- Lighter and stiffer mid-woofers go down to 36 Hz with improved midrange clarity and articulation for more accurate mixing.
- Extended ultra-flat frequency response now at 48 Hz to 28 kHz  $\pm$  2dB compared to 50 Hz to 24 kHz  $\pm$  2 dB of the original iLoud MTM.
- Double the onboard processing power at 96 kHz (up from 48 kHz), delivering better transparency and resolution.
- Improved horizontal dispersion results in a broader sweet spot and smoother in-room response while controlling vertical dispersion.
- More efficient power management raises a single unit's maximum SPL to 112.5 dB compared to its predecessor's 110.5 dB.
- The latest ARC correction algorithms from iLoud Precision produce unmatched definition and translation reliability for a monitor this size and price.

There's never been a compact monitoring system as powerful – and versatile – as iLoud MTM MKII.

#### Pricing and Availability

iLoud MTM MKII monitors can be ordered now from the IK Multimedia online store, and IK authorized dealers worldwide at the following prices:

- iLoud MTM MKII (Single) – \$/€399.99\* – ARC MEMS microphone not included.
- iLoud MTM MKII (Pair) – \$/€799.99 – Includes ARC MEMS microphone.
- iLoud MTM MKII (11-Speaker Immersive Bundle) – \$/€3,999.99 – Includes ARC MEMS microphone.

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

## ACCESSORIES

### Electro-Harmonix Refreshes its First-Ever Effect with the LPB-3 Linear Power Booster & EQ



Before there was Muff, there was boost. The LPB-1 Linear Power Booster was originally discovered by EHX founder Mike Matthews while working with engineer Bob Myer to develop the very first Big Muff Pi pedal for Electro-Harmonix. Bob had overestimated the output of guitar pickups and built an outboard booster to boost the guitar signal going into his original circuit design. Curious about the little box hanging off of the Big Muff, Mike asked Bob show him what would happen if only the booster box was used with the guitar an amp. The resulting volume levels blew Mike away and he knew he had his first product. Over 5 decades and millions of pedals later, Electro-Harmonix is proud to introduce their latest Linear Power Booster & EQ, the LPB-3.

Housed in EHX's Nano-sized chassis, the LPB-3 is capable of boosting up to +33dB of clean gain with the powerful tone shaping of a 3-band EQ with parametric Mids. BOOST sets the overall output of the pedal with the MAX switch toggling between 20dB and 33dB of maximum boost. Use the PRE-GAIN knob to fine-tune the total gain and volume of the boost. The 3-Band EQ features TREBLE and BASS knobs to control the highs and lows plus a parametric Mids.

This Swiss Army boost pedal's additional features include selectable Buffered/True Bypass switching and internally extended 30V power rails for enhanced headroom. The EHX LPB-3 comes equipped with standard EHX 9 Volt power supply, will be available in June 2024 and have a U.S. street price of \$129

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

## Pig Hog Magnetic Cable Loops Keep Cables & Accessories Right Where You Need Them

New Magnetic Cable Loops from Pig Hog are here to deliver the future of cable and accessory organization, keeping cables, headphones and other everyday items tidy, ready to go, and exactly where you need them to be. These versatile loops are made of thick, premium polyurethane leather, with dual 20mm magnets for fast application or bundling, and easily affix to most metal surfaces, such as stands, drum kits, chairs, desks, lockers, carts and more, for nearly endless flexibility.



With a luxurious feel, Pig Hog Magnetic Cable Loops are both durable and flexible, and are the fastest, most simple way to keep cables or accessories close at hand on stage, in the studio, or on the go. Better than traditional cable wraps or cable ties, Magnetic Cable Loops can also be stacked together, to keep multiple individual cables conveniently wrapped and organized together. Whether used one at a time or to manage groups of cables, Magnetic Cable Loops will help keep any working environment clutter free. Beyond cables & headphones, use Pig Hog Magnetic Cable Loops as impromptu drum mutes, stud-finders, or to hang just about anything anywhere!

Pig Hog Magnetic Cable Loops are sold in packs of 2, and are covered by a 1-year warranty. Each Loop measures 7.8" by 1.3" (200mm by 34mm). MSRP: \$29.95; MAP: \$14.95

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

## RockBoard Handle Set

The Handle Set is the perfect solution for safely and comfortably lifting the RockBoard Pedalboard out of the gig bag or flightcase while protecting the adjacent pedals. It meets the highest standards of quality and functionality. The ergonomically shaped handles provide a comfortable and secure grip, allowing for effortless carrying of the pedalboard. Made from durable and robust material, they ensure reliable durability and stability during equipment transport.



Installing the Handle Set is incredibly simple and requires no complex tools. Thanks to its adaptability, it can be easily attached to all RockBoard models. Handle sets for the RockBoard DUO, TRES, QUAD & CINQUE series feature:

- easy mounting in the slot grid of the RockBoard pedalboard for a secure hold
- powder-coated steel, black surface
- mounting screws and tools
- Dimensions (L x W): 129 x 52 mm / 5 5/64" x 2 3/64"
- Weight: approx. 80 g / 0.18 lb. (set)

[www.rockboard.de](http://www.rockboard.de)



## PRINT & DIGITAL

### The Tradition Expands: Kendor Music Publishing Announces New Jazz Ensemble Music

Kendor Music Publishing is thrilled to announce the release of its jazz ensemble music for 2024-2025 featuring new charts from Kendor Music Publishing, including the release of seven new full-score

editions in the Sammy Nestico Jazz Series, as well as Doug Beach Music. Four new composers join veteran voices in the Kendor Music Publishing line-up, expanding the tradition of this beloved and storied publishing house.

"I couldn't be more excited to share our new Kendor Jazz catalog, including the Sammy Nestico full-score editions, and new releases from Doug Beach Music," says Kendor Music Publishing jazz and instrumental editor Blair Bielawski. "Our composers, who are dedicated to nurturing Jazz musicians of all ages, have done an exceptional job creating music that pays tribute to our rich heritage and tradition while introducing fresh and engaging sounds. We've got great new charts that encourage improvisation at all levels to help foster musical exploration while building valuable ensemble skills."

New this year, Kendor Music Publishing is thrilled to release new editions of seven masterworks by the legendary composer and arranger, Sammy Nestico, in full-score versions. During the years that Sammy Nestico wrote for the Count Basie Orchestra, he composed landmark pieces that became staples in the repertoire of Jazz Ensembles across the world. Until now, seven of these outstanding charts were only available with a condensed score. Kendor Music Publishing is releasing full-score versions of these seven charts: Hay Burner, It's Oh, So Nice, Magic Flea, The Queen Bee, Switch in Time, That Warm Feeling, and Ya Gotta Try. For the first time, these pieces are available with full scores and the parts have been meticulously edited to address inconsistencies in the original editions. Aside from being an invaluable tool for the director in rehearsal, these new releases offer insight into how Nestico wrote for the Basie Orchestra, providing key resources for study and exploration.

Kendor Music Publishing's 2024-2025 new release includes original and arranged charts from Kris Berg, Peter Blair, Vince Gassi, Dave Hanson, Jeff Jarvis, Clifton Jones, Andrew Lesick, Jamie Roth, Ellen Rowe, Craig Skeffington, Terry White, and Greg Yasnitsky. Doug Beach Music's 2024-2025 release features composers Doug Beach, Denis DiBlasio, Michele Fernández, George Shutack, Mike Tomaro, and Bret Zvacek.

With Kendor Music Publishing's interactive online resources making the selection process easy and streamlined, directors can access free professional recordings and ScoreVideos for each new chart, as well as Composer Insights videos where composers share inspiration and details about their new charts. Professional recordings of the new music are streaming on all major platforms and the publisher's website. All these resources can be used as tools for students in the classroom at any time. The scores in this collection are thoughtfully edited and engraved with ease of reading and accessibility at the forefront. Kendor Music Publishing's catalog is organized with the following color-coded series names: Quest (1), Gateway (1.5), Trek (2), Journey (3), and Summit (4 and up). These categories delineate grade levels, helping directors select the most appropriate music for their ensembles.

Kendor Music Publishing's 2024-2025 Jazz Ensemble music releases are available from music retailers and the publisher.

<https://kendormusic.com>

## Excelcia Music Publishing's New 2024 Concert Band Music Release Inspires Hope

Excelcia Music Publishing is thrilled to announce its annual new release of concert band music for 2024-2025. Bearing themes of hope and resilience, the new release features a variety of works for all levels of skill and musicianship, as well as a wide gamut of occasions, from back-to-school, seasonal, and holiday to contest and festival performances. As in prior years, the publisher's new concert band music includes professional recordings and ScoreVideos of each piece, as well as unique Composer Insights videos. These free-



to-use resources aid band directors in easy review and selection, and can be used to further immerse students in the music that they are learning to play. Professional recordings of the new music are streaming on all major platforms and the publisher's website.

"The overarching theme of hope in this year's concert band catalog cannot be denied," exclaims director of music production and editing Tyler Arcari. "Exploring themes of determination, resilience, and unity, this collection of music, I'm certain, will resonate strongly with young musicians. The composers have put their collective sense of hope for the world on full display through their music, as the musical world continues to turn to hope as a guiding force."

Excelcia Music Publishing's 2024-2025 concert band music release includes new pieces from composers and arrangers Tyler Arcari, Carol Brittin Chambers, Larry Clark, Laura Estes, Christina Huss, Yukiko Nishimura, Sean O'Loughlin, William Owens, Matthew R. Putnam, David Samuel and Robert Sheldon. The publisher is also proud to distribute concert band works by Pinkzebra, and now the inaugural work of the Voctave Concert Band Series, *Joy to the World*, arranged by Jamey Ray.

Each score and its accompanying parts are meticulously edited and beautifully set for ease of reading. Scores and parts include unique features to increase accessibility and help facilitate efficient rehearsal. Published in Excelcia Music Publishing's signature color-coded series, the concert band music follows a strict and consistent six-part grading system.

<https://excelciamusic.com>

**New Release Alert: Taylor Swift – The Tortured Poets Department: The Anthology**

Taylor Swift's reign over the music world continues with her 14th No. 1 album on the *Billboard* charts shattering records and captivating fans worldwide.

Swift's latest album, *The Tortured Poets Department*, made history with the largest streaming week ever for an album and an unprecedented sweep of all 14 top positions on the singles chart, garnering \$1.5 million in sales in its debut week.



Hal Leonard proudly presents the complete 31-song matching folios for the 2-album Anthology edition in Piano/Vocal/Guitar and Easy Piano formats. The Easy Piano edition features simplified arrangements with chord symbols and full lyrics, while the Piano/Vocal/Guitar edition includes chord symbols, guitar chord frames, and complete lyrics. A guitar edition is forthcoming.

Songs include: The Albatross • The Alchemy • The Black Dog • The Bolter • But Daddy I Love Him • Cassandra • Chloe or Sam or Sophia or Marcus • Clara Bow • Down Bad • Florida!!! • Fortnight • Fresh Out the Slammer • Guilty as Sin? • How Did It End? • I Can Do It with a Broken Heart • I Can Fix Him (No Really I Can) • I Hate It Here • I Look in People's Windows • Imgonnagetyouback • Loml • The Manuscript • My Boy Only Breaks His Favorite Toys • Peter • The Prophecy • Robin • The Smallest Man Who Ever Lived • So High School • So Long, London • thank you aiMee • The Tortured Poets Department • Who's Afraid of Little Old Me?

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



**Wingert-Jones Publications Achieves New Heights: Releases New Works for Concert Band**

The latest collection of concert band works from Wingert-Jones Publications has arrived. Curated to aid band directors in fostering achievement within their ensembles, this catalog includes but is not limited to, works for occasions such as fall and spring concerts, holiday concerts, and contest and festival performances. Accompanying the release of these works are a collection of free-to-use resources that include ScoreVideos and Composer Insights Videos, as well as live professional recordings of the music available for streaming now on all major platforms and the publisher's website.

"I am immensely proud of this year's 2024-2025 Concert Band release for the Wingert-Jones Publications catalog," says Tyler Arcari, director of music production and editing. "Our outstanding composers continuously find paths to new musical heights that will resonate throughout classrooms and across concert stages for years to come. We cannot wait for you, your students, and your audiences to experience the contents of this new release."

In the spirit of adding to the Wingert-Jones Publications heritage of achievement-focused works, the publisher welcomes eight additional composers: R. Alan Carter, Jay Coles, Trestin Durant, Joshua Hobbs, Christina Huss, Robert Sheldon, Bruce W. Tippet, and Chandler L. Wilson. Their music is available alongside that of the Wingert-Jones Publications composers whom educators, students, and audiences already know and love: Tyler Arcari, Carol Brittin Chambers, Larry Clark, John Dupuis, Chris Ferguson, Mark Lortz, James Meredith, Gene Milford, William Owens, John M. Pasternak, Matthew R. Putnam, Peter Sciaino, and Jorge L. Vargas. Also available are three new additions to *The Bourgeois Editions*, arrangements of pieces carefully selected and scored by one of the preeminent conductors of our time, Colonel John R. Bourgeois.

The catalog has been organized to clearly delineate grade levels with the following color-coded series names to help directors select the most appropriate music for their ensembles: First Achievement (.5), Early Achievement (1), Achievement (1.5), Achievement Plus (2-2.5), Concert (3-3.5) and Symphonic (4 and up). Each score and its accompanying parts are meticulously edited and beautifully set for ease of reading and accessibility.

<https://wingertjones.com>

**AMPLIFICATION**

**PRS Guitars Announces New David Grissom Signature Amplifier: The PRS DGT 15**

PRS Guitars and David Grissom have announced the PRS DGT 15 amp and matching 1x12 cabinet. This low-watt, all-tube amplifier is full of Texas tone and packed with tone-sculpting features, perfect for recording and playing live.



David Grissom and PRS Guitars have been collaborating on guitar design since the late 1980's and started collaborating on amps in the early 2000's. Grissom's extensive experience with vintage gear paired with PRS's meticulous understanding of guitar and amplifier making have resulted in highly coveted gear. The PRS DGT and PRS SE DGT remain one of the company's most popular signature models.

Designed to rival Grissom's favorite vintage amps, the PRS DGT 15 is rich with character. With all the magic of smaller-wattage vintage tube amps, it is fully applicable in a modern setting thanks to its extensive highly-functional tone-sculpting controls. Starting with a 3-band TMB tone stack, the DGT 15 also includes a 3-position bright switch, boost, reverb, top cut, and presence front-panel controls. The bright switch can be set to on, off, or on except when the boost is engaged – so you can intricately manipulate the amp's high-end. The Master Volume can be set to be on, off, or on only with the Boost. The tremolo circuit oscillates the power tube bias (old-school) and features speed and depth front panel controls to dial in to the exact preference.

The PRS DGT 15 comes with a three-button footswitch, controlling boost, reverb, and tremolo. There is also a matching blonde/salt and pepper 1×12 cabinet loaded with Celestion Vintage 30 speakers. The 1×12 cab features a ported back for expressive tone that never sounds boxy.

<https://prsguitars.com>

## Aguilar Amplification Releases 2nd Generation Tone Hammer & AG Series Amplifiers

Aguilar Amplification is excited to unveil the next generation of Tone Hammer and AG series amplifiers. These amplifiers are designed to meet the



exacting standards of today's bassists, enhancing their musical expression through in-demand features and fresh new designs.

The latest innovations in the Tone Hammer and AG series include the introduction of the Aguilar Cabinet Suite, dual XLR outputs, expanded connectivity options, and power section upgrades. These features not only provide superior sound quality and flexibility but also maintain the classic Aguilar performance that musicians have relied upon.

Key features of the next-generation amplifiers:

**Aguilar Cabinet Suite:** This new software allows players to load Aguilar's custom-designed SL/DB cabinet impulse responses (IRs), or their own custom IR files. This feature is available through both XLR and headphone outputs, offering new tone shaping and cabinet emulation options.

**Dual XLR Outputs & Expanded Connectivity:** Musicians can now tailor their tone and utilize cabinet IRs for their monitor mix, while also sending a pre-EQ'd signal directly to the front-of-house. This dual functionality ensures optimal sound for both the artist and front-of-house. The new amplifiers include auxiliary input and headphone output options for silent practice. They also feature mix controls to fine-tune the listening experience, ideal for both practice and performance.

**Upgraded Power Sections:** Previously exclusive to Aguilar's 700-series, the upgraded power sections in the Tone Hammer and AG 500 now support a 2.67 ohm load and include universal mains. These enhancements make the amplifiers perfect for international touring, offering seamless voltage adaptation.

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

## SYNTHESIZERS

### TEO-5: The Legendary Oberheim Sound Reborn in a Compact Powerhouse

Oberheim, the venerable brand synonymous with the golden age of synthesizers, proudly announces the TEO-5 polysynth. This powerful instrument features the visionary craftsmanship of Thomas Elroy Oberheim (TEO), offering a perfect blend of classic analog warmth and modern versatility for today's musicians.

"I'm so proud to be able to make a synth like this... compact and affordable, the Oberheim sound for 2024," says Tom Oberheim, the company's founder. TEO-5 is designed to make the classic Oberheim tone palette widely accessible, encapsulating decades of analog engineering experience in a forward-thinking and innovative musical instrument.



The TEO-5 boasts a five-voice architecture with genuine analog VCOs and VCFs, capturing the distinctive warmth and depth that defined countless hit records. But TEO-5 isn't just a tribute to the past. Additions like through-zero FM, which adds a contemporary twist to its oscillator X-Mod feature, allow for the exploration of entirely new sonic textures. And the legendary Oberheim SEM filter returns, offering the versatility of morphing between low-pass, notch, and high-pass configurations, along with a switchable band-pass mode for extensive tonal shaping.

Beyond its core synthesis architecture, TEO-5 features a comprehensive modulation matrix, opening a world of possibilities for sculpting and transforming sounds. Digital effects processors provide classic chorus, delay, reverb, and more, alongside faithful recreations of the revered Oberheim Ring Mod and Phasor effects. A 64-step polyphonic sequencer and multimode arpeggiator further fuel creative exploration, while a premium Fatar keybed ensures a responsive and inspiring playing experience.

<https://oberheim.com>

## FRETTED

### Dean Guitars Introduces USA Custom Shop Vengeance w/Pickguard

Dean Guitars sets a new standard for six-string excellence with the unveiling of the USA Custom Shop Vengeance with pickguard. Simultaneously classic and aggressively cutting-edge in appearance, this instrument boasts an impressive array of design features that facilitate playing at the highest levels.

Crafted with a visually arresting mahogany body and featuring three-piece mahogany set neck design, the Vengeance with pickguard is a tonal powerhouse with unmatched resonant sustain and stability. 22 stainless steel frets and a 24 5/8" scale length combine to allow for effortless access up and down the neck, setting the stage for slippery, lightning-fast leads and powerful chordal crunch. Playability is further matched to elegant aesthetics courtesy of an ebony fingerboard with Pearl Ultra inlays and cream binding. Additionally, bold glow-in-the-dark side dot markers enhance the guitar's distinctive look, while helping to ensure ease of play even in the most dimly lit of venues.

The Vengeance sonic might is bolstered courtesy of both USA Baker Act and Time Capsule pickups. The signature pickups of shredder extraordinaire and mastermind of Dean's DMT pickup line Pat Baker, Baker Acts provide unmatched grit, growl, and output. Meanwhile, the overwound Time Capsule is an aggressive dynamo that soars and sings, comfortably handling any degree of distortion. Both pickups feature tasteful gold covers, adding to the guitar's overall top-tier appearance. High-end hardware appointments also include Grover 18:1 locking tuners with tulip heads for tuning stability with style, as well as a Tone Pros locking Tune-o-Matic-style bridge with brass string-through plate.

Feature-rich and meticulously crafted to bring out a player's best, Dean's USA Custom Shop Vengeance with pickguard is a stunning triumph of guitar design. \$4,499 USD

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



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**KHS America**

KHS America, the Nashville-based Musical Instrument company, has the following job position open:



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# TONEX ONE



OVER  
**25,000**  
TONE MODELS

TONEX ONE \$/€179.99 (ex. taxes)

## UNLIMITED TONE. FOR ALL.

Say hello to the newest member of the TONEX ecosystem. TONEX ONE is a groundbreaking mini pedal packed with the power of AI Modeling. Play the world's best amps and pedals with incredible responsiveness and dynamics no matter where you gig. Guitar or bass, you'll experience a massive amount of tones that's never been in such a small, pedalboard-friendly size. Take your own favorite gear anywhere without the weight. It's all possible with TONEX ONE.

- Explore and load any of 25,000+ Tone Models from ToneNET
- Customizable LED colors make using multiple units fun and easy
- Onboard EQ, compressor, reverb, noise gate and smart tuner
- Store up to 20 presets with over 200 Premium Tone Models included
- USB-C connection for managing presets and computer recording
- Load custom IRs or use IK's VIR™ cabinets to fully customize your sound



LEARN MORE  
[www.ikmultimedia.com/tonexone](http://www.ikmultimedia.com/tonexone)



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SOUND BETTER



MACHINE  
MODELING