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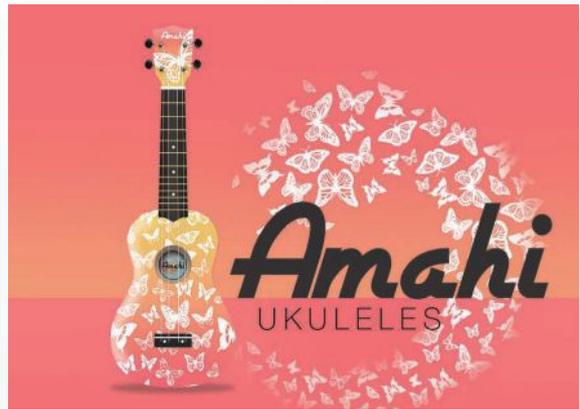
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MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

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Succeed by Going Above and Beyond

By
**Christian
Wissmuller**

This issue of *MMR* – much like many August (sometimes July!) editions in my tenure with the magazine – focuses on the relationship between MI retailers and suppliers with area music students, schools, and music programs. While certain initiatives such as “Back to School” sales remain evergreen, low-hanging fruit for dealers and vendors, the effectiveness of such tried and true meth-

odology, as well as the mechanics of connecting with kids and their parents (the ones who actually make the big purchases) continue to change at a rapid clip. School music reps visiting districts is still an impactful strategy for many, but perhaps not for all, or not as much as in decades past. E-commerce and ready access to an overabundance of (often suspect) information about specific models of instruments and gear represent challenges as threatening to the maintenance and expansion of retailer/student/teacher connections as school budget cuts and larger economic trends.

“It’s just too easy to get online what you used to need to come to a music store for,” observes Drew Parker of Lewisville, North Carolina’s Separk Music Company in the current Dealer Survey (page 16). “The problem with the typical beginning band family is that they don’t know what they don’t know. The guidance they get on a website cannot duplicate what they get from a concerned and caring music store staff. But in many cases now, we are their second choice after being disappointed by what they got online. We need to do whatever it takes to keep that customer coming back to us.”

Supersonic Music’s (Topeka, Kansas) Derek Sharp adds, “[Today’s] culture posits that individuals can become ‘expert’ in anything on the other end of a Google search (‘research’ they call it), and those individuals have heard so many wackos sound off there that they’re suspicious of anyone purporting to actually know anything about a topic. Therefore, trust in what store employees/sales folks have to share – regardless of how many years’ worth of experience such folks have had with the very topics at hand – is very low. My pseudo-sociology ends there, so I don’t know what to do about it. Maybe the tide will turn someday and experience will be valued again.”

What to do, then, when formats that have worked for ages upon ages suddenly no longer carry as much weight within the zeitgeist? Believe me, as someone who committed his professional life to “print media,” I can relate...

As the experts we spoke with for this issue’s Spotlight feature (page 12) seem to agree, it’s a situation where strategy is of utmost importance and a case of “slow and steady” wins the race. “We suggest to think long-term,” advises George Quinlan, Jr. of Quinlan & Fabish. “Perhaps develop a five year plan to replace or enhance existing school-owned instruments... It’s important that we focus on providing the best educational tools for the students as the benefit of this project. *They don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care.*”

NAMM president and CEO John Mlynczak concurs that relationship-building – and not necessarily chasing “today’s sale” – is key to long-term success: “You have to invest early, you have to invest in the relationship piece of it long before the money comes. Because if the relationship’s there, the money is going to come and that’s going to be the easy part.”

Parking-lot sales, knowledgeable in-store staff, and one-on-one meetings may be under fire from YouTube and TikTok clips, half-baked social media posts, and click-and-purchase convenience, but at the end of the day most folks – be they the parent of a new violin student or the music director tasked with upgrading an entire district’s synth labs – prefer doing business with people they *know* and *trust*.

As Rich Ghinelli of CutTime, and formerly educational support manager for Conn-Selmer, puts it, “Is the dealer sending a rep to the school every week to pick up/return repairs, hand deliver accessories, to update them on products, et cetera? Are invoices accurate, payments applied appropriately, et cetera? A lot of loyalty can be gained by a dealer rep going above and beyond to make sure the director is taken care of in the best way possible.”

Here’s to going above and beyond. Has there ever been a more impactful business model?



Christian Wissmuller
christian@mrrmagazine.com

PUBLISHER
Mike Lawson
Ext. 4
mike@artistpro.com

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Christian Wissmuller
Ext. 3
christian@mrrmagazine.com

CONTRIBUTORS
Menzie Pittman, Jaimie Blackman

Art
ART DIRECTOR/PRODUCTION MANAGER
Angela Marlett
Ext. 5
angela@mrrmagazine.com

Advertising
ACCOUNT MANAGER
Matt King
Ext. 2
matt@mrrmagazine.com

ACCOUNT MANAGER
ACCOUNTING
Shannon Kechsull Lawson
accounting@artistpro.com

PUBLISHING CONSULTANT
Terry Lowe

PRINTING/FULFILLMENT
Liberty Press
1180 N. Mountain Springs Pkwy.
Springville, UT 84663

artistpro
PUBLISHING

artistpro, LLC
7012 City Center Way, Suite 207
Fairview, TN 37062
(800) 682-8114

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Sunn Amplifiers Returns

Mission Engineering, in collaboration with Fender Musical Instruments Corp. (FMIC), announces the return of the iconic Sunn amplifier brand as an officially licensed product. The Sunn brand was at the forefront of amplifier innovation throughout the 1960s and 1970s, used by legendary players including Pete Townsend, Jimi Hendrix, the Beach Boys, the Melvins, and many more. Under an exclusive licensing agreement with FMIC, Sunn Musical Equipment Corporation will spearhead the brand's return, applying Sunn's unique approach to amplifiers and other products with a dedicated U.S.-based factory to deliver on this ambition.

"Resurrecting the Sunn brand has long been a dream of our team, and we are thrilled to be the trusted partner Fender has selected to bring this vision to life," said James Lebiha, CEO of Sunn Amplification. "We are honored to have a robust group of Sunn enthusiasts, including some of the original employees, join us on this journey to restore Sunn for musicians worldwide. If you know the Sunn brand, and the historical significance it has in the music industry, you understand why the world needs it back."

"We're proud to partner with Mission Engineering to uphold the legacy of the Sunn Amplifier brand and look forward to introducing modern players to the raw power that these classic amplifiers are capable of," said Richard Bussey, VP of Accessories, Lifestyle and Licensing FMIC. "We can't wait to show what the Mission Engineering and Sunn Amplification team has in store."

Historically, Sunn was at the forefront of amplifier innovation in the 1960s and '70s before its eventual closure. They remained under the Fender umbrella of brands for many years, awaiting the right team and resources to usher in Sunn's next chapter. In 2022, a group of passionate industry veterans approached Fender with an inspired vision to resurrect the Sunn brand, repositioning it at its rightful place in the music industry. Following in-depth discussions, it was mutually decided that Sunn Amplification Corporation would spearhead the rejuvenation of the Sunn brand, applying Sunn's unique approach to amplifiers and tone with a dedicated US-based factory to deliver on this ambition.

Ranging from \$499 to \$3,299 the revived Sunn product line will feature historic reproductions of the classic Sunn designs, utilizing original tooling, and introduce new products that incorporate modern technology to meet the needs of today's musicians. Products will be available late 2023.

Gibson Brands Appoints Cesar Gueikian as Permanent CEO

Gibson Brands, Inc. has announced that its board of directors has confirmed Cesar Gueikian to the role of president and CEO of Gibson Brands.

"I have had the opportunity to work closely with Cesar as we have rebuilt Gibson over the past 5 years," says Nat Zilkha, chairman, Gibson Brands. "He has established a remarkable track record at Gibson, shaping our product, our marketing, our artist relationships, and many of our important growth initiatives. In addition, Cesar has an extraordinary personal passion for music, and for Gibson guitars in particular. He is an accomplished leader, a musician, and a self-professed guitar nerd. We are confident that Cesar is the ideal person to serve as Gibson's next CEO and to build on the great momentum we have as a company."

"I am honored and humbled to take on the permanent CEO role! Gibson is a passion project for me. Our board of directors, chaired by Nat Zilkha, has been incredibly supportive over the last five years, giving me an opportunity to merge my biggest passion, which is not just music and guitars, but Gibson guitars with my business background, and I don't take this for granted" says Gueikian, president and CEO, Gibson Brands. "The support from our board, team, artists, and fans has been overwhelming and I look forward to continuing the work we started with our leadership team, who always challenge me to be better. We have an epic history in music, which comes with responsibility, and we are constantly asking ourselves how to be more relevant and leverage our iconic past to be more creative the older we become as a brand. Our future depends on our team's passion and pride in the work they do, and on creative collaboration with our artists around the world across genres of music. When music is at its best, the spirit of the fan merges with the spirit of the artist, and that transcendent experience is special. I can't wait to get started, keep momentum, and press ahead."

Gueikian joined Gibson in 2018, merging his business background with his lifelong passion for music and guitars. He has been instrumental in the resurgence of Gibson, setting a successful new strategy centered around instruments and sound, relaunching the portfolio of brands, shaping a new portfolio architecture, creating Gibson Media, launching Gibson TV, and securing partnerships with Gibson artists to bring their music to the world and keep Gibson culturally engaged and connected to music.



ESP Guitars Expands Into New U.S. Headquarters

ESP Guitars, the respected global manufacturer of guitar and bass instruments and U.S. distributor for acclaimed brands that include Takamine Guitars and ENGL Amplification, has moved into their new U.S. headquarters. ESP's new U.S. offices, showroom, service, distribution, and warehouse space is located at 5433 West San Fernando Road, Los Angeles, CA, 90039. The new location is adjacent to the city's well-known Griffith Park area.

"ESP had been in our previous location in North Hollywood for over 20 years," says Matt Masciandaro, president and CEO of the ESP Guitar Company. "While it served us well, ESP has grown tremendously during that time frame, expanding our product line and adding distributed brands. Our new facility has almost three times the warehouse space of the old HQ, and offers a much more

effective layout for our business offices, product showroom and more."

All ESP business staff, including sales, marketing, customer service, human resources, accounting, product development, and manufacturing coordination are now located at the new headquarters. Additionally, the company's shipping and receiving teams are able to take advantage of the greatly expanded warehouse space, which houses the company's extensive inventory of ESP and Takamine instruments. The manufacturing facility for the company's ESP USA Series instruments will remain at its current location in North Hollywood, CA, but is also expanding its footprint by an additional 50%.

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Cort Guitars and Digitech/DOD Parent Company Cor-Tek Marks 50th Anniversary

Cor-Tek Corporation, the parent company of Cort Guitars and Digitech/DOD, kicks off the year 2023 with its 50th anniversary celebration. For the past five decades, Cor-Tek has produced and shipped over 20 million musical instruments and played a significant role in helping the guitar become the most popular instrument in the world. Cor-Tek remains a family company at its core, inspired by the contributions of its employees, artists, and international partners and poised to embrace a bright future of innovation.

Like many success stories, Cor-Tek's journey began as a response to a setback. Founder and chairman of Cort and Cor-Tek Corp., Young H. Park, was born into the music manufacturing business, but a 1972 recession forced the closure of his father's SooDo Piano Company. In 1973, at the young age of 26, Park quickly pivoted to launch a guitar manufacturing business in partnership with Jack Westheimer, an industry bellwether who had been SooDo Piano's predominant buyer. The new venture, known as "Yoo-Ah Company," began building guitars under the Cort trademark.

What started as a small-volume production in the early 1980s has steadily blossomed into a large-scale manufacturing operation throughout multiple countries. The 1990s ushered in artist collaborations to design and develop innovative instruments. Throughout the decades, Cor-Tek's operation has weathered major economic and social upheavals, including most recently the COVID-19 pandemic. The company has successfully balanced the wide-scale success of its OEM business with the marketing of Cort guitars, enabling both sides of the business to flourish.

Reflecting on Cor-Tek's past accomplishments and future plans, Young H. Park commented, "I'm fortunate to be surrounded by my son, Jun Park, and other younger-generation employees who are guiding Cor-Tek into the future. There are many employees who have been with us for more than 20 years. I'm proud of our work culture and creative environment, where employees can grow in their roles and contribute to Cor-Tek's success."

NAMM Foundation Elects Wooten to Board of Directors

The NAMM Foundation welcomes legendary bassist, educator, and author Victor Wooten to its board of directors. In the role of director-at-large, Wooten will serve a three-year term to help guide the work of the nonprofit organization and fulfill its vision: creating access to and advance participation in music making across the lifespan.

"Victor is not only an iconic bassist and artist but also a visionary educator," said Mary Luehrsen, executive director of The NAMM Foundation. "He's a passionate advocate who breaks down barriers to create more music makers. His belief in and work to advance access to music education have inspired us all, and we couldn't be more excited to have him join the board."

"Music and education are very important to me," Wooten said. "As a new board member, I will be joining others who are also passionate about making positive changes in our musical industry. It's an exciting time."

Wooten is a founding member of jazz-fusion group Béla Fleck and the Flecktones, as well as a longtime solo artist. He has collaborated with such renowned artists as Stanley Clarke, Mike Stern and Chick Corea and remains a sought-after session musician. As a bassist, his style blends jazz, funk, rock and a unique melodic approach. He was named Bass Player of the Year from *Bass Player* magazine three times, and he's a five-time Grammy winner.

In 2000, Wooten founded the Bass/Nature Camp music program, which expanded into Victor Wooten's Center for Music and Nature. He also helps lead the Victor Wooten/Berklee Summer Bass Workshop at Berklee College of Music in Boston. His teaching style focuses on individuality, creativity and seeking out one's unique musical voice. He's the author of *The Music Lesson: A Spiritual Search for Growth Through Music* and its sequel, *The Spirit of Music: The Lesson Continues*.

Wooten replaces Bernie Williams, who has served his term as director-at-large. With Wooten's appointment, he will join Chris White, chair of The NAMM Foundation and president of White House of Music; Dinah Gretsch, vice chair, as well as executive vice president and CFO of Gretsch Co.; Susan Lipp, secretary-treasurer and chairman of Full Compass Systems; and John Mlynczak, president and CEO of NAMM.



Introducing Pearl River Guitars to Nashville, Music City, USA

Sherry Carlisle Smith, respected owner/operator of SCE Group, a prominent booking and promotion agency in Nashville, is well-versed in the city's music scene. With a remarkable history of performing both solo and alongside numerous country music stars, Smith has earned recognition for her role in assembling top Nashville musicians for live performances and promoting them nationwide through live streaming and videos.

As Nashville's reputation as Music City, USA, hinges on the significance of the guitar, Smith is thrilled to introduce local musicians to the new line of Pearl River Guitars. Among the recent converts is country music star Keith Burns, a founding member of the Grammy-nominated, ACM & AMA award-winning, platinum-selling group Trick Pony.

With an impressive track record as one of Nashville's leading songwriters and the recipient of the NIMA Best Country Male Solo Artist & Best Country Entertainer of the Year awards, Keith's opinions on guitars carry considerable weight.

"The moment I picked up a Pearl River guitar, I knew it would be accompanying me on the road," he remarked. "It boasts an amazing tone, a perfect feel, and is incredibly appealing to the eye. From now on, Pearl River will be on stage with me wherever I go!" Keith's Pearl River guitar will be a constant companion during his sold-out North American tour, featuring Pearl River guitar signage on his tour bus.

Each Pearl River guitar undergoes a meticulous and intricate process, starting with the careful selection of woods known for their unique tonal qualities, resonance, and aesthetic appeal. The bracing is thoughtfully positioned to enhance response and projection. Throughout the entire production, every Pearl River guitar is rigorously tested and adjusted to achieve the perfect balance of tone, playability, and responsiveness.

For more information about Pearl River Guitars and their availability, visit pearlriverusa.com/guitars

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After 26 years at **Martin Audio**, mostly spent in managing marketing and PR, **Maureen 'Mo' Hayes** is taking retirement. She has been the longest serving member of the Martin Audio staff by a clear stretch.



"Giving up something that's been part of your life for such a long time is certainly going to feel strange, and I can't imagine not having it in my life," she concedes. "But while I will miss the camaraderie, I feel comfortable that I am leaving the company in good hands, with a blend of experienced people and new blood coming in to keep things fresh."

Audio-Technica announces that **Kurt Van Scoy** has been promoted to Audio-Technica U.S. vice president and officer, Products, Busi-



ness Alliances, and Marketing. The announcement was made by Manabu Aoki, Audio-Technica U.S. CEO and president, to whom Van Scoy will report directly in his new role.

Van Scoy joined Audio-Technica U.S. in 1987, transferred to a subsidiary, then came back in 1995. He has worked in roles spanning several of ATUS's departments including engineering, production, quality, and product management. He also worked at A-T's corporate headquarters in Japan for over four years before earning his most recent title of executive director of product management.

In his new role, Van Scoy will continue to oversee product development as well as assume leadership of the marketing team, which includes Gary Boss (director of marketing) and Isabel Kiefer and Rory Geraghty (assistant marketing managers). As a VP and officer of the organization, Van Scoy will assist in shaping and leading the overall strategic future of ATUS.

Allen & Heath USA

is proud to announced that **Michael Jackson** has been appointed as regional sales manager for the western territory. A graduate of Full Sail University, Jackson joins the team with over a decade of experience in touring, project management, and business development within the entertainment industry.



In his new position, Jackson will be working with sales representatives and dealers in the western United States, providing sales support and oversight.

"We are pleased to have Michael join our team," said Pat McConnell, national sales manager for Allen & Heath USA. "He is a welcome addition and is already jumping into the territory, getting to know our reps, and supporting our dealers. He will be another effective resource in our continued commitment to our dealer partners."

traderegrets

The MI world lost a true giant recently, when **Jerry Ash**, former president and chairman of Sam Ash Music, passed away on July 6. Our thoughts are with the Ash family and all of Jerry's many friends within the industry and beyond.



The following was posted on the Sam Ash website:

Surrounded by family, Jerry Ash, former president and chairman of Sam Ash Music, passed away on Thursday, July 6, 2023. He was highly respected as a businessperson but most importantly, he was a kind, honest man who believed in treating everyone with respect. That's the lasting impression Jerry aimed to leave on the people he met, whether a customer, colleague, friend, or family member.

Owner and president of Wichita, Kansas' Senseney Music Company, **Lori Supinie** passed away from complications related to brain cancer on July 12 at the age of 63.



Supinie purchased Senseney Music from original owner Denny Senseney upon his retirement in 2008. The MI retail operation was honored with the NAMM Dealer of the Year awarded in 2011 and Supinie, herself, was a past board member of NAMM, NASMD, and a past president of RPMDA.

Donations can be made to the Lori Supinie Scholarship Fund, Kansas Music Educators' Association, 614 N. Parkdale, Wichita, Kansas 67212 and/or the American Cancer Society, P.O. Box 171335, Kansas City, KS 66117.

Renowned luthier, **Edwin Wilson**, notable for his pioneering work for Gibson Custom's True Historic program, passed away on July 14 at the age of 59.



Wilson served as director of the True Historic program until 2017, revolutionizing many aspects of vintage guitar replication. The True Historic Program - especially the Collector's Choice line - was a first for the industry: Gibson's effort to faithfully replicate Golden Era guitars down to the smallest detail. Wilson and his team went far beyond merely attempting to make newer instruments "look old." Rather, they

sought to create guitars that played, sounded, and felt as close as possible to the originals.

As Gibson was headed towards bankruptcy in 2017, Wilson parted ways with the iconic brand and moved on to serve as head of Guitar R&D for Vista Musical Products (Harmony and Heritage Guitars). In his new role he was instrumental in introducing an entirely new line of Harmony guitars and launching the Custom Core line for Heritage.

Wilson's passing has been observed by many notable figures in music, including Joe Bonamassa who posted to Instagram that, "Edwin was instrumental in developing prototypes for both my signature Les Paul and 335 models as well as the Collector's Choice series for Gibson Custom. He was a good dude and gone too soon."

Matt Koehler, VP of Product for Gibson, observed, "Edwin Wilson was fearless. He was a great friend. And he helped me get the job at Gibson. I'll never forget his smile, his laugh and his heart. His legacy in guitar is worth of a book itself. For decades he was behind the Gibson Custom Historic model evolution, all the coolest limited runs, and all the artist models. We kept up until the very end and he was always in great spirits. We love you Edwin! You will be greatly missed."

We were impressed by this video that Casino Guitars put out about the closure of independent music shops. In our area alone, two shops closed in the Winnepesaukee/Lakes region, NH and another in Montpelier and Newport, VT mostly from owners retiring. Although there seem to be many other pressures on independent stores currently, many pointed out in this video. We are almost the only music shop left within an hour's drive. It makes me curious if you have been watching or have been gathering statistics on independent store closures and if not you, has NAMM noticed?

Thanks,
Ben Salomon
 Northern Lights Music
 Littleton, N.H.

[We replied to Mr. Salomon and he plans to pen a Guest Editorial column for publication in MMR in the near future. – Ed]

Christian,

Wanted to drop you a note regarding the Stringjoy article [July, 2023 – Ed].

As a (really) small guitar repair shop, having a string dealer who will work with you is a huge plus.

I started using Stringjoy strings, personally, while installing the other brands on customer's instruments. Occasionally, if the customer didn't request a certain brand or generalized a gauge, I'd install some of my personal strings/gauges. Never had a complaint. Never.

These guys are the real deal. They understand the small shop as well as the consumer's needs.

Thanks for a great article about them and for spreading the word! Keep up the good work!

Scott Eivins
 Owner
 A&Z Guitar Repair
 Carrollton, MO

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The Real 'Influencers'

Tapping into the Purchasing Power of Music Educators

by Christian Wissmuller

Surely all readers of *MMR* – reps for MI brands, individual retailers, administrators – recognize that young and new music students are a key engine that powers our industry. First-time students as well as those advancing to the next levels of ability each generate profit for suppliers and dealers on a global scale. Encouraging the culture of music making and advocating for music & arts scholarship has long been a common goal for many.

And yet, while the direct line between emerging players and repeat customers has long been understood, valued, and respected, on an individual level sometimes certain parties seem to lose the plot. At industry gatherings such as the NAMM Show it's (sadly) not uncommon to occasionally witness representatives for exhibiting brands, upon realizing that the guy or gal who just entered their booth is wearing an educator badge, "disengage" – and in some cases literally turn the other direction and walk towards another visitor – as if such an individual isn't worthy of attention because they're unlikely to directly represent a sale.

Wrong!

In an age where online influencers are sought-after brand ambassadors, some forget that in many ways no single opinion has more authority or sway when it comes to the purchase of instruments and gear than individual music instructors, band directors, or district leaders. These folks aren't lowly "tire-kickers" (to borrow

a phrase from *MMR* publisher Mike Lawson) taking up space at trade shows, clutching their demo CDs (yes – CDs, even in 2023) and dressed ready for a night out on Sunset Strip circa 1989. Music educators represent very real, direct *and* indirect, potential sales – sometimes in substantial volume.

We recently touched base with three authorities from different segments of the MI industry on the far-ranging purchasing power wielded by educators and how best to develop, maintain, and grow meaningful and lasting relationships with these individuals.

Music instructors – be it classroom or private, one-on-one teachers – are in many cases the "influencers" when it comes to students or parents of younger students deciding what brand or model of instrument or music gear to purchase. Can you talk about the unique role teachers have in terms of impacting those types of student- or parent-of-student purchases?

John Mlynczak: Everyone tends to get excited when there's a YouTube or TikTok influencer: "Oh, we've got to get them to mention the product!" Well, educators *are* the influencers when it comes to student purchases.

I think that the best way to sum up the value of an educator and education purchasing, as compared to consumer purchasing, is to understand everyone's role. As a consumer, you are the de-



cision-maker, the purchaser, and the user. In the education world, those roles can be occupied by three different people. And that's the key understanding that folks have to have. So, for an example, a beginning student is the user, but they don't have the chops to really know what is actually a quality instrument, or what helping them or hurting them at the time. The teacher could actually be the key decision maker helping drive what that purchase is, but the parent is actually the purchaser. Just understanding who's playing what role is crucial because that teacher is ultimately the one driving the purchase.

Rick Ghinelli: I think there are several factors at play here. A music instructor was most likely influenced by *their* music instructor in college. If a college instructor is a die-hard fan of a particular brand/model, there is a good chance they are influencing their students to play the same.

Instructors can also be influenced by private teachers that play instruments other than what the instructor plays. Typically a band director is only proficient in one instrument, so they would depend on others to guide them.

Band directors are also going to look outside their own situation to see what other successful programs are using. I say, "Band directors can be like sheep." Once a few start heading in a particular direction, others will tend to follow.

Manufacturer and dealer influence can also be a factor. If that's who the director sees as the expert, they could be influenced by special features, price, promotions, et cetera.

George Quinlan, Jr.: As music retailers, we must realize that most parents have little or no experience or expertise about the products they need for their children to participate in Band or Orchestra. Understanding this dynamic is a key to becoming a trusted advisor and for teachers. We try to emphasize that "where you buy" is equally important as "what you buy," [and] having a local presence to properly repair and provide needed services for their school music program. And, our role is different for directors and private teachers. Private teachers *are* expert at their particular instrument. Typically they have a great knowledge and experience with brands, models, reputation, and specifications. Occasionally, we can provide information about new models, but often their preferences are already established. With B&O directors, while they may have great experience and knowledge about their major instrument(s), they often need supplemental information from their recommended vendor to assist in guiding parents towards high-quality, yet affordable instruments. Educational representatives must continue improving their product knowledge to add value to the relationships for the directors they serve.

In your experience, when a school district is looking to replace or upgrade some of their instruments – say, buying new B&O instruments, or some new synths for the music tech lab, or replacing a district's pianos – what are the factors, aside from price, that come into play when it comes to choosing brands to purchase and MI retailers to do business with in order to acquire that new gear?

GQ: For purchases of school-owned instruments, many directors will rely on recommendations from trusted experts in their particular area of expertise, espe-

cially marching and concert percussion. As retailers, we try to cultivate positive relationships with these teachers so they recognize the value we provide servicing their band or orchestra program. Smaller schools may not have the resources of larger schools, so it's important that our educational representatives bring expert knowledge to our recommendations to earn our reputation as a partner in music education. Price will always be one factor in their decision, but when the district realizes the value a local store offers, this too can become part of their decision-making process.

RG: I may have touched upon this, but price is probably the main thing a *district* looks at when approving a purchase. Many times the music director will have to provide specific data/reasons to purchase a similar item that has a higher price point. In many cases it has to be a pretty compelling argument, especially when this goes out to bid and has to be approved by the board. Certainly the reputation of the brand, past history, and feedback from other users would be taken into consideration.

Do you have any advice or recommendations for "best practices" that businesses might want to adopt that would help forge and/or strengthen relationships with local school districts and individual campus directors or independent private instructors?

RG: I personally feel that a director needs to be constantly informed about the new products that are coming out. We've seen the best results happen when a dealer or manufacturer can provide an instrument to the school/director so that it can be play tested by instructors and students. You can't tell how an instrument plays by looking at a picture on the Internet! The other big factor is service. Is the dealer sending a rep to the school every week to pick up/return repairs, hand deliver accessories, to update them on products, etc. Are invoices accurate, payments applied appropriately, et cetera? A lot of loyalty can be gained by a dealer rep going above and beyond to make sure the director is taken care of in the best way possible.

JM: When talking to an educator, either in-store or at the NAMM Show, it's really important to ask your qualifying questions to understand how to get that teacher to influence, because, at the end of the day, a purchase is driving people emotionally to take action.

“While most school music dealers and their educational representatives strive to cultivate positive relationships with music teachers, we often emphasize the importance of having strong relationships with other key people in the school district, notably the purchasing/finance department staff, principals, and school office staff.”

— George Quinlan, Jr. — CEO/School Service Representative, Quinlan & Fabish Music Company



So, you must ask those qualifying questions of, “How many students do you have, what level they played, do they mostly play beginner instruments, what are their biggest frustrations, how long do they stick with it?” And then you come up with your pitch: “Hey, did you know if you had this model, the action is better, and it’s going to help them play longer” – whatever the strategy is. It’s the same sales cycle, but it doesn’t have to lead to a dollar in that moment; it leads to a lasting influence.

I think educators really want to be educated. Educators are typically very wary, they could smell a sales pitch a mile away. But they do want to be educated, especially on the emerging and rapidly developing areas of audio and other areas of music technology. However, they often don’t have time – they are so busy, they have classes, they don’t have a free second without kids around them. So, the idea of having to research what products to use and learn about the new innovations, or what models of instruments they should recommend, or how to design that audio lab, they simply don’t have time. So, if someone comes in and just helps them, and is a partner educating them, that’s key. And, like everything in education, you have to build the relationship. We’re planting trees, right? So you’ve got to give them time, educate them, and when those funds come by, which might be five years later, they’ll come by to do business in a big way. But you have to invest early, you have to invest in the relationship piece of it long before the money comes. Because if the relationship’s there, the money is going to come and that’s going to be the easy part.

GQ: While most school music dealers and their educational representatives strive to cultivate positive relationships with music teachers, we often emphasize the importance of having strong relationships with other key people in the school district, notably the purchasing/finance department staff, principals, and school office staff. Since these people will have influence on the purchasing decision, having developed a trusted relationship with them will help guide their decision, hopefully in our direction.

Some MI suppliers occasionally undervalue the potential purchasing power represented by school districts. Off the top of your head, can you think of any instances where a single high school, school district, college, or conservatory placed an order with an MI retailer that represented impressive volume?

RG: Last year, I, as a Conn Selmer educational support manager, sold

\$4.7 million dollars of instruments to the Houston Independent School District.

Those sales went to two local music dealers that forged positive relationships with the district. There are a number of other examples where districts have purchased several hundreds of thousands of dollars of instruments. When a new school is opening, especially a high school, you’re looking at them purchasing thousands of dollars of instruments, pianos, electronics, sound systems, et cetera.

GQ: Many school district finance managers realize the importance of ongoing preventative maintenance and repair for their school owned instruments. *After all, they see the repair invoices, too!* Several years ago, a large suburban district reached out to us for a comprehensive package of rentals and school service coupled with a plan for preventative maintenance of their school-owned instruments. Once the age of their existing inventory was demonstrated, they made a major investment in their music program. One administrator remarked that she could not think of a single asset used daily by the students which was older than their school-owned tubas as she authorized replacements!

Are such high-volume sales usually coordinated directly with an MI supplier/brand, or an individual MI dealer, or both?

RG: I think it can be both. Sometimes the dealer hears about the potential purchase first, sometimes it’s the manufacturer. Hopefully the two work together to help the district get what they need, but then that depends on the relationship between the dealer and the supplier!

In your opinion, what are the most important “action items” that both MI retailers and suppliers should consider in order to leverage the considerable buying power and profit potential represented by institutional sales?

JM: As discussed earlier, right now we’re all hot on the YouTube influencer, the TikToker, the people that are doing unboxing videos and demonstrating products online and getting lots and lots of followers. When we see an influencer or a YouTuber come in the booth [at the NAMM Show], we’re like, “Wow, I have to talk to that person because I’ve got get them to talk about my product.” The teacher is the same person, with the same or greater impact. We need to treat them like those high-level influencers, because they have hundreds of students every year that they’re sitting with. We need to treat *them* like a rock star or YouTuber



“You have to invest early, you have to invest in the relationship piece of it long before the money comes. Because if the relationship’s there, the money is going to come and that’s going to be the easy part.”

— John Mlynczak — President and CEO, NAMM



their music programs. It's important that we focus on providing the best educational tools for the students as the benefit of this project. "They don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care."

RG: It really boils down to relationships. I was told once, "People will buy from people they like, so just go out and build those relationships and the sales will come." I saw that come to fruition when I was stopped by a fine arts administrator at a conference who said, "I have \$800K to spend. We need to talk!"

John, let's wrap up with you. What do you see organizations like NAMM and events such as the NAMM Show doing differently in the future to better leverage the purchasing power of band directors, music educators, and school districts. What paths do you see towards strengthening the relationships between all parties – suppliers, retailers, educators – to mutual benefit?

JM: I'll start with what NAMM's doing, because if I'm doing it at NAMM, I honestly believe it's what should be done. From an institutional standpoint, you have to look at the supervisor, the district arts, or visual performing arts director or music supervisor, because the end of the day, they're the ones that are going to



"When a new school is opening, especially a high school, you're looking at them purchasing thousands of dollars of instruments, pianos, electronics, sound systems, et cetera."

– Rick Ghinelli – Regional Director, West, CutTime

when they walk in, because they have that level of influence.

I think the other thing to understand, too, is that the level of influence on convincing a student or parent to buy something is massive. But also, teachers do make large district-wide purchases of instruments and audio equipment and installs, and the music teacher is a big decision-maker there. And I'll tell you, the key to that – and this is where it really becomes about quality – the thing to remember when a teacher is spending district money is that those funds come around once every seven years, or there's a new millage on the tax or there's a new school opening. Those things come around, like, once in a comet cycle, right? And when they come around, you've got to run outside at 2:00 a.m., look at that thing, and see the streak in the sky, because you ain't seein' that again for the next 22 years or however long! [laughs]

So, when that money's there their number one thing is, "I need to make a purchase that's going to last long enough." So, they're going for quality, at that stage. They're absolutely of the mindset: "Give me everything I need to buy right now, every accessory, every extra cable, whatever it is, give me the repair contract for seven years." Their mentality is, "I need to go big now."

GQ: Avoid making assumptions that because a particular school or district is small or financially challenged, that they have limited potential. Typically, the total expense to operate a band and/or orchestra program is a *very small* line item compared to the entire school district budget. When an administration sees high value in their band & orchestra programs, they will invest accordingly. We suggest to think long-term. Perhaps develop a five year plan to replace or enhance existing school-owned instruments. After developing a comprehensive plan, administrators often realize that they have long-neglected or under-valued

approve the large purchase. But again, it's another example of purchaser and decision-maker and user, right, because the teacher is the driver.

So, the one-two punch that you have to get right – either as a brand, as a retailer, or what we're doing at NAMM – is you've got to get the supervisors there to see it and feel it for themselves. But you have to get the teachers engaged in the brand, because they're the ones that are going to design the audio lab or pick out the tubas for the marching band and decide what they want. So, you have to get to both. And if you get to both, top-down, it happens a lot quicker. Otherwise, you have to get to one and they have to convince the other party. There's a music supervisors group that always meets at NAFME. We're bringing that group to NAMM. We're actively engaging music supervisors. And we're actively programming to engage teachers so that we can get both groups at the table.

Again, it really goes back to understanding that the educator in your booth is an influencer. And you actually don't know the type or degree of influence. We have to think of it as media, you know? Sometimes you see a media badge at the Show and the first reaction may be, "I don't know you, I don't know that." Then all of a sudden you look it up and realize, "Wow, this YouTube channel has a million followers!" Just because you don't immediately know or recognize a person, do not discredit them because, even though they might teach at one high school in a district, a music supervisor could have sent that teacher to scope out the lab that they're going put in one high school this year, and expand to five the next year, and then putting 10 more the following year. Those types of opportunities are really there, and that's there's just massive influence, and we just do not discount the power of that – we cannot. © NAMM

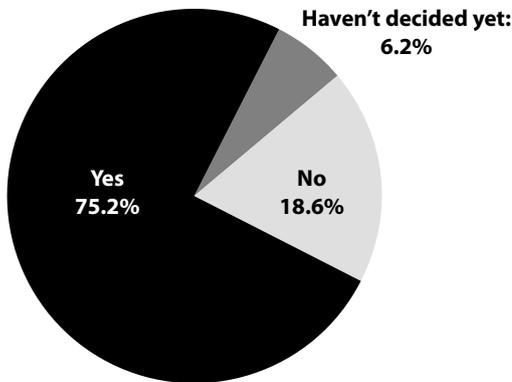
What Does 'Back to School' Mean for MI Retail in 2023?

Music Dealers Sound Off on the Changing Nature of Doing Business With Student Players By Christian **Wissmuller**

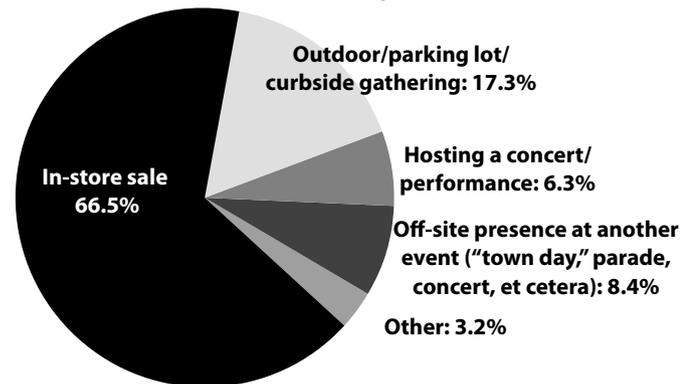
Long a crucial time of year that has contributed significantly to the annual sales of MI retailers, the nature of "Back to School season" has changed significantly with the ever-increasing reach of e-commerce, online "research," and big box competition.

Beginning in late June of this year, we polled over 500 MI stores

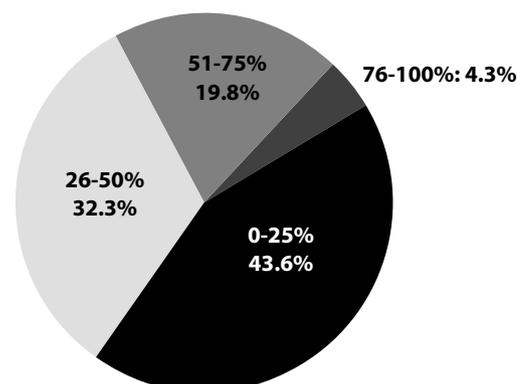
Are you planning to have a back to school sale, event, or promotion this year?



If you are planning an event, what will be its nature (feel free to select more than one option)?



Sales of instruments and musical gear leading up to the fall semester accounts for how much of your annual business?



to learn about their plans to capitalize on potential profits connected to the fall semester, as well as the factors that continue to impact – often negatively – the relationships between young music scholars, their parents, the schools themselves, and local businesses.

Folks had a *lot* to say on these topics, so without further ado...

"We have noticed a decrease in the number of young players visiting our store, which can be attributed to several factors. The rise of online shopping and its convenience have altered the way people acquire instruments and accessories. We understand that families may find it more convenient to purchase online, bypassing the need to physically visit our store. Moreover, the increasing reliance on digital resources, such as online tutorials and virtual instrument simulations, has also impacted the frequency of visits to music stores.

"To address this issue, we have taken proactive steps to adapt and remain relevant in this evolving landscape of music education and commerce. We are committed to engaging young players and encouraging their continued patronage by implementing the following initiatives:

- **Educational Outreach:** We actively collaborate with music educators and school districts to organize workshops, masterclasses, and instrument demonstrations within schools. By showcasing our expertise and resources, we aim to highlight the unique benefits of in-person interactions and hands-on experiences.

- **Community Events:** We host a range of events that bring together musicians of all ages, including performances, and drum circles. These events create a sense of belonging and provide young players with opportunities to interact with experienced musicians, fostering inspiration and growth.

- **Online Presence:** Recognizing the importance of the online sphere, we have begun to make changes to our online presence through our website, active social media accounts, and participation in online marketplaces. We provide comprehensive information about our products, services, and special offers to cater to customers who prefer online shopping.

- **Partnerships with Music Educators:** We actively seek collaborations with music educators, aiming to create referral programs and incentive schemes that encourage students to visit our store. By working closely with educators, we can support music programs while ensuring that students have access to quality instruments and resources.

- **Instrument Rental Programs:** We offer flexible and affordable instrument rental programs designed specifically for students. By making it easier for beginners to access high-quality instruments, we hope to establish long-term relationships with young players and provide ongoing support throughout their musical journey.

"Ted Brown Music remains dedicated to adapting to the changing needs and preferences of young musicians while preserving the value of personal interactions and the unique experiences that our physical store offers. We are committed to serving as a trusted resource and community hub for music students, educators, and school districts, and we continuously strive to enhance the relationships within the music community we are proud to be a part of."

Garrison Grisaffi

Ted Brown Music, Tacoma, Washington

For the past 23 years, our sister publication *School Band & Orchestra+ (SBO+)* has sponsored the Annual *SBO Music Students Scholarship Essay Question*. In addition to writing about a given year's topic/question, students are asked to provide the name of their primary music educator/school, as well as their local, go-to music store. That latter question has been getting fewer and fewer responses in recent years, to the point where, this year, hardly any of the 10 winning students claimed to have a favorite local MI retailer, or even one they frequently shop at. What are your thoughts on the relationships between music stores and music students/educators/school districts? Do you feel fewer young players are coming into stores and, if so, what steps (if any) are you taking to address the issue?

"I'm seeing a decrease in our student population and our sales are down. To me, this looks like 2008 all over again. I visit schools, and budgets are cut and many of my schools are slow to pay. I am concerned we are headed for a recession."

Daniel Yadesky
Yadco Music
North Versailles, PA

"School security has made the weekly visits to schools challenging. We have tried to be on call for schools' and districts' needs as they arise. We assist our town district with a September 'petting zoo' where 4th graders get to choose their instrument for the fall. We offer an open-house program at our store for parents and students to get a similar experience."

Jeff Shaw
The Music Shop
Southington, CT

"Since Music & Arts has school music field representatives, we don't quite have the same floor traffic as stores that may not use this format. This is made up by having various promotions and clinics in-store throughout the year. These have greatly helped keep our sales traffic flow."

David St. John
Music & Arts
Glendora, CA

"Definitely less young players and specifically their young parents with loyalty to a particular store. However, I'm finding that once the problems begin with poor quality 'Amazon instruments,' from then on we have a pretty constant customer because they now understand why the instrument they get their child matters. Some teachers seem to be pretty bad about educating parents about the different instruments and, frankly, I'm not sure some of them understand it! "An observation from 40+ years in this industry: The older teachers who have retired saw the relationship with a music store to be a plus and a resource they could tap to improve their program and make their job easier. The younger teachers that have replaced the older ones really don't want and/or feel they need a relationship with a music store. All the information they need was taught in

college or is available on the internet. "One thing we do to help drive students in is offer affordable instruments by John Packer that are decent playing and relatively well built for an affordable price. We can offer something that is closer to the internet junk prices but in a horn that will

actually work for the student. Of course we also rely heavily on our rental program as well for the budget minded customer. "It is also of critical importance to be respectful of a customer who comes in with a junk instrument and also not refuse to repair off brands if you feel they can be

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survey

repaired adequately. One of our competitors causes us to gain repairs and sales because they are unwilling to repair any 'off brands.'"

Kevin Walters
Central Penn Music
Palmyra, PA

"We provide (and do the presentation) of awards at area marching contests. We have our reps visit the schools on a regular basis."

Michael White
White's Music Box
Las Cruces, N.M.

"Big box retailers in metro areas have dramatically eroded mom & pop stores instrument rental business, with the possible exception of specialty MI shops, which I believe is the reason for the lack of detailed responses from essay participants. In our smaller market area we still actively promote and pursue our tight-knit relationships with surrounding school districts and educators."

Jerry Vesely
Vesely Music
Parowan, UT

"It's just too easy to get online what you used to need to come to a music store for. The problem with the typical beginning band family is that they don't know what they don't know. The guidance they get on a website cannot duplicate what they get from a concerned and caring music store staff. But in many cases now, we are their second choice after being disappointed by what they got online. We need to do whatever it takes to keep that customer coming back to us.

"Our relationship with the directors we serve is critical to building back our face-to-face customer base. We always ask what school their child attends and make sure that the next time that student shows up in class, they have exactly what the teacher sent them to us for. It's a win-win-win if it's done consistently.

"When mom and dad come in with their young saxophonist, we make sure that we talk to them as well as their parents. They are the long-term customer and parents appreciate that we take the time to educate their child (and them indirectly). Where possible we try to remember first names so that we can call them by name when they come next time. Our dog who greets them at the front door does a great job."

Drew Parker
Separk Music Company
Lewisville, N.C.

"Far fewer kids are coming in. My sense is that the culture posits that individuals can become 'expert' in anything on the other end of a Google search ('research' they call it), and those individuals have heard so many wackos sound off there that they're suspicious of anyone purporting to actually know anything about a topic. Therefore, trust in what store employees/sales folks have to share – regardless of how many years' worth of experience such folks have had with the very topics at hand – is very low. My pseudo-sociology ends there, so I don't know what to do about it. Maybe the tide will turn someday and experience will be valued again."

Derek Sharp
Supersonic Music
Topeka, KS

"Certainly the average student is spending less time visiting brick and mortar music retail than they have in the past. This is a function of growth over years in e-commerce, a decline in the overall number of 'local' music retailers, and a general distancing

from traditional retail by the consumer. It would be wrong, however, to assume that because the student is not listing a favorite go-to music store that the relationship between educators and school districts is somehow lessened by e-commerce. Quite the contrary, given that there are fewer brick and mortar stores actively serving the needs of the educator, if anything districts and teachers are more reliant upon their local retailer. They have fewer options for repair services, installation services, and the individualized support that they need to keep their programs running smoothly. The local music retailer is best positioned to ensure that recruiting and retention efforts are maximized and that tailor-made support if provided to the educator and their program, and the educators support their local retailers because of this. Given that the students (in general) are not the ones who are making the purchasing decisions in the products they consume, their lack of identifying a 'go-to' music store is concerning, but not necessarily reflective of a decline in support of the local retailer. I believe that those responsible for the actual financial transactions associated products and services we sell would absolutely have a go-to store that they would name (be it big box, e-commerce, or independent)."

Jonathan Breen
The Music Shoppe, Inc.
Normal, IL

"We have noticed a decrease in the number of young players visiting our store, which can be attributed to several factors. The rise of online shopping and its convenience have altered the way people acquire instruments and accessories. We understand that families may find it more convenient to purchase online, bypassing the need to physically visit our store. Moreover, the increasing reliance on digital resources, such as online tutorials and virtual instrument simulations, has also impacted the frequency of visits to music stores. "To address this issue, we have taken proactive steps to adapt and remain relevant in this evolving landscape of music education and commerce. We are committed to engaging young players and encouraging their continued patronage by implementing the following initiatives:

Educational Outreach: We actively collaborate with music educators and school districts to organize workshops, masterclasses, and instrument demonstrations within schools. By showcasing our expertise and resources, we aim to highlight the unique benefits of in-person interactions and hands-on experiences.

"Too many vendors sell direct to the collegiate school accounts. While this bad behavior has been going on for a long time, bringing the dealer back into the supply chain would be the best way to invest in the future of band and orchestra sales."

Anthony Mantova
Mantova's Two Street Music
Eureka, CA

"In Ontario, I feel like smaller music stores are more likely to make connections with students and teachers more than large corporate stores. People seem to prefer the local personal feeling of a small store over a box store. Unfortunately, band and orchestra sales are handicapped by not offering school discounts to low volume stores. This means that smaller stores must continue to refer students and educators to large competitors in order to secure their products. It forces a disconnect between player and store. We continue to offer repair services on student level instruments, but hardly see any younger players for band and orchestra."

Jaco Rendell
Case's Music
Sault Ste. Marie
Ontario, Canada

Keeping Time with Denver's Rupp's Drums

by ChristianWissmuller

In late October of last year, Alex Simpson, owner of independent drum retailer Rupp's Drums, closed on the purchase of 2045 S. Holly St. in Denver, the property the MI retailer had been leasing for nearly 30 years.

At the time, Simpson observed, "The modest 2,300 sq. ft building that our customers know and love sits on a lot four times that size (9,200 sq. ft), providing ample opportunity to meaningfully expand our operations and services. This investment also secures the company's convenient and familiar location in the heart of Denver, allowing us to continue serving Denver-area drummers for decades to come."

The acquisition of the property – and, indeed, ownership of Rupp's Drums – represents something of a "full circle" development for the young owner, who had been a patron since the age of 13 and later worked at the store. Serving drummers in Northwest and across the U.S. since 1984, the business provides new, used, and vintage drums, as well as rentals and repairs. Rupp's Drums was named a Top 100 Dealer by NAMM in 2019 and 2021 and was recognized by the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce as a Small Business Awards Finalist in 2022. In 2023, the store has hosted masterclasses with Todd



Alex Simpson in 2023

PHOTO BY JOSHUA NEITZEL

Sucherman and Greyson Nekrutman.

MMR recently chatted with Simpson about the evolution of Rupp's Drums, his own background as a musician and the events that led to his stewardship of the beloved local dealer in 2018, and plans for the future.

Let's talk about the origins of Rupp's Drums. What led Bob Rupp to open the store in 1984?

Rupp's Drums was born in 1984 when Bob Rupp, already a familiar face in the Colorado drumming scene at the time, began selling used drums out of his living room just down the street from the store's present day location on South Holly St. Thirty eight years later, many of his original customers remain loyal to the store and entertain the present day staff with outrageous stories about shopping in Bob's living room back when it all began.

If the business has moved in the subsequent 39 years, where was it first located and how large was that original store?

The first true brick and mortar location was located just across the street from our present day location. In order to become a dealer for new brands like SABIAN Cymbals, Bob moved the company out of his living room and into a 2,500 square-foot building which he shared with local guitar retailer, Cadillac Guitars.



Mike Johnston Drum Clinic at Wings over the Rockies (Exploration of Flight)

PHOTO BY JOSHUA NEITZEL



Rupp's Drums honored by the Denver Chamber of Commerce

PHOTO BY JOSHUA NEITZEL

retail

How many employees were on staff at the very beginning?

Rupp's Drums was a one-man show at the beginning, but Bob brought on two or three more employees when he moved into the first location.

Bringing things to the present day, is Rupp's Drums still in the same location? How many current employees?

Rupp's Drums moved into its current location in the early '90s and has occupied the same 3,000 square-foot building at 2045 S Holly St. ever since. I currently employ seven amazing drummers, several of whom shoulder their own unique responsibilities on top of daily customer service. We have an innovative marketing manager who handles our social media channels, an operations manager who handles systems/inventory management, a shipping/receiving specialist, an e-commerce specialist, and three dedicated sales representatives. Additionally, we have a thriving drum lesson program with faculty members spread out across the greater Denver area serving over 100 young drummers every week!

What led to you purchasing the store in 2018, Alex? Had you previously been an employee? Customer?

My history with Rupp's Drums began when I visited the store for the first time at 13 years of age. Early in his career, my dad was a Denver-area musician and a salesman for a wholesale drum company that sold products to Bob Rupp. Being a huge fan of the store, he made it a point to bring me there as often as possible. After patronizing the store for many years, I set my sights on becoming a professional drummer and eventually landed a sales position at Rupp's Drums to pay my bills while I pursued that goal. Over the next few years, I worked my way up to sales manager before moving to New York City to continue pursuing my dream. In October 2017, I was driving across the U.S. to continue my drumming career in Los Angeles when I received a text message from a former colleague informing me that the store had been put up for sale. I decided to stop in Denver briefly to explore the opportunity and just six months later, in April 2018, I became the third owner of Rupp's Drums.

What are the major lines of new gear currently carried by Rupp's?

We carry just about every major drum brand (DW, Tama, Noble & Cooley, Yamaha, Mapex, Sonor, Gretsch, Ludwig, PDP, Zildjian, SABIAN, Meinl, Paiste, Dream, Roland, LP, et cetera), as well as many smaller, innovative drum brands like Welch Tuning Systems, Doc Sweeney, A&F, Barton, and more! We pride ourselves on our

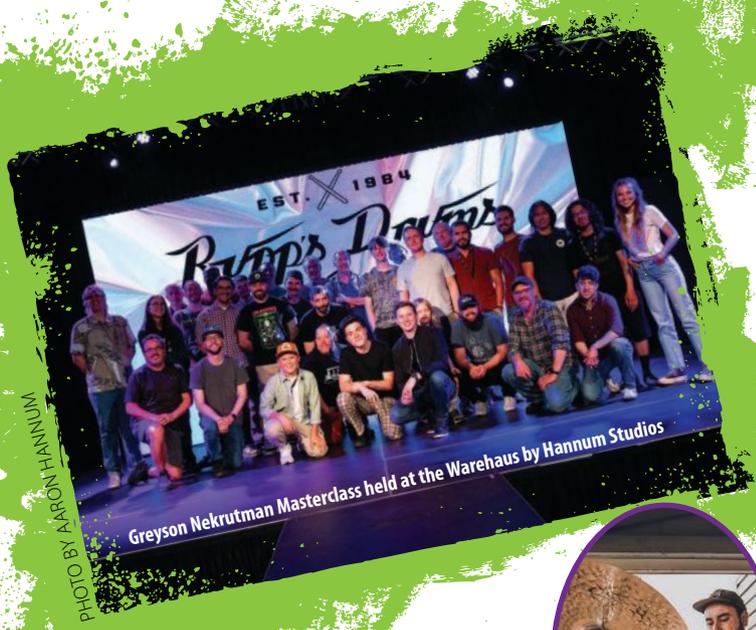


PHOTO BY ARON HANNUM

ability to offer our customers a massive range of products across nearly every significant drum brand. We also carry a substantial world percussion inventory, including healing instruments like hand pans, gongs, and tongue drums.

In terms of volume, what's Rupp's biggest-selling type of drum set and/or gear?

Our biggest product category by volume is accessories – sticks, mallets, heads, bags, books, dampening products, et cetera.

Does Rupp's also sell used and vintage gear?

Yes, used and vintage gear represents just over 19 percent of our annual gross revenue. It's an area we are particularly passionate about.

Does the store offer repairs?

Yes, we offer a variety of services including repairs, rentals, lessons, backline services, photography, and vintage instrument appraisals.

Can you talk a little about lesson programs offered at Rupp's Drums?

Rupp's Drums has offered private drum instruction for decades, but over the last two years we have rebuilt our lesson program from the ground up. Our new lesson program, UpBeat Drum School, offers private lessons from six professional drum instructors spread out across the greater Denver area and Colorado Springs. Our students are currently 95 percent in-person and five percent remote. While most of our students are beginning drummers, we teach all ages/skill levels and we custom-tailor our lesson plans to meet the student's needs. We are particularly proud of the fact that over 50 percent of our students are female. Encouraging diverse representation in the drum community is a fundamental part of our company culture.

How does the business handle promotion – email list, social media, mailing list, other?

We have a large email list that we utilize, as well as over 35,000 followers across our social media channels where we put a great deal of effort into customer engagement. We also host a formidable number of live events throughout the year, with the goal of energizing the Denver drum community and growing our customer base. These events include drum clinics and masterclasses, drum competitions, drum trivia nights and more. Additionally, we provide drums for the state's largest annual music festivals like the Underground Music Showcase and the Westword Music Showcase. This puts our company directly in front of tens of thousands of Denver musicians and music lovers every year.



Operations Manager
Evan Miller



Marketing Manager
Joshua Neitzel

A 13 year-old Simpson during his first trip to Rupp's Drums

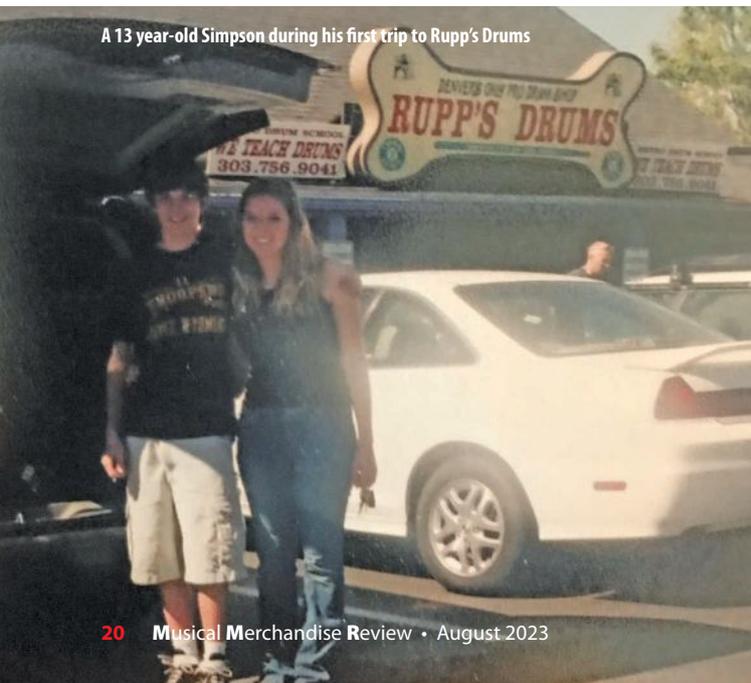




PHOTO BY JOSHUA NEITZEL



"After patronizing the store for many years, I set my sights on becoming a professional drummer and eventually landed a sales position at Rupp's Drums to pay my bills while I pursued that goal." -Alex Simpson

Does Rupp's Drums send reps to the NAMM Show or any other industry gatherings?

Attending the NAMM Show is very important to me. It's always a great opportunity to strengthen relationships face-to-face, establish new friendships, share ideas with industry peers, and make it clear that we, Rupp's Drums, are a company that intends to continue growing and contributing to the success of the industry as a whole. I make it a point to attend nearly every year and I always bring key staff with me so they can attend NAMM U sessions and gain inspiration from the incredible companies, products, and people they encounter.

Any recent or upcoming developments or events of note?

2022 was a banner year for the company. In April, we were named a finalist for the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce "Small Business of the Year" award. In October, I purchased the building that Rupp's Drums has occupied since 1993, securing our Denver location for decades to come. Most recently, we were featured in the popular travel book series *111 Places in Denver You Must Not Miss* by Philip D. Armour alongside other Denver institutions like Twist & Shout Records, Casa Bonita, The Grizzly Rose, and Meow Wolf. We also hosted drum clinics with several phenomenal drummers including Mike Johnston, Nate Smith, and Stanton Moore.

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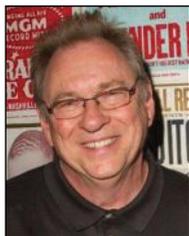
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Leadership Styles



By
**Menzie
Pittman**

Whether we like it or not, as owners and managers, department heads and/or music teachers, our manner and style of leadership greatly determines our effectiveness.

Not a day goes by that we don't witness both effective and ineffective styles of guidance. On occasion, when we least expect it, we do witness great leadership. For example, people surprise us by doing the unusual, showing their leadership through gestures and civilities. It is the element of surprise that enhances that moment. The key is offering an unexpected gesture of kindness, something simple, to those who don't expect it. Holding a door or an elevator for someone or returning someone's grocery cart, or simply sharing a smile and projecting positive energy while saying, "Have a great day!" is a form of leadership.

The easiest opportunity to display leadership and advance "goodwill" in the workplace occurs when you recognize our co-workers for their contributions and show respect to our peers. It's empowering to everyone when you share your appreciation for them, regardless of one's position. Although respect does not have a dollar value attached to it, it's quite possibly our most important currency. Nothing is more powerful in the workplace than respect and goodwill. Respect and goodwill build trust, and it's important never to undermine trust in the workplace.

The old adage "lead by example" never tires. You won't need horn blowing or a tickertape parade, just the understanding that your simple gestures demonstrate civility. "If" you are a good leader, the effect of "your way" will always enhance the mood of those you lead and, from that moment forward, you have made a positive impact on the other person's day. People are more likely to pay your kindness forward; thus, your impact can be significant.

Of course, the opposite is just as true, if not more powerful. Being disrespectful to others has a longer lasting effect than showering them with praise. Think about the last time someone used their position to intimidate or demean you. It happens all the time in the work force. The damage and hangover from a boss or co-worker being insensitive lasts much longer than the effect of praise. Intimidation is a puny tool and when you bruise someone's feelings it takes much longer to heal because criticism feels personal. The sting of criticism's taint lingers longer than the sweet aroma of praise.

The intoxication of a leadership position is a tonic for fools, yet the consumption rate is staggering. And if by chance the leadership role goes to someone drunk on titles or position, morale will surely plummet. In this instance, one's manner of leadership style matters more than money. That's because respect is a currency that doesn't deplete; it actually appreciates in value as time passes.

The definition of our roles in leadership morphs as the responsibilities of our positions grow. The role of a leader in the management of an organization carries more complex responsibilities than the role of a music teacher for example. This is true only be-



cause a music teacher's role is generally more consistent. It is no less important.

The different roles also require different skill sets. I'm not telling you anything here you don't already know. The owner of a store has more responsibility than a manager, and a manager has more than an employee. But respect has no master. Its power belongs to all, and when you give it, you receive it in return, no matter your title.

So here are a few things to remember:

As you give, you get. All relationships are a reflection of everyone involved. If you don't like what you see reflecting back to you in the harmony mirror, before you criticize, check your pitch. Here is a cold truth: if you feel you are being unfairly chastised or intimidated by management, it may be time to look at other possibilities.

The higher you climb in position, the farther you have to fall. Leadership is not for the faint of heart. Being a business owner or business manager comes with huge demands. You are always expected to have the answers and never to make mistakes. But, that's an unrealistic expectation. So higher-ups tend to drink from the cup of ego to add a layer to their armor. My advice here is put the cup down.

Lastly, good employees are the best asset any business has and, as leaders, we must embrace their opportunity to grow. We can not expect them to know what we as leaders have to deal with, and we must teach our staff to understand us, while we strive to understand them. Most importantly, we must ask our teachers to do the same, and ask the same from them in return.

Always remember: Play the long game. 🎸

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."

“Nothing is more powerful in the workplace than respect and goodwill.”

FRETTED

Fender and Loog Team Up to Create Kid-Sized Guitar

Children’s guitar brand Loog and Fender Musical Instruments Corporation (FMIC) have announced the launch of the Fender x Loog collection, a collaboration featuring kid-sized versions of Fender’s iconic guitar models. Fender x Loog brings Loog’s signature elements to Fender’s Stratocaster and Telecaster guitar designs including 3-strings, one pickup, one knob, and Fender’s trademark headstock design – small in size and big in sound. The guitars, manufactured by Loog and designed alongside Fender’s innovative product team, come fully equipped with learning tools including chord flashcards and access to Loog’s learning app, Loog Guitar. The app is available for free in the Apple and Google Play stores and includes video lessons and game-like exercises. Exclusively made for this partnership, the guitars also come with a booklet telling the story of Fender’s first electric guitars.



“I’m very proud of this collaboration. The Fender x Loog collection is a great way to introduce kids to the world of electric guitars and celebrate two of rock ‘n’ roll’s seminal instruments: the Telecaster® and the Stratocaster,” announced Rafael Atijas, founder and CEO of Loog Guitars. “To work alongside Fender’s team on this project has been a pleasure and I’m honored that we were given the opportunity to reimagine these design masterpieces as 3-string electric guitars for children.”

The Fender x Loog collection features two models: a mini 3-string Stratocaster guitar available in black and a mini 3-string Telecaster guitar available in Fender’s signature Seafoam Green. Both guitars come equipped with a single-coil pickup and a standard ¼ jack that allow them to be plugged into an amplifier. Loog’s trademark design element, the slim 3-string fretboard, sets them apart as an ideal choice for children. With chords simplified to only three notes, learning becomes more accessible and less intimidating for young players. Utilizing standard guitar strings and tuning ensures everything learned on a Fender x Loog guitar can be applied on a 6-string guitar as well.

“It was a natural fit to collaborate with Loog, providing young artists with new tools as they take their first step in their musical journeys,” said Richard Bussey, VP of Accessories, Lifestyle and Licensing at FMIC. “With a history of supporting music education, Fender and Loog came together to blend Fender’s renowned craftsmanship with Loog’s mission of teaching children to play. This exciting partnership aims to foster creativity and enhance accessibility for aspiring artists, nurturing the rock stars of tomorrow, one chord at a time.”

The Fender x Loog guitars retail at \$199.00 and are currently only available in the United States with plans to expand to Europe, Japan and Australia later this year.

www.loogguitars.com, www.fender.com

Guild D-55 70th Anniversary GSR Limited Edition

First introduced in 1968 as a special-order top-of-the-line model, the D-55 was so well-received Guild added it into the regular production line by 1974. Famously played by Tommy Smothers on the “Smothers Brothers Show” in the late 1960s, the D-55 grew in both popularity and longevity over the decades. The Guild Special Run (GSR) D-55 70th Anniversary Limited is an ultra-collectible special edition of the company’s flagship dreadnought, packing premium features into a limited 70 piece run overseen by Guild master luthier Chuck Sanzone.



The GSR D-55 70th Anniversary Limited showcases Guild’s most recognizable headstock, fully bound and featuring mother-of-pearl Guild Peak and G-shield inlays over an exotic Madagascar Rosewood face. The top features an ornate abalone rosette and matching purfling inlay and is crafted from aged Adirondack Spruce with hand scalloped Adirondack spruce braces.

Exotic Madagascar Rosewood has been used for the back and sides, adding figured grain lines across the body and the entire hand build has been done using traditional hide glue. A fully bound Ebony fingerboard pairs with a mahogany neck and beautiful Walnut center seam strip. It is inlaid with Guild’s iconic abalone/pearl V-blocks and a commemorative “Winged G” at the 12th fret.

Additional features include gold Gotoh open-gear tuners, Evo gold frets and a dovetail neck joint. A hand-sprayed gloss nitrocellulose finish provides minimum thickness and maximum resonance. Each guitar includes a specially numbered and signed certificate of authenticity, a soundhole cut-out hand signed by the Guild USA build team and ships in Guild’s premium humidified hard-shell case. Limited to 70 pcs worldwide to commemorate Guild’s 70th anniversary, 1953-2023.

Street price: \$5,999

www.guildguitars.com

Epiphone Announces Limited-Edition Sheraton, Wilshire, Crestwood Custom, and Zephyr DeLuxe Regent, In Celebration of 150th Anniversary



Epiphone is proud to announce a new editions of the Sheraton, Wilshire, Crestwood Custom and Zephyr DeLuxe Regent guitars are available worldwide in celebration of the 150th Anniversary of Epiphone.

Epiphone 150th Anniversary Sheraton

Introducing the limited edition Epiphone 150th Anniversary Sheraton, an elegant instrument created in celebration of Epiphone’s 150th anniversary. It features a semi-hollowbody crafted from layered maple with a maple centerblock for feedback resistance. The 22-fret one-piece mahogany neck has a bound Indian laurel fretboard with block mother of pearl and abalone inlays. The bound headstock has a historic Epiphone logo and tree of life in mother of pearl on the front and a gold Epiphone 150th-anniversary logo on the back. The Epiphone 150th Anniversary Sheraton comes with premium electronics, including made-in-the-USA Gibson Mini Humbucker pickups wired to CTS potentiometers, Orange Drop capacitors, and a Switchcraft three-way pickup selector switch and 1/4” output jack. The striking gloss Cherry finish is complimented by gold hardware, including Grover Rotomatic tuners, a LockTone Tune-O-Matic bridge, and a Tremotone vibrato tailpiece. An Epiphone 150th Anniversary Historic Hardshell Case is included.

Epiphone 150th Anniversary Wilshire

Introducing the Epiphone 150th Anniversary Wilshire, a hard-rocking guitar was created in celebration of Epiphone’s 150th anniversary. From its introduction in 1959, the Wilshire has been one of Epiphone’s most successful original solid body electric guitars. This special anniversary version features an asymmetrical-style Wilshire double-cutaway mahogany body for outstanding upper fret access, a mahogany neck with a comfortable ‘60s SlimTaper D profile, and an Indian laurel fretboard with dot inlays. The headstock is the popular “Batwing” style, with Wilkinson six on a plate inline tuners with metal buttons. The Wilshire is featured in a custom Pacific Blue finish which is of the era. The electronics feature a pair of Gibson Mini Humbuckers that are wired to CTS potentiometers and

newproducts

a Switchcraft 3-way toggle switch and output jack. The included hardshell case features nickel hardware and an Epiphone 150th Anniversary logo.

Epiphone 150th Anniversary Crestwood Custom

The Crestwood first appeared in 1958 and it was renamed Crestwood Custom in 1959; it was Epiphone's first two-pickup solid-body electric guitar design. The latest Crestwood Custom celebrates Epiphone's 150th anniversary and features an asymmetrical solid mahogany double cutaway body that gives players unhindered upper fret access, a mahogany neck with a comfortable 60s SlimTaper D profile, and an Indian laurel fretboard with oval inlays. The headstock is the popular "Batwing" style, with Wilkinson six on a plate inline tuners with metal buttons. The electronics feature a pair of Gibson Mini Humbuckers that are wired to CTS potentiometers and a Switchcraft 3-way toggle switch and output jack. The Crestwood Custom arrives in a unique custom, California Coral finish which is of the era. An Epiphone Tremotone vibrato tailpiece gives you extra expressive capabilities. The included hardshell case features an Epiphone 150th Anniversary logo.

150th Anniversary Zephyr DeLuxe Regent

The Epiphone Zephyr DeLuxe Regent was originally produced from 1948 until 1957 and was one of the world's preeminent archtop guitar designs when Epiphone was Gibson's biggest competitor. In celebration of Epiphone's 150th anniversary, Epiphone is proud to release the new 150th Anniversary Zephyr DeLuxe Regent. Built for jazz, blues, and rockabilly and inspired by the highly collectible vintage originals, but updated to meet the needs of modern players, the new 150th Anniversary Zephyr DeLuxe Regent is a full hollowbody. It features a deep cutaway for improved upper-fret access, a multi-layer pressed maple arched top, and a 25.5" scale 5-piece maple and mahogany neck with an ebony fretboard. The inlays include a historic '50s-style Epiphone logo, a Tree of Life headstock inlay, and historic Epiphone Cloud fretboard position markers – all in mother of pearl. The electronics are equally impressive, with a pair of Epiphone NY Mini Humbucker pickups. Each has individual volume and tone controls with CTS potentiometers. The Zephyr DeLuxe Regent arrives in a stunning Aged Antique Natural finish. An Epiphone 150th Anniversary decal adorns the back of the headstock, and an Epiphone hardshell case is included.

www.epiphone.com

ACCESSORIES

Electro-Harmonix Introduces the New Pico POG Octave Pedal

Electro-Harmonix's POG series of pedals has been relied upon by countless musicians from all walks of life for their octave pedal needs thanks to their flawless polyphony and lightning-fast track. Electro-Harmonix is now proud to introduce the latest of the POG pedigree, the Pico POG Polyphonic Octave Generator Pedal. The pedal features the pitch perfect octave up and down sounds in a new ultra-compact Pico chassis plus modern updates.



The EHX Pico POG's control layout is centered around a simple trio of volume controls for each of the three voices, DRY, OCTAVE UP, and SUB OCTAVE. These knobs allow for infinite blend possibilities. A new TONE knob has been added for the first time for expanded tonal flexibility. The TONE knob controls one of three filters selectable by the FILTER mode button. In Tone mode, the tone knob acts as a tilt-eq, inversely adjusting bass and treble of all three voices. In Low Pass Filter mode, an LPF is applied to only the octave voices to attenuate high-end, making for a smoother octave tone. In High Pass Filter mode, a HPF is applied to only the octave voices to attenuate

low-end for a tighter sub octave sound.

The first in a line of Pico-sized pedals, the new EHX Pico POG Octave pedal comes equipped with an EHX 9V power supply is available now and features a U.S. Street Price of \$240.

www.ehx.com

SmallStage LLC and AP International Music Supply Launch The CableCup Family of Products

SmallStage LLC and AP International announce the new CableCup family of products.

This exciting new product line pioneers the combination of a pick tray and cable rest in a unique design that uses microsuction technology consisting of miniature air pockets to adhere securely to an amp or tabletop, allowing for simple removal without leaving any residue behind. Comprised of lightweight, flexible silicone, CableCup products are washable and reusable ensuring a lifetime of usage.

Featuring a 1/2" deep cup area, the Cable Cup provides ample room for your picks, slide, and other small playing accessories, ensuring that they stay organized and within easy reach. The notched cable rests guarantee hassle-free cable management, eliminating the need to fumble around for cable ends during practices, studio sessions, or performances.

"The CableCup is a solution that guitar and bass playing musicians didn't know they needed. It's hard to go back to NOT using one once you've tried it. We see our test team using them on multiple amps," said Steve Skillings, inventor of the CableCup. "It's a place for your picks, a clip for your cable, and even a holder for your frosty beverage. It's so simple, yet useful – it's just one of those inventions that makes you wonder why it didn't exist before."

AP International president Andy Papiccio said, "Partnering with SmallStage is all about bringing practicality and fun together for musicians. Like the HexHider (magnetic hex wrench), CableCup does both. It's a great gift idea at the perfect price point."

The CableCup family of products comes in a variety of shapes and sizes, including officially licensed Fender® Stratocaster® and Telecaster® headstock shapes, Stratocaster® and Telecaster® body shapes, and a classic pick shape design. The five initial designs will be available in September, 2023, providing a fun and useful lifestyle accessory in time for the holiday season. Interested dealers are requested to email sales@apintl.com to set up an account at AP International Music Supply in the meantime.

Retail: (pick shape) \$16.99; (Fender shapes) \$19.99

www.smallstage.co

ProMark Launches New Signature Stick with Marching Instructor Rudy Garcia

As a new addition to the System Blue line of marching products, ProMark's Rudy Garcia Signature Stick has broad appeal to marching percussionists who know the name or simply appreciate the excellence imbued into Rudy's signature stick.

The Rudy Garcia Signature stick was made to feel great in anyone's hands and suit the needs of every player in the marching arts. Champion marching instructor Rudy Garcia designed his stick with an inverted triangle tip shape to allow smooth hand motion during tenor "sweeps," as well as consistent sound across each drum. Coupled with the strong rebound profile, this hickory stick allows for elevated sound quality on snare and controlled movement on quads.



"First and foremost, I wanted to create a stick that would feel great and fit the needs of all skill levels in the marching arts, says Garcia. After a few trials, we landed on a length of 16.9" with a .685" Diameter. This allowed for an impressive amount of control and comfort while playing. Coupled with the inverted triangle tip, this stick achieves amazing rebound and sound quality on both the Tenor and Snare drums." Price: \$26.45

www.daddario.com



AMPLIFICATION

Darkglass Electronics Introduces Microtubes X 900 Amplifier Unit

Darkglass Electronics, a Helsinki, Finland-based manufacturer of handmade bass guitar equipment, introduces the Microtubes X 900 amplifier unit – meticulously crafted with the target of achieving exceptional power with unprecedented precision, with no concessions or shortcuts. Based on Darkglass's revered X Series pedals, this amplifier sets a new standard for accuracy and control.

The X 900 unit is packed with a Class D 900-watt amplifier and an ultra-quiet six-band graphic equalizer that can sculpt the tone from aggressive and overdriven to crystal clear clean to suit every bassist's needs. The X distortion circuit allows users to select exactly what frequencies they want to compress and saturate for the low and treble, respectively. It features MIDI for channel switching and muting programmability, impulse response cabinet simulation with up to three different storable virtual cabinets, auxiliary input, and headphone output – offering unmatched versatility and control, making it a true companion for touring, live gigs, the studio and more.

Marcos Barilatti, Darkglass managing director, remarked, "With the launch of the X 900, today marks a significant milestone as we proudly present what we believe is our best amp yet."

The Darkglass X 900 amplifier unit is now available with U.S. MAP pricing of \$1,299. A limited production run is available.

X 900 specifications:

- Dimension unpacked: Width: 230 mm / Length: 270 mm / Height: 70 mm / Weight: 2.9 Kg
- Input Impedance: 1.1 MΩ
- Minimum Load Impedance: 2.5 Ω
- Maximum Power Output: 900 W

RMS @ 4 Ω (1 kHz full blast, 2 min. max) 20% THD, 450 W RMS v@ 8 Ω

- AC Input Power: 100-250 VAC
- AC Frequency: 50/60 Hz

www.darkglass.com



CASES & STANDS

Gator Expands G-TOUR Line with Two New Cases for Transporting Multiple Mic Stands

Gator Cases is pleased to announce the launch of its two new G-TOUR Series microphone stand tour cases. These fresh additions to their prominent line of road-worthy cases, designed with the rigors of touring and heavy usage in mind, offer an ideal solution for transporting and protecting microphone stands, proving invaluable to production companies and large performance venues.

Built with rugged 9mm wood construction and equipped with premium Penn

Elcom casters, these cases are designed for strength and ease of transport. The sturdy construction of their exterior guarantees resilience against the harshest of touring schedules and extensive use.

The GTOUR-MICSTAND-12 and GTOUR-MICSTAND-20 models have been meticulously designed to accommodate up to 12 and 20 microphone tripod or round base stands, respectively. Each stand is accommodated in its own reinforced individual storage tube, which guarantees maximum protection and easy access. Moreover, the case includes a dedicated storage area on top for storing round bases and other suitable accessories, enhancing utility and convenience.

Gator provides a wide range of tour case solutions spanning from the guitar and DJ categories all the way to flat panel displays and live-in furniture.

www.gatorco.com

Frameworks Wooden Sheet Music Stands

Gator Frameworks, a division of Gator Co., has added two new stands to its line of sheet music stands, both equipped with large wooden bookplates for unparalleled elegance and practicality.

Featuring premium red wood finish,

THE INSTRUMENTS

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Discover our woodwind and brass student range for all beginners
Bring on the music!

www.prodig-instruments.com



newproducts

both stands maintain a professional look, while meeting conductor or soloists' demands for functionality. The large bookplate included on each model provides ample room for both oversized scores and recital sheet music, helping to reduce the amount of page turns during performances.

The GFW-MUS-4000 features a collapsible, standard tripod base, ensuring effortless transport and storage. With height adjustability ranging from 24.75 to 42.5 inches (629 to 1080mm), it accommodates both sitting and standing players. The lightweight and collapsible design makes it easy to transport from the rehearsal site to the performance hall.

The GFW-MUS-5000 boasts a brushed metal design and an easy-lift mechanism, enabling convenient, one-handed height adjustment changes. Offering height adjustability from 27.5 to 45.5 inches (699 to 1156mm), it suits both seated and standing positions. This stand offers a premium look and experience top to bottom.

Street price: \$119.99 (traditional base); \$99.99 (tripod legs)

Frameworks offers a variety of sheet music stands and accessories, including clip-on LED lamps designed to illuminate pages in low-light environments.

www.gatorco.com



PRINT & DIGITAL

Saxophone Omnibooks for Eb and Bb Instruments Now Available from Hal Leonard

Saxophonists can now elevate their playing and expand their musical horizons with *Saxophone Omnibooks* from Hal Leonard. Whether used in the practice room, classroom, or on stage,



these new volumes in the popular *Omnibooks* series will undoubtedly become an indispensable resource for saxophonists at every stage of their musical journey.

Available in Bb and Eb editions, the books feature 53 songs transcribed exactly from artist-recorded solos as played by Cannonball Adderley, John Coltrane, Stan Getz, Joe Henderson, Jackie McLean, Gerry Mulligan, Charlie Parker, Sonny Rollins, and more! Songs that were originally played by the other instrument types have been transposed for each edition. Some notes or phrases may be out of range and may be played an octave higher.

Songs include: All the Things You Are • Anthropology • Body and Soul • Cherokee (Indian Love Song) • Donna Lee • A Foggy Day (In London Town) • Frenesí • Georgia on My Mind • I Can't Give You Anything but Love • I Remember You • Just One of Those Things • Lester Leaps In • Lover Man (Oh, Where Can You Be?) • Luck Be a Lady • Mood Indigo • Seven Come Eleven • Take Five • Walk on By • What a Little Moonlight Can Do • and more.

With nearly 50 titles in the series, *Omnibooks* have become the books to turn to when players want to master a particular artist, instrument, or genre. These comprehensive collections feature the most accurate note-for-note transcriptions for all instrumentalists and are spiral-bound for easy usability. They also include chord symbols, metronome markings, and record information. The books also include helpful contents lists by song title and artist.

Saxophone Omnibooks retail for \$39.99 each.

www.halleonard.com

PRO AUDIO

Audio-Technica Releases Limited-edition ATH-M50x Wired and Wireless Headphones in Ice Blue

Audio-Technica unveils the ATH-M50xB Professional Monitor Headphones, a limited-edition "Ice Blue" color version of A-T's popular ATH-M50x. This model is the result of a global crowd-sourcing campaign, where end users voted on their favorite color of the next ATH-M50x model. Also being introduced is the wireless ATH-M50xBT2IB iteration.



From the 45 mm large-aperture drivers to its sound-isolating earcups and robust construction, the ATH-M50xB provides an unmatched experience for the most critical audio applications, including recording, live sound, broadcast, DJ and personal listening. The headphones incorporate technology drawn from Audio-Technica's long history in the field of high-performance professional audio, providing natural, accurate sound with impactful bass and high-frequency extension. With professional-grade earpad and headband material and a collapsible design with detachable cable, the ATH-M50xB headphones transport easily and remain comfortable throughout long monitoring sessions.

The wireless ATH-M50xBT2IB delivers the same exhilarating listening experience as its wired counterpart, offering exceptional clarity and deep, accurate bass response. Additional features include premium internal audio components and a dedicated internal headphone amp; compatibility with multiple audio codecs (SBC, AAC and LDAC); sidetone circuitry that allows users to hear their voice in the headphones when making calls on most smartphones, and access to voice assistants (Amazon Alexa Built-in, Google Assistant, Siri); a "Fast Pair" feature, enabling users to quickly pair the ATH-M50xBT2IB headphones with Android OS smartphones and devices with a single tap on the device; a detachable 1.2-meter (3.9-foot) cable for optional wired connection; and compatibility with the A-T Connect app, allowing control of the low latency mode, EQ, L/R volume balance, choice of voice assistant, misplaced headphone location, change of codecs, and more. Multipoint pairing lets users connect wirelessly to two Bluetooth devices at once, and a low-latency mode improves synchronicity between audio and video for smooth streaming and gaming. Battery life is approximately 50 hours of continuous use on a full charge and up to 3 hours of use on a 10-minute rapid charge via USB-C connection. A USB charging cable and a handy carrying pouch are also included.

Audio-Technica's new limited-edition wired ATH-M50xB (priced at \$169.00 MAP) and wireless ATH-M50xBT2IB (priced at \$219.00 MAP) are now available.

www.audio-technica.com

Everywhere you go, there we are.



From the magazine on your desk to the phone in your pocket, *MMR* is everywhere you are, providing comprehensive coverage of our industry's news and trends. Find us online at: www.mmrmagazine.com.



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WIDE SELECTION

Save time - purchase from one source.

QUALITY

Refurbished & New Instruments.

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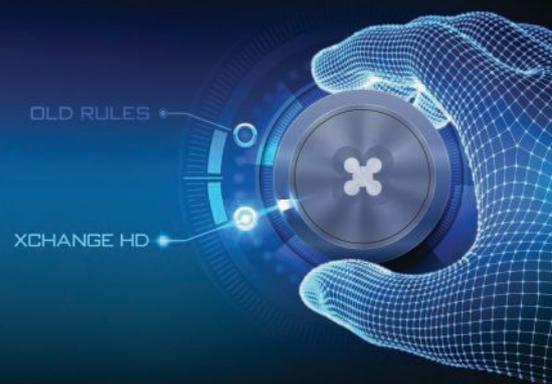
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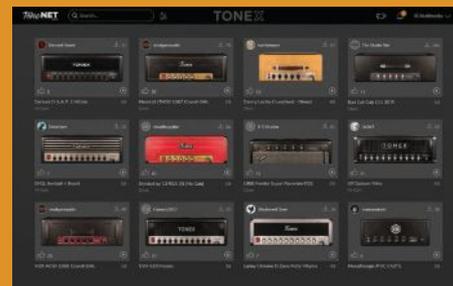
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