

MMRP

MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

Willis Music at 120



46

44

Survey:
Strings for Orchestral Instruments

48

Philanthropy:
Augustine Strings and Stephan Connor Help Bring Solace to Puerto Rican Musicians



FIT AS A
Fiddle

40

The Violin and Viola Market



Gathcell Violins
James Phillips



NS Design's
Gary Byers



Yamaha's
Ken Dattmore



Knilling's
Lang Shen



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C O N T E N T S

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MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

FEATURES

Vol.178 JUNE 2019 No.6



UpFront Q&A

S.I.T. Strings' Tim Pfouts 36

As this Ohio company approaches its 40th anniversary, vice president Tim Pfouts discusses some of their newest offerings and what it means to craft and support an

artist roster in 2019



Roundtable

Fit as a Fiddle: The Violin and Viola Market 40

We sat down with reps from four major brands to learn about what trends are driving the market in 2019

Survey

Strings Attached: Strings for Orchestral Instruments 44

With nearly 65 percent of participants in this month's dealer survey reporting that sales of orchestral strings are either up or level when compared to past years, this would appear to be a fairly static market segment.



Anniversary

Willis Music at 120 46

MMR chats with Kevin Cranley, president of one of our industry's oldest and most respected retailers and publishers as Willis Music reaches an overwhelmingly rare milestone

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Philanthropy

Augustine Strings and Stephan Connor Help Bring Solace to Puerto Rican Musicians 48

There are no words that can sufficiently comfort the victims of natural disaster. That's why luthier Stephan Connor and Augustine Strings chose to speak with music.

Small Business Matters

As it Should Be: A Teacher's Job is to Serve 50

Some obvious (and some not-so-obvious)pitfalls that can hopefully be avoided when teaching students at your music store

Sound of Money

Identity Theft, Part I 51

Information about the realities of identity theft – and the myriad of ways it can affect you and your business

Departments

Editorial	4
UpFront	8
Supplier Scene	18
MMR Global.....	32
Trade Regrets	35
People on the Move.....	34
Top Gear	52
New Products	54
Classifieds.....	57
Ad Index	58
The Last Word	60

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Lindsey Jordan of Snail Mail - Player Series - Jazzmaster® in Polar White



The Perks of Departing the Comfort Zone



by Christian Wissmuller

The mission statement over here at *Musical Merchandise Review* is to serve all members of the musical instrument retail industry and to report upon all developments of note across all segments, and we've been doing so since 1879 (Fine, not the current roster – we're not vampires – but you get the point).

Even with such a clear-cut blueprint to guide our efforts, personal interests inevitably influence direction. The present-day cast of characters over at *MMR* features a drummer (our president), two guitarists (myself and one of our associate editors), two bassists (the vice president and one of our advertising directors), and a pianist/key-board player (another advertising director). As such, it's not especially surprising that, when off the leash, we often skew sort of "combo heavy" in our coverage: "Oooo! I get to talk and write about guitar effects pedals this issue?!?!? Score!"

However, we do take our dedication and responsibility to the *entire* MI realm very seriously and, for every "fretted focus" issue that sends me (and others) back to junior-high-fanboy levels of excitement or "drum & percussion" books that thrill others on staff, there are those that delve with equal amounts of effort into other realms that may not immediately be within our comfort zones.

This issue takes a deep dive into a subdi- vision within the world of Band & Orchestra with an exploration of today's violin and viola market (page 40) and a retailer survey on the topic of strings for orchestral instru- ments (page 44). Side note: neither of these subjects are *entirely* outside of my lifetime

orbit – I studied violin from the age of 5 until 13 (I was actually pretty good, but my parents figured I had "moved on," dedication-wise, when they found that in that final winter of study I was using my hard- shell case as a sled to speed down the snowy hill with fellow students after lessons).

Surprisingly, I often find these "non-wheelhouse" issues of *MMR* to be as, or more, exciting. Actually, it's probably *not* all that surprising – I already know that I find guitar, bass, drums, et al., (anything you'd find in a traditional hard rock group) fasci- nating. What's cool is to be reminded how many interesting developments are taking place in areas I'm less intimately familiar due to my own listening and playing tendencies.

This month's Roundtable feature on the 2019 violin and viola market was both enjoyable and enlightening to work on. Hearing – from the vendors, themselves – about the myriad innovations and trends making serious waves in a part of MI I don't always naturally venture into reinvigorated my appreciation for the whole industry and not just my own, meticulously carved-out corner of it.

This is a fun, fascinating, weird, and exhilarating business we're all in, in each of our ways. I never, ever *forget* that... but it's nice to be gently hit over the head with that fact now and again. 

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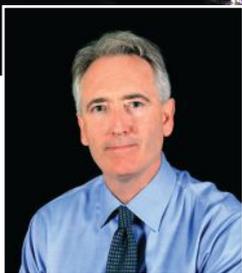
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Note From Joe

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Are You Playing to Win? Or Not to Lose?

Making the case for attending your industry's mid-year gathering.

Recently, some industry friends and I were pondering this seemingly simple question. Like many things in life, it began by watching football. We talked about the numerous occasions where a team entered the 4th quarter with a commanding lead, only to have the opponent dramatically come back from behind to win the game. It happens so often, it is almost predictable!

Giving this some thought, it occurred to us that the team with the lead wasn't playing to win; they were protecting the gains they had earned—playing not to lose. The underdog, in contrast, had little to lose, so they were trying everything in their power to change their situation. In other words, they played to win.

We considered this question in terms of our own business lives, and it triggered some interesting responses. It made me think of the recent NAMM Board meeting where we carefully analyzed a 42-year trend in NAMM retail membership. While our retail membership is up 135% during that period, we have noticed a decline in this category since the peak in 2001.

Notably, a similar number of overall stores exist today, but they are held in fewer hands. This trend is due to many factors, including the expansion of chains and industry consolidation. There are likewise some new and innovative startups in the retail space. These young MI entrepreneurs are exciting to watch as their ideas are changing the face of the music industry.

But this contrast between innovation and contraction brought me back to my question. If you've been in business for a long time, it makes sense to want to protect your hard-earned gains and keep doing what got you there in the first place. And for those who are just starting out, what is there to lose? Newcomers tend to experiment, to try new things and keep iterating until they arrive at a successful formula.

We are seeing these differences in strategy play out at Summer NAMM. The retailers that are attending are the folks who seem to truly understand how fast the world is changing. They know that the clues to their future growth can be found by attending as many NAMM U sessions as possible and by keeping their ear to the ground, fully involved in the countless conversations occurring in and around the show.

In my opinion, our retail members are the ones on the front lines, bringing music to their communities, and as an industry, we should all be encouraging them and cheering them on. But we know one thing for sure: Summer NAMM will be another waypoint to success for our retailers who are playing to win.

Won't you join them?

Joe Lamond
NAMM President and CEO

Summer NAMM

July 18–20, 2019

Nashville, Tennessee



Advance Your Product Mix

Review your business with top brands and find new products to differentiate your inventory.



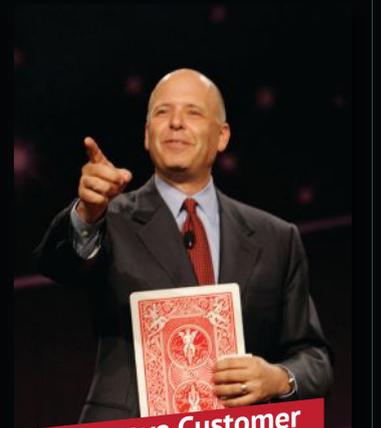
Fine-Tune Your Operation

Multiple education tracks help future proof your store, hone skills and train your staff.



Learn New Ideas

The Top 100 Dealer Awards will showcase best practices for every department of your store.



Improve Customer Experience

Shep Hyken, *New York Times* bestselling author, will showcase strategies to grow customer loyalty.

“

If I say, I'm part of the problem, that's good because I can help fix it. If it's always some big box store problem or it's somebody else's problem, there's nothing we can do but die. Yes, we can't control it. We're screwed. Or, we can say music is emotion. Music is experience. We are part of that experience, and therefore that is contagious. You determine what that's gonna be.

Scott Stratten, Co-Owner, UnMarketing Inc.

Learn More and Register at
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Industry News

SMI Names New Management Team



John Stippell, Taylor McLam, Spector artist Doug Wimbish, Stuart Spector, and Corey Witt

Under new ownership, Spector Musical Instruments (SMI) has named a new management team for the brand.

John Stippell has been named as global brand manager, Corey Witt has been named as global marketing manager, and Taylor McLam has been named USA Series sales specialist.

John Stippell has become a seasoned brand manager through his work with KORG USA, working directly on brands like VOX, Blackstar, KORG, and Spector. "John has a keen eye for brand building, but he also intimately understands the supply chain and sell-through process, making him the right choice for the position," says SMI CEO, Joe Castronovo.

Additionally, Corey Witt and Taylor McLam bring a wealth of experience to both Spector's marketing and sales needs moving forward. "Spector has thrived since 1976, due in large part to a faithful following of performers and players," says Stippell, "And Corey and Taylor are assets to the Spector mission because of their ability to be simultaneously brand-centric and player-centric. Spector is a player's brand, and we honor that through the leadership we put in place."

In addition to Stippell, Witt, and McLam, SMI has assigned record-keeping and international documentation oversight to Casey Scourby. According to Joe Castronovo, "She has become the 'go-to' person for Spector administration."

SMI looks forward to supporting the brand, both domestically and globally, through their trusted network of international distribution partners.

- Industry News
- MMR Global
- Trade Regrets
- Supplier Scene
- People on the Move

Augustine Strings Partners with Hal Leonard for U.S. Distribution

Augustine Strings, the world's first producer of nylon strings for guitar, has granted Hal Leonard exclusive distribution for all of their guitar string products in the United States. The deal, which will begin on June 1, was announced by Stephen Griesgraber, president of Augustine, and Brad Smith, vice president of MI Products at Hal Leonard.

Founded in New York City in 1947, Augustine Strings first worked in collaboration with guitar maestro Andrés Segovia. Through this initial collaboration, Augustine defined the sound of the classical guitar in the 20th century. Continuing its legacy of innovation, Augustine offers "Cristal" nylon strings in their Regal and Imperial line of strings as well as carbon trebles in their Paragon line to meet the demands of all contemporary players. A full range of strings for acoustic and electric guitar are also available, making them a top-tier line great for all retailers to stock. Their roster of artists includes Grammy award winner Jason Vieaux, Elektra recording artists White Reaper, Eduardo Fernandez, and more.

Griesgraber says, "It was time for us to choose an exclusive distributor. Augustine Strings has two priorities – to make the best guitar strings in the world and to nurture our market through a commitment to education and community. Hal



Brad Smith, vice president of MI Products for Hal Leonard, Stephen Griesgraber, president of Augustine, Elias Blumm, marketing director of Augustine, and Peter Carlson, sales manager – MI Division for Hal Leonard

Leonard understands the needs of retailers in our changing landscape and has decades of experience working closely with educators. Their commitment to excellence in quality and service reflects our own values and we are thrilled to be partnering with them."

Smith added, "Hal Leonard strives to represent the best companies in their field and Augustine Strings certainly qualifies. Our mutual interest in supporting the classical guitar market – in schools and with professionals – makes this addition a natural expansion to our growing lines of accessories for fretted instruments."

Retailers interested in stocking Augustine Strings can call the Hal Leonard E-Z Order Line at (800) 554-0626.

EarthQuaker Receives Exporter of the Year Honors



Associate administrator of the U.S. Office of International Trade David Glaccum, EarthQuaker Devices president Jamie Stillman, EarthQuaker Devices CEO Julie Robbins, and U.S. Small Business Administration administrator (acting) Chris Pilkerton.

On May 6, EarthQuaker Devices founder and president Jamie Stillman and his wife, chief executive officer, co-owner Julie Robbins, received honors as Exporter of the Year 2019 from the U.S. Small Business Administration during an afternoon awards ceremony at the National Institute of Peace. The presentation was part of the U.S. Small Business Administration's National Small Business Week activities.

National Small Business Week is a national recognition event to honor the country's top entrepreneurs. 2019 marks the 66th anniversary of the U.S. Small Business Administration. EarthQuaker Devices was selected for this national

See **EARTHQUAKER** page 12



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Grover Pro Joins RBI Music Family

Rhythm Band Instruments, LLC has announced the acquisition of the assets of Grover Pro Percussion, Inc. Since 1979 Grover Pro has produced and sold the finest orchestral percussion instruments in the world, including its signature Super Overtone™ triangles, Projection Plus™ tambourines and concert snare drums, all of which are designed and manufactured in the USA and sold worldwide.

Grover Pro was founded and run by Neil Grover who has performed for over 40 years with both the Boston Symphony and Boston Pops. He can be heard on many Boston Pops recordings as well as movie scores like *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* and Phillip Glass' *Mishima*. Grover has performed the around the globe with Henry Mancini, Music From Marlboro, the Broadway production of "The Pirates of Penzance," and in over 50 concert tours with the famed Boston Pops. He appeared as a percussionist in the movie "Blown Away" starring Jeff Bridges and Tommy Lee Jones, and has even performed with Aerosmith. Neil is one of the



field's most requested clinicians, in demand across the country and around the world. He has written or co-authored five publications published by Meredith Music and written educational articles for numerous music magazines. He is the former Chair of the Percussion Programs at both the Boston Conservatory and the University of Massachusetts-Lowell and has served on the Board of Directors of the Percussive Arts Society.

"We are thrilled to be able to work with Neil Grover and to offer as a key component of our RBI Music initiative, the world-class instruments and accessories that Neil has designed," said Brad Kirkpatrick, president of Rhythm Band. "For as long as I've been in the music industry, Neil has designed products with the performer in mind. He's performed for years with the Boston Symphony and the Pops, so he knows percussion, and all of the products he produces are exceptional."

GC Opens Landmark Store in Hawaii

Guitar Center (GC) celebrated the opening of its newest retail location – a 19,000-square-foot facility in Pearl City, Hawaii. The store marks a major milestone for Guitar Center as its first store opening outside of the 48 contiguous U.S. states and its third of six planned openings for 2019. Guitar Center Pearl City offers an expansive set of services and gear to serve the music needs of the community.

The grand opening took place on Friday, May 10, 2019, kicking off with a special gala celebration that lasted all weekend, including special in-store offerings. Prominent Guitar Center executives were in attendance, including CEO Ron Japinga and EVP of Store Operations Wayne Cowell. Weekend festivities included

See *Guitar Center* page 16



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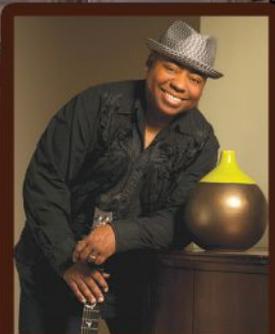
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EARTHQUAKER

from page 8

award amidst candidates from each of the 50 states, as well as District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam.

"I never imagined that EarthQuaker devices would someday be awarded the SBA's Small Business Exporter of Year 2019 and that we'd be invited to a

ceremony in Washington DC," Robbins said. "It was so special to share it with our daughters. I wish we could have brought the whole EarthQuaker team. "I have immense gratitude for everyone who has worked hard and supported us in our journey," she added.

Hand-crafted effects pedal manu-

facturer EarthQuaker Devices, top-six in the U.S. and one of the top-10 in the world, create products that are available in over 865 retail locations in approximately 50 countries. Its key retailers include Guitar Center, Sam Ash, Sweetwater, and Thomann. The company has sold approximately 250,000 units.

The company's current workforce reaches over 50 individuals, and has been praised for its commitment to inclusion, diversity, and cooperation with other pedal manufacturers by *Best Guitar Effects*. The company also has an in-house global marketing team fluent in seven languages (Japanese, Spanish, French, German, Italian, Czech, and Polish), and, in 2018, rolled out a live dealer training program, which has been completed in 31 cities.

The company leveraged their Small Business Development Center Export Assistance Network, which provides free, confidential counseling to exporters and has offices throughout Ohio. The network, an SBA resource partner, assists small- and medium-sized businesses with international business planning, market research, export documentation, local product requirements and logistics.

The company was assisted through a State of Ohio International Market Access Grant for Exporters (IMAGE) grant to develop an international marketing strategy, funded through SBA's State Trade Expansion Program (STEP). The company also made use of the U.S. Department of Commerce's Gold Key Service, which provides U.S. companies with matchmaking appointments with interested partners in a foreign market.

Through this service, administered through the U.S. Export Assistance Center (USEAC), where officials of the Department of Commerce and SBA are co-located, EarthQuaker LLC met with potential partners in Australia. This resulted in a signed contract with an Australian firm and an opening order of \$41,000.

Today, EarthQuaker Devices also has recent distribution partnerships with Yamaha Australia and Yamaha Asia.

Stillman also holds a U.S. patent (Patent no: US9,899.013B1, issued February 20, 2018) pertaining to an effects pedal implementing a switching mechanism between forward and reverse delay effects.

COMING SOON

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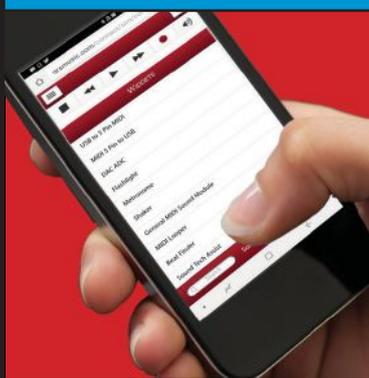
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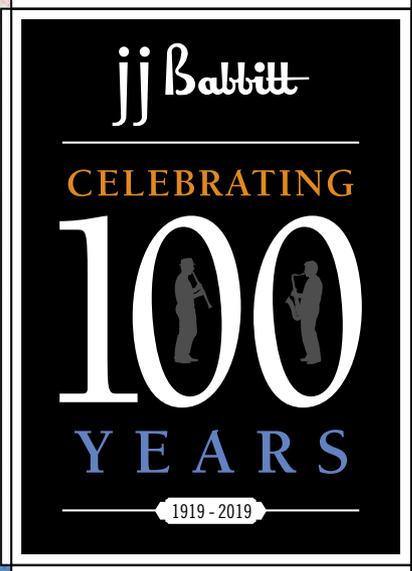
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Reverb Donates \$250,000 to Youth Music Programs through 'Reverb Gives'

Reverb.com recently announced that it has donated more than \$250,000-worth of musical instruments to youth music education programs across the U.S. and globally. Since launching its Reverb Gives initiative in 2018, the music gear marketplace has helped put musical instruments into the hands of students at more than 70 youth music education organizations. Reverb's goal is to donate \$500,000-worth of musical instruments by the end of 2019.

Reverb gives

"Reverb's mission is to make the world more musical by making it easy and affordable for anyone to buy and sell musical instruments. Our Reverb Gives initiative is a direct extension of that goal, enabling us to put instruments into the hands of students all over the world," said David Kalt, founder and CEO at Reverb. "Behind nearly every musician who uses the site and every employee at Reverb is a music instrument, teacher, or program that made a positive impact on their life. We're grateful for the opportunity to play a part in the musical journeys of students across dozens of incredible programs through Reverb Gives."

A portion of every sale made on Reverb goes to Reverb Gives, benefiting worthy organizations. To learn more about Reverb Gives, including how the program works, what organizations the initiative has supported, or how to apply for a grant, visit www.reverbgives.com.

RPMDA Announces the 2019 Dorothy Honoree and Other Awards

A highlight of every RPMDA convention is the announcement of the Dorothy at the closing dinner, given for a lifetime of service and achievement in the music industry. It is RPMDA's highest honor. The 2019 honoree is Lori Supinie of Senseney Music. Lorie began her long and distinguished career in the print music industry at Senseney Music and is now owner of the company.



Lori Supinie pictured with Kevin Cranley, Bob Kohl, Eric Strouse, Iris and Ron Manus

Christie Smith of Alfred Music, received the 2019 Sandy Feldstein Service Award for her ongoing and generous support of RPMDA.

Don Eubanks Publisher Representative Award was presented on behalf of RPMDA's dealer members to Tim Cose of Hal Leonard, for consistent and exemplary service to his customers.



Wittner - Essentials for Stringed Instruments

						
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Violin 4/4 Cello 4/4-7/8 Double Bass 3/4-1/4	Violin 4/4-1/16 Viola all sizes Cello 4/4-1/8	Violin 4/4-1/16 Viola all sizes Cello 4/4-1/8 Double Bass 3/4-1/4	4/4-3/4 and 1/2-1/4 Viola all sizes Taper: 1:30 Cello 4/4-7/8 and 1/2-1/4 Taper: 1:25	Violin and Viola Diameter: 7,0 mm (0.275")-9,4 mm (0.370") Taper: 1:20, 1:25, 1:30	Violin 4/4-1/16 Viola all sizes	Violin 4/4-1/4 Viola all sizes Cello 4/4-1/4

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Robb Smith

DANSR Adds Smith Mallets to Brand Lineup

DANSR, Inc. announced that effective May 1 it has begun worldwide distribution for Smith Mallets. Located in Phoenix, Arizona, Smith Mallets was founded by Robb Smith in 2004. Smith manufactures a wide variety of high-quality mallets ranging from entry level to professional.

Smith earned a Bachelor's in Music in

Percussion Performance and a Minor in Music Education from Virginia Commonwealth University and started making his own mallets while studying at VCU. Soon, Smith began making them for fellow students. The manufacturing of mallets was put on hold as Robb pursued his performance career which included performing with the Richmond Symphony as well as Broadway Musicals. Smith knew he'd be back to making mallets as he saw the opportunity to create high-performance mallets at a lower cost than most.

"The exceptional value Robb has created in his mallet line, along with the passion that comes from being an independent family-owned business, is what attracted us to Smith Mallets. That is who we are and what the brands we represent are all about," said sales manager Stephanie Murphy. "Smith's passion for making great mallets is shown in his work," added Gary Winder, executive VP of Sales. "This is a mallet line you have to experience. The quality far exceeds the price."

DANSR is also pleased to announce that Harris-Teller, Inc. will be the exclusive sub-distributor for Smith Mallets in the United States.

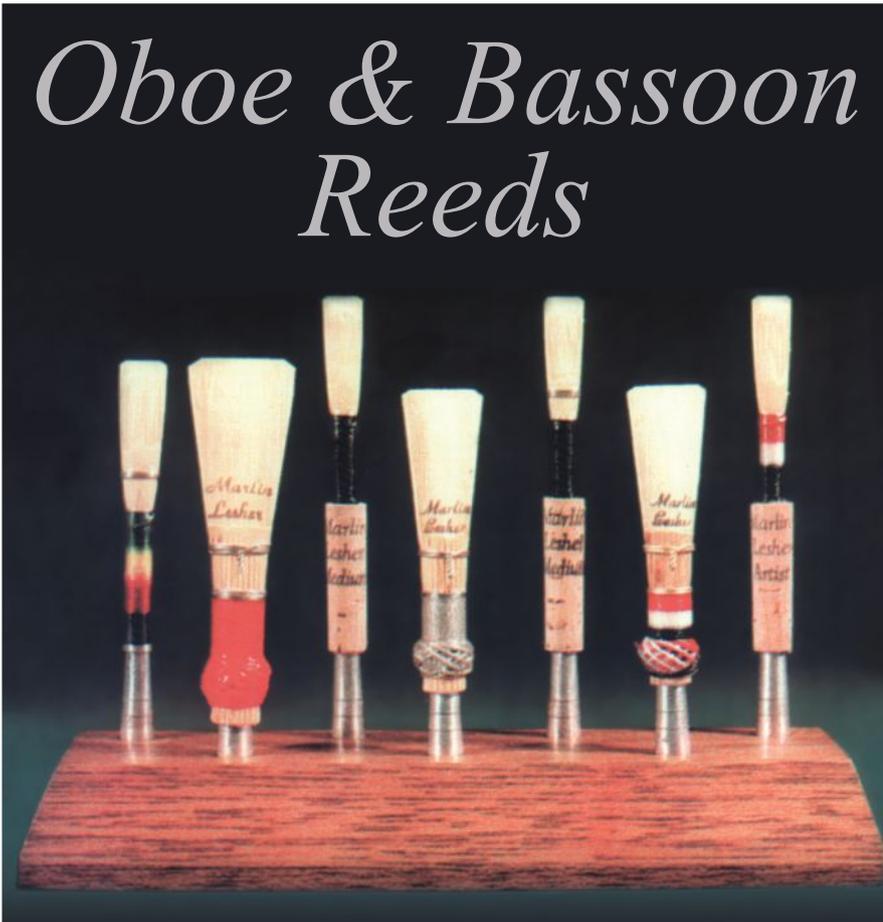


GUITAR CENTER

from page 10

live music by award-winning local talent, exclusive giveaways, specials on lessons and rentals, and much more.

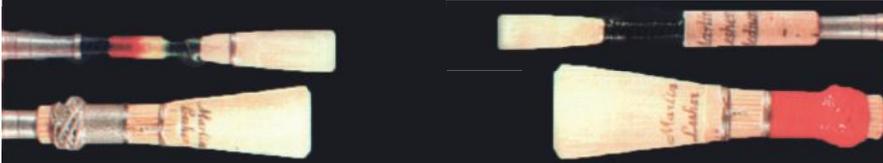
The opening celebration began with Councilmember Brandon Elefante, State Representative Gregg Takayama and Senator Brenne Harimoto presenting Japin-ga, Cowell and Guitar Center Pearl City store manager Tim Ball with honorary certificates, followed by a presentation by the husband-wife team behind Kanile'a Ukuleles. Acclaimed musician and ordained minister Kahu Kawika Kahiapo then conducted an official "blessing" ceremony. The evening then featured live entertainment from award-winning local musicians such as Anuhea and Kawika Kahiapo, as well as GRAMMY®-nominated Polynesian musician Josh Tatofi. Additionally, the Pearl City High School Band Ensemble performed and was presented with a grant of wind instruments including flutes, trumpets, trombones and saxophones, donated by the Guitar Center Music Foundation.



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Supplier Scene

GC Celebrates Store Opening in South Carolina

Guitar Center (GC) has opened its latest retail location, a 10,000-square-foot facility in North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina (1240 Hwy 17 N, North Myrtle Beach). The grand opening took place on Thursday, May 16, and this location is the fourth of six planned GC grand openings for 2019. In-store services include Guitar Center lessons, repairs, rentals, and workshops.



North Myrtle Beach shoppers are also able to enjoy Guitar Center's multi-channel "endless aisle," which gives customers the ability to combine in-store, online and phone options to purchase music equipment from anywhere.

Michael Rismiller, North Myrtle Beach Guitar Center store manager, stated, "Our mission at Guitar Center has always been to create more music-makers in the world, and we look forward to welcoming and further growing the local music community in North Myrtle Beach. We invite everyone to come on in and take a lesson with us! Whether you're a beginner, just starting out or more advanced, we have top instructors and state-of-the-art lessons facilities to support you on every step of your musical journey."

Summer NAMM to Present More Than 60 Education Sessions

At Summer NAMM, a plethora of professional development, networking, and business opportunities will take place over the course of three days at Nashville's Music City Center (July 18–20).

Each morning, Summer NAMM will bring the future to the fore with a NAMM U Breakfast Session. On Thursday, a panel of industry thought leaders will explore the trends and practices that are transforming music retail and answer the question, "What does it take to win in an era of change?" in "Retail Disruptors." On Friday, customer service expert and *New York Times* best-selling author Shep Hyken will draw from his groundbreaking new book, *The Convenience Revolution*, and share six compelling strategies that businesses of any size can take on now to revolutionize their customers' experience in "The Customer Experience Revolution." On Saturday, at the perennial favorite "Best in Show," a panel of retailers and *Music Inc.* and *UpBeat Daily* magazine publisher

Frank Alkyer will return to share the hot products from Summer NAMM that consumers will be buzzing about into the holiday season and beyond.

The NAMM Idea Center will host a variety of thought leaders covering topics curated to supercharge retail music stores. Sessions include "Music Lessons: How to End No-Shows Forever," "Insider Secrets to Manage Your Reputation on Google, Yelp and Facebook," "5 Ways to Level Up Your Instagram," and more.

For audio professionals, TEC Tracks returns on Thursday and Friday with sessions designed to help professionals take their careers to the next level. Notable sessions include "Deconstructing a Mix," where, in an interview with Dr. Dave Tough, Grammy-winning engineer Craig Alvin (Kacey Musgraves) will walk you through how he builds a hit album; "The Making of Willie Nelson's Grammy-winning 'My Way'" with producers Matt Rollings and Buddy Cannon,

See **NAMM page 28**



NAfME and NASSP Call for Full Funding

The National Association for Music Education (NAfME) has joined with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) in calling for full funding of Title II Part A and asking for constituents to help.

"We are only two months removed from the President requesting the elimination of Title II, Part A, in his budget," explain NASSP and NAfME. "Eliminating Title II, Part A funding would remove an important resource used by school districts to provide and support high-quality professional development for all teachers, including music educators."

As the note from the two associations goes on to elaborate: "The President's budget called for eliminating Title II, Part A, the main funding source for professional development for educators and school leaders, and for eliminating Title IV, Part B, an important funding source for after-school programs. Finally, the President's budget suggested that \$50 million

in Title I, Part A funds be used to support portability options – allowing funding to follow a child instead of supporting a Title I program. Portability, which the administration supports, removes funds from high-poverty schools where Title I funds typically provide needed supplemental programs for children, including arts integration and music programs. Congress has wisely rejected earlier attempts by the Trump administration to change how Title I funds support high-poverty school programs and has continued to fund Title II-A and Title IV-B, including the recommended raised levels coming out of the House's Appropriations Committee."

NAfME encourages students, educators, and those who value music and art to send an email to their members of Congress urging them to fully fund Title II, Part A. Advocates can also look for ideas on how to advocate for Title II, Part A through social media, writing letters, or calling their members of Congress.



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CELESTION

Roland Introduces TR-SYNC 'READY' Tracks

Roland Corporation and BPM Supreme have announced a partnership that will include Serato x Roland TR-SYNC "READY" tracks within BPM Supreme's vast music library. Labeled "TR-READY" tracks, each of these MP3 files is grid-verified by BPM Supreme's in-house team of audio editors and quality assurance experts.

"Bringing TR-READY tracks to BPM Supreme is a great addition for DJs looking to use Roland's most famous drum machines within Serato DJ," said Raj Thomas. "Whether you're using Serato during a live performance, at home in your studio, or alongside another musician using a drum machine, you can be confident that the grid in TR-READY tracks will immediately and flawlessly sync within Serato."

The new Serato x Roland TR-SYNC update brings the power of Roland's drum machines to a Serato DJ Pro setup. Roland's TR-8, TR-8S, TR-08, or TR-09 drum machines now come Serato DJ OSA-ready allowing DJs to effortlessly match the BPM of the TR drum machines with tracks playing on Serato DJ Pro.



There are 100 TR-READY tracks available now in a range of genres and decades. Each TR-READY track is marked with an official TR-READY icon and BPM Supreme will upload new TR-READY tracks daily.

"BPM Supreme was the first record pool to offer Serato pre-Flipped tracks, and now we're excited to take our partnership with Roland and Serato one step further," said Angel "A-Rock" Castillo, CEO and founder of BPM Supreme. "As huge fans of both Roland and Serato, our team is excited to offer these TR-READY tracks and anticipate that our large community of DJs will find them exciting and useful."

Available to U.S. customers only.



Whirlwind Shares DesignPRO 2.0 Software

DesignPRO is Whirlwind's new free downloadable software by StarDRAW, which allows users to custom design their own distro, panels, plates, or boxes and submit them directly to Whirlwind for quotation. Included in DesignPRO 2.0 is Improved AutoCAD export functionality and features include a new Powerlink Power Distro environment allows you to design your own custom Powerlink Distro. The free download of DesignPRO 2.0 can be accessed from the Whirlwind website (www.whirlwindusa.com/design-pro).

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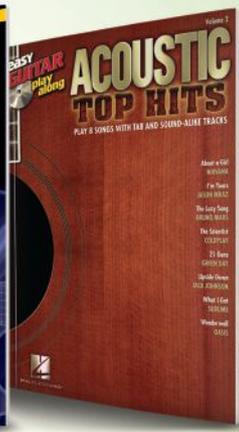
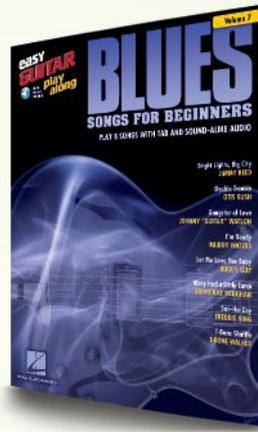
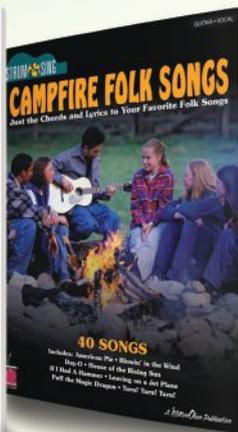
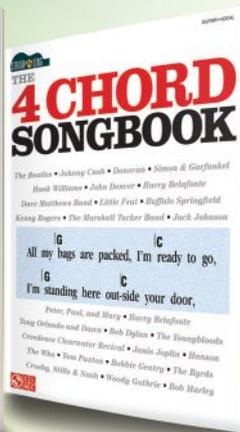
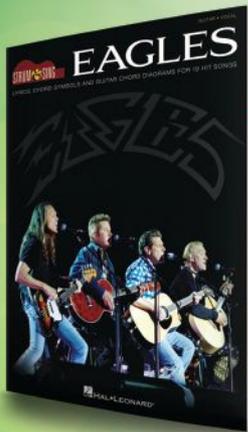
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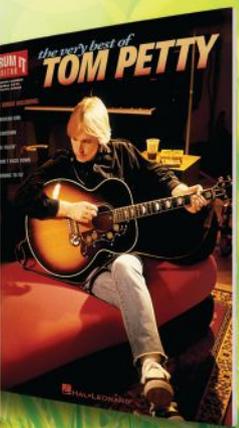
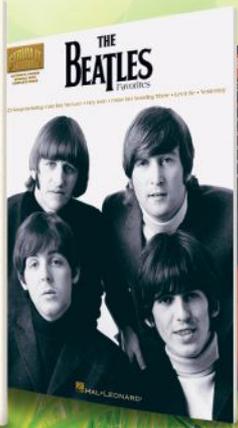
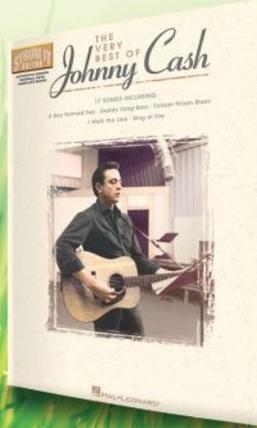
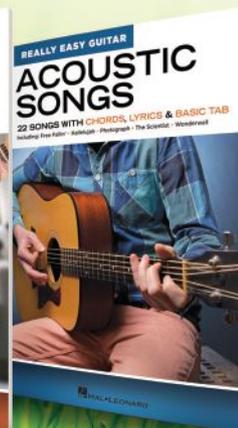
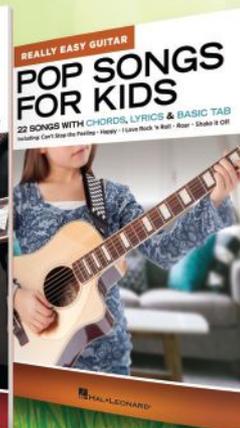


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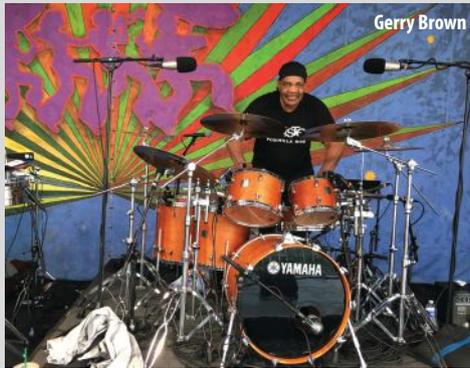
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JazzFest Celebrates 50th Anniversary with more than Three Decades of Support from Yamaha

The New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival (NOJHF) recently marked its 50th consecutive year as a premier music event in Louisiana, with Yamaha Corporation of America (YCA) serving as the official drum sponsor for more than 34 years. For two four-day weekends from April 25 to May 5, hundreds of thousands of people attended events and concert performances on the Fair Grounds Race Course, just minutes from the historic French Quarter. Musicians at the festival played on the Yamaha Recording Custom, Tour Custom Maple, Live Custom, Absolute Hybrid Maple, Club Custom, Stage Custom Birch and Rydeen drum sets.

"We are honored that the Festival has continued this relationship with us for more than 30 years, especially now as they observe this milestone anniversary," said David Jewell, partnerships and alliances manager, Yamaha Corporation of America. "The quality and versatility of our handcrafted drum sets allow artists of various genres to easily adapt in large productions like this."



Over the course of eight days, the festival showcased the indigenous music, culture and cuisine of New Orleans and Louisiana, and featured blues, jazz, Cajun, zydeco, Afro-Caribbean, Latin, R&B, gospel, rock, folk, rap, country and bluegrass music.

"The New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival is celebrating 50 years of New Orleans culture and music with more than 600 different bands on 14 stages," says Reginald Toussaint, executive director, Stage Production. "Yamaha Drums

has partnered with Jazz Fest for over 30 of those years, not only to help maximize the overall sound quality of each band but also to make the best drums available for our artists to experience. We are grateful for their continued support."

Several Yamaha Artists performed this year, including Carter Beauford (Dave Matthews Band), Gerry Brown (Diana Ross), Teddy Campbell (Boyz Scaggs), Doug Belote (Fareed Haque), and Oscar Seaton (Terrence Blanchard).

Gatchell



Violins



Many new Accessories have been added along with the addition of eight new Master Makers from Europe and China

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MUN KONG

'Play It Loud: Instruments of Rock & Roll' Opening Concert Uses Martin Audio Fixtures

Frost Productions recently supported the opening concert for New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art's popular "Play It Loud: Instruments of Rock & Roll" exhibit with Martin Audio MLA Mini and CDD-LIVE.

Discussing the production, Frost's Joe Lima explains, "We partner with the Met as a preferred production equipment provider and we handle many of the events when people use it for corporate or social events, or even something like the Met Gala. This was an internal event for the museum and we were called in a couple of months in advance about a special exhibition of instruments, memorabilia and collectables from the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and private collectors including several A-list musicians. To kick things off they wanted to invite all of museum's patrons and donors to a special private concert featuring The Roots and guest artists like Steve Miller and Don Felder of the Eagles."

Discussing the challenges, Lima adds, "the Museum's team wanted to do the show in the Metropolitan's Great Hall which is about 106 ft. long by 70 ft. wide and 65 ft. tall with a surrounding balcony, multiple entrances and exits, and stone and marble all around. So the space can be quite cavernous sounding with a lot of reverberation – a very tough room."

To accomplish a successful sounding concert with a limited amount of setup time in the room, the team from Frost dampened as many of the hard surfaces as possible with soft goods such as thick cloth curtains to cover the stone walls and unused entrances and exits. Then they positioned the stage to help avoid direct reflections coming right back at it.

According to Lima, "the third step was choosing a PA that enabled us to 'Hard Avoid' whatever was in front or behind it and direct and focus the energy onto the crowd, which is what really matters. So Martin Audio MLA and cellular technology was the obvious choice. We didn't need anything that big because we wanted to keep the output contained to the first 60 feet in the room where the bulk of the crowd was going to be. So, the MLA Mini was a perfect solution for that application without exceeding the museum's 95dB SPL limitation, yet delivering the clarity and dispersion control we needed first and foremost."

To do that, Frost built what they call an MLA Mini "Super Stack" with an element of four MLA Mini cabinets and one MSX sub on top of a WS218X sub per side. In addition, they deployed four CDD-LIVE 8's for front fills and eight more around the room to fill areas not covered by the PA and maintain consistent coverage throughout the space.

Discussing the show, Lima adds, "The museum originally predicted 400 guests, which turned out to be 1200, but it was no surprise that the MLA solution was more than adequate. In fact, the additional people helped dampen the sound even more. The performance lasted about an hour and a half, the artists' FOH engineers were super satisfied and very happy with the sound. We did a prediction on Display, put it into the system and Artless Poole, the Roots' FOH engineer, fired up the system the night before and was satisfied and pleased right off the bat with no tweaking needed. He was able to do a virtual sound check the day before the event and everyone thought it sounded great."

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Bullock Runs Wiz Khalifa's Coachella Show with ChamSys

Wiz Khalifa's Coachella performance featured the ChamSys MagicQ MQ500 desk, selected by his longtime lighting designer Jason Bullock.

"Coachella is a very important festival for all artists involved, so there was some pressure," acknowledged Bullock. "I didn't see the ChamSys desk until I arrived at the festival. I built the patch and show file in a Viz room on the site. Being able to build a show with a few hours and only get on the lighting system for three hours made time of the essence. ChamSys was the ideal tool, given that I was in a crunch."

"The Sahara Tent at Coachella was primarily EDM acts," Bullock added. "Since Wiz brought the entire band with him, I decided to make the show completely different than the other acts by going in the direction of a more classical rock show. Our beautiful set, which was designed by the team from Nimblis, made it easier to create this kind of look with its band risers and large center gate. We also had a powerful video display from Screenworks NEP that covered the front of the set and added to the intense vibe."

Bullock controlled a universe of Catalyst to send multiple out-



Jason Bullock

puts to the massive amount of video surfaces on the set. His show was extensive (his patch had 21 pages of paperwork), and he punted throughout its entire length.

"My whole show was punted," said Bullock, who ran all the FX, video and lighting. "Wiz is a very prolific artist, so there's always lots of material to learn. Even right up until showtime at Coachella there were still alterations to the set list. After eight years of being with Wiz, I have developed a formula that works for his show."

The friendly layout of the ChamSys MagicQ MQ500 Stadium helped Bullock at Coachella. "I really like how the MQ500 has a row of buttons over the playback faders," he said. "This gives you way more options for layering different fixture functions. With the larger screens and a few added buttons, the MQ500 is really a great upgrade. It's also helpful that the software is consistent. If you've worked

on any ChamSys product before, you're on very familiar ground."

Bullock credits his team with helping the Coachella show run smoothly. "Justin Collie and Nathan Wilson from Nimblis, my video content people Dark Matter and Matthew Fuller all contributed to the success of this project," he said.

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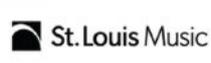
NAMM *continued from page 18*

along with engineer Steve Chadie, which will tell the stories behind the songs; “Immersive Audio and You,” which features pro audio gurus John McBride and Greg Penny, who’ll explore the world of simulated reality, natural-sounding sources and environments; and “The Pro Audio Entrepreneur Mindset,” with Sean Giovanni, owner of The Record Shop Recording Studio and Production Company in Nashville, who will present new information and ideas for audio professionals to improve their success in entrepreneurship, career development, finding and maintaining clients, and building multiple revenue streams.

Saturday welcomes the show’s Make Music Experience, delivering a lineup of sessions curated for emerging artists to build successful – and sustainable – careers. Highlights of the program include a songwriting masterclass with John Oates of Hall & Oates; “Unleashing and Maximizing the Hit Songwriter in You” with Grammy- and Dove-nominated songwriter Thornton Cline; and “Pensado’s Place Live at Summer NAMM,” featuring Dave Pensado, Herb Trawick and recording legends as they delve into the hottest topics in production today.

Exclusive to the Make Music Experience, A3E (Advanced Audio + Applications Exchange) will present the game-changing technologies and ideas that are driving the evolution of music products pro audio and music making. Highlights from the program range from “The Future of Production: Gamifying a Supergroup with The Fell” to issues of rights and licensing, with “Why Is Music Free and How Can We Get Back on Track” and “Data Collection Is Key to Maximizing Earnings,” as well as others.

Before the show officially opens, retail professionals of all levels of expertise are invited to take part in the new Retail Training Summit: a mini-conference that deep dives into the most relevant and critical areas for music retail success. Held on Wednesday, July 17, the program offers specialized training for music retail professionals in a format designed to give hands-on, proven ideas, techniques and tools for retail success in a range of business areas. Retail professionals will be able to choose from six different tracks (one in the morning and one in the afternoon), covering a variety of hot-button issues and tools to stay competitive. Registration is now open and free to NAMM members and their store staff to attend.



KORG Hosts First Ever Volca Happy Hour

KORG has taken the heart of their Brew Music campaign and created a new Happy Hour series – an intimate gear event that provides musicians with the opportunity to test-drive their favorite gear, this time with emphasis on the KORG volca series.

Musicians went to Saint Vitus Bar in Brooklyn for their chance to demo the complete volca line including NAMM favorites: volca modular and volca drum, as well as the newly released volca nubass, which features KORG's innovative tube technology, NuTube. This event was the first chance for fans to experience the powerful sounds of the volca nubass.



"Brew Music was the first of its kind, creating this incredible community of musicians who have one thing in common: their passion for music. These Happy Hour events aim to capture that same feeling, rather than at a brewery, we find local music venues to partner with. Saint Vitus was amazing to help us host this event and we're looking forward to seeing these gain as much traction as Brew Music has," says Jennifer Lewis, marketing relations and events manager at KORG USA, Inc. More Happy Hour events will be announced in the coming months.

Los Cabos Promotes Breast Cancer Awareness with Donation to the Canadian Cancer Society

Los Cabos Drumsticks is giving back to the community with a donation to the Canadian Cancer Society.

Since 2010, Los Cabos Drumsticks has manufactured and sold pink drumsticks as part of their Think Pink fundraising campaign. A portion of the proceeds from all Think Pink drumstick sales are donated to the Canadian Cancer Society through the annual Relay for Life.

Larry Guay, president of Los Cabos Drumsticks' said, "We would like to extend our thanks to everyone who has supported our campaign over the past few years and we look forward to continuing our ongoing efforts in support of cancer research."



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Xone products on display at HEC Plaza

Xone on Display at HEC Plaza Experience Center

Allen & Heath's Turkish distributor HEC Pro recently completed a four-year project to construct its new four-floor HEC Plaza "experience" center in Istanbul.

As part of HEC Pro's portfolio, Xone products are featured prominently at HEC Plaza, with all models on demonstration in one of the facility's dedicated showrooms. In addition, the nightclub area has a DJ booth which is home to a Xone mixer that was straight into the thick of the action when a succession

of A-list DJs took part in the opening night celebrations.

David Morbey, senior product manager at Allen & Heath (DJ) attended the opening night and congratulates HEC Pro on its new experience center: "HEC Plaza is stunning achievement and a testament to the imagination and commitment of the HEC Pro team. The way in which the technology is integrated and presented in 'real' scenarios allows visitors to fully experience the possibilities afforded by HEC Pro's extensive portfolio. With the entire Xone range on show and a mixer regularly in use in the DJ booth of the nightclub area, it's easy to appreciate the visibility that this brilliantly conceived facility offers our products."

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MMR GLOBAL

Propellerhead Software Names Agevik as CEO

Propellerhead Software's Board of Directors has announced the appointment of Niklas Agevik as CEO. As part of a planned succession, Agevik will take over from current CEO and founder, Ernst Nathorst-Böös on June 10. Ernst Nathorst-Böös will remain a shareholder and take a seat on the board of Propellerhead Software. This follows on the heels of the company's recent expansion of its management team in Q1, with the addition of Sofia Juhlin as SVP of sales and marketing and Timothy Self as SVP of product.

Says chairman of the Board Katarina Bonde, "I am proud to present Niklas Agevik as the new CEO of Propellerhead Software. Niklas is an entrepreneurial leader with experience from both large and small organizations. He has the right background to take the company on an expansion journey where we reach new target groups while cultivating the core business of high-quality software applications for music creators. I also want to thank Ernst Nathorst-Böös for building such an extraordinary company, and I am welcoming him in his new role to the board, where we will benefit from his visionary thinking."

Propellerhead software was founded by Ernst Nathorst-Böös, Marcus Zetterquist, and Peter Jubel in 1994 and has since been pioneers in creating software for producing music. Their flagship product, Reason, is one of the leading applications used for creating music.

Early in his career Agevik spent been five years at Ericsson. After that he has been part of several fast-paced startups. Most recently, he comes from Instabridge, a company he founded and ran for the past seven years. The Instabridge app has 30M users and 30,000 organic daily new users.

Musikmesse 2020 to Open Wednesday to Saturday with Enlarged Visitor Spectrum

The 40th anniversary edition of Musikmesse will be held from Wednesday to Saturday, April 1 to 4, 2020. Next year, the show will once again be positioned as the international trade fair for the music business with a clear focus on professional encounters. Additionally, there will be offered a special ticket for

private visitors on the Friday and Saturday when Musikmesse will present an expanded program of events with numerous workshops, concerts, and entertainment.

For the coming anniversary edition, Musikmesse is banking on the decisive factors that had made it into the biggest platform for the sector for many years. They include not only a highly professional and international orientation, but also a great emotional appeal to the entire music scene. Against this background, Messe Frankfurt is bringing the Saturday back into the event concept, to draw together companies and market participants from all over the world together with all the target groups of decisive importance to them.

"Over the last years, we and our partners have accomplished a great deal and established a variety of new formats at the fair. We deliberately waited until after the last show before setting the dates of Musikmesse 2020 and are also drawing on



MATHIAS KUITT

our extensive experience gathered over the past four decades. Naturally, we are also building on the unparalleled tradition of the fair. At the same time, we aim to make Musikmesse fit for the future with new components, great content and favorable conditions. In this way, we will make the event more attractive for companies, retailers, trade visitors and the whole music scene," says Michael Biwer, group show director of the Entertainment, Media & Creative Industries Business Unit of Messe Frankfurt Exhibition GmbH.

As lastly in 2018, Musikmesse will open its doors concurrently with Prolight + Sound, the Global Entertainment Technology Show, which runs from March 31 to April 3, 2020, on three days. On the Friday and Saturday, Musikmesse will be accompanied by the "Musikmesse Plaza" sales area. Additionally, 2020 will see the fifth edition of the Musikmesse Festival with concert highlights at the Exhibition Centre and throughout Frankfurt.

Flight Partners with Hal Leonard for U.S. and Canadian Distribution

Flight Instruments, a popular ukulele manufacturer, has granted Hal Leonard exclusive distribution of their ukulele products in the United States and Canada. The announcement came from Primoz Virant, COO of Flight, and Doug Lady, senior vice president at Hal Leonard.

Based in Slovenia, Flight is an innovative manufacturer with a wide selection of beautiful ukuleles crafted in a variety of styles and materials. Since 2010, Flight has always stayed true to its original mission: create the best priced, quality musical instruments and make them available for everyone who wishes to play. As

the ukulele explosion has grown, Flight has expanded beyond Slovenia and Europe, and is now available around the world. Through collaboration and partnerships with popular YouTubers, Instagrammers and bloggers focusing on bringing ukulele tutorials to the masses, Flight maintains a strong presence in the social media age.

Hal Leonard is adding Flight ukuleles to a premier roster of ukulele accessories, books, and instruments, including Kahua Ukuleles, Woodrow Guitars, and more. Hal Leonard already distributes Flight ukuleles throughout Europe and Australia.

Heil Sound Expands Intl. Distribution

Heil Sound has announced the appointment of four new distributors for its line of professional microphones and headphones.

South Korea's Capstone Pro, Italy's TEDES, Greece's Ntoulas Sound, and Dubai-based Broadcast Media Zone will become distribution partners for Heil Sound's popular Pro Series and HDK drum mic kits as well as ProSet headphones. The appointments come on the back of an expansion effort in response to increased sales and product awareness outside of the USA for Heil Sound products.



Kevin Kim and Jesse Park from Capstone Pro

Capstone Pro's appointment came to fruition after a series of meetings that began at the Winter NAMM show when company founders Jesse Park and Kevin Kim visited the Heil Sound booth and met with Ash Levitt, head of research and business development for Heil Sound.

"We're excited to be working with this group of distributors," said Levitt. "The creative community worldwide is massive and our products fit so many areas; live sound, studio, broadcast, and podcasting. As our founder, Bob Heil always says, 'It starts at the microphone.'"

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Pro Gear Creates Club Atmosphere at Belgium's Moose Bar Chain

Versuz, the largest nightclub in Belgium, has added a happy new twist to the pop-up nightspot concept with Moose Bar. Taking the party to the people, Moose Bar is opening pop-up nightspots throughout Belgium. Contributing to the festive atmosphere is a collection of Chauvet DJ fixtures, supplied by Pro Gear BVBA.

Wanting fixtures that could deliver the exciting visuals of a club environment, yet were compact and energy efficient enough for a pop-up location, Laurent Wery, owner of Pro Gear, decided to anchor Moose Bar rigs with Chauvet DJ products. Featured in his lighting package for the six current venues in the chain are: 47 Intimidator Spot 260 moving fixtures, 80 SlimPAR

T6 USB low-profile RGB wash lights, 30 SlimPAR T12 USB units, four Line Dancer compact mid-air effects, one Swarm Wash FX rotating derby, 16 Geyser P7 colorized RGBA+UV foggers, and three Hurricane 2000 fog machines.

Wery ensured that the dancefloors at the Moose Bar clubs were enlivened by a steady stream a bright and bold looks by hanging the Intimidator Spot 260 fixtures over them as their main spot. At some sites, he enhanced the impact of these 75W powerhouses by coordinating them with aerial effects from the Line Dancer or Swarm units.

For color, Wery positioned the SlimPAR washes strategically throughout each Moose Bar location.



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ON THE MOVE

Douglas Penstone-Smith has joined Yamaha Corporation of America as vice president of retail and e-commerce. He reports directly to Matt Searfus, corporate vice president of integrated marketing. In the newly-created role, Penstone-Smith is chartered with several initiatives to improve the Yamaha customer experience. He will work to improve and expand the Yamaha Music School in the U.S., which has already trained over six million worldwide. He is also charged with improving the Yamaha brand experience in dealer retail shops, including existing successful initiatives such as the Yamaha Experience Center and Shokunin Dealer displays. His role in expanding e-commerce is to help drive customers to dealer retail locations and to increase Yamaha connection to customers.



"Douglas brings with him a long record of success in leading innovative retail solutions and customer experiences," Searfus said. "He has a deep understanding of the shopping journey and how to create a customer-first focus; we are pleased to have a talented mind like Douglas's working for Yamaha."

Before joining Yamaha, Penstone-Smith dedicated 13 years to The LEGO Group, beginning his tenure in an analyst capacity in the United Kingdom and ascending through managerial positions in the European Union and United States to become director of retail experience, a post he held for six years. Penstone-Smith has also applied his analytical and organizational acumen at BP/Safeway Partnership (UK) and KFC Ltd. (UK).

YCA has also announced that **Dean Speers** has joined the company as district manager in the company's sales group. He reports to Dan Rodowicz, senior director, institutional channel sales.



In his new role, Speers will be responsible for working primarily with post-secondary institutions on providing solutions from the myriad products and instruments that Yamaha produces and distributes. He will work closely with all of the organization's sales channels and channel partners to identify the customers' needs and find the best solutions that only a company with the breadth of Yamaha can provide.

"Dean's vast array of experiences both inside and outside of the music products industry made him an ideal choice for this position," said Rodowicz. "I look forward to having him as a part of this expanding team."

Before joining Yamaha, Speers held the position of Institutional Solutions Specialist at Metroplex Piano in Dallas, where he worked with colleges, universities, school districts, churches and music schools to determine the best solutions for their needs.

Additionally, YCA has announced that **Greg Macias** has joined the company as brand director. He reports also directly to Matt Searfus.



"Greg has succeeded in key marketing roles on industry-leading brands and knows how to create strong connections between brands and consumers," said Searfus. "He possesses an exceptional mind for strategy and analysis; we are gratified to have him help tell the Yamaha story."

Before joining Yamaha, Macias held the position of chief marketing officer at start-up brand Magnivation, where he worked

alongside the company's founder to introduce and raise funding for their Bluetooth Low Energy technology. As director of marketing at ASICS America, he oversaw digital, sports, retail, and event marketing across channels, including partnerships with the New York City and Los Angeles Marathons and the World Series of Beach Volleyball.

The Conn-Selmer Division of Education has welcomed **Dr. David Fullmer** as West Region educational support manager beginning August 5, 2019. After 37 years of instrumental teaching, he will be retiring from Snow College as director of bands where he conducted the Wind Symphony, Symphonic Band, Badger Band and taught courses in conducting and music education.



Fullmer is active as a guest conductor, clinician, and adjudicator throughout the Western United States and has received the Mid-West Clinic Medal of Honor, Utah Music Educators Association Outstanding Music Educator Award, the National Band Association Citation for Excellence (twice), Utah Music Educators Superior Accomplishment Award (twice), National Federation of High School Activities Association Western States Section Outstanding Music Educator Award, Ray Smith Music Educator of the Year, PTA State Golden Apple Award, Utah Bandmasters Association Mentor Award, and has been featured twice on the cover of *School Band & Orchestra*.

Fullmer earned a doctoral of musical arts degree in instrumental conducting from The University of Washington and his masters and bachelor's degrees in music education from Brigham Young University. He studied conducting with Glenn Williams, Ralph Laycock, Don Peterson, Clyn Barrus, David Blackinton, Peter Eros, and Timothy Salzman. His dissertation, *A Comparison of the Wind Band Writing of Three Contemporary Composers: Karel Husa, Timothy Broege, and Cindy McTee*, comprises three chapters of *A Composer's Insight: Thought, Analysis and Commentary on Contemporary Masterpieces for Wind Band, Vol. 1* published by Meredith Music. He has published over a dozen articles on various music education topics.

The Percussion Marketing Council (PMC) announced the appointment of **Jennifer Paisley** to its executive committee. She joins the all-volunteer committee consisting of David Jewell (Yamaha Corporation), Stacey Montgomery-Clark (Sabian) and Karl Dustman (Dustman and Associates). The PMC executive committee serves as the PMC's leadership team, contributing diverse talents and resources to extend the reach of the various PMC programs, campaigns, and events, all centered on growing the percussion industry in all product categories.



Paisley is trade shows and partnerships director at Alfred Music and has been an active member of the music industry for more than 16 years. "I'm delighted to be joining the PMC Executive Committee and am looking forward to supporting the PMC in its efforts to help more future musicians discover their love of drumming," states Paisley. Paisley holds a bachelors of music with a concentration in music business from the Crane School of Music as well as a bachelor of science in business administration from SUNY Potsdam.

Taylor Guitars has announced the hiring of longtime music industry veteran **Craig Yamek** as a key accounts manager within its North American sales organization.



Yamek joins Taylor following a record year in 2018 and at a time when demand is surging behind the launch of the company's revolutionary V-Class bracing system. Yamek will be leading Taylor's relationship with Guitar Center and its 293 retail locations across the country.

With more than 22 years of experience, Yamek is well-versed in the music industry's sales world. As a key accounts manager, Yamek will be the primary liaison between Taylor and Guitar Center. He will be responsible for the product assortment for all of Guitar Center's retail locations nationally as well as the online assortments for Guitarcenter.com and Musiciansfriend.com.

In his role, Yamek also will coordinate strategic plans, go-to-market tactics, first-to-market and exclusive product opportunities, and channel promotions that meet the financial objectives for Taylor and Guitar Center. Additionally, Yamek will serve as a brand ambassador and product trainer in Guitar Center stores and contact centers.

Buffet Crampon USA has announced three new appointments in the North American Sales Team. Jordan Olinsky is now division manager for the Southwest territory, David Nichols for the Pacific North territory, and Benjamin Myers for the Midwest territory.

Jordan Olinsky assumed the Southwest territory in January after a successful stint as Pacific North division manager for Buffet Crampon USA. Olinsky is based in Houston and serves dealers and artists in Oklahoma and Texas.



Following Olinsky's departure, the Pacific North territory welcomed **David Nichols** as its new division manager in January. Nichols calls the Portland, Oregon area home and will serve Buffet Crampon USA's Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington dealers and artists.



Benjamin Myers joined Buffet Crampon USA in 2018 as South Central Division manager and assumes the Midwest territory in April 2019, covering dealers and artists in Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin.



Trade Regrets

On May 20, we received the following from NAMM's Dan Del Fiorentino:

Charles R. Walter, a pillar in the piano business for nearly 60 years, passed away on Friday. He was 92.



Charles was hired by the C.G. Conn Company to work in the piano design department back in 1964. While there he worked under the legendary Dr. Earle Kent, the director of research and engineering. When the company decided to discontinue one of their piano lines, Charles saw an opportunity. In 1977, a year after establishing his own piano manufacturing business, he introduced the first Charles R. Walter Piano at the NAMM Show in Chicago. It was the beginning of his own brand and design, which grew into a family business that continues to produce quality instruments.

In addition to running a successful business, Charles was also very active in encouraging music makers of all ages by supporting several organizations including AMC and the NAMM Foundation.

On May 26, Del Fiorentino sent us the following about **Parham Werlein**:

Parham Werlein passed away earlier this month at the age of 97. Parham followed in the footsteps of his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather as president of Werlein's For Music in New Orleans, Louisiana. Like his predecessors, Parham also served on the NAMM Board and was a great supporter of the American Music Conference (AMC). Parham's interview [NAMM Oral History interview, 2003] was completed on the day after Werlein's closed its doors for the final time, which was only the fifth day of closing in its history. The first time the store closed its doors was during a battle close to the warehouse during the Civil War.



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Tim Pfouts

By Victoria Wasylak



Just because a company has a classic bread-and-butter item doesn't mean they can't keep exploring new technology, and for S.I.T. Strings, innovation never gets put on hold.

Perhaps best-known for their Power Wound strings, the boutique string maker has recently released both their Foundations bass string sets and corrosion-resistant electric guitar strings. While the Foundations strings offer a special core material that makes the strings more responsive to touch and flexible, the CRT strings bring anti-corrosion technology to the S.I.T.'s electric string sets, building on what was initially just for their acoustic strings.

As S.I.T. Strings approaches its 40th anniversary, vice president Tim Pfouts discussed some of the newest offerings from the Ohio company, as well as what it means to craft and support an artist roster in 2019. (Hint: endorsements still mean just as much now as they did before.)

S.I.T.'s Foundations bass strings have a special core material. How would you explain what makes them different? Where did you come up with this idea for the different material?

Tim Pfouts: We've been around for over 30 years, but we've always been primarily a guitar string company. We always had bass strings, but our bass strings have always been engineered and geared towards more rock and metal players with a little bit

heavier of a core. A few years ago, we started trying to develop a new bass string that we felt that needed to be a smaller core, more flexible type of bass string more geared towards different types of players – for example, gospel, R&B, jazz. To do that, we needed to get a smaller type of core material than we're currently using for our bass strings because it just needs to hold up to the pressure that was going to be put on them as well.

They've been out for a little over a year now. We still consider it a new product because we just came out with the six strings set. We did a lot of R&D on these and got them in the hands of a lot of artists. We really sent a lot out both to just general consumers who didn't know our product, and also our endorsed artists. We got a lot of feedback on it, and we kept tweaking it and tweaking it and finally we got into a spot that we felt comfortable, we felt good about what we're releasing.

They're still not a string for everybody. They are a little different flavor than our other strings. Our main bass string is called the Power Wound and it still probably outsells the Foundations because we have such a loyal base of players who use those and love them. For the Foundations, it was almost a different taste bass strings, or a different flavor of bass strings.

The newest string that you released is a coated electric guitar string, featuring a CRT [corrosion resistant technology] treatment to prevent corrosion. What goes into making a special treatment that will work so that these strings will last longer? There's a lot of science behind that.

Probably it's good to mention that as a company, we're not a coated string company. There's a lot of coated strings on the market, and we came out with the coated acoustic string a couple of years ago and it's done pretty well. We've kind of held off on the electric string a little bit just because it's not really what our core business has been.

“A lot of the dealers and lot of people that support us have been with us a good part of those 40 years. And I think that's a testament to the quality of our product and also a testament to the adaptability of many of our dealers to change through the different generations and business climates and whatever else comes their way.”

– Tim Pfouts

What makes ours a little different is that the wrap wire is coated before the string is made. Our goal with this coated string that we do with the CRTs was to make a coated string that felt and played like an uncoated string, but just lasted a little bit longer from a corrosion standpoint.

Our way of looking at it from a product standpoint is we kind of wanted to tweak a non-coated string to make it last longer. The coating that we have on the wrap wire is a treated wrap wire that extends the corrosion process and moisture, affecting the plating of the wrap wire. And so what it does really is just extends the life of the string.

Also for us, we wanted to be able to come in with a coated string that was a good price point in the market. That was important for us. Being that we're a company that's not known for coated strings and that's not our core business, we needed to come in with the string that was at a good price point. I think we're there – it's kind of right in the middle of the road. Our key players and new players are picking up these strings and they really like them. They've been selling really well for us so far. They're really new – we just came out with them after the NAMM Show. So we're only really three months into it, but so far, so good.

With the CRTs we've expanded the line. We don't have a huge offering in them. I think we're at five SKUs right now with the CRT Coated Electric. And again, they're there to go along with the CRT Coated Phosphor Bronze that we do. And that's the feedback that we got on the coated strings is, "Hey, you know, these strings sound like your Power Wounds," which is our bread and butter electric guitar strings. It's an 80 percent nickel-plated steel guitar strings.

Is there a genre that you're noticing that these strings are popular for certain players?

You know, not really, not like we see with the Foundations bass strings. It's pretty much been across the board. There's certain players that just want a coated string. With that in mind, maybe they're [players] putting strings on a guitar, they don't want to change the strings constantly, or maybe they're starting and not playing all the time, and they don't want the strings rusting. Or, they could be in a [humid] environment, and that's

really where it comes into a lot too. A lot of our distributors that are doing well with these strings, they are in very humid environments. For example, our distributor in Indonesia is doing great with these strings because in their market, they need something like this to help them out. It's the same in the United States depending where on the market is.

About 50 percent of our business is export, and so we definitely had to take

that in consideration. In a perfect world you don't want a string coated because it sounds the absolute best when it's not [coated] – there's nothing stopping the way the string vibrates and the way string sounds. But depending on the environment, depending on how a person plays, and depending on the pH value in their sweat, they need it. And so that's why we decided to come out with it.

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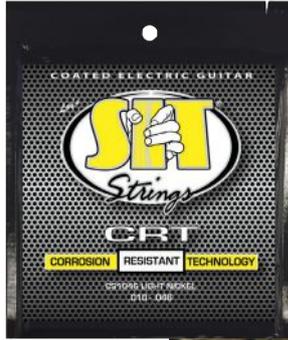
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You folks have an anniversary coming up next year – 40 years in 2020. Do you have any special plans for that?

We have some new products that we're going to come out with and we're also going to be doing maybe a couple of events in and around the NAMM Show to celebrate our 40th anniversary as well. You know, a lot of our dealers, believe it or not, have been with us a lot of those 40 years. They're the reason we're still here and we're still profitable is because of all the dealers are hanging in with us.

Time flies – I've been here for 25 of the 40 years. A lot of the dealers and a lot of people that support us have been with us a good part of those 40 years. And I think that's a testament to the quality of our product and also a testament to the adaptability of many of our dealers to change through the different generations and business climates and whatever else comes their way. Hopefully some of the things that we'll do will have a lot to do with some of our dealers and distributors, you know, bringing them into the loop about it, bringing them on board about it.



Inside the S.I.T. factory in Akron, Ohio

Looking at your website and your social media presence, I can really tell S.I.T. Strings seem very involved with your artist family. What are those relationships like?

I'm glad you asked about that. For us, it's all about relationships. Being a smaller company in the industry, the only people that are going to use our product and endorse our product are those who love the product and also love us personally, and so we feel that it's got to be reciprocated. That it's a trade-off. If we're going to expect an artist to support us, we want to support them where we can

and we want to work with them. And it's such a small industry, I think sometimes people forget that. Especially now with social media, it's such a small industry that the degrees of separation between a bigger or a medium size artist and a potential consumer is so small. It's a post on Instagram or it's a response to an email or to a conversation after a show. We try to focus and spend resources and money and time building those relationships that we have. We also have a really good artist relations guy who continues to work in the industry. He's on the road and so that helps as well is that he's always out there.

And it's not a perfect science. We'd like to do more. There's always that balance between promoting your product and trying to stay involved with the artist but we're trying to find that balance. For our artist roster, a lot of people say that it really doesn't matter anymore, but it still does. The kids are still influenced by who plays the stuff. Maybe who that is has changed a little bit - some people like to call them influencers on Instagram - but really all they are is still guitar players. They're still guitar players who are playing guitar that somebody else sees and likes how they play and they want to play like they do. How it looks from the outside has changed but the internal workings of our industry and of what influences people is still the same. It just looks different.



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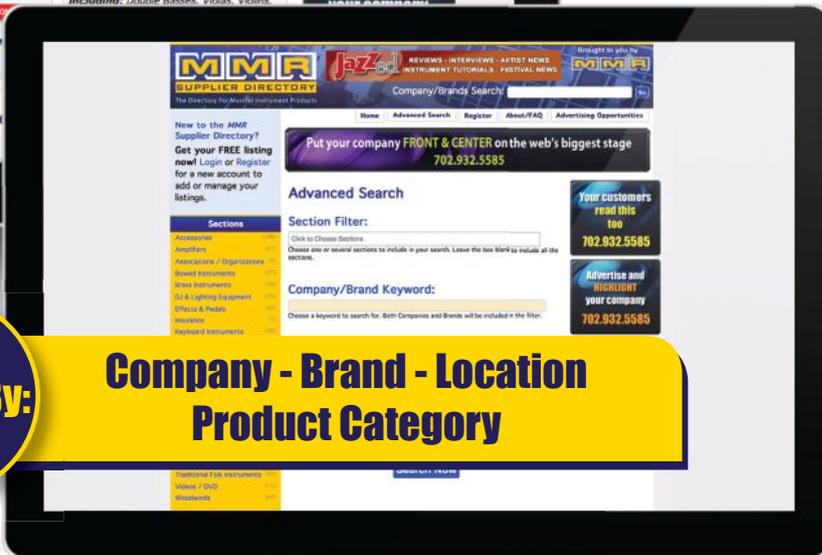
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FIT AS A

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The Violin and Viola Market
By Christian **Wissmuller**



Violins and violas (particularly violins) are often the very first “real” instruments a child learns and a crucial mainstay of any school music program, but the violin market today is not limited to orchestral, classical music. Electric violins are significantly extending the instruments’ reach to pop, dance, rock, country, and hip-hop, while simultaneously changing the nature of stringed instrument departments within MI retail stores across the globe.

Advances in design and construction are making both acoustic and electric violins and violas more durable and capable of better sound production, while also affecting available price points for the earliest beginners through to the most advanced professionals.

We sat down with reps from four major brands to learn about what trends are driving the market in 2019...

For your brand, what are currently your best-selling models of violins and violas?

Ken Dattmore: We have a few that fit into different categories: the V3SKA is our “workhorse” instrument used by dealers for student rentals and by school districts for student use. The AV5 is a deluxe rental outfit with a stackable case option that’s a great benefit to dealers and educators. The AV7 and AV10 are the best-selling intermediate models or step-up instruments. Either would serve as the instrument a student owns rather than rents and would complement the level they’ve reached in their proficiency and musicianship because of the wood quality and improved sound.

Gary Byers: In terms of units sold, the WAV series is our top seller because of the exceptional price/performance value ratio. However, for the “gigging pro” market, the new NXTa Active series has become our top performer, in part because of its affordability in that class, but mainly because the battery-free active output feature gives players absolute freedom to plug into any gear, in any performance environment, and sound fantastic.

Lang Shen: Our flagship Bucharest solid carved violins and violas from Romania remain a top seller, valued

by dealers and end users alike for the superb quality and consistency of the workmanship and materials – especially the exceptionally stable European tonewoods and rigorous standards of construction, graduation, and full adjustment in the U.S. in our Knilling Shop. Bracketing the European Bucharest in popularity are the Chinese Sebastian and Sebastian Artist outfits for those seeking a budget entry-level student or value priced step-up outfit, which are also adjusted in our shop. And, for players seeking a true pre-professional instrument, our American-made, independent, bench-built Nicolo Gabrieli violins and violas have been turning heads with serious players and dealers.

James Phillips: The Stefan Petrov (Superior, Standard, and Workshop Models) and Trista (Superior and standard) – both violin and viola.

What are some “best practices” embraced by dealers who do particularly well selling these stringed instruments?

GB: We’re finding that retailers who can talk to players about the right pedals, amplifiers, and other accessories they’ll want for their electric instrument have stronger sales results because that kind of advice adds a very encouraging level of confidence, especially for the buyer who may be new to the world of electronics. This is really important because, in



Gary Byers, Managing Director, NS Design

“This exciting market is still young, and we anticipate continued growth this year and beyond, not just for our own business, but for the bowed electric market overall.”



“Our dealers find out from their customers exactly what they are wanting to accomplish with their instrument... this helps us tailor the instrument to their customers’ needs.”



James Phillips, Manager,
Gatchell Violins Company

general, high schools and colleges generally don't provide string players with much training or exposure to the technology that goes along with the electric.

JP: Our dealers find out from their customers exactly what they are wanting to accomplish with their instrument. Things like, are they looking for a brighter or warmer sounding instrument? Something powerful? What types of music will they be playing et cetera? All this helps us tailor the instrument to their customers' needs.

LS: Whether for rental or sale, dealers who engage in “best practices” embody a knowledgeable, trustworthy, and responsive resource, supplying and servicing reliable, quality instruments which meet or exceed expectations, supporting and engaging actively with prospective clients, whether individual, school, or community.

KD: In my years in the stringed instrument business, the one common denominator among the most successful school music dealers is the adage, “The educator is always right.” As the manufacturer, we do the best we can to serve educators, but we can only go so far. Providing well-built instruments that that are durable and will stay in tune is a great service to the educator, but we rely heavily on our specially picked dealers to provide the added value that helps directors do their best job. We are constantly looking for ways to work with our dealers to support educators in innovative ways, and the partnership our dealer base provides is critical in achieving that mission.

Are there any trends of note that you've been noticing with respect to violins and violas?

JP: Both vendor and consumer are looking for higher quality instruments both in material and workmanship, even for student-level instruments.

LS: The increasing accessibility and sharing of information, particularly online, has had an impact on options and alternatives available to and requested by both con-

sumer and dealers.

While Chinese violins and violas still command a significant share of the overall market, we have seen a trend that started actually some time ago of dealers and players looking back to Europe for instruments. It should be interesting to see how the current friction between the United States and China affects this shift.

Although not specific to the violin or viola per se, the advent of Perfection planetary geared pegs continues to be a game-changer for all segments of the market, solving one of the most challenging aspects of playing a string instrument – tuning the violin, viola (and cello)... just

as “worm and gear” machine heads solved tuning issues for the guitar family in the 1800s. (Who wants to go back to six friction pegs?!) More and more, it is not only end users and schools requesting Perfection pegs be installed on their individual or school instruments, but dealers find that Perfection pegs on their rental instruments have increased retention and accelerated progress.

KD: For many years there was a race to the bottom on pricing. Average prices of stringed instruments declined as instruments from other countries entered the market at incredibly low prices. This resulted in a sharp drop in the average lifespan

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of a violin or viola in a rental program or school inventory. People began to realize they were paying less per instrument but having to replace them more often. Now, there has been a rebirth among educators in the demand for quality and they are looking for more dependable products that play well with greater durability.

As the acoustic violin enjoyed a golden period over 200 years ago, the electric violin is now reaching that stage. School programs all over the country are adding electric string ensembles to their traditional curricula; it isn't unusual to see an electric violin in a jazz band, marching band, or drum corps. YouTube stars like Lindsey Stirling, 2Cellos, and Black Violin command views into the billions. The scene for electric strings is changing. Today every player wants one, but tomorrow every player will need one.

GB: There are at least two interesting trends we can report. It's become striking, when, for example, Beyoncé's amazing Coachella performance featured violinists and cellists with NS instruments, just how mainstream the electric violin has become. We're hearing from more and more sea-

soned players who have built their careers around their acoustic, but who are now looking for ways to expand the range of what they do. Rather than being part of some other world, they are recognizing the electric as an important extension, or even a way beyond, their current playing.

Interestingly, we're also experiencing an uptick in interest in the fretted violin. Players, who in the past thought of frets on a violin as a crutch for good intonation, are more readily embracing the fretted instrument as a musical tool with unique performance capabilities and character, in particular the rich sustain when playing pizzicato and the ability to articulate chord structures not possible with a fretless fingerboard.

Do you have any recently released or upcoming new violin or viola models that you'd like to share with our readers?

GB: An important part of our success is that we listen to our players. At this year's Anaheim NAMM we brought a prototype of a new SuperLight NS violin, hoping to gauge the reaction of players visiting or performing during the show. I'm not making an announcement just yet, but we were surprised at how positive the reaction was.

LS: American-made, pre-professional instruments from Nicolo Gabrieli continue to gain traction, and we have expanded models offered for advancing students and serious players.

JP: The Trista Violin and Violas, and The Gatchell Innovations Carbon Fiber Violas Endeavor and Aspire models

KD: In January, we launched the YVN Model 3 student violin. Yamaha has been working for more than five years to rethink the way a student instrument is made. We knew educators wanted an instrument that was consistent from one to the next, durable enough to withstand rigorous student use and, of course, have a great sound. In addition, as part of our Corporate Social Responsibility initiative, we make sustainability a high priority; it's an essential part of our culture. The YVN Model 3 has an amazingly innovative, patented manufacturing process that allows the production of three times the number of violin tops and backs compared to traditional carving techniques, using the same quantity of wood. This process also lends itself to a consistent-



Ken Dattmore, Product Marketing Manager, Strings, Yamaha Corporation of America

cy never before seen in a student violin.

What are your expectations for this market segment in the coming months?

KD: The market for student violins and violas has always been resilient. I notice orchestra programs weakening and disappearing periodically, but for every program I've seen diminished, there has been another program birthed elsewhere that continues to grow. I don't foresee the next few months, or even the next few years, being any different.

GB: Ned Steinberger has over two decades devoted to the electric bowed instrument segment via NS Design, and we have seen a tremendous growth in interest and sales over this period. This exciting market is still young, and we anticipate continued growth this year and beyond, not just for our own business, but for the bowed electric market overall.

LS: Based on the past few years, we do expect there to be continued growth and demand specifically for fractional size instruments, violas in particular, indicating an increased participation by younger students in string programs throughout the States.

JP: I believe that in the coming months the consumer demand for violins and violas such as the Stefan Petrov and Trista models will increase significantly compared to previous years due to the increasing demand for higher quality from both players and instructors, alike.



Lang Shen, Product Manager, Knilling, St. Louis Music

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Strings Attached

Strings for Orchestral Instruments By Christian **Wissmuller**

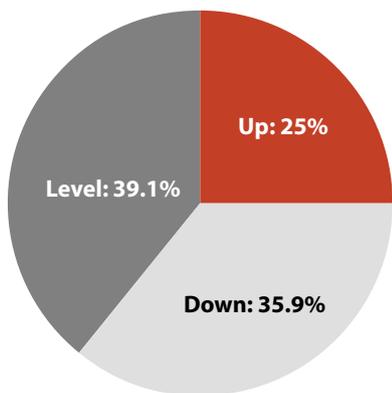
With nearly 65 percent of participants in this month's dealer survey reporting that sales of orchestral strings are either up or level when compared to past years, this would appear to be a fairly static market segment. "Violin family instruments are not affected by current trends," observes Jeff Elias of Interesting Music Shoppe (Cannington, Ontario, Canada). "It's a small part of the MI industry, but is quite stable."

"Static" does not necessarily equate to "strong," however. As with many accessories, margins are relatively low and online competition is particularly challenging for retailers when it comes to these strings. "They buy on the Internet at the price which we dealers get charged by the wholesalers," opines Rodica Brune of Greenwich, Connecticut's Atelier Constantin Popescu.

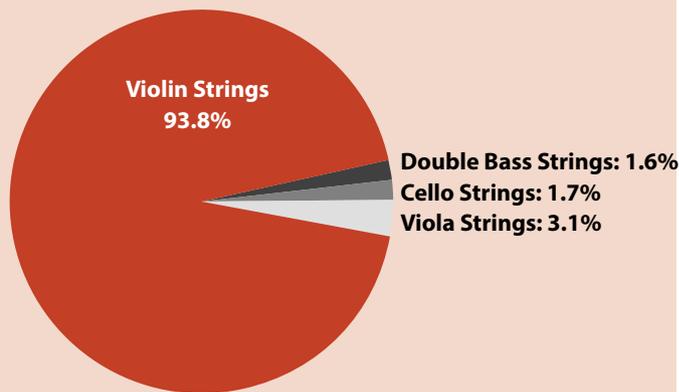
Other trends that are affecting the market include the advent of synthetic-core strings, which allow for quality product at lower price-points, and the emergence of newer players into a once fairly monopolized field. Indeed, Thomastik (long *the* leader for orchestral strings) is the best-seller for 73 percent of this survey's respondents – second to D'Addario's 82.5 percent.

As David St. John of Music & Arts – Glendora (Glendora California) notes, "D'Addario has taken over more of the lion's share." More suppliers in the mix can allow for greater opportunities for both customers and retailers. "Players seem more willing to try something new (like D'Addario, Kaplan) than they have been in the past," says Jeff Simons of Davis, California's Watermelon Music. "Thomastik Dominant no longer rule the roost."

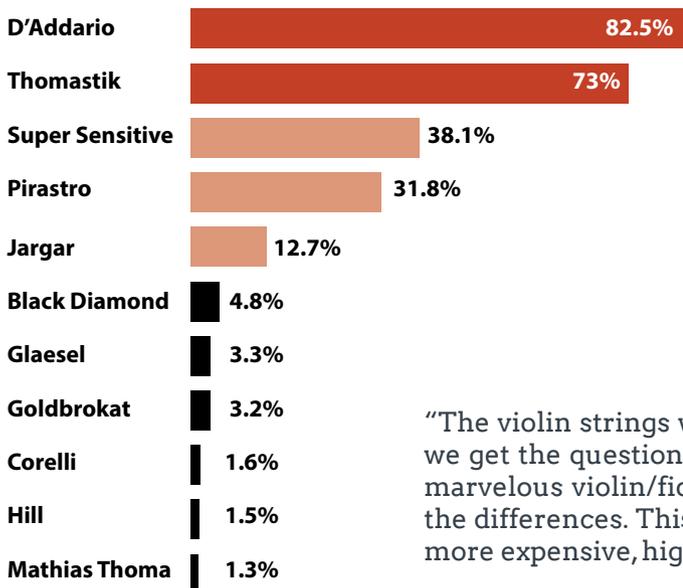
Compared to this same time last year, sales of strings for orchestral instruments for your business are...



In terms of volume, what types of orchestra strings do you sell most of?



What brands of orchestral strings are best-sellers for your business?



"Most manufacturers of orchestra strings have decided to not include retail dealers in their business model. No margins and direct-to-consumer has created a massive 'No Man's Land' between brick and mortar stores and orchestra string manufacturers. These manufacturers only have themselves to blame for the downturn."

– Anthony Mantova, Mantova's Two Street Music

"The violin strings we stock range from about \$20 to \$85 per set. When we get the question, 'What's the difference?' we are fortunate to have a marvelous violin/fiddle player in our employ who can explain, in detail, the differences. This enables us to be able to upsell many customers to a more expensive, higher quality violin string set."

– Tim Bascom, Morgan Music

Have you been noticing any current trends when it comes to strings for orchestral instruments – either on the supplier or consumer side (customer buying preferences or habits, materials/ techniques being used by suppliers, et cetera)?

"Gone are the days of voluminous SKUs and [selling] high-end strings out of a glass tube. Orchestra programs in schools are decimated and our pro clientele has diminished as well."

Jerry Veseley
Veseley Music
Parowan, Utah

"Customers are preferring perlon core over steel core strings."

Ed Intagliata
Cassell's Music
San Fernando, California

"Customers tend to err towards the cheapest string. Also, the strings market is so competitively priced, there is barely any margin to these items. Coupled with a high cost, makes it very difficult to stock a variety of strings at our stores, and have had to stick to just a few manufacturers/SKUs."

Walter Crisp
Schmitt Music
Brooklyn Center, Minnesota

"[A] public school elementary instrumental music teacher sending beginning students to a clown music store causing us to lose \$300,000 in rentals the last two years."

Gus Rieckhoff
Quincy School Music Center
Quincy, Illinois

"Thomastik for violin and viola, plus Jargar for cello. These have been our recommended choices by our award winning orchestra program for many, many years."

Jerry Besser
Tone Music
Owatonna, Minnesota

"People want to know what the best bang for their buck is. If they are looking for a good string at a good price, we steer them toward Super Sensitives. For a step up, but not too pricey, we go with any number of D'Addario sets. If they want nicer strings and are willing to pay a little more, we set them up with either Zyex or Dominants."

Nathan Jamieson
Walton Music House
Walton, New York

"More single string purchases, fewer sets – cheaper brands preferred."

Jo Julier
Cerdd Ystwyth Music
Aberystwyth, Ceredigion
Wales

"Customers are going longer between string changes due to cost increases."

Cassandra Thuneman
Cassandra Strings
Algonquin, Illinois

"Not really. Most of my customers are school kids. I've been selling the Supersensitive Reds for 12 years now and haven't had any requests for anything else. Ditto rosin by the way – again pretty much the Supersensitive, though the older students have been getting the Hill's. Sales of supplies in general have been fairly level the past three or four years. Rentals and repairs are where the growth has been. Rental growth has been a slow but steady rise. Repairs have grown at a faster clip as more people find out that I do repairs."

Richard Hannemann
Hannemann Music
Los Alamos, California

"A move to more affordable synthetic cores."

Amanda Rueter
Springfield Music
Springfield, Missouri

"Customers buying online, and bringing it to us to put on."

Mitchel D. Banks
Don Banks Music
Tampa, Florida

"D'Addario has been our big seller for the past five-plus years. Very consistent and great company to deal with."

Kevin Walters
Central Penn Music
Palmyra, Pennsylvania

"The easy access of social media, YouTube, et cetera [means that] the packaging is less important. If a product is 'out there' with a quality perception the manufacture can focus more on product less on 'eye candy.'"

Dan Patterson
Roger's Music
Fort Payne, Alabama

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On April 1 of this year, one of our industry's oldest and most respected retailers turned 120 years old. Since 1899, Willis Music Company has remained family owned and operated and, since the mid-'50s, has been under the stewardship of the Cranley family. First was John, then his son Edward, and, since 1990, Edward's son Kevin.

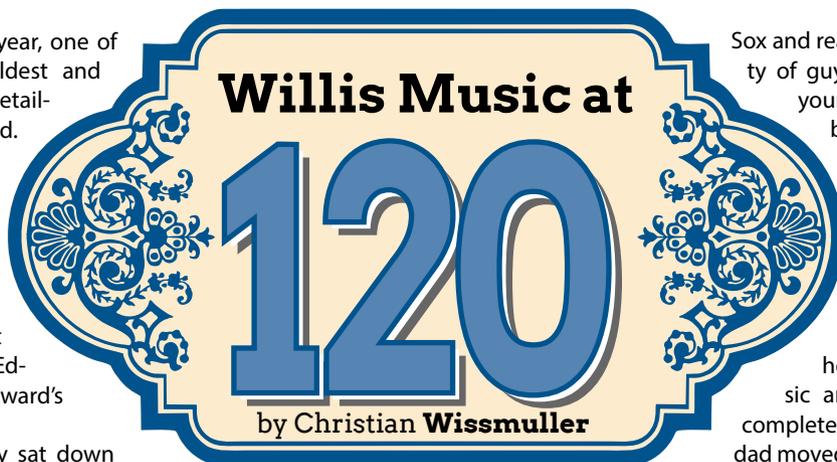
Kevin Cranley recently sat down with *MMR* to discuss the company's journey, his own time in the business, and Willis Music's unwavering commitment to excellence in music publishing and MI retail.

The history of Willis Music is generally known to many in the industry and is detailed quite nicely on the company's website (www.willismusic.com), but are there any anecdotes from the early years that you'd like to add to the picture?

Yes, this is an interesting item. Part of the deal with Mr. Willis in 1919 was a longterm payout in the form of bonds. In 1943, on August 16 he wrote a letter in the form of a signed affidavit explaining his career. I can only assume my grandfather asked him to do this. But two interesting things arise. First, he implies that he started the business before 1899, but provides no clear date. We have always celebrated 1899 and we always will. Secondly, he describes being a trustee and incorporator of the Music Dealers Association and he took an active part in their conventions. I spoke to Dan Del Fiorentino at NAMM and he didn't have any idea what he was talking about. Unsolved mystery.

Let's talk about your father's time at Willis Music. From what I've read, he had seemed more on the path to becoming a ball player than an MI retailer – is that correct? What was his first exposure to the musical instrument business and how did he become involved with Willis Music, ultimately becoming president?

You are correct. He was a baseball player, but at 18 he joined the Navy during WWII. When he returned he tried out for the Red



Sox and realized that there were plenty of guys with great fastballs and younger than him. So he went back to school to study history at BC [Boston College – Ed.] and worked at Boston Music, which was also owned by Gus Schirmer, like Willis. After going back to the Navy during the Korean conflict he came back to Boston Music and, when my grandfather completed the purchase of Willis, my dad moved with my mother and three

older sisters to Cincinnati. My younger sister and I were born in Cincinnati. It had to be difficult, especially for my mother, to leave her home and parents with three young children and move to Ohio.

I can imagine. Now, to your own time at Willis Music – can you talk about your early memories of the company and your first experiences working for your father?

My first job was painting the floor of our warehouse in Florence, Kentucky, which was new in 1970. I worked Saturdays and summers until I helped build a store close to my house during high school. From then on, during summers I worked at the warehouse and during the school year I worked at the store. I continued working both retail and in publishing until I graduated from College. I went to Xavier University, which was close to home. Shortly after graduating I worked full time in the retail part of the business. Working for my father was difficult. We were both hardheaded and fought a lot. Blame can certainly go both ways. But later in life as he mellowed and I matured we had a wonderful relationship. I couldn't ask for anything more than all my father did for me.

When you went off to college at Xavier, was it always your intention to return to Willis?

I got ahead of myself. Since Xavier was in Cincinnati, I lived at home and continued working at Willis throughout.

Can you talk about the evolution of your role at the company, post-college, leading to your becoming president in 1990?



A 1950's shot of Willis Music in Cincinnati, Ohio.



A shot from Willis Music's annual planning meeting. Left to right: Bill Phipps, marketing; Bill DiGrezio, consultant; Colleen Cranley Merman, educational director; Paul Finke, VP Retail; Cindy Hicks, B&O division manager; Kevin Cranley, president; Myra Barrowman, CFO

Right after college I went to retail and we built a great team and expanded rapidly. With a great team in place, I moved my focus to publishing and became president shortly after. At that point, of course, I was focused on both divisions and we were expanding in both areas. Most of the growth in publishing was international and we were able to develop great partnerships around the world. Our direct sales in publishing were North America and the rest of the world, with few exceptions, were handled by what we called sub-publishers. So in Europe, China, Japan, Australia, and other countries and regions a publisher would translate, print, and distribute our John Thompson, Edna Mae Burnam, and William Gillock books and pay us a royalty. Now with our relationship with Hal Leonard and others, I manage the publishing relationships with about 20 percent of my time and everyone else at Willis, along with 80 percent of my time, is strictly focused on our retail business.

Can you reflect a little on your time as chairman of NAMM and your continued involvement?

Being chairman of NAMM was one of the highest honors of my career. NAMM is a tremendous organization with a staff that is second to none. I wish everyone in our industry could have a close-up view of everything NAMM does for the good of the industry and music makers worldwide. Although I'm a past chairman, along with others who have become great friends, NAMM continues to keep us involved. It is a unique role and I feel we are all ready and willing to help advance the vision and mission of NAMM whenever it's needed.

Currently, who are the principal senior management folks at Willis Music?

My senior management team at Willis is something I am tremendously proud of. Although he's retired, I have to mention Dan Herbert who I worked side by side with for over 35 years. Dan is a great friend and helped move Willis to where we are today. Currently our team is: Paul Finke, VP of retail operations (34 years); Myra Barrowman, CFO (22 years); Cindy Hicks, rental division manager (37 years); William Phipps, marketing manager/buyer (25 years); Colleen (Cranley) Merman, education coordinator (9 years); William Di-Grezio, advisor (9 years). This latter one is a unique situation – Bill is a volunteer with SCORE. We called on them in 2010 to help

us with marketing. Bill has been with us ever since. Bill was in senior management with Sears, LensCrafters, and The Gap before retiring. He is a part of the team in every way and he advised our team and some of us individually.

What are some recent developments of note at Willis Music that our readers might not be aware of?

About eight years ago, we determined a great need to diversify on the retail side of the business. We were very heavy in combo and, as everyone knows, competition was coming from all directions. So we wanted to definitely stay in that business, but knew we needed to expand in other areas to keep the business secure. We expanded in three of our stores with pianos. We now represent Steinway and Sons, Yamaha, and Roland. The other key area for expansion was band and orchestra. We purchased a competitor a few years ago, which grew the business con-



Kevin Cranley

siderably and we have been reinvesting there ever since. Both were difficult transitions, but by finding the best people we feel confident of continued growth. We've recently remodeled three of our five stores and are working on another renewal and remodel now.

To mark this year's anniversary, do you have any special events, sales, or initiatives in the works?

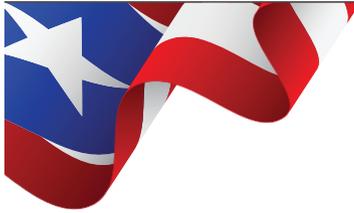
120 is a year-long celebration, but the main event was around our anniversary date in April. Through the help of our vendors we had a celebration on April 6 at all our locations. Vendors pitched in to make it a great event and our customers had a great time with food, live music, and plenty of prizes. The following day we closed our store early and held an employee event which was a great time. We had awards, lots of food and drink, and performances from our staff.



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Leonela Alejandro



There are no words that are can sufficiently comfort the victims of natural disaster. That's why luthier Stephan Connor and Augustine Strings chose to speak with music.

Following the devastation that Hurricane Maria brought to Puerto Rico in September 2017, the New York-based string company embarked on a special project with one of their endorsing luthiers to bring the healing power of music to the island. Starting just one month after the hurricane, Connor came to Augustine with a very specific plan: to handcraft two guitars for two outstanding musicians affected by the damage. Seeking financial assistance for the project, Augustine hopped on board and provided monetary support, so that Connor could afford to build two of his meticulously crafted models to donate to deserving musicians.

"I just felt that I had to do something to shine rays of hope for these people and their families," Connor says. "I decided the way I could 'give back' and help was by donating two guitars to aspiring, talented guitar students who dream of being professional classical guitarists."

"Each of his guitars is a total labor of love. It takes months to build a guitar," Elias Blumm, marketing director for Augustine Strings, tells *MMR*. "And the fact that he was going to be giving away these instruments that usually sells for, you know, upwards of \$10,000, he was going to give them away for nothing other than out of the goodness of his heart, he just wanted to be able to recoup some of the funding on his materials and all the labor accounted for him, and cost."

When Connor came to Augustine with a fully-formed proposal that fall, he already had two young women in mind as the recipients of the models he planned to build: Leonela Alejandro, the winner of the 2014 Boston GuitarFest Youth Competition, and Frances Karim Chiroque, who longed for a concert guitar to play at her master's degree recital at Conservatorio de Música de Puerto Rico.

"They have the talent and need better instruments, but with the economic situation from the hurricane it would no longer be possible for them to acquire them," Connor says. "So I let them know that as a symbol of support from the classical guitar community, I

would build each of them a special guitar."

"Part of what took us or what convinced us in terms of the pitch was what his description of the recipients of the guitar," Blumm adds. "Him, describing their passion and some of their accomplishments and some of the things that they hope to accomplish, we were very inspired by that and certainly made us want to help all the more. While it was significant for us, it felt like it wasn't just going towards two guitars, it was going towards the entire community of Puerto Rico, and all the people that Frances and Leonela would be able to touch with their music."

After six months, Connor finished the custom guitars, both with buds adorning the rosettes as a symbol of the new growth in the young women's lives. The red flower of Puerto Rico on both models, "reflect[s] the soul of the island," he explains.

"The idea was, while they are rebuilding, I will be working hard from my workshop – along with them, in a way," Connor said.

The large investment is particularly impressive coming from a rather small company; with only 26 employees, Augustine is a boots-on-the-ground operation and can easily see the differ-

ence a few acts of kindness can make.

"As a small, sort of family operation, we understand that sometimes a little thing can actually spread a really wide distance, so we hope to make an impact like that," Blumm says. "That's why picking our spots in terms of philanthropic endeavors is important to us. This one arose and was just what we were looking for."

Augustine's philanthropic track record extends far past just this one Puerto Rico project. Perhaps most notably, at Travis High School in Texas, the company has provided guitars and other necessities for traveling in their community to make music.

"We actually have close ties to a classical guitar organization out of Austin, Texas called Austin Classical Guitar. Through them, we've found some amazing opportunities to support local schools who have sometimes very new or burgeoning music programs and are catered towards underprivileged kids," Blumm notes. "You think of the classical guitar as not super popular, and, you know, dorky. But we've gotten to see through some of the amazing teachers that

Augustine Strings and Stephan Connor Help Bring Solace to Puerto Rican Musicians

By Victoria Wasylak



are hooked into this program some of the amazing effect of being able to provide music to the schools. And in a lot of ways, guitar is a perfect instrument for programs like this because unless they're \$10,000, you can find ones that are inexpensive and affordable. They're easy to store for high schools. And instead of having a full, you know, marching band or symphony orchestra, you can just hook up to 25 kids with guitars and make music that way."

Looking forward, Blumm and the rest of Augustine Strings are eager to see where each guitar will bring Frances and Leonela in their careers as musicians.

"I believe this will not only be a lift to their families but could also help with the trajectory of both Frances and Leonela's careers," says Connor.

Frances, for instance, is currently working in Chicago on both her career as a classical guitarist and her efforts to give back in the realm of music education.

"I was recently interviewed and accepted by Denis Azabagic to work on an educational classical guitar project called Lead Guitar Program who teaches low income schools and supports classical guitarism," she explains. "It is my intention to stay in Chicago to prepare myself in every professional aspect, while working on building a sustainable music school in Puerto Rico. My first dream after the hurricane was finishing my master's degree. Now, my second dream is Puerto Rico Guitar Project."

The gift from Connor and Augustine also helped her to financially sustain herself and get the final credits needed to finish her degree.

"I express my gratitude to Steve Connor and Augustine Strings for all the good things I've experience after the hurricane in Puerto Rico. It is my responsibility to create a music school for future guitarists," she adds.

Likewise, Leonela is ready to finish her first school year at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, which she was also able to complete with the help Connor's special-made guitar.

"I'm currently about to finish my first school year at UW Milwaukee, where I transferred to last fall to study with Rene Izquierdo," she tells *MMR*. "It's been an incredible year, and I feel like I've had the opportunity to continue growing and developing as a guitarist.



AUGUSTINE GUITAR STRINGS

Being here at Milwaukee has given me so many performance opportunities, I've been able to participate in a number of recitals and masterclasses given by guest artists. Having a Connor guitar has definitely facilitated the process, playing such an amazing instrument lets me appreciate every performance and helps me not take any for granted. Steve built a beautiful instrument and I feel very lucky to be able to make music with it. His generosity is admirable and I'm very fortunate to say I've been able to experience his selflessness firsthand through this incredible gesture. Although I'm not completely sure where yet, I plan on continuing my studies outside of Puerto Rico for now. I hold Puerto

Rico very close to my heart, and I know I'll always return to it."

If and when the time comes, Blumm says there's two spots in the Augustine artist roster for the young women, should they choose to pursue music in the coming years – although realistically, they have quite the familial bond already.

"We look forward to tracking their careers. And hopefully, if they push through and want to become, full-time performing artists, we want them to join our family in the same way that many of our other outstanding artists do," Blumm adds. "But even if they don't, this was something that, no pun intended, we hope was instrumental in their personal healing and the fact that they could use music to help heal their communities. The guitars went to two people but we feel like the gain will reverberate... We think it's special enough that we would love for everybody to find out about it, and hopefully it would inspire some other people in the industry to follow our lead on good deeds." 

Stephan Connor's work can be viewed at www.connorguitars.com

Frances Karim Chiroque



“ The large investment is particularly impressive coming from a rather small company; with only 26 employees, Augustine is a boots-on-the-ground operation and can easily see the difference a few acts of kindness can make. ”

As It Should Be A Teacher's Job is to Serve

By **Menzie Pittman**

It's been a while since I've discussed the topic of music lessons, and many readers have lesson programs, so let's jump in and have a look under the hood at some "obvious" and some "not so obvious" pitfalls that can hopefully be avoided. Or maybe those very pitfalls can help to serve our programs to become more effective.

Serving the Student First

Effective teachers make the needs of their students their highest priority. Rather than embracing just the instrument, they are completely in tune with the student and, thus, they embrace the student first and foremost. At first glance this seems like an obvious principle. It seems much simpler than most music teachers or music lesson program directors realize. So, what is this great secret to accomplishing this you ask? Teach the person, not the instrument. No doubt that statement will draw some ire, but – yup, I said it! Technique is wonderful, chops are great, gadgetry makes us all gaga, but truthfully, when you approach teaching any other way than "teaching the person first," you corrupt the process.

So, What Does it Mean to 'Teach the Person First?'

It means you, as a musician, are not the most important component. The student outranks you, even though he or she is subordinate to you. As a teacher, you technically outrank the student, but you need to cast aside the great throne of musician/teacher entitlement. Steal a page from the legendary Quincy Jones, who while recording "We are the World," posted a sign to all the artists that read: "Please Check All Egos at the Door."

Become the Observer, not the Expert

"Become the observer, not the expert" means you study the student while he or she develops their craft. You observe *the way* the student processes and learns, not *what* that individual learns. Understanding how a student processes is the gateway to successful teaching. Once you understand that, only then can you effect change. Great teaching is selfless and, done well, it becomes one of pure observation – observation of the way the student comprehends both the music and him- or herself.

Most teachers understand the music part of that equation, but they wrestle with the idea of observing the student's comprehension and the "whys" of the student's struggles. Teachers are so focused on the right or wrong of the materials and techniques that they overlook the "how" the student learns part and the "why" the student learns a certain way part. The "why" tells you how the student learns, and the "why" is how you advance any music student, young or old.

When You Strive to be a Great Teacher, Sophistication, as a Musician, is not Always Your Friend

The art of teaching is different than the craft of performance. I worked diligently every day at my craft for decades, and I still do. When you perform music, the goal is to serve *the song* and entertain an audience. When you teach, the goal is to serve *the*

student, and that takes additional humility. So, the role of the teacher is challenging in different ways than the role of the performer. While service applies to both, the role of a good teacher is more esoteric. That's why it takes a special understanding of the student to be effective at it.

Nothing is More Advanced than Book One

Once I had a teacher ask me if I favored teaching the more advanced students and materials. He was referring to the fact that I carried many advance students at the time. I'm sure my response made him wonder a bit about me, but I said, "Nothing is more advanced than Book One." Book Two is just Book One with more enhancement and faster tempos, and Book Three, et cetera is just Book One turned upside down, and you add your left foot, and, of course, at that point you are expected to sing (obviously, I'm a drummer). That teacher hasn't asked me too many questions since. So, you see, I take the value of Book One seriously. I always joke and say, "I teach Book One to death, because nothing is more important than establishing the foundation"

Your Job is to Make Learning Compelling – Not Difficult

Recently, I inherited a situation that had some student frustration intertwined. The student came from another teacher in the area, a teacher who had a reputation for good technical skills, and it should be noted that he did help this student develop into a good reader. But in the process of focusing mainly on advancing materials, instead of focusing on the true level of the student, he advanced his own ego, but not the student's curiosity. The student would have been better served learning to be comfortable with himself and working with materials that would ground him and help him learn how to learn. That would have helped the student's self-esteem develop, along with his confidence. Advancing the material doesn't always advance the student.

In Closing...

Every teacher means well when he or she teaches. I truly believe the intentions are good, and every program is initially designed to be productive. But, as with musicians themselves, there are several levels of teacher mastery. You can't put up a poster of Jimi Hendrix and call yourself a master guitarist – although I do see "branding" distracting the customers more and more. However, just as true, pushing a student into materials that satisfy you, but that leave a student feeling frustrated, doesn't serve the student, and serving the student and understanding how he or she learns is the job of the instructor. Great teachers do that job well. 



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



Identity Theft, Part I

By Jaime Blackman

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, in 2016 a whopping 26 million Americans 16 or older reported they had been victims of identity theft during the prior 12 months. The good news is 88 percent had almost no out-of-pocket losses. Still, behind every number is a real person with a real story, and that's where we begin.

Consider the following true story. A woman receives a bill from a hospital, requesting payment for a surgical procedure which included an amputation of her left foot. The problem? She never had the surgery, as demonstrated by the fact that both her feet were intact.

It's kind of funny, and would seem this is an easy fix, right? Wrong. Resolutions – especially non-financial ones – don't come quickly when identity theft is involved. In this case it took hefty payments to a lawyer and over a year of mental stress to finally get the mess sorted out. Her medical files continue to be mingled with the thief's records, across the medical network universe. This leaves the victim's personal health and security at risk. More serious issues such as the creation of erroneous medical files like inaccuracies in her blood type, history of drug or alcohol abuse, and wrong diagnosis are now linked to the victim's medical records. Unfortunately, victims of medical identity theft are not extended the same rights as victims of financial identity theft, which adds the complexity for a timely resolution.

Jim Lapedra, a colleague of mine, recently told this story during an educational talk for financial advisors I attended. Lapedra is an experienced ID theft investigator, information security professional, retired NYPD deputy inspector, and author of *Identity Lockdown, Your Step-By-Step Guide to Identity Theft Protection*.

Another popular scam he shared with us is tax fraud. According to the IRS, the scam usually occurs when, "an identity thief uses a legitimate taxpayer's identity to file a fraudulent tax return and claim a refund. Generally, the identity thief will use a stolen SSN to file a forged tax return and attempt to get a fraudulent refund early in the filing season." Paperless e-filing is the friend of the fraudster. At the meeting, a senior manager confessed he had such a problem, so this stuff happens.

Perhaps the scariest of cases, although rare, is when you are arrested for a crime you didn't commit. The thief who commits the crime uses your identity when being arrested. When he doesn't show up for sentencing, there is a warrant out for "your arrest." You could be stopped for a speeding ticket, and the officer is then alerted that you have an outstanding warrant. This could be a very ugly and embarrassing situation, again taking its toll on you as you try to get it resolved.

After some research, I quickly came to realize, that ultimately, the 10 percent of Americans who have been victimized will not owe money, but there's no reason to be cavalier about the risk. It's the hundreds or thousands of hours to convince people that don't care about you, to help you clean up the problem. Loss of peace of mind and a sense of helplessness and vulnerability often lingers far longer than the resolution. Remember, from the creditor's perspective, you're guilty until you prove yourself innocent.

By some statistics, children may be four times more likely to become an identity theft victim than adults. How many of you have received a pre-approved credit card offer in the mail for your 3-year-old and laughed? The thieves know how to obtain the social security number of the child and can manage to stitch enough of the identity together to do a lot of damage to the child's credit history. Often, it goes undetected until a college or new employer reviews the credit report.

Thieves have a variety of ways for getting the information like hacking into your employment records, raiding your home mail box, or mining the information on social media. Simple common sense steps like buying a safe, using a shredder, and cautious social media friending should be a no-brainer.

“Thieves have a variety of ways for getting the information like hacking into your employment records, raiding your home mail box, or mining the information on social media.”

And why does it matter to get this corrected? Your credit score is used by any institution that lends money like banks, credit card companies, and mortgage lenders. A poor credit score may impact your mortgage interest rate and even a job, as many employers will review your credit score number before the hire.

The different forms of identity theft are categorized as financial and non-financial.

Financial identity theft includes: accessing your checking, savings, or credit account; opening up a new financial account in your name; taking out a new mortgage.

Here are some examples of non-financial identity theft: medical identity theft; criminal identity theft; child identity theft; Social Security number misuse; driver's license misuse; identity cloning and synthetic identity theft; identity theft of the deceased.

If you, a family member, or a friend have been a victim of identity theft, I'm happy to help you find the answers to your questions.

In "Identity Theft Part II," which will appear in the July *MMR* issue, I will be sharing best practices for identity theft education and resolution. Remember, the ultimate defender to your identity is you.

Stay tuned. 

Jaime Blackman – a former music educator & retailer– is a financial advisor and succession planner. Blackman helps music retailers accelerate business value now through team building, coaching & mentoring. Blackman is a frequent speaker at NAMM's Idea Center. Visit jaimieblackman.com to subscribe to Unlocking the Wealth newsletter.

Blue Ember Microphone

The Blue Ember is billed as an “XLR Studio Condenser Mic for Recording & Streaming.” So... what exactly does that mean and why should you or your customers care, you ask? Well, in the past decade or so podcasts, live streaming, and posting personally curated content to YouTube (“YouTubing”) have surged in popularity. A weapon of choice for most entry-level practitioners is a USB microphone, as those boast portability, ease of use, and relative affordability. Streamers and ‘casters who progress and develop their brand and perhaps gain a degree of popularity eventually may look to up their overall game by acquiring a studio-grade, yet compact, XLR microphone. Enter the Blue Ember.

While I don’t, myself, have a podcast or do any YouTubing, I have a small demo studio setup and I tried to use the Ember as such folks might. The included mic mount looks and feels formidable and was intuitive to lock into place. With a slim, silver/grey metal chassis and stylish grille, the Blue Ember sure *looks* pro – it certainly appears to be a step above its asking price of \$99.99. As the capsule is side-mounted, you need to keep the mic parallel to your face as you’re speaking (rather than speaking directly into the top/end, as with typical hand-held or on-stage vocal microphones), but the Ember’s sleek, compact form makes this easy to do without obscuring your face – a benefit to anyone capturing not just audio, but also video of themselves. In fact, YouTubers will likely *want* the elegant Ember in frame. It’s a stunner.

This unit has a cardioid pickup pattern, which allows for sound to be recorded from the front and the sides, but which also effectively lessens off-axis noise, resulting in a clearer recording. I did find myself wishing I had a pop filter handy, though, since while the off-axis rejection was effective, I found certain plives still making their way onto recordings.

Unlike a USB mic, the Ember requires an audio interface. Moreover, that interface must have +48V phantom power. That additional cost (users also need an XLR cable, stand, and that pop filter) may prove a barrier to some, but the superior sound quality provided by such a set-up will make this a tempting purchase for many.

Of course, while the Blue Ember is marketed towards podcasters, et cetera and designed with those consumers in mind, at the end of the day, it is a microphone and you can use it to record anything you please. I tracked myself playing acoustic guitar, electric bass, and electric guitar and was pleasantly surprised at the Ember’s frequency response and the clear and accurate capture of the sounds.

This is a serious microphone at a seriously reasonable price. Once word gets out (if it hasn’t already – the Ember was released this past January), I expect this will become *the* go-to microphone for many, many users. (Christian Wissmuller)

www.bluedesigns.com



Cusack Music Screamer Fuzz Germanium

The Screamer Fuzz Germanium is a limited run upgrade to Cusack’s Music insta-classic Screamer Fuzz pedal. Manufactured in Holland, Michigan, Cusack Music is participating in an exciting renaissance of sorts for boutique American pedals, joining the likes of Zvex, Fulltone, and a slew of other American-based manufacturers. Cusack is looking to innovate in the pedal space – you won’t find clones in their catalog. The Screamer Fuzz Germanium exemplifies this approach: it brings an incredibly diverse range of great sounding overdrive and fuzz effects – a workhorse pedal with a couple of twists. It can do a lot of different things on the pedal board.

Aesthetically, the Screamer Fuzz Germanium is a good-looking pedal; classy with subtle detailing. It is housed in a single space, matte black case with a single LED, four knobs, a 3-way switch, and a soft touch foot pedal switch (soft touch means that there is no click when you step on it). It has an understated high-quality look, principally defined by the four milled knobs. These knobs control Level, Tone, Drive, and Fuzz.

The Drive and Fuzz circuits are where this pedal excels, creating a metric ton of dynamic range between the two of them. The Drive knob controls a warm overdrive, evocative of a tube screamer. The Fuzz adds in a gnarly distortion that, when combined with the Drive, offers up a wide range of tones, from punchy overdrive to Sabbath-esque fuzz. One of my favorite things about this pedal is that the Level knob sets the volume

very reliably – you can adjust the crunch without the Drive or Fuzz knobs affecting the volume.

The 3-position switch toggles between three different clipping types: Silicon, LED, and Germanium. Each setting has a different impact on how the Fuzz and Drive circuits break up, particularly when they are cranked. Between the knobs and these switches, there’s a lot of pedal for players to explore – this is a fantastic pedal for the tone-hounds out there who are particular about their sound. That said, I was able to quickly dial up sounds I loved – I found there to be a superb combination of accessibility and depth. It sounds great out of the box but with all of the variety described above, players can tinker to their hearts content.

I used this pedal while playing an American-made Strat through a vintage Fender Precision combo and was able to dial up a very aggressive distortion and then pull back to a clean tone with just a trace of grit, all while keeping my volume level even. Every element of the Screamer Fuzz Germanium seems built with intent – each knob does what it describes and does it well. This is a player’s pedal designed to become the cornerstone of your sound. (Daniel Sussman)

www.cusackmusic.com



AirTurn goSTAND, MANOS, Telescoping Mic Boom, and Side Mount Clamp

What we have here is four separate units/purchases – the goSTAND for mics & tablets, the goSTAND telescoping mic boom, the MANOS universal tablet holder, and the Side Mount Clamp – but I'll be presenting an evaluation of how all components work with one another, for the most part, rather than individually.

The main component is the goSTAND, itself – a tripod stand that can extend to a full height of 58", but which can also fold down to less than 18" with a total weight of less than 3lbs (2.6lbs). Anyone familiar with standard tripod stands will be instantly comfortable with the footprint and basic functionality of the goSTAND, but will soon come to appreciate the features that set it apart from the pack. In addition to enhanced portability via its extremely small folded-up profile, this stand also allows you to extend the three feet, allowing for additional stability when in use or to accommodate for cramped performance spaces and uneven floors. As with any adjustable-base stand, if you fully expand all three feet, you'll negatively impact stability, but that's just the way physics works – certainly not AirTurn's failing. With the matching telescopic boom,

you have a stand that extends as much as nearly any out there.

The MANOS holder does exactly what it purports to – namely, it securely holds any mainstream tablet or smartphone. I used this entire rig with my iPad, my Kindle Fire, and my iPhone and the entire process was intuitive and simple. With minimal hassle, it's easy to adjust in order to achieve your preferred angle, height, or position. Via the Side Mount Clamp you can place either the MANOS or other mic-threaded devices or mics to the side and beneath the main stand or boom (for, say, reading music or notes off of a tablet while singing or speaking into a microphone mounted on top of the goSTAND).

The overall impression is one of quality. These products are solid, well-made, versatile, and well-engineered. Whatever team designed this stand and its accessories understands and anticipates the needs and uses of actual working musicians.

There are plenty of stands out there – and plenty of *good* ones, too – but the folks at AirTurn have really produced



something special with the goSTAND, MANOS, and other compatible add-ons. All in all, a sturdy, lightweight, and flexible suite of products that can address any number of performance or recording needs – and it all easily fits in your backpack or gig-bag. The prices are beyond competitive, as well. All four items sell for roughly \$135 as a group and the goSTAND and MANOS retail for only around \$50, each. If you're not currently stocking AirTurn products in your MI store, you may want to look into beginning a relationship with this supplier. (Christian Wissmuller)

www.airturn.com



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Accessories

New Drum Accessories from Remo

Remo's new Adjustable Bass Drum Dampener designed in conjunction with Dave Weckl is an accessory product that provides drummers the ability to add tone and feel control on any size bass drum at all tuning ranges. The dampener is clamped to the bass drum hoop and be adjusted around the circumference of the bass drum without interfering with the bass drum pedal and beater. It can be used on the batter or resonant heads of the bass drum.



Remo's Suede Max Marching Snare drumhead provides softer a feel and warmer tone featuring a black matte suede finish for a warm attack. Suede Max is constructed with a state-of-the-art high-tension fabric weave for maximum durability, combined with Remo's proprietary suede texturing process. Suede Max marching snare heads provide higher clarity at lower dynamic levels and are ideal for all marching applications. Available in sizes 13" - 14"



www.remo.com

The Danger Zone Pedal

The Danger Zone is a phaser/tremolo double pedal, designed for easy foot control over parameters to give players real-time expression possibilities. The pedal comes standard with two WingMan foot-control knobs on the rate controls for both phaser and tremolo. The depth controls for both effects have large round knobs placed on the left and right outer sides of the pedal allowing you to use your foot to brush the sides of the knobs to change depths, while leaving clearance to actuate the WingMan knobs on the Rates. MSRP \$249.95



www.wingmanfx.com

New Tuners from KORG

KORG's MiniPitch series caters to the ukulele demographic. The new tuners feature an intuitive display design, guiding the player with an LED meter that lights up the peg in need of tuning. In addition, the MiniPitch line was designed to be discreetly placed on the ukulele, making it ideal for live performances. True to KORG form, the new ukulele tuners are sleek and stylish with three color variations to choose from: beach white, sunset orange, and ocean blue.



KORG has also released eight bright, new colors to the Pitchclip family and introduced a limited-edition KDM-3 metronome complete with elegant wood panels and a white-maple finish.



www.korg.com

On-Stage's DB200 Mini DI Box

On-Stage's new DB200 Mini DI Box transfers any high-impedance 1/4-inch source into a low-impedance (XLR) signal ready to be sent to a mixing board or recording console. The Mini DI box is perfect for guitars, keyboards, and bass, and thanks to its compact size, makes for a perfect fit on pedalboards and includes a hook and loop. The new DB200 also features a ± 20 dB pad, a cabinet simulator and ground lift controls to eliminate hum caused by ground loops.



www.on-stage.com

RS Berkeley's Reed-Well

The Reed-Well is the ultimate tool for soaking and maintaining saxophone and clarinet reeds. Made of the highest quality glass, this 12-sided numbered vessel enables you to organize and rate your reeds as each one clings to the desired number panel. Comes with a sponge to keep in the moisture, and a lid to seal it.



www.rsberkeley.com

New from Los Cabos Drumsticks



Los Cabos Black Widows are a new type black-dipped red hickory drumstick featuring a glossy black finish and a special new logo, used exclusively on the Black Widows.



They are also expanding their line of percussion tools to include a new variation of Timbale Sticks. At 16" long and 7/16" around, Los Cabos Drumsticks' 7/16" Timbale Sticks are among the longest and thinnest timbale sticks on the market and are specifically designed for quick response, excellent grip, and a bright cascara.

www.loscabosdrumsticks.com

Drums & Percussion

New Conga and Bongo Finishes from Pearl

Pearl has released new finishes for the Bobby Allende and Richie Flores signature series of congas and bongos. #617 Confetti, the finish on Bobby's fiberglass drums, features a black sparkle lacquer base with large prism colored flakes that make the finish dance. Richie Flores used a tropical color palette as his inspiration for his new finish #528 Tropical Rainbow (pictured). Richie's oak drums are awash with color over a stylized camo base. Both signature series features Pearl's Contour Crown Rims and Self-Aligning Washer System that allows effortless tuning the premium heads.



www.pearldrums.com

Cases & Stands

volca rack2x2 from Sequenz

Sequenz has launched the volca rack2x2, a sleek volca stand designed to hold multiple units at once. The volca rack is an efficient and sturdy solution to housing multiple volcas, enabling for a straightforward and seamless setup. The volca rack can hold up to four volcas simultaneously, held durable by the aluminum framing, wooden panels and rubber legs which prevent slipping. Users can combine the rack with a KORGSQ-1 or any FX pedal for customizable settings and can set it to be a deeper or higher configuration, depending on their preference. The volca rack 2x2 will be available August 2019 for \$99.99

www.sequenzmusicgear.com



Hercules' Plus Series Stands

Hercules Stands' new Plus Series stands provide players with an increased level of security, dependability and versatility. The upgraded AGS yoke is designed to fit a wider range of instrument necks, including from wider neck instruments like classical guitars to narrow neck instruments like ukuleles, mandolins and banjos.

The Plus series stands come with specially designed "N.I.N.A." (Narrow Neck Instrument Adjustment) cuffs to ensure all instrument types are safely locked. In addition, the re-imagined footpad of Hercules Plus Series Guitar Stands maximize friction to better prevent sliding, and the new "Instant Height Adjustment Clutch" allows for super quick, easy, and secure positioning.



www.herculesstands.com

New from König & Meyer

König & Meyer's 24624 Speaker/Lighting Stand features a heavy, flat steel plate that is well-suited for use in small areas. The safety bolt with locking screw provides for comfortable and safe height adjustment. The stand's maximum extension height is 94.488" and maximum weight is 39.648 lbs. The integrated M10 threaded bushing provides for the attachment of crossbars.

The 26075 Base Plate is a heavy and sturdy square base plate for all common distance rods and tube combinations with M20 threaded bolts. Additional useful features include a practical integrated handle for easy transport, cable management and four stable feet covered in felt. With the included wrench the tube combination can be setup to individual specifications.

The 26736 Distance Rod uses a steel tube combination to connect satellite systems. With bottom M20 thread to attach connector plate 24116. The rod features zero backlash and height adjustment with a spring-loaded locking screw and safety bolt. Can be used with both the 26075 and 26700 base plates.

www.km-america.com



Keyboards & Synthesizers

KORG's volca nubass

KORG's volca nubass is a bass synth implemented with KORG's new-generation vacuum tube, Nu-Tube. This modernized technology is implemented into the oscillator, sub oscillator, and drive circuits, creating incredibly warm tones and rich distortions that only a tube can provide. This unique form of sound generation, along with nubass' low-pass ladder filter, delivers countless timbral possibilities. The tone knob controls either the distortion of the sound or its crispness. nubass' fully-fledged 16-step sequencer provides users with loads of features to help them create amazing basslines, including motion sequencing of the knobs, transpose, accent, slide, and randomize. Availability begins in August 2019. \$199.99

www.korg.com



New from IK Multimedia

IK Multimedia's UNO Drum is the newest member of the UNO series. Designed in collaboration with Italian analog specialist Soundmachines, UNO Drum offers a wide sonic palette combining fat, punchy analog sounds with digital flexibility and convenience. A robust selection of programming and live performance features and controls makes it easy for musicians, producers and DJs to add massive drum grooves to their music. UNO Drum's compact form, battery power, and affordable price make it ideal for on-the-go music creation and performance.

Also new is the AXE I/O, a high-end audio interface and controller that delivers premium sound and innovative features designed for guitarists seeking the perfect way to record with world-class tone and professional techniques. The new 2 In/5 Out AXE I/O offers guitar-centric features such as adjustable impedance, streamlined re-amplification functions and a variety of instrument input circuits, plus a wealth of recording options including high-end mic preamps, top-of-the-line converters, 192 kHz operation, a wide dynamic range, an extended frequency response, and more.

www.ikmultimedia.com



Prodigy Flagship Player System from PianoDisc

PianoDisc's new flagship player system Prodigy offers improved performance, exceptional ease of use, and versatile connectivity opening a whole new world of even better live piano performances of high-resolution concerts in the homes of acoustic piano owners across the globe. Prodigy combines the company's patented iQ technology for high-resolution playback with its SilentDrive II whisper-soft technology in a single discrete interface. Internally, the Prodigy system's new CPU delivers a more natural and expressive performance and improved playback quality.

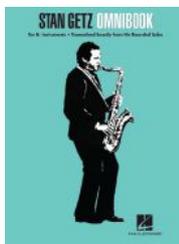


www.pianodisc.com

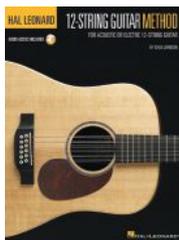
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New Releases from Hal Leonard

The Stan Getz Omnibook features 54 recorded solos from *The Sound*, whose illustrious career included five Grammy Awards, induction into the DownBeat Hall of Fame, and career collaborations with Oscar Peterson, Dizzy Gillespie, João Gilberto, and more. Songs include: "Desafinado," "Garota De Ipanema," "I Remember You," "One Note Samba (Samba De Uma Nota So)," "Quiet Nights of Quiet Stars (Corcovado)," "So Danco Samba," and more. Editions are available for Band C instruments.



In *The Hal Leonard 12-String Guitar Method*, Chad Johnson provides a guide for six-string guitarists who want to apply their skills to the 12-string. *The Hal Leonard 12-String Guitar Method* is aimed at guitarists who already possess skills on the traditional six-string guitar. Through a combination of useful exercises featuring nearly 60 popular songs and riffs and audio tracks, Johnson gives guitarists an inside look at beginning to master the acoustic or electric 12-string. The book features 8 chapters of lessons covering: mechanics and maintenance of a 12-string, acoustic and electric tips, chords, arpeggios, fingerpicking, alternate tunings, playing with a capo, recording idea, technique tips, and more.



www.halleonard.com

First String Orchestra Music Release by Excelcia Music



Twenty-seven new and inspiring string orchestra pieces from favorite veteran composers such as Alan Lee Silva, Ruth Elaine Schram, and Yukiko Nishimura, make up Excelcia Music Publishing's first string orchestra music release.

Each score and its accompanying parts, are set for ease of reading and include unique features to help facilitate efficient rehearsals, like oversized time signatures in the conductor's scores and measure numbers at every measure on each part. Free, high-level, professional recordings of each piece, which provide unparalleled, pedagogical examples of good tone and musicianship, as well as preview scores, are available on Excelcia Music Publishing's website. Published in a color-coded series, the string orchestra music is meticulously edited and follows the strict and consistent six-part grading system developed by Clark and Arcari: Prelude (grade .5), Da Capo (grade 1), Harmony (grade 1.5), Intermezzo (grade 2 to 2.5), Rhapsody (grade 3 to 3.5) and Maestro (grade 4 and up).

www.excelciamusic.com

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The Stow-Away is a performance-quality travel guitar that plays and feels like your favorite guitar. It has a full-scale 25.5 inch neck and can break down in seconds to be easily taken anywhere. It comes with a travel backpack that meets all FAA carry on requirements. The guitars are available for immediate delivery and are produced in five colors and can be equipped with custom pickups configurations. The price for base the model is \$679.



www.stewartguitars.com

Yamaha's FG Red Label Acoustic Guitars

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www.yamaha.com

Pro Audio

StudioLive 64S Mixer from PreSonus

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AdvertiserIndex

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Al Cass	53	
Albert Augustine Ltd.	29	albertaugustine.com
Allen & Heath	1	allen-heath.com
Allparts Music Corp.	42	allparts.com
Amahi Ukuleles	9	amahiuukuleles.com
American Way Marketing	38	americanwaymktg.com
Armadillo Enterprise	15	armadilloent.com
Audix Corporation	31	audixusa.com
Big Bends LLC	28	bigbends.com
Bourns, Inc.	4	bourns.com
Breezy Ridge Instruments	33	jpstrings.com
Celestion Professional	19	celestion.com
Chauvet	C1	chauvetdj.com
Cordial GmbH	11, 22	cordial-cables.com
Emerald Reed Co.	16	emeraldreed.com
Framus & Warwick GmbH	17	rockboard.net
Fender Instruments	3, C4	fender.com
Gatchell Violins Company	22	gatchellviolins.com
Gear Up Products, LLC	33	gluboot.com
Gretsch Guitars	30	gretsch.com
Grover Musical Products	47	grotro.com
Hal Leonard Corp.	21	halleonard.com
Hunter Music Instrument Inc.	30	huntermusical.com
J.J. Babbitt Co. Inc.	13	jjbabbitt.com
Kyser Musical Products Inc.	10	kysermusical.com
La Bella Strings	41	labella.com
Maloney StageGear Covers	24	maloneystagegearcovers.com
Messe Frankfurt/Music China	27	musikmesse-china.com
NAMM	6, 7	namm.org
NEMC	20	nemc.com
OMG Music	28	omgmusic.com
Option Knob	45	optionknob.com
QRS Music Technologies Inc.	12	qrsmusic.com
Rovner Products	29	rovnerproducts.com
S.I.T. Strings Corp.	37	sitstrings.com
SKB Corp.	25	skbcases.com
WD Music Products Inc.	2	wdmusic.com
Whirlwind Music Inc.	C2	whirlwindusa.com
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Yamaha Corporation	23	usa.yamaha.com

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By Dan Daley

MI Goes to Church

The house-of-worship market has traditionally been a significant one for MI retail. The contemporary worship style in particular has been a boon, driving demand for everything from instruments to accessories. For those MI retailers who have jumped into the AV-installation market in recent years – and there have been many of them – the HOW vertical is even more important, bountifully local and creating demand for PA systems and other live-sound equipment, recording and broadcast/streaming gear, and projection video. It's enough to make a believer out of some.

That market may be about to get more interesting, however, thanks to the unlikely boost it's getting from Kanye West. *Yeezus* – the title of his sixth studio LP and among West's more ironic nicknames, given what we're about to discuss – has lately been holding praise and worship music sessions outside of his home in Calabasas, California lately, with full backup bands and sizable choir on a temporary stage and touring-type PA. Those led to an even bigger Sunday "service" performed by Kanye at the Coachella music festival in April, where he was joined by performers DMX and Chance the Rapper. All this was also streamed live on TMZ, which was likely hoping to catch the Second Coming but was satisfied to catch Kim, Khloe, Kendall and Kylie bopping to Ye's heavenly beat. It all took place on a separate stage, which drew an estimated 100,000 festivalgoers. Whether he intended to or not, West has put the spotlight on how religion and pop music might be headed for another interesting intersection.

Come One, Come All

Churches and concert venues have had a long history of interchangeability. The increasingly disused cathedrals of Europe have been hosting classical concerts for decades. More recently, churches and music venues have been changing places: in February, the former Tricky Falls concert hall in downtown El Paso, Texas became the third outpost of the Abundant Living Faith Center, a 30,000-member nondenominational Christian church; a few years earlier, the former St. Francis Street Methodist church in Mobile, Alabama was transformed into The Steeple, a 500- to 600-seat music venue. This fungibility extends to the musicians who perform in both types of venues, playing heavy metal in a club till 3 a.m. Sunday morning and somehow making it to church in time to play in the 9 a.m. service's worship band.

“The next generation of church sound systems is also going to have to address the same issue that secular stages – and NBA arenas – had to: low-frequency punch for hip-hop, which is already making its impact felt in gospel music.”

New Tools Of The Trade

Not every church is as welcoming as some of secular musical influences, and that can extend to the sound of instruments. A Sunday service that accommodates acoustic guitars might not tolerate electric ones using Van Halen stomp boxes. Sensitivity to the increasingly broad worship-style spectrum that modern churches cover, from traditional organ-and-choir music to rock-concert SPL and staging, can make an MI retailer a resource for churches and their musicians alike. Products like drum and cymbal mutes, and modeling guitar amps offer church musicians the tools they can use to satisfy both audiences. In-ear monitors are a huge help when it comes to keeping volumes down onstage, as well as keeping that stage less cluttered.

The next generation of church sound systems is also going to have to address the same issue that secular stages – and NBA arenas – had to: low-frequency punch for hip-hop, which is already making its impact felt in gospel music. Because for the message to be believable, the music conveying it has to be authentic, and hip-hop demands big bass. The challenge will be making the low end impactful without alienating more traditional worshippers. Maybe Kanye holds the key, there, too.

The Next Step?

Is Yeezy breaking down what barriers are left between the two domains? That remains to be seen. But crossover between the spiritual and the secular can only be good for business – think of it as the amplified version of the prosperity gospel. Just be ready with the right tools. 

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