

M M R

MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW



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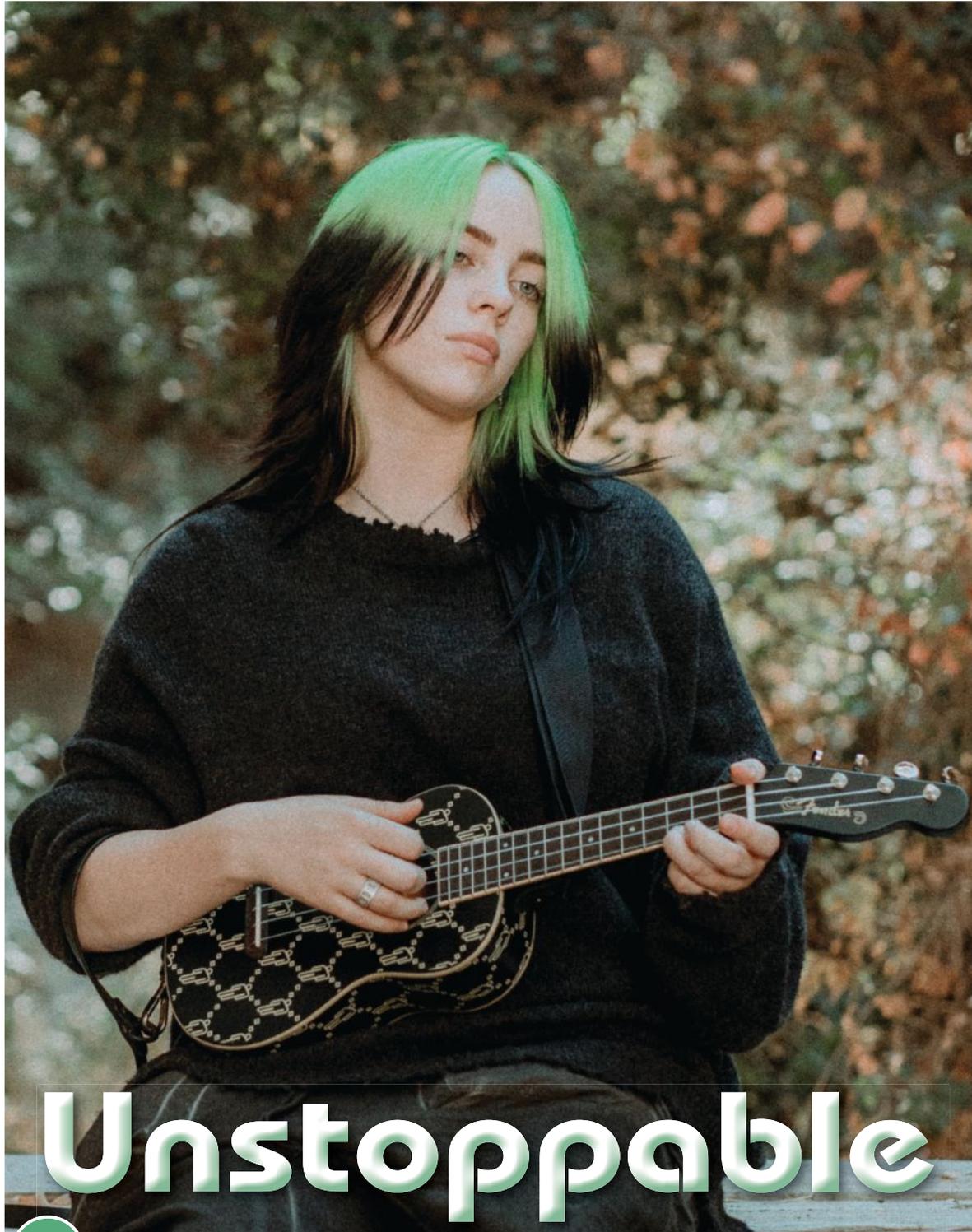
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– Romantic Warrior



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The Sound of Money:
Leadership Founded
in Love



Unstoppable

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Ukulele Sales Soared in 2020 and the Trend Continues



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- SC-800 carrying case with backpack straps

C O N T E N T S



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Cover photo courtesy FMIC

New Products & New Year Deals!

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- HCLF660 Koa
- HCLF770 Spalted Maple
- HCLF880 Quilted Ash
- HCLF990 Ebony
- (10) Matching Bags



DISPLAYS AVAILABLE



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

Silver Linings Play(LOUD)book

By Christian Wissmuller



So I just got back from walking my dog and, on the final block of this morning's jaunt, I was greeted by the sounds of two dudes playing and singing along to Zep's "Tangerine" on their third-floor balcony. To provide further context, it's a little before 11am and it's 12 degrees out, with snow on the way.

Much has been made – including within the pages of this magazine – of the increased embrace of musical instruments in the past year and, while it's certainly anecdotal and in no way a metric that could serve as the basis for any business model or anything, my own neighborhood is a living, breathing (singing, somewhat flat) example of this trend.

"There [are] many people searching for a way to keep themselves preoccupied, and learning a new musical skill was that outlet and the much-needed release," says Armadillo Enterprise's (Dean Guitars, Luna Guitars, ddrum) Adam Gomes in this month's feature on the ukulele market (page 14), when asked about the ongoing surge of interest in playing music. "We saw a major increase in sales once so many people were forced to stay home and looking for fun things to do," agrees Kala Brand's Leanne McClellon.

Back to my own 'hood, it is now a daily "thing" to hear the folks in an apartment on the street behind my place practicing (I'm being generous with the term) at around 1pm – amplified guitar and drums, making all those detractors who scoffed at Meg White's abilities a few years ago seem way overly harsh. This is in "the city" – one with amongst the highest population densities in the nation (Somerville, MA. Look it up!) – and we've got people bashing away loudly, inelegantly in the middle of week/work days, and *nobody* complains. I, myself, have "jammed" (hate that term...) with neighbors I had never, prior to 2020, had any connection with beyond a junior-high-level head-nod as we passed one another on the street. My buddy and former bandmate has been giving his downstairs neighbor's son guitar lessons (kid's just gotten The Stones' "Dead Flowers" under his belt. I had nothing to do with this, but I'm bursting with pride, nonetheless) and my father, down in Florida, entertains the neighbors and residents of the nearby assisted living facility with impromptu classical guitar recitals.

Where am I going with this? Good question (wish I knew!).

I guess I am – like many of us are – trying to find and amplify silver linings during a complex, challenging, and, for all too many, *tragic* time. Can you amplify silver linings? Mixed metaphors, perhaps.

I suppose the point is: difficult times direct us towards sources of comfort, relief, and joy – and for many, *many* people that source has been, and remains, music.

Back to my own reality: as I type this I've got The Bronx spinning on my turntable (yea!) at loud volume and my downstairs neighbor is listening to Maroon 5 (boo!) on her own system, neither of us complaining. I'll almost certainly (pfffft – "almost"...) be plugging in and playing guitar loudly/badly along to "Bark at the Moon" in a few hours (don't scoff at '80s Ozzy. If you can play that Jake E. Lee solo, I'll buy you dinner) – and, again, I never get push-back these days (that was *not* the case in previous years).

Making music, playing music, and learning music are some of the most cathartic, community-fostering, therapeutic endeavors that exist. Screw that – *the* most uplifting endeavors and activities there are. Every reader of *MMR* helps to further this culture and should get no small degree of satisfaction from helping to keep others happy, creative, and sane as so many things in this world seem to be upended.

Here's to joyful, healthier days to come and hats off to all in the MI community who are contributing to keeping everyone mentally correct and safe in the meantime. 

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Manus Receives NAMM's 2021 Believe in Music Award

Alfred Music's Ron Manus was a recipient of NAMM's annual Believe in Music Award. This prestigious award recognizes the dedication of individuals and businesses that demonstrate a commitment to music and music-making. Joe Lamond, president and CEO of NAMM and Dan Del Fiorentino, Music Historian at NAMM presented the 2021 Awards to the incredible class of recipients which Ron was a part of.

"Ron's contributions to our family, to our industry, and the Oral History program have been priceless and we could not be more proud to have him in our family, and us in his family – it's enriched all of our lives. It's been fantastic to work with him," said Lamond.

Both added, "Ron Manus has dedicated his life to music education. He's been on the (NAMM) Board, advocated in Washington D.C., and so much more. This is his life, this is our life, and we could not be more proud to work with our dear brother on all of this. Ron is a part of the family and we look forward to many, many great years ahead."

"NAMM is such a great organization! It's hard to imagine where we would all be navigating this crazy year without their help and guidance," said Manus. "I want to thank Joe, Dan, Eric, and the entire NAMM team, who do so much to make this industry a better place."

Manus goes on to say, "I feel truly lucky to receive an award for doing something that I love in an industry that I love. My grandfather Sam Manus started Alfred Music in 1922, 99 years ago, and I feel so blessed to be able to continue to be a part of the dream he started. I owe so much to my awesome parents Morty and Iris, who turned Alfred into an educational powerhouse, and now with our partnership with MakeMusic, Alfred is once again evolving and writing an exciting new chapter. There is nothing better than helping the world experience the joy of making music."

Shure Files Petition with FCC to Open Dedicated UHF Channel for Wireless Microphone Use

Shure Incorporated has petitioned the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to reverse its recent decision and ensure that at least one "vacant" 6MHz UHF channel is designated in each market for wireless microphone use. The FCC recently terminated the "Vacant Channels" rulemaking that was opened during the 600MHz incentive auction and declined to authorize a dedicated UHF TV channel for wireless microphone use. Shure disagrees with the FCC conclusions and rationale for terminating the proceeding and has asked the Commission to reverse the decision.

Shure's petition argues the wireless microphone community needs clear spectrum now more than ever, as the 600MHz band



has been reallocated to mobile phone use and the DTV repack has moved many TV stations into the 500MHz spectrum. At the same time, broadcast, performance, and sporting productions continue to demand more channels of wireless microphones than ever before.

The "alternative" frequencies identified by the FCC in 2017 for wireless microphone use at 900MHz, 1.4GHz, and 7GHz fall far short of addressing the needs of wireless microphone users. These bands do not have the same characteristics and operational flexibility as UHF frequencies. Because these bands are occupied by licensed users in other industries, access to these bands for wireless microphone use is conditioned on sharing requests, which can be lengthy and ultimately denied.

The 600MHz duplex gap and VHF frequencies offer interference and other con-

siderations that constrain use. Together, these other spectrum resources are helpful, but are not practical alternatives to UHF, and the certainty of having access to at least one vacant UHF channel is important to meet demand for wireless microphone use. The designated UHF channel would also be important for applications that include intercom, IFB and others.

This is essential for industries that rely on wireless microphones such as sports, broadcasting, performing arts, entertainment, houses of worship, education, and recording artists. These organizations rely

on open and clear spectrum for microphones, in-ear communication devices, cue and control devices, and equipment controlling devices. Every professional sports game, concert, live TV production, theater performance, and more relies on open and clear spectrum to maintain production quality. Without it, production integrity can be compromised.

"The amount of available UHF spectrum for wireless microphone use continues to shrink," said Ahren Hartman, vice president, Corporate Quality, Shure. "With the loss of 700MHz, 600MHz, and the DTV repack into 500MHz, we are at an all-time low for access to UHF spectrum. However, the need for open and clear wireless microphone spectrum is higher than ever before."

Shure, and its allies, believe the FCC should consider the current spectrum concerns of wireless microphone users and designate for wireless microphone use, a vacant UHF channel in each U.S. market wherever possible.

Bauer Becomes Part Owner at Keyboard Concepts

Dennis Hagerty, founder and president of Keyboard Concepts, has announced that Jeff Bauer, who was named vice president of sales last June, has become part owner. Bauer will now have the title of vice president and will continue to oversee sales management.



Jeff Bauer

Before graduating UCSB in 1996, Bauer worked part-time at Michael's Music, a local piano store in Santa Barbara, under the tutelage of owner Michael Farley, salespeople, and piano technicians.

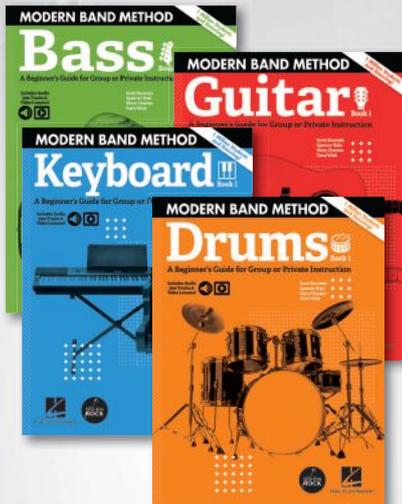
It didn't take long for Bauer to realize he had a talent for helping people discover the joy of all things piano.

"Ever since Jeff joined Keyboard Concepts in 1997 he has helped this company grow to being the premier source for top-quality new and used pianos, earning the respect of varied and highly distinguished clientele," Hagerty said. "He's invested over 23 years into sales, service, and support excellence, so it's only fitting he now has part ownership as well."

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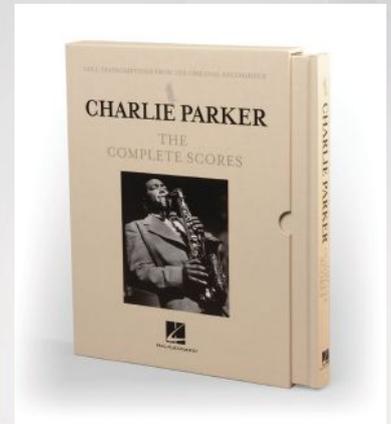
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Georgia Southern Names the Fred & Dinah Gretsch School of Music

With approval from the University System of Georgia Board of Regents, Georgia Southern University has established the Fred and Dinah Gretsch School of Music and becomes the newest addition to the Gretsch family, which includes country music icon Chet Atkins, legendary rock drummer Charlie Watts, the Beatles' George Harrison, the late great Malcolm Young of AC/DC, rockabilly and swing king Brian Setzer, the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, and many more.

Naming the university's school of music comes after Fred and Dinah Gretsch pledged substantial funding plus their Gretsch Collection of historic drums, guitars, and company archives to Georgia Southern. While the school of music will now bear the Gretsch name, the company's influence will be felt across all campuses and in several academic departments, the museums and the library. Georgia Southern will be able to catalog and display Gretsch's storied instruments – a collection estimated to be valued in the millions – that tell a compelling story of musical history from American jazz to English-born rock to popular modern worship bands in Australia.

Downtown Savannah has already been identified as an exhibit venue for the Gretsch Collection. Georgia Southern is establishing the Fred and Dinah Gretsch School of Music Performance Stage at the Atlantic Building of the new downtown Plant Riverside District. Within that building, exhibit space will highlight Gretsch instruments and storyboards with QR code links to the Gretsch history and legacy. Similar exhibits will be planned at the Georgia Southern

Museum in Statesboro, as well as the Fine Arts Hall at the Armstrong Campus, and can be packaged for partner shows around the world.

With the agreement, Georgia Southern will create the following positions:

- The Distinguished Scholar in Guitar/Music Industry, an assistant professor in the music school's new music industry program who will also work closely with the museum and library to document, curate and promote the Gretsch Collection.
- The Gretsch Collection Curator of Permanent Collections, a position in the Georgia Southern Museum who will provide all aspects of cataloguing, registration, collection management, maintenance and upkeep duties including activities involving the permanent Gretsch Collection, loans and exhibitions, access to collections for scholarly research, and in support of university classes and day-to-day operations.
- A project archivist for the Gretsch Archival Records, a three-year position in University Libraries who would primarily be responsible for the arrangement and description of the Gretsch archival records, to include print, photographic, audiovisual and digitally born materials.
- Two graduate assistantships in the Department of History for students who will help in organizing, cataloguing, researching, and preserving the Gretsch family's collections, exhibits, documentation, and digitization.

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Framus Vintage debuts new website.
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The Grove Theatre in Dunstable, UK installed **CHAUVET Professional Force** fixtures.
More details at mmr.news/cpf

Overloud has unveiled Fluid Convolution.
More details at mmr.news/ofc

Furch Guitars has added an antibacterial additive to its guitar neck finish.
More details at mmr.news/abfurch

Renkus-Heinz has promoted senior staff to provide additional North American support.
More details at mmr.news/rhprom

Gibson has announced a brand partnership with Universal Music Publishing in China.
More details at mmr.news/gibun

Letters

Christian,
Thank you so much for acknowledging the passing of so many of our musical heroes and friends [‘One Last Goodbye’ – MMR, January 2021]
As NAMM chairman, one of my most solemn duties is to acknowledge the passing of those of us in the MI industry who passed the previous year. It is important that we acknowledge the past. It is the foundation for the future. So many of our customers grow through the journey of discovering where the music came from. This was such an extraordinarily sad year, in that way too many of our tribe are no longer with us. But we will always remember their contribution to Believing in Music.

Chris Martin
Chairman & CEO, C.F. Martin & Co., Inc.

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E. Rousseau

Guitar Center Celebrates the Life of Eddie Van Halen with a New Mural at Flagship Hollywood Store

Guitar Center has unveiled a new mural of Eddie Van Halen on the outside wall of its flagship Hollywood, California store located on the famous Sunset Strip. With January 26, 2021, marking the late guitar legend's 66th birthday, renowned muralist Robert Vargas teamed with Guitar Center to pay tribute to the legacy of Van Halen with this striking mural, which depicts Eddie playing his iconic "Frankenstrat" guitar. Vargas donated his time and talent to design and create the mural, which measures approximately 17 feet tall x 105 feet long and covers the entirety of the store's outer wall at its rear entrance.



American Music & Sound Adds Glorious to its Distribution Portfolio

American Music & Sound, a division of Jam Industries USA, has acquired U.S. distribution rights for the Glorious line of DJ, vinyl, and production-oriented furniture and accessories. Glorious comes from the same innovative team at Global Distribution GmbH that is also responsible for Reeloo, purveyors of the foremost solutions for DJs. As the U.S. distributor for such other prestigious DJ brands as Reeloo, Reeloo HiFi, Xone DJ, Play Differently, and Hercules, as well as high-end audiophile offerings from Fostex, Glorious makes a great addition to a stellar line-up of pro audio, MI, and CE brands as a part of the AM&S portfolio.

Gerald Barbyer, Glorious CEO, commented, "Since 2004, Glorious has been designing furniture for DJs, producers and vinyl lovers, and has become a leading brand in the European music furniture industry. As the demand for our popular music and performance stations and vinyl accessories keeps growing across the globe, we are happy to announce that our long-time partner AM&S now also distributes our furniture range to make it available for the American market. We are sure that DJs, studio producers and HiFi enthusiasts will love our carefully designed music stations and modular storage solutions."



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Joe Naylor, Penny Haas, and Ken Haas

Six Strings & An Attitude

Reverend Guitars' Ken Haas

By Christian **Wissmuller**

Since Reverend Guitars' launch in 1997, the company – founded by celebrated luthier and amp tech Joe Naylor – has gained a devoted following for its distinctive instruments that match innovative tech and construction methods with retro-inspired designs, superior playability, and within-reach prices.

Current CEO and COO, respectively, Ken and Penny Haas purchased the company in 2010 and in the subsequent years, the brand has flourished, attracting a number of high-profile guitarists. With instruments still designed by Naylor – who also serves as technical advisor and whose pickup company, Railhammer Pickups, was absorbed by Reverend in 2017 – the buzz about these guitars continues to grow. We recently spoke with Ken about what makes Toledo, Ohio-based Reverend Guitars unique.

I've noticed how pretty much everybody at Reverend is not only an active, performing musician, but really active. Was that by design or just pure chance?

Over the last 10 years since Penny and I took over the helm, we have hired a lot of our friends or a lot of our friends' friends. As the company grew, people in our "musician circle" had certain skillsets and then became available. As an example, my warehouse manager is Chris Zielinski and he's the bass player in one of my many bands at the moment. We actually played at Winter NAMM in 2014 – right in the lobby, dude. Chris was a warehouse manager for a pharmaceutical company that left our city and went to Chicago, so all of the sudden he was unemployed and we gave him the job and having him here really helped us grow, as well. It's been that way with just about everybody.

That's awesome. I'm sure it also makes for a fun workplace.

It's special and I know it. You know what I mean?

Unlike some transitions of ownership or power, everything is copacetic between you and Joe Naylor.

Joe and I were really good friends starting in the late '90s. I was play-

ing his guitars in my bands and we developed this really good friendship. One of Joe's trepidations about hiring me full-time was he didn't want to ruin our friendship by having me work for him – and it didn't! Then it got to the point where I was doing enough for him that he was like, "We have to make this official." Which was great for me because I was in my 30s and I hated the career path that I was on.

Perfect timing.

I think the transition of company ownership was made smooth by the fact that we had already, sort of, done that when I came to work at Reverend. And he's not in the building every day, so it's not like I'm "his boss" hovering over him or anything like that. I view Joe as an independent contractor who I have an exclusive arrangement with to design guitars for me. Basically, I'm a bookkeeper – I just keep the books for really cool shit, you know? *[laughs]* And I have no problems doing dealer in-store appearances and doing, you know, the videos with any of our artists and stuff like that. And I can play well enough to hang with those guys a little bit without being too cocky.

Related: I wanted to talk about what an amazing endorsing artist roster you have. I mean – Ron Asheton, Bob from Fu Manchu, Mike Watt – you're cherry-picking my favorite bands.

Yeah, I cherry-pick *my* favorite bands.

It would be easy for any of those guys to hook up with one of the well-known "legacy brands" and the fact that they're casting their lot with Reverend is meaningful.

Thank you. You know, all those relationships have developed organically, as well, which is what makes them special.

How did the partnership with Billy Corgan come about?

A very good friend of Naylor and I's little sister was working for Billy Corgan's management in the late '90s and introduced Joe to him and Joe made him a couple of custom guitars years ago. And then when Billy's [endorsement deal] with Fender was coming to a close, he reached out to us and said, "Hey, if you guys are interested in developing a guitar with me, I'd be into that." And, of course we're interested!

Joe Naylor and Ken Hass with Jeff Schroeder from Smashing Pumpkins (center)



I think the reason why we're able to keep a Bob Balch or we're able to keep a Reeves [Gabrels] or a Billy is, when we're talking about doing a signature Reverend is not, "Oh, cool, man. Yeah, we'll just put your name on this Double Agent." That's not what it's about. Joe works with the artists to make them the exact guitar that they wanna use live for their purpose and then we manufacture it exactly to the artist's specs. So if you really like The Cure and you really like the tone that Reeves Gabrels gets with his Spacehawks, the Spacehawk that we sell is set up exactly as what he's playing onstage.

A lot of guitar stores and suppliers have been reporting that, as much as this past year-plus sucked in virtually every respect, guitar sales are, for some, through the roof. What's been your experience?

Biggest year we've ever had. Coming out of last spring and going into summer through right now, it's just been nonstop.

Wow.

I think it has a lot to do with people having a lot of time on their hands, sitting around and goofing off on Reverb or elsewhere. But, also, people are podcasting like mad and people are playing, recording videos of their playing, and then people are practicing and getting better and stepping up into the next level of guitar. We're squarely a mid-level instrument and so people are stepping up into us from their beginner guitars because they see their heroes are using our stuff or whatever else. That factors in.

I also do a weekly YouTube show from here, from Reverend, at 11:00 on Fridays on YouTube and Facebook, where I sit down with a piece of inventory people can ask me questions and we'll talk about stuff. It usually ends up going longer than it should because, in case you haven't noticed, you can ask me a question and I'll talk for a really long time.

Ha. No, that's good to know. I'll check one of those out.

Yeah, it's a fun thing to do. And, you know, it makes me feel like I'm a little connected and I miss that connection. I got into this business because of the NAMM Show. When Joe took me to my first NAMM Show, which it was summer of '99 in Nashville at the old center, the first time I walked in and stood in that area upstairs and looked down over the main floor and looked at all the stuff, the very first thought I had was, "I'm doing the right thing with my life."

My favorite thing is when we go to NAMM or a public guitar show and some guy walks up to the booth and goes, "Man, I've been playing guitars for 30 years. I've never even heard of you guys. Tell me what you guys do." And I'm like, "Hell yeah." Because, after 22 years in this business, there's still room to grow. We haven't come anywhere near close to saturating this market yet.

That dovetails nicely into my next question. What are your expectations for the coming months – specifically for Reverend, but also for the whole MI industry as a collective?

I don't know. I'd love to see this industry come back at Summer NAMM in Nashville. I mean, can you imagine if after being locked down for a year-and-a-half, we all finally get together in Nashville?

Absolute insanity.

It'll be so fun.

Does Reverend have any upcoming product introductions or news you want to share with our readers?

Oh, yeah. We have some major signature artist stuff planned for 2021. Right at the top of the year, we're launching a new model with Greg Koch that is featuring Fishman Fluence P90 pickups. Well, we went to Fishman, and Joe and Greg voiced the pickups with Fishman together because Greg loves the sound of Naylor's P90s, so these are the first Fluence P90 style pickups and they're gonna be available in Greg's signature – "Gristle 90," I think we're calling it.

One final question: If you were to describe the Reverend aesthetic, how would you put it?

It's vintage/retro styling that people are comfortable with married with modern innovations and modern quality in building – the two things coexisting together in something that looks familiar. That's the magic that Joe's able to capture. 

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Ukulele Sales Soared in 2020 and the Trend Continues By Christian Wissmuller

Despite – or, perhaps, because of – the pandemic and related lockdowns et cetera, many dealers and suppliers of fretted instruments (including ukuleles) reported very robust sales in 2020. What has been your experience with this trend? Have sales remained strong or have they levelled off or declined by this point?

Adam Gomes: Throughout the pandemic, it was hard to keep product on the shelves – especially ukuleles! Looking back, there were many people searching for a way to keep themselves preoccupied, and learning a new musical skill was that outlet and the much-needed release. With all the uncertainty going on with COVID-19, one thing was certain: learning to play ukulele was fun. With more time on our hands, sharing your progress with friends on social media was easy. In fact, we saw an entertaining uptick of social media users and influencers rocking their ukuleles across all social platforms.

Looking ahead to 2021, the ukulele trend is even stronger than before with consumers looking for what's next. They're thinking, "I've learned how to play, now what's next in my ukulele journey." And it's up to us to give the people what they want.

Chris Martin: We're coming into this thing later than a lot of other people, even though we were in it before pretty much everybody else. And what I sensed from my colleagues was, we've been so busy building guitars and chasing the demand for guitars that we sort of forgot about the ukulele. And every time someone would bring it up, somebody would say, "Yeah, if we had a really good \$99 ukulele, we could sell a lot." And everyone in the room would go, "That ship sailed 100 years ago. Martin can't make a \$99 ukulele. Let's get over it." So then we would stop talking about it. And I thought, "Okay, I'm going to retire. What can I tee up that's in our wheelhouse?" Rather than I come up with some crazy initiative for my colleagues like, "Hey, Fred, let's get into the solid body electric guitar business because there's plenty of opportunity and the world is waiting for a Martin electric." No...

But then I thought, "Wait a minute. We've been in this business for over 100 years. We doubled the size of our factory in 1916 to keep up with the demand for ukuleles." It dropped off, thanks to the Great Depression, right? "The Roaring '20s" – I mean, we

Michael Shear, President, Amati's Fine Instruments/Amahi Ukuleles



couldn't make enough. We were making more ukes than we were guitars. And we were making fancy ones and making them out of Koa. Imagine trying to get Koa from Hawaii in 1922! But we did. It dropped off. And then we had to try and stay in business in the '30s and ended up changing the guitar and making it the modern guitar. And so that kept us busy through World War II, up into the 1950s when Arthur Godfrey goes on TV, plays ukulele, and all of a sudden, people start contacting us: "Hey, can we get a Martin uke?"

Who kept us in the ukulele business was our Japanese distributor. They saw the uke boom earlier, I think, than a lot of other people did. And they came to us and they said, "We want ukes." "You know they're expensive." "That's okay. We can sell them. We have high-end uke customers in Japan." So we started to make them again. And someone from the shop came to me and said, "Chris, you know we're using fixturing from the '60s?" I said, "Well, at least it isn't the 1860s." [laughs]

Fred Greene: What we did is, we took a picture of the best piece of Koa we could find in the factory and we asked the manufacturer if they would use that as the film print that we put on top of that HPL [model ukulele] Koa, And we've seen a big boon as soon as we did that. All of a sudden, the instruments started flying off the wall.

CM: And we cut the price, too.

FG: That helped.

Michael Shear: Sales have remained strong – in fact, some models have increased in sales. We have felt at an advantage, in that we have maintained our inventory levels and been able to deliver on our most popular models. Especially our entry-level models which have made the perfect instrument for beginning players looking to learn an instrument during quarantine.

Leanne McClellon: We saw a major increase in sales once so many people were forced to stay home and looking for fun things to do. Thankfully, many dealers already had presence online, and others were able to adapt quickly. Sales have remained strong as more and more people continue to look for things to keep themselves and their families occupied!

Billy Martinez: Growing our ukulele business has been an ongoing effort for the past four years. While 2020 brought on new chal-



Leanne McClellon, Kala Brand Music Sales Director



Adam Gomes,
Director of Marketing & Artist Relations, Luna Guitars



lenges for everyone, we did continue to grow our ukulele business during a time when people decided to make the move to learn something new, and ukuleles proved to be a great outlet. We have continued to see success year over year, and we do not see this trend slowing down anytime soon. I firmly believe there are still more players out there who haven't started their musical journey and ukulele has proven to be a great avenue for that when they make that decision.

For your brand, what are currently the "hot" uke models in terms of volume?

FG: I think all the new ones that we just introduced this year at the January show [Believe in Music Week 2021] that Chris had urged us to put into the line sold incredibly well, exceeded expectations. So we took probably over 700 orders in the first week on three new ukes – and these are not cheap. They're not all very cheap ukes. Probably the one that did the best, I think, out of the group, was the StreetMaster. That's a tenor and a little more serious instrument for someone that's probably graduated from a soprano.

BM: At the end of last year we launched our Billie Eilish Signature Ukulele and it has done really well. We are also seeing a lot of success with our recent Fullerton series ukes that showcase our iconic electric guitar shapes and colors. It has been an exciting few years of new product launches in our ukulele business and we are excited to keep that momentum moving forward.

LM: Our original Sparkles series has been an exciting hit. Our Learn to Play, and really, any of our beginner models continue to exceed expectations.

MS: Our tropical series models have been the hot movers, especially the DDUK12, a custom designed Mermaid scale pattern. As well, we have seen an uptick in demand for tenor size ukuleles.

AG: One of the most recognizable designs, and our most popular model by volume, features the laser-etched tattoo

design, most commonly known as the Uke Tattoo Concert Mahogany. This ukulele has an all-mahogany body and has been played on many stages by players of all skill levels. Next top seller is the banjolele – do not underestimate how fun a banjo ukulele can be! Most Luna instruments have a demonstration video and to this day, the banjolele demo is the most watched demo video on our YouTube channel. Finally, the Uke Starry Night Concert is another steady seller, adored for its historical artistic beauty. From the moment you first scope out this ukulele you're already captivated by the artwork and detail.

Have you observed any specific marketing or promotion strategies adopted by dealers who are especially successful with ukulele sales during these unusual times?

BM: Our dealer base is really good at speaking to their audience. We have seen an uptick due to everyone staying home and looking to start playing and instrument. With our PLAY Through initiative we offered last year as well as our unique ukulele product offerings, the feedback from the dealers has all been very positive.

LM: There are so many great things dealers have done and have learned to do over the last year! A few successful things we've seen: Being present on social media and gaining participation from their followers

via things like giveaways; offering unique bundles; offering extra service and care; and offering specials.

MS: We have noticed that dealers who made purchasing easier, either by online ordering or curbside service have been most successful during this time. Also dealers that targeted the ukulele as an inexpensive and fun instrument during quarantine were especially successful by making it a bundle with learning materials, strap, pick etc. We had heard some dealers mention that it was a less expensive instrument to stock than investing in an acoustic or electric guitar. Those dealers offering local same day pickup were at an advantage, especially with extreme shipping delays during the holidays. We have also seen that dealers are promoting the ukulele to schools as an ideal classroom instrument and we have noticed an increase in orders from dealers specifically for school programs.

AG: During these challenging times, we really had to lean on branding strategies including social and email marketing to provide our dealer network with the tools they need to help sell. While product at times was slow to arrive at stores due to setbacks from the pandemic, keeping consumers/Luna enthusiasts informed with all things product content was essential for us as well as our dealers. We couldn't be prouder of our Luna artists, as they played a key role in showcasing product in an en-



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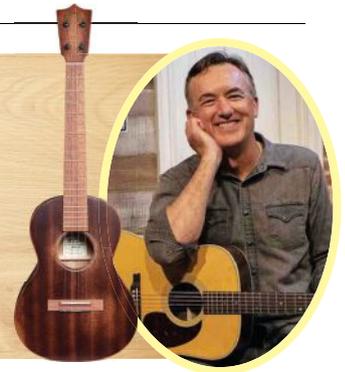


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“Having a wall of ukuleles is pretty impressive. That gives the customer the sense that, ‘Oh, this is a real thing. This isn’t just something they have two of over in the corner.’” – **Chris Martin**



Chris Martin, chairman & CEO, C.F. Martin & Co., Inc.

tertaining yet professional way. Artists that were most active on social media found creative ways to feature their instruments via Tik-Toks, Twitch, photography, travel posts, et cetera. Whether it was an artist demonstrating a ukulele through a looper on video or an artist doing a unique photoshoot, leveraging these fantastic musicians brought happiness to our followers and content for our dealers to share.

CM: Well, the one thing I had seen when I would get into stores, having a wall of ukuleles is pretty impressive. That gives the customer the sense that, “Oh, this is a real thing. This isn’t just something they have two of over in the corner.”

Are there any other significant trends with respect to the ukulele market that you’ve been noticing?

CM: What I’ve heard is that one of the reasons that the uke continues to be popular is that you can get a lesson on YouTube.

AG: As the ukulele trend continues, and grew significantly in 2020, many new and seasoned players are wondering what’s the next for them: “What are the qualities I should be looking for in a step-up or higher-end ukulele?” From exotic wood detailing to bevels, and solid tops to Fishman electronics, there are quite a few qualities to look for in a higher-end ukulele that can substantially increase tone, functionality and convenience.

For example, we introduced the Vineyard Series ukuleles in 2021 that meets the needs of musicians looking for a higher-end ukulele that will be a powerhouse performer. And the consumer response has been wonderful!

LM: Lots of schools have transitioned to teaching ukulele, so we’ve been able to capture more of that business. There are a surprising number of new ukulele companies jumping on the bandwagon that sell cheap ukuleles without the quality – over time this can hurt the market as a whole.

BM: We have noticed that more and more players like to have electronics on their ukes, even if they don’t plan to use them right away. Because of this, we have also seen a shift upwards in price. We are also seeing ukulele players who started out with a more entry priced uke looking to upgrade as they progress in their learning. That

Fred Greene, Vice President of Product Management, C.F. Martin & Co., Inc.

is exciting because we at Fender have spent a lot of time trying to lower the abandonment rate for first time players. Ultimately, that bodes well for the industry as a whole!

MS: It seems consumers are looking for unique models with more features for the lowest cost. We just introduced a new line of soprano size ukuleles called the Troubadour series with top and off-set sounds holes that are priced affordably and have been moving very well. Rather than colorful designs or just mahogany for the entry-level price point, we offer 10 exotic wood choices like bamboo, spalted maple, Koa, and ebony. We have found that these designs appeal to adult beginners which is a growing segment of the ukulele market.

Expectations for this market segment in the coming months?

BM: We are excited to continue to deliver the best product possible for the new player segment as well as folks continuing to progress in their own musical journey. Who knows who will write the next hit song with a Fender ukulele.

LM: Ukulele and stringed instruments will continue to sell well! People will generally still be staying at home for a while, so beginner models will continue to sell. The new players from last year will also be looking for the next thing to continue learning and to help grow their collection!

AG: With summertime quickly approaching and the pandemic still looming, folks will want to get outdoors and do some traveling. Ukuleles have been a comfort instrument throughout the pandemic, and we anticipate the demand for more ukes to continue. If you’re anything like the Luna Tribe, adventure is a way of life. Who knows, we might just introduce a totally new product!

MS: We anticipate the growth of this market to continue to trend upwards.

CM: The thing I think that’s somewhat missing with the uke right now that I think will actually come back and help continue this demand is that thing, that phenomenon, where you see a bunch of people get together, physically, and get together and play the ukulele collectively. That’s missing right now, but that’s coming back. Those ukulele circles, whether you’re 60 or 16. 🎸🎸🎸



“While 2020 brought on new challenges for everyone, we did continue to grow our ukulele business during a time when people decided to make the move to learn something new, and ukuleles proved to be a great outlet.” – **Billy Martinez**



Billy Martinez, Vice President Category Manager – Acoustic and Squier Divisions, FMIC

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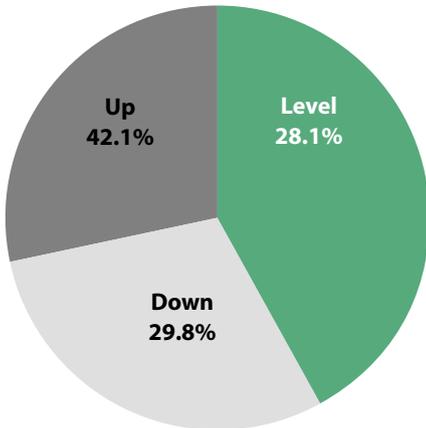
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'More Guitar Sales Equals More Bag and Case Sales'

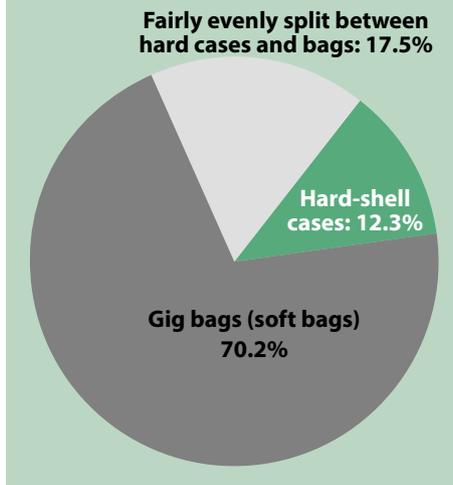
By Christian Wissmuller

Putting your guitar to lessons, practices, shows, or the studio requires a sturdy and reliable conveyance. While many of those activities listed have been limited or put on indefinite hold in the past year, sales of guitars have been through the roof for many dealers (not *all*, but many) and with those new purchases often comes the add-on of a case or bag. We checked in with over 350 retailers to learn about trends in this market segment, as well as what specific brands are driving profits in 2021.

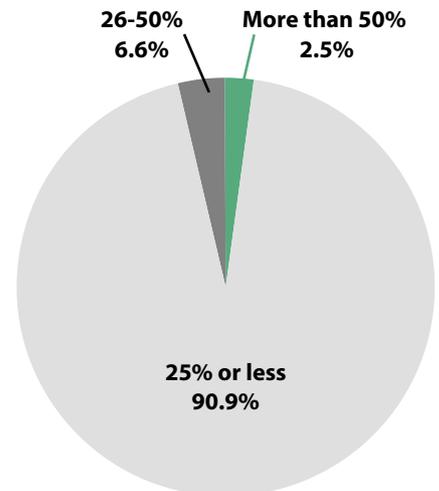
Compared to this time last year, sales of guitar cases and bags for your store are...



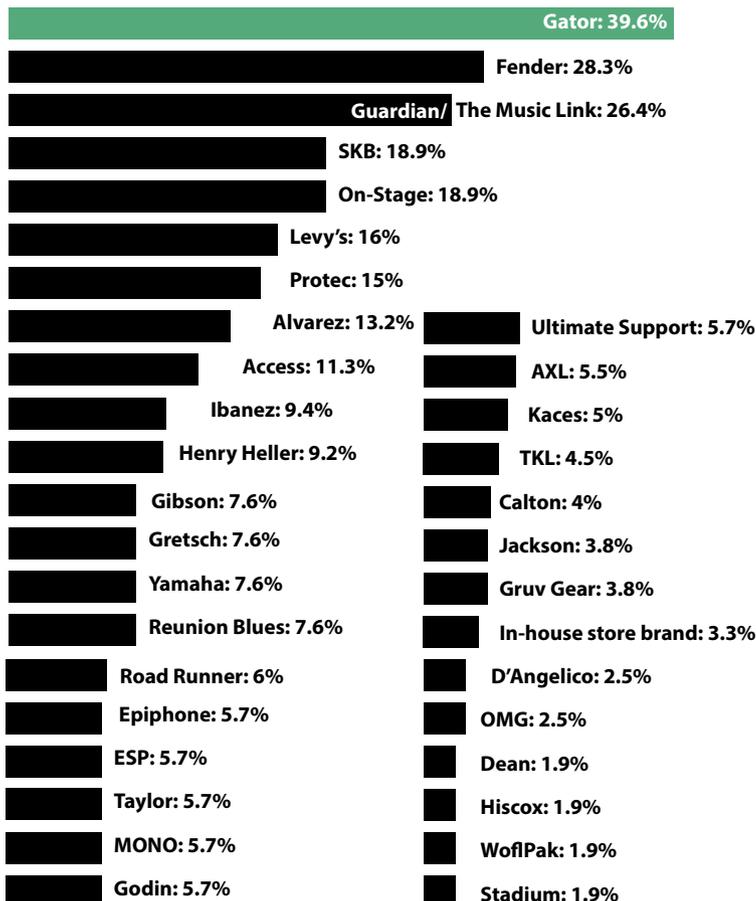
For your operation, the bulk of sales for these types of products are...



Guitar cases and bags account for what percentage of overall sales for your business?



What brands of guitar cases and bags are generating the most profit for your store?



Have you been noticing any significant trends when it comes to guitar cases and bags – on either the supplier or consumer side?

"We have always done well with our store branded product, by design. We push those items purposefully over the 'name brand' completion, knowing that the added exposure of our store's name and logo is priceless."

Jerry Vesely
Vesely Music Co.
Parowan, Utah

"Seems like the trend is spending a few extra bucks for a nicer bag or case."

Dru Hubbard
Hubbard's Music-n-mo
Las Cruces, New Mexico

"More guitar sales equals more bag and case sales. No real trends other than that."

Colin Campbell
Riverton Music
Sandy, Utah

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David St. John
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Chick Corea – Romantic Warrior



By Menzie Pittman

The music of the 1970s – wow! That era was such a grand time to be a musician. There was enough great funk music to keep you practicing until your funk skunked (sorry for the bad pun, Brecker Brothers). Musicians pushed every boundary as they continually created new genres. Live music was king, vinyl spun freely, and auto-tune and Cher hadn't met yet. This was an age of grand curiosity for musical invention.

New guys in your scene were always looking to get the next "one-up on ya," and, as in the "West Side Story" song, "Something's Coming," you could detect a rumbling coming... you could feel something humming in the air. As a musician at an after party or a hang, you were often confronted by the "hip guys," the "one-up-ers" as they pretentiously paraded into the room holding new records that they had picked up at Tower Records. You know the guys – they were the cats that had a few chops that you may not have heard yet, or the guys that had mastered the hip licks and tricks of the day. They would arrogantly look you in the eye and ask smug questions meant to be intimidating or humiliating, but you, too, were one of the guys. The one question that changed my entire perspective on the mastery of music was, "Have you heard the new Chick Corea album, *Where Have I Known You Before?*" I specifically remember a hipster saying, "You are not ready for this. It will scare the hell out of you – but in the best way." And as the needle hit the record, in an instant, my music world exploded! All boundaries were shattered. There was a new musical format on the rise, and Chick Corea was at the forefront of the movement – welcome "fusion!!!"

Everywhere you looked in the "Fusion World," amazing musicians abounded pushing new frontiers. The harbingers of this movement blending jazz, progressive rock, and funk as key elements, were groundbreakers such as Mahavishnu Orchestra, Weather Report, Herbie Hancock and the Headhunters, The Tony Williams Lifetime, The Brecker Brothers, Stuff, and The Eleventh House.

The Fusion World was on fire! And it was influencing Progressive Rock with bands like Yes, and King Crimson. It was a vibrant time in music. Corea, like all truly great artists, very clearly understood a few things. He knew he was experiencing a time in music akin to the great Westward Expansion of the 1800s. It was, indeed, a new frontier in modern "fusion" jazz, and Corea was a big part of its soul. Although he pushed every boundary, Chick respected time-honored musical principles.

Where Corea did take great liberty was in the blending of genres. I will borrow the senior vice president at Hal Leonard, Doug Lady's description of Corea's music. He described it as "Spanish flavored, jazz fusion, virtuoso, electric funk."

Corea had another gift: besides being a great musician, he was also a master composer. His song "Spain" has been recorded by no fewer than 30 different artists including Stevie Wonder. The lyrics were later written by the late, great

Al Jarreau. Chick changed formats repeatedly and always surrounded himself with the world's finest musicians, and just when we thought we had seen every different pairing and approach possible... enter Bela Fleck. Corea and Fleck, broke through to new heights and recorded the live album *Two*. Fleck (together with Corea) redefined the role of how the banjo could be integrated and adapted into multiple new genres.

“Although he pushed every boundary, Chick respected time-honored musical principles.”

Corea was not only a master of his craft, he was also respected and revered by all the great musicians with whom he performed, and he always surrounded himself with the world's best musicians. But what some may not realize is that Corea was also approachable. His grace was a defining part of his character. A few years back, I took two of my music students to see Corea and Steve Gadd together at the famous Washington D.C. jazz club Blues Alley. Blues Alley is a very intimate setting where the artists and the audience are truly one. The stage is only six inches high and the tables in the front and on the sides abut the stage. The locals know the Blues Alley secret is to arrive early because it is general seating; arriving early, we were able to get a table next to the stage and within point blank range of Gadd's drums. The lineup was comprised of Luisito Quintero (percussion), Carlitos del Puerto (acoustic and electric bass), Lionel Loueke (guitar), Steve Wilson (saxophone), Steve Gadd, and Chick Corea. At Blues Alley, when the artists approach the stage to perform, they stroll through the audience, and in this case, they paraded through to a standing ovation. It was an electric evening for all of us. What happened that evening for my two students will affect the way they look at the grace of legends for the rest of their careers. As Gadd made his way to the stage, he acknowledged the young musicians, and he intentionally stopped to talk with them. He did the same after the show, as did Chick Corea. These two greats made themselves available, not only to us, but to many in attendance who hoped simply to say, "Thank you."

And this brings me to my close. We should all say thank you to Chick Corea, a true musical ambassador, music pioneer, pianist, composer, and one of the best artists ever to grace us with unbelievably beautiful music.

Mr. Corea, you sir, will be missed. ☹️

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".



Leadership Founded in Love

By Jaimie Blackman

In my last four columns I've been spotlighting multi-generational retailers like Chip and CJ Averwater, third and fourth generation Amro retailers; and Joseph Fox, Fox Music's fourth generation retailer.

Each new generational leader brings their own unique vision to the previous leadership, keeping the whole enterprise fresh. The one recurring theme is a profound appreciation for the values, wisdom, and accomplishments of those who preceded them.

The typical business cycle for first-generation organizations begins with start-up, advances into the growth phase, and unfortunately for most organizations, death by the time maturity is reached.

Multi-generationalists have developed a way to avoid the grim ending by pivoting right back to start-up with every new generation. Filled with new energy, and fueled by the reverence for the those that came before them, the baton is passed to the new conductor, and the symphony continues. First-generation business owners may look to younger employees to re-ignite.

Saied Music, established in 1946, is a full-service music instrument organization, which delivers its services across six locations in Northeast Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Texas. In 2018, Saied Music was awarded the NAMM "Top 100 Dealer Award" for outstanding achievement in the music products industry.

Saied's newest conductor is Kim Koch. She began working in her family business at the age of 12. "I was stuffing envelopes, and taking inventory," she recalls. "As I got older, I was deeply connected with dad, and had great pride in what my family accomplished."

Today, Kim is responsible for leading 90 employees across six stores. Under the watchful eye of Bob Saied, Kim's father and the current president, the organization is looking to Kim to provide the next generation of leadership.

In multigenerational businesses, most parents want their children to first work outside the business before making the family business their career. As Kim explained to me, it's better to make mistakes outside of the business, and then return to the family business as a stronger manager. Although there were no formal conversations about Kim one day running the family business, it seemed to be more of an unspoken truth that was inevitable.

After she graduated Tulsa University, where she honed her operatic singing skills, she was accepted into the Masters program at Manhattan School of Music. While continuing her music studies, she landed a job in the marketing department at the Metropolitan Opera queuing up in the cafeteria behind such artists as Placido Domingo and Luciano Pavarotti. Eventually Kim realized the bohemian lifestyle of an opera singer was not for her. Missing her family, she moved back to Tulsa where she taught Elementary Music in Tulsa Public schools and maintained a private voice studio. Kim was now armed with a broad range of new skills and was ready to re-join the

family business.

Central to Kim's leadership style was mastering the powerful art of collaboration. When you think of the great music collaborators like Lennon and McCartney, Ellington and Strayhorn, Rogers and Hammerstein, one thing comes to mind: $1+1=5$.

While Kim realizes that honoring her father and grandfather for their values and accomplishments, today she recognizes that more coaching and mentoring and less fear and complacency would be a more authentic leadership style.

"My generation is more collaborative. The previous generation is more authoritative.

That's not as effective. Gen X is not looking at this as a job, clocking in and clocking out. It's much more personal. The millennials, now in their 30s, don't want authoritative relationships. They expect a much more collaborative relationship, being more transparent from upper management. They want to know where they are going. They just don't want a job, they want to know where they fit in. 'Why this is important? What came before me?' They don't just to 'show up.'"

With great affection, she explains how her dad let her make mistakes. "It took a lot of patience on his part to let me screw up" she says. Eventually she learned the required lessons to make her father proud.

Today she is the trainer, and she is the one practicing patience by allowing her people to stumble while she helps to pick them back up. Still, her reputation precedes her. Kim tells me of a new hire in her mid-20s who came to her saying she wanted to be a road rep. It turned out that the young lady's marketing savvy was ahead of Kim's on a new piece of merchandise. In a burst of enthusiasm Kim said, "If everyone in the company could do that – Oh, my gosh! The energy, the creativity, would just explode."

There is a study, cited by Craig Groeschel, Kim's pastor at Life Church, which says, "Employees who describe themselves as 'inspired' are more than twice as productive as employees who call themselves 'satisfied.'" Kim has certainly taken that lead.

What seems to be extraordinary for the most successful multi-generational leaders is their ability to synthesize the experiences of previous generations, while bringing in their own unique qualities and creating something far greater than the first generation could have imagined. And that's the true magic of love.

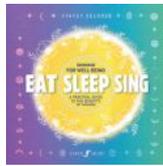


Jaimie Blackman – a former music educator and retailer – is co-founder of BH Wealth Management. The organization offers financial advice, insurance, and succession planning services. Jaimie hosts "The Sound of Money Live: presented by MMR." Discover how much risk is in your portfolio. Visit bhwealth.com/riskvideo. Registered Representative, First Allied Securities, Inc. Member FINRA/SIPC

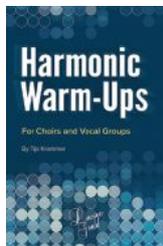
Print & Digital

Eat Sleep Sing and Harmonic Warm-Ups from Alfred Music

Eat Sleep Sing is a practical guide to the benefits of singing through the exploration of the physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, and ultimately life-changing benefits that singing can bring. *Eat Sleep Sing* has been created to encourage everyone to sing, from those who had never even considered singing but are interested in improving their mental and physical well-being, to beginner and amateur singers, right through to trained musicians and teachers. It includes simple practical exercises, a step-by-step warm-up guide, advice, illustrations which can be colored to support mindfulness, tongue-twisters to practice, as well as a mood-tracker to help monitor progress. There is no requirement to read music. Readers will learn how to discover the chemical responses to singing that reduce stress and encourage a good sleep, master exercises to gain stronger breath control and a happier mind, explore the myriad ways singing connects us to each other and the world around us, and unlock tips to boost confidence and keep memory sharp and agile. \$19.95



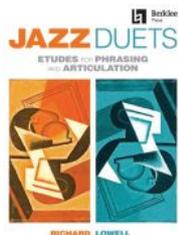
Harmonic Warm-Ups will help choirs and vocal groups reinvent their routines with an innovative approach that leads the way to more meaningful and diversified warm-ups. *Harmonic Warm-Ups* is filled with uncomplicated melodies that are quickly learned, and then turned into multiple-part exercises by singing in canon or stacked parallels. An exemplary practice that invites developed groups to focus on higher listening and ensemble skills. Online access to MP3 demos of every exercise is included. \$29.99



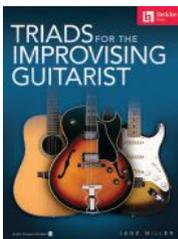
www.alfred.com

Jazz Duets: Etudes for phrasing and Articulation and Triads for the Improvising Guitarist from Berklee Press

Jazz Duets: Etudes for Phrasing and Articulation by Richard Lowell provides 27 duets in jazz and jazz-influenced styles such as swing, bebop, funk, samba, and others. They are appropriate for performance by any melodic instruments. The duets feature independent contrapuntal lines, and practicing them will give players intimate insight into how these constructs sound and can be used to create a wide variety of colors. Players will improve their ear, sense of timing, phrasing, and facility in bringing theoretical principles into musical expression. Players will learn to use: jazz staccato and legato articulations; scales, modes, harmonies and other structures; various meters and ways of interpreting them; phrasing within and between measures; swing feel; and more. \$14.99



Triads for the Improvising Guitarist by Jane Miller explains how triads are the key to understanding harmony, soloing, and comping. By understanding how triads relate to larger chord structures, players can improve their command over harmony and be able to use triads more effectively in their playing. Through visualizing and using common



triads on the first three strings, players can create smooth lines that make sense of the chords even when the song changes keys or modes. The book includes online access to recorded examples which include PLAYBACK+, a multi-functional audio player that allows you to slow down audio without changing pitch, set loop points, change keys, and pan left or right. \$19.99.

www.halleonard.com

Accessories

GraphTech's Archtop Bridge and Tune-A-Lele Machine Heads

Crafted under high heat and pressure from 100-percent organic polymers, the Archtop Bridge ensures that every nuance of an archtop's sound is delivered with high-definition resolution. To guarantee a solid foundation to any archtop model, the Graph Tech Archtop Bridge has flexible legs that conform to the top of the guitar. Two heights are available—standard and ultra-low—to guarantee the right fit for an archtop's neck angle, and gold or nickel thumbwheels allow players to dial in just the right action for their playing style. MSRP: \$49.95



The Graph Tech Tune-A-Lele machine heads offer precision tuning, tuning stability, and a lighter weight. Their machine heads are designed expressly for a ukulele's light weight and short scale. They are super light—one weighs just 5 grams, as compared to the 26+ gram heft of each guitar machine head. The concentric 6:1 gear ratio of Tune-A-Lele machine heads means you have the familiar guitar-tuning feel, but with zero backlash and zero backdrive for very stable and accurate tuning. MSRP: \$29.95 for a set of four.



www.graphtech.com

Warwick's Distance Buffers

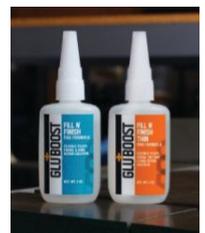
Warwick's Distance Buffers are for use when opening the electronic compartments on the back of a guitar or a bass. These Distance Buffers feature a built-in spring that pushes the cover of the electronic compartment upwards when loosening the screws. The installation diameter is 5 mm / 0.19". \$ 5 each.



www.w-distribution.de

Fill n' Finish from GluBoost

GluBoost Fill n' Finish is a perfect option for pore filling. With far less odor than any of those messy brown pore fillers, Fill n' Finish is easy to use and can be applied simply with just a squeegee. Your piece can go to the booth and be sprayed within 30 minutes of application. Fill n' finish stays flexible, breathes with the wood, and provides superior lasting results.



www.gluboost.com

Accessories

The Nano Metal Muff from Electro-Harmonix

Electro-Harmonix's Metal Muff has shrunk to a pedalboard-friendly size with the same massively heavy tones. The Nano Metal Muff features the same powerful EQ section and high-gain sound as its big brother, but now also features an adjustable noise gate for a tight and dynamic performance. Its VOL control sets the pedal's output level while its DIST knob adjusts the Nano Metal Muff's input gain and distortion. A newly designed-noise gate removes unwanted hum when you stop playing. It utilizes an adjustable noise floor threshold and includes a dedicated LED which indicates when the output signal is muted \$72.70.



www.ehx.com

D'Addario's XS Coated Strings

D'Addario's XS coated strings offer players maximum life, and an unprecedented level of strength and stability. Led by Jim D'Addario, the team incorporated D'Addario's proprietary manufacturing processes and well-known innovations—like NY Steel high-carbon cores in the wound strings and Fusion Twist technology in the plain steels—to give XS incomparable break strength and tuning stability. XS will be available beginning in April 2021 in Phosphor Bronze string sets for acoustic guitar, 12-string guitar, and mandolin in the most popular gauges.



www.daddario.com

The Phil Jones Bass PE-5 Pedal

The Phil Jones Bass PE-5 pedal is designed for bass guitar and upright bass. It incorporates a sophisticated 5 band EQ and also offers superior function as a Pre-Amp, Direct Box, and signal booster. The PE-5 is engineered with a unique switchable input impedance, which allows the pedal to match exactly to either a magnetic or piezo pickup. It achieves the full band spectrum for either pickup source. In addition, it is a signal booster which compensates for low output pickups and will also provide ample drive for any amplifier. The input level and gain controls are designed to precisely match the pickup output to an amplifier. The line output is strong enough to use directly into a power amplifier or a powered speaker. The PE5 can be powered by a standard 9-volt DC pedal adaptor or run on its own internal lithium-ion battery that is charged with a standard cell phone charger via its USB socket. The two foot switches provide a mute function and a true bypass. The rugged housing is constructed of die cast aluminum alloy made to deliver years of service.



www.pjbworld.com



The Analog Effects Collection from PreSonus

PreSonus has released five retro-inspired effects with the Analog Effects Collection. The collection includes Analog Delay, Analog Chorus, Red Light Distortion, Rotor, and Tricomp. Each effects plug-in in the collection represents the apex of PreSonus craftsmanship, from State-Space Modeled drive stages with inspiring sonic textures to their classic, vintage-inspired user interfaces. Formerly only available in Studio One® Professional and Artist, these plug-ins are now available via PreSonus Hub in VST3, AU, and AAX format.

Analog Delay is a classic emulation plug-in of an analog BBD delay known for its ability to create a warm delay sound that can range from subtle modulation to spirals down a psychedelic rabbit hole. It also features a State-Space Modeled Drive control to add analog grit to your sound for even more tonal sculpting.

Analog Chorus is a one- to three-voice chorus processor with optional LFO delay-time modulation and stereo-width control. It offers a wide range of effects, from subtle to extreme, with its roots in '70s-era analog guitar pedals and studio effects processors.

The Red Light Distortion is an analog-distortion emulator with six selectable distortion models plus two EQ controls, a Mix control, and independent Drive and Distortion controls to let you to design a unique, signature distortion.

Rotor is a rotary-speaker emulation plug-in that simulates the sound of a tube-powered amplifier with independently rotating high-mid horns and a bass woofer that excels at adding a sense of motion and unique tonal character. Each speaker's rotation can be set to a range of speeds, with realistic braking and acceleration effects when changing speeds. State-Space Modeling technology provides authentic tube emulation for extra warmth and character.

Rounding out the collection is Tricomp, a three-band compressor plug-in with automatic threshold and ratio settings, plus a relative control for the low and high bands and switchable Attack and Release controls to finalize your mix or add brilliance or punch to frequency-rich signals.

\$19.95 each, or available as a five plug-in collection bundle for \$79.95.

www.presonus.com

Band & Orchestra

New Sizes of Yamaha's YVN Model 3 Violin

The YVN Model 3 Violin family is comprised of the YVN Model 3 and the YVN Model 3 three-quarter and one-half size violins. Each provide students of all statures with a durable, well-crafted starter instrument for an exceptional playing experience. Among



Band & Orchestra

the innovations used to create the YVN Model 3 family is the proprietary graduated "press-formed" spruce top that offers exceptional resonance, as well as the patented three-layer construction of the tops and backs that uses just one-third the amount of wood previously consumed. These improvements allow the violins to sing with the rich tone of a graduated carved instrument while maintaining student-proof durability for renters, all at a family-friendly price for those ready to invest in a quality starter violin.

Computer-aided design makes the Model 3 family of violins easier to service than traditional string instruments. Each piece is as precise as the one before it, making it both faster and more cost-effective to keep the violin at peak performance — an important consideration in academic music programs. Includes a bow and sturdy-shaped ABS case.

www.yamaha.com

Anniversary Edition Saxophone from Cannonball

Cannonball celebrates 25 years in business with a new special-edition model of the popular Big Bell Stone Series saxophones. Each of these models is handcrafted with a nickel silver bell, bow, original neck, and FAT Neck, and is further enhanced with an oversized, solid titanium neck screw and lyre screw. An intricate pattern selected from Cannonball's catalog of premium hand engravings - White Tiger - is carefully carved onto each bell and bow. Seventeen semi-precious Snakeskin Jasper stones adorn each saxophone. Finished in polished black nickel plating and acoustically hand-customized as with every pro Cannonball instrument, the striking presence and rich sound of these versatile saxophones make a bold statement. Available in alto (A5-25) and tenor (T5-25) through authorized Cannonball dealers worldwide beginning March 2021.

www.cannonballmusic.com



Eastman's New Marching Sousaphone

Eastman has introduced the EPH495 BBb marching sousaphone, marking the beginning of advancements being made across the full line of Eastman marching instruments. The new Eastman EPH495 BBb sousaphone includes a shoulder brace matched to finish, redesigned neck bracing, and support throughout the instrument, all while maintaining a lightweight design that is comfortable on players of all statures. It also features an accessible first valve tuning slide, a shoulder guard for added comfort, and powerful sound through all registers.

www.eastmanmusiccompany.com



Buffet Crampon Student Alto and Tenor Saxophones

Using many of the same design elements as the Buffet Crampon 400 Series professional saxophones, the 100 Series student saxophones give young band students a high-quality instrument that plays well right away, a crucial first step for beginning saxophonists. These 100 Series saxophones feature a gold lacquer finish, leather pads with metal resonators, a high F# key, and a large bottom bow for easier low note response.

www.buffet-crampon.com



Cases & Stands

Gator's Professional Microphone Boom Arm and Utility Carts

Gator's new professional desktop broadcast/podcast microphone is the step-up from the best-selling GFW-MICCBM3000, with features an on-air indicator light, 360-degree rotation ability, and a replaceable XLR cable. The stand is fully adjustable for desired mic placements and will clamp or directly mount to surfaces up to 2.17"/55mm in thickness, including the ability to rotate a full 360-degrees. To reduce the potential for noisy interruptions during sound-sensitive recordings, the stand is engineered specifically to produce minimal sound when being moved. The spring-loaded articulating arm has a maximum weight capacity of 4.4 lbs./2 kg and can extend up to 32.25"/940mm, allowing it to support the load of extra heavy broadcast mics and large-diaphragm condensers, regardless of the length of extension. The stand comes equipped with a 3"/76mm extension adapter to further distance the mic from the boom end, which allows plenty of extra room to comfortably attach an XLR cable without having to bend or force cables.



Gator's utility cart series includes two models: a standard model with non-pneumatic wheels and an All-Terrain model with rugged rear tires meant for travel over rough gravel, dirt, grass, and uneven ground. The new utility carts haul gear safely without the hassle, hold up to 500lbs, and are constructed of a rugged, welded steel frame. Constructed of a heavy-duty, welded steel frame, the carts will bear the abuse of multiple trips with a maximum load capacity of 500 lbs. Both carts feature no-flutter locking swivel casters and are specially designed to counteract cart wobble and prevent any unwanted noise. Engage the locking casters when on an incline to prevent your cargo from rolling away during loading and unloading. The carts easily adapt to a variety of needs with eight different configurations: Compact Dual-Handle, Extended Dual-Handle, Compact Single-Handle, Extended Single-Handle, Compact Collapsed, Extended Collapsed, Compact Upright, and Extended Upright.



www.gatorframeworks.com

Fretted

Chrissie Hynde and Joe Strummer Signature Models from Fender

Fender's Chrissie Hynde Telecaster comes complete with an alder

body finished in Faded Ice Blue Metallic RoadWorn lacquer; vintage-style '50s single-coil Tele pickups voiced to match Chrissie's original set; a 6-stainless steel barrel saddle bridge; and much more in an incredibly faithful recreation of one of the world's most iconic guitars, Hynde's treasured '65 mode.

The Joe Strummer Campfire model is a small-body acoustic-electric guitar

inspired by the legendary campfires that he held at Glastonbury Festival. Boasting a solid spruce top with mahogany back and sides, the Campfire reflects Strummer's legendary aesthetic with its matte black finish, nickel hardware and star inlays. Available March 2021.



www.fender.com

Gil Parris GPS Model from Reverend Guitars

The Reverend Gil Parris GPS has tons of Reverend upgrades and is loaded with

Fishman Fluence Single Width pickups. A push-pull knob in the bridge tone control switches between the two pickup voicings—a vintage tone and a more muscular "Hot Texas" tone. The Reverend Gil Parris GPS is available in Midnight Black with a choice of Roasted Maple or Pau Ferro fingerboards.

www.reverendguitars.com



Henna Dragon Ukuleles from Luna Guitars

Luna Guitars' Henna Dragon Ukulele Series is available in three body sizes with varying tonal depths. These Henna Dragon Ukuleles have a laser-etched henna dragon design and a slotted headstock that's reminiscent of a classical nylon-stringed guitar. Luna includes a built-in pre-amp to convey the warm tones of the all-mahogany body. The three body sizes offer different scale lengths: the 15-inch concert, the 17-inch tenor, and the 20.2" baritone. Each ukulele is built with an all-mahogany body that provides a vibrant, warm tone that varies in depth depending on the instrument's size. The henna dragon design by UK henna artist Alex Morgan is delicately laser-etched onto the mahogany top, which has an open-pore natural finish that further improves the instrument's resonance. Gig back included. Available in April, starting at \$169.

www.lunaguitars.com



Piano & Keyboard

The DGX-670 Digital Piano from Yamaha

Yamaha's DGX-670 digital piano features a modern, attractive aesthetic and a simplified user interface. The new "Portable Grand" ensemble instrument is a full, 88-note weighted action keyboard with exceptional playability, superb sound and visual appeal, making it ideal for beginners and accomplished pianists. The DGX-670 includes the company's Graded Hammer Standard keyboard action—the low keys have a heavier response and the high keys have a lighter response—which delivers the touch piano teachers recommend for building proper finger technique for playing acoustic pianos.

While the DGX-660 had a traditional, rectangular frame, the DGX-670 has been totally redesigned with a modern body featuring curved edges. Operation of a wide selection of functions is made quick and easy, thanks to a new, full-color LCD screen featuring a simplified user interface. The keyboard also has enlarged buttons on the front panel that feel nice to the touch without taking up too much space. Additional features of the DGX-670 include: 601 instrument Voices, including 29 Drum/SFX Kits, as well as 263 accompaniment Style presets; Bluetooth audio, which allows musicians to play their music through the new 10W x 2 speaker system; and "USB to Host" that functions as a two way 2-channel audio and 16-channel MIDI interface.

www.yamaha.com



Drums & Percussion

Paiste's Signature Series Revival

Paiste has announced a new phase of Signature Series re-launches and new models. 19" & 20" Power Crash are

assertive instruments for bright, full accents. 20" & 22" Power Rides pierce the loudest guitar walls with a solid, bright ping and strong bell sound. 14" & 15" Power Hi-Hats complete the triumvirate of Signature Power models with their bright and cutting character. The 14" Heavy Hi-Hat features power and brilliance as well, and features clear, full sound with a rich low-end. For the first time, Paiste presents the 22" Mellow Ride - a larger version of the popular light ride cymbal. In the new size, the sweet, mellow stick sound and the rich, soft wash obtain even more depth and volume. Signature Cymbals are made by hand from Signature Alloy using traditional methods that have remained unchanged in over half a century.

www.paiste.com



Zildjian's Limited Edition Vintage As

In celebration of what would have been Armand Zildjian's 100th birthday, the Avedis Zildjian Company will be releasing vintage cymbals from the Zildjian family vault. This first ever family vault release features 200 hand selected genuine vintage 20" A cymbals from Armand Zildjian's personal collection. Included with each cymbal is a pair of limited-edition Armand Zildjian signature drumsticks, a pair of gloves, a signed and numbered certificate of authenticity, and a book celebrating Armand Zildjian's life and legacy. All of these come packed in a premium Calzone road case.

www.zildjian.com





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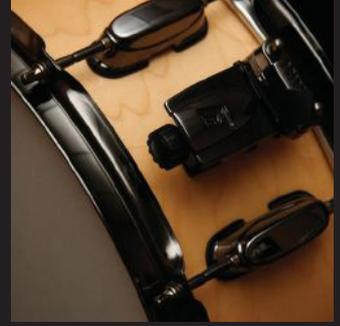


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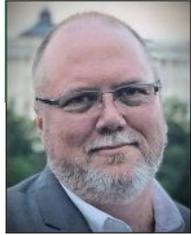
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By
Mike Lawson

A Virtual Return to Musical Fitness

As I write this, it has been 51 weeks since my last live gig in Nashville after playing the same awesome venue, Acme Feed and Seed, every other Monday with my band, “Hooteroll?” for about five years. By the time you read this, it will be over a year. That’s a long time to not be performing, if performing regularly was your thing before the COVID-19 crisis sent us all home.

The “good news” is that the club wants to have us back, ostensibly starting in April and gave us dates going through to the end of December. It’s awesome to be wanted back, and Acme is probably the chilliest, best-run venue in Nashville, so we are cautiously delighted. I mean, everyone in the band is of a certain age, so health issues are still a factor in a town where the mask-less wonders take great delight in showing how brave they are by potentially spreading a virus they might not know they are spreading. But I digress...

Health issues aside, the biggest fear I have about returning, provided we all can get vaccinated first, is my lack of physical preparedness. There is a gigantic difference between performing live and casually playing or recording at home. Since I carry a large share of the vocals, I have about eight weeks, if the target date to return holds, to get a voice that hasn’t had to sing with vigor back into shape after not using it for over a year.

Fortunately, we do live in a world where that is actually possible to do without leaving home. For many years I performed live audio over SHOUTCast, sharing the live stream into Second Life. That started over 13 years ago for me, and it was amazing to play two or three hour stream-of-consciousness sets for a live, responsive audience – even if they were dancing pixel people. They were a real audience. You have to put on a real show in real time or they will not stick around.

Doing a live performance radio show, which in essence is what that is, requires all of the components of an in-person show without the visuals. I did the first one again a couple of days ago. After three hours of playing “in front of” about 40 people whose pixel avatars were dancing and socializing and doing what people do in a real venue in real life, I was wiped out. I know I need to do it again, and again, and again, or I simply will not be ready to take the stage in front of hundreds of people at one of Nashville’s premier live music venues.

I dropped out of doing these livestream shows a few years ago. I was getting so busy with my band and life that I didn’t have time to do it. I’m doing it again now because I know that it is a serious boot camp that gets my hands back in shape, my voice singing with purpose, and improves muscle memory for chords and song structures, with myriad other benefits.

During COVID-19, some of your customers discovered that they could do this, but probably not in an

audio-only format, with the onslaught of live video streaming. Some are performing over Twitch and, until the end of March when it shuts for good, Periscope, or Facebook Live, or livestreaming on YouTube and other services. While I personally am not opting for adding another layer of complexity by adding video, I’d venture most of your customers had not ever given thought to *not* using video. I, however, have a face made for radio and don’t mind not having the distraction of lighting, video angles, or trying to make it more visually interesting.

“Supporting virtual concert livestream video or audio-only performances by your customers and helping them look and sound their best is smart business right now.”

Supporting virtual concert livestream video or audio-only performances by your customers and helping them look and sound their best is smart business right now. One category of items that have sold like mad the past year have been these tools for all things home recording. Your customers need to have a solid audio interface, streaming software (much of which is free), an Ethernet connection for steady data streaming, good microphones, signal processors, and everything that goes along with doing a show in person.

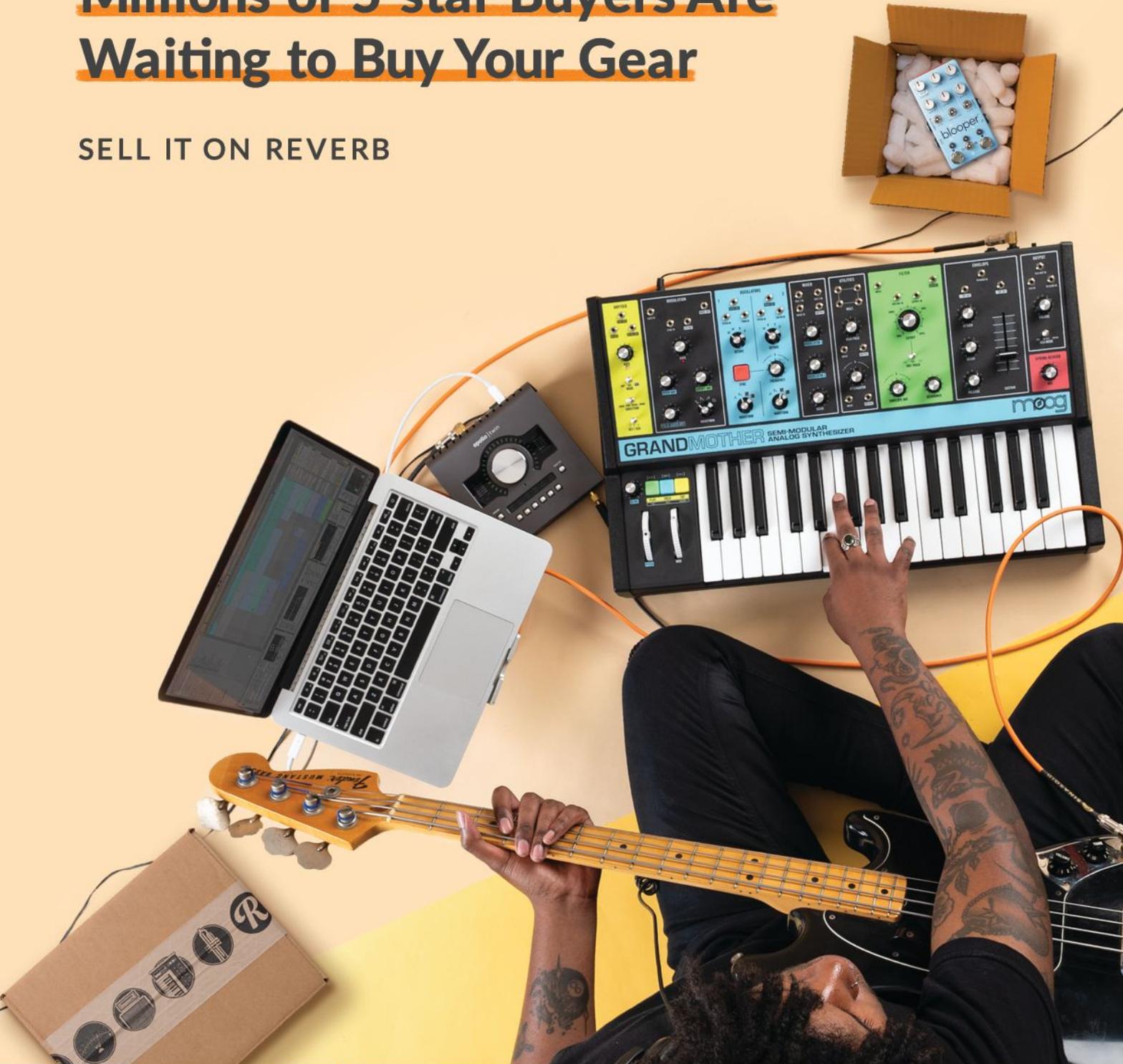
Everything you sell to a customer for home recording or live shows is needed for livestream video performance. This includes stage lighting, which has probably not been a hot seller the past year. If you have customers like me, who played out professionally for years and suddenly had to stop last year, rest assured they are nervous and likely out of shape and not ready to jump back into performing live in person.

If you think you have customers who were not really into home recording before because they spent their efforts playing in cover bands, or solo gigs, now is a good time to put together livestream performance packages, gather how-to resources from webpages and videos, and point them to places they can use the equipment – but most importantly, express that these livestream performances can become the equivalent of hitting the gym musically before they enter into the marathon of live performance. They need to sound good and look good, so they can do the same when the clubs are reopened for real. You can help them get into shape again like a musical fitness guru. I think the ones who played out, even a few times a month, would appreciate your interest in their getting back into musical shape before they hit the real stage again. I know I would. ENTREPRENEUR



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