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MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

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'Growing Each Year'

The Electronic Drum Set Market

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INSIDE



Dealer Survey
Crash, Splash, and Trash (and More)! – The State of the Cymbal Market



UpFront Q&A
Sweetwater's Andy Rossi Discusses Gear Exchange



School of Thought
Don't Underestimate the Purchasing Power of the Educator

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MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

FEATURES

Vol. 182 FEBRUARY 2023 No. 2

Upfront Q&A

Andy Rossi on Sweetwater's Gear Exchange 10

Last summer, Sweetwater launched the Gear Exchange (GX), providing users a trusted platform from which to buy and sell used musical instruments and related equipment. We sit down with Andy Rossi, VP of Gear Exchange, to learn more about this new resource.

School of Thought

Don't Underestimate the Purchasing Power of the Educator 13

Longtime veteran of the Spring Independent School District (Houston, TX) and current director of music administration outreach and the educational support manager, Southwest, for Conn-Selmer, Inc., Rich Ghinelli discusses the powerful influence music instructors can have on instrument and gear purchases – on both the individual and institutional levels.

Roundtable

'Growing Each Year' – The Electronic Drum Set Market 14

With rapidly advancing technology, design, and construction, electronic drum kits are resonating with more and more end-users, and savvy MI retailers are riding this enduring surge in popularity to ever greater profits.

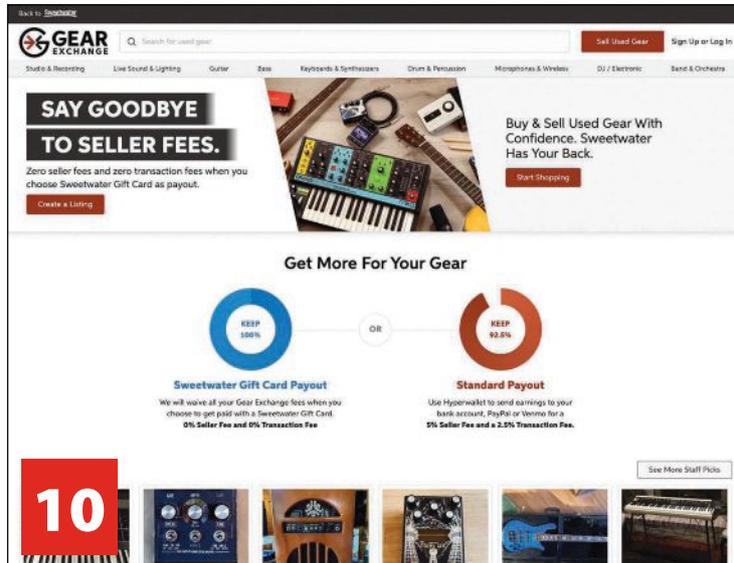
Dealer Survey

Crash, Splash, and Trash (and More)! – The State of the Cymbal Market 18

With over 90 percent of participants in this month's retailer survey reporting that sales of cymbals are either up or level compared to early 2022, it would appear that the return to live performances has been a true shot in the arm for this portion of the MI landscape, post-pandemic.

Departments

Editorial	4
UpFront	5
Supplier Scene	7
People.....	9
Sound of Money	20
Small Business Matters	21
New Products	22
Classifieds.....	26
Ad Index	26



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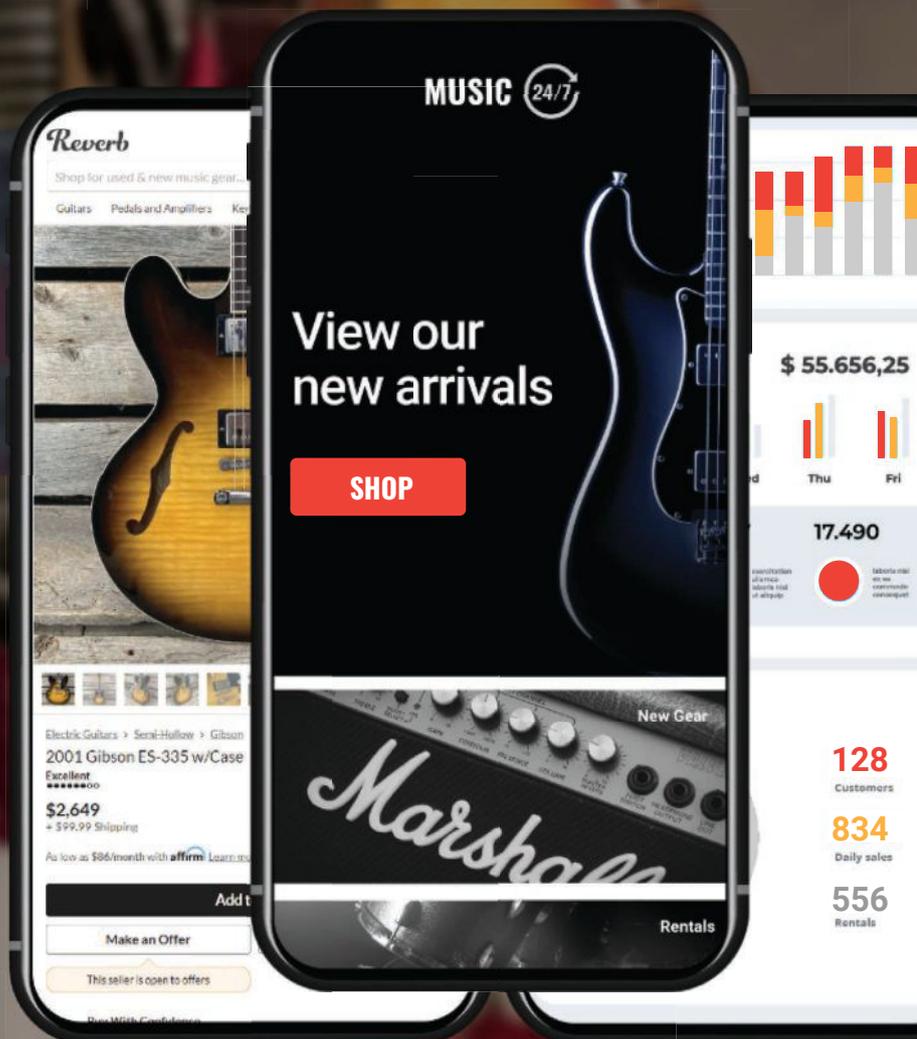












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An Upbeat Tempo

By
Christian
Wissmuller

The global electronic musical instruments market size is estimated to increase by USD 505.09 million. The market's growth momentum will progress at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 3.09% – this according to a January 2023 report compiled by Technavio, a leading market research firm. While that analysis doesn't focus exclusively on electronic *drums*, it's worth noting that a recent survey of similar nature, this one put together by Striats Research, estimates that the overall Percussion Instruments

market size is expected to expand at a CAGR of just under 1.5% between now and 2030, with virtual kits accounting for a hefty portion of that growth.

This may not be headline-grabbing news in mainstream media, but it does signal both a rebound for the world of "drum commerce," post-pandemic, which was hit especially hard during lockdowns, but also that electronic drums – instruments that decades ago were sometimes-glitchy oddities confined by technological and practical limitations – have truly arrived as powerfully versatile tools embraced by players of all styles, ability levels, and budgets. What was once a niche option has become an essential tool for many, and today it's not an "either/or" situation when a musician considers acoustic or virtual percussion options. As *ddrum's* Mike Petrak observes in this issue's cover story (page 14), "At one point it seemed as though drummers either had an acoustic or electronic kit. Nowadays it seems most players have both. An acoustic kit for rehearsal, studio, or live situations, and then an electronic kit for quiet playing at home or even to learn new songs and techniques." Matt Rudin of Yamaha concurs, adding, "The electronic drum market continues to grow, driven by end-user interest. This includes electronic drum kits hybrid kits, and technologies that bridge the gap between acoustic and electronic worlds, such as mics and recording devices. No doubt this trend will continue through 2023."

“It's true that supply chain difficulties and inflation continue to cast a bit of shade on an otherwise sunny day, but it feels like with each issue of *MMR* that we publish, regardless of the market segment being given the spotlight, the mood is lightening and numbers are suggesting that enthusiasm is well-founded.”

The positivity continues when glancing at the results of our latest Dealer Survey, this month on the topic of cymbal sales. With 93.8%(!) of participants reporting current sales that are either trending upwards (58.5%) or, at the very least, remaining level with last year's numbers (35.3%) these are undeniably encouraging metrics suggesting that our industry is on the upswing.

On a selfish level, I can't overstate how invigorating it feels to have the opportunity to share uplifting news from the world of MI after a fairly rough stretch these past few years. Sure, there were lockdown-related spikes in fretted and keyboard sales, and it's true that supply chain difficulties and inflation continue to cast a bit of shade on an otherwise sunny day, but it feels like with each issue of *MMR* that we publish, regardless of the market segment being given the spotlight, the mood is lightening and numbers are suggesting that enthusiasm is well-founded.

With the NAMM Show just around the corner – April 13-15 – now would seem to be an ideal time to really lean into such positivity and push the momentum even further. To anyone on the fence about whether or not your retail, supply, or distribution business should join the gathering in Anaheim this spring, I'd say there's ample data to support the notion that, with the return of live performance and in-person learning, MI is positioned for great things – and, as the old lottery tag-line goes, "You can't win if you don't play." Here's hoping we see you in a few short weeks!

Christian Wissmuller
christian@mrrmagazine.com

PUBLISHER

Mike Lawson
Ext. 4

mike@artistpro.com

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Christian Wissmuller
Ext. 3

christian@mrrmagazine.com

CONTRIBUTORS

Menzie Pittman, Jaimie Blackman

Art

ART DIRECTOR/PRODUCTION MANAGER

Angela Marlett angela@mrrmagazine.com
Ext. 5

Advertising

ACCOUNT MANAGER

Matt King matt@mrrmagazine.com
Ext. 2

ACCOUNT MANAGER

Mari Deetz mari@mrrmagazine.com
Ext. 1

ACCOUNTING

Shannon Kechsull Lawson
accounting@artistpro.com

PUBLISHING CONSULTANT

Terry Lowe

CIRCULATION MANAGEMENT

Stark Services, Inc.
12444 Victory Blvd., 3rd Floor
North Hollywood, CA 91606-3173
(818) 985-2003

PRINTING/FULFILLMENT

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

artistpro
PUBLISHING

artistpro, LLC
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NAMM Welcomes Eight New Board Members

On January 24, at the Annual Meeting of Members of the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM), eight new board members were elected to the organization's board of directors. Each board member will serve a three-year term and provide oversight, input, and direction to the organization.

The board welcomes Ben Ash, content marketing manager, Sam Ash Music Corp.; Lance Day, territory sales manager, D'Addario & Company; Josh Faust, CEO of Faust Harrison Pianos; Ron Japinga, CEO, Guitar Center; Francois Kloc, president and CEO of Buffet Crampon; Kim Koch, vice president of Saied Music Co.; Stacey Montgomery-Clark, vice president of sales and marketing, SABIAN Ltd.; and Marcus Myers, Principal Owner of Henry W. Phillips Company, Inc.

NAMM Board of Directors Chair Joel Menchey shared, "Each of the eight new board members represents an important voice and perspective that will serve to strengthen our industry's future. We are deeply grateful for their willingness to serve and help advance our collective mission of creating a more musical world."

The meeting also celebrated the service, leadership, and many contributions of the outgoing members of the board including Robert Baker, Schmitt Music Company; Brian Ball, Ernie Ball, Inc.; Kimberly Deverell, San Diego Music Studio; Brian Douglas, Cream City Music; Doug Lady, Hal Leonard, LLC; Bryan Ottens, Peter E. Schmitt Co.; Tristann Rieck, Brass Bell Music, Inc.; and Gary Winder, DANSR, Inc.

Menchey thanked the eight outgoing members for their service on the board, which included an additional year due to the pandemic. "On behalf of all NAMM member companies, we offer our gratitude to our eight, outgoing board members for their unwavering service and steadfast commitment to our industry," he said.

To view the full NAMM Board of Directors and Executive Committee members, please visit NAMM.org/about

Sweetwater Announces Another Year of Milestone Growth

Sweetwater recently announced significant milestones and pivotal growth achieved in 2022. Despite current economic challenges, Sweetwater served more than 1.6 million people by remaining dedicated to providing best-in-class customer service, known as the Sweetwater Difference, and staying true to their mission of doing the right thing.

Reaching \$1.57B in sales in 2022, the company saw revenue growth of 9.5% year over year. 2022 marks the third consecutive year that Sweetwater has broken the \$1B revenue mark, illustrating that despite inflation and rising struggles in the retail industry, placing the utmost importance on customer satisfaction continues to be successful.

"I am immensely proud of the Sweetwater team's accomplishments in 2022. In a year when the world dealt with economic uncertainty, geopolitical challenges, lingering supply chain difficulties, and many other issues, we were still able to provide exceptional customer service to millions of music makers," said John Hopkins, CEO of Sweetwater. "What a privilege it is for us to have this role in the music industry; music that has the power to inspire, offer hope, and promote healing."

In addition to record customer growth and sales performance, Sweetwater launched the Gear Exchange in July 2022. It allows musicians to buy and sell used gear on a trusted platform, knowing that the transaction is safe. Sellers can avoid fees by opting for the payout in the form of a Sweetwater gift card.

The Band & Orchestra program initially launched in 2021 also experienced significant growth over the year, serving more

schools and students. By adding to an already wide selection of band & orchestra instruments, both existing and new Sweetwater customers are able to get all of their music needs met in one location.

In October of 2022, Sweetwater opened a distribution center in Arizona, the first-ever facility outside its headquarters in Fort Wayne, Indiana. This distribution center has allowed the company to deliver products to West Coast customers faster and more efficiently, shipping almost 50,000 orders in just three months and creating nearly 100 new jobs.

Throughout 2022, Sweetwater focused on providing its employees with a supportive workplace by implementing a record number of promotions, increasing 401k company match percentages, launching management development courses, and adding a tuition reimbursement program.

The company also prioritized giving back to the community throughout the year. Focusing on inspiring the next generation of music makers, Sweetwater continued significant philanthropic support of more than 400 music, arts, education, and social services agencies, giving monetary donations of more than \$750,000 and an additional \$60,000 worth of instruments and audio gear to schools, music programs, and other groups.

As many businesses announce inventory challenges, increased business operating costs, declining consumer spending, and the possibility of a more significant recession, Sweetwater remains steadfast in its commitment to excellence. "Our customers are the reason we exist, and our priority is to serve them in every way possible," said Sweetwater president Mike Clem.

Pearl Corporation Announces Opening of 2023 Scholarship Application

Pearl Corporation announces the opening of its third annual college scholarship, "Musicians Making A Difference," which will award two \$5,000 scholarships totaling \$10,000 to high school musicians who have demonstrated the ability to impact change in themselves, their community, and those around them.

"I am beyond grateful to have been selected a recipient of the 2022 Musicians Making a Difference Scholarship. The scholarship has been invaluable in paying for my college and conservatory education and has allowed me to focus on becoming a better musician and person. Thank you so much to Pearl Drums for

supporting musicians who are passionate about giving back to their community!" said Amy Hwang, 2022 Scholarship recipient.

A diverse panel of Pearl staff and artists will select recipients based on a student's contributions to their community and not their playing or vocal ability. The scholarship's objective is to reward and inspire the youth who will shape tomorrow.

This year's application deadline is April 15, 2023.

To learn more and apply for this scholarship, please visit: <https://pearldrums.com/en/about-pearl/scholarships>

Fender Play Foundation & USC's Research Showcase Importance of Music Education on Adolescent Mental Health

The latest USC research on the impact of music education shows that for adolescents, the benefits appear to extend beyond a surge in neural connections in their brains. It actually boosts their well-being.

The study published by the journal *Frontiers In Psychology* comes just weeks after voters statewide approved Prop. 28 to increase funding for arts and music education in California public schools.

A USC Thornton School of Music researcher said the results are especially meaningful amid a nationwide mental health crisis.

"We know that the pandemic has taken a toll on student mental health. The many narratives of learning loss that have emerged since the start of the pandemic paint a grim picture of what some call a 'lost generation,'" said Beatriz Ilari, an associate professor of music education at the USC Thornton School of Music and corresponding author of the study. "Music might be an activity to help students develop skills and competencies, work out their emotions, engage in identity work

and strengthen connections to the school and community."

The work was supported by grants including one from the Fender Play Foundation, a nonprofit organization that places instruments in the hands of youth who aspire to play and reap the powerful benefits of music education.

Evidence of those benefits continues to mount, although many states and school districts have reduced the amount of class time, faculty and curriculum dedicated to the arts amid budget crunches and changes in curriculum standards.

Ilari contributed to prior studies, including a longitudinal one by the USC Brain and Creativity Institute, that demonstrated children who learn a musical instrument have enhanced cognitive function. Other research also has shown music education contributes to improved creativity and confidence, better mental health and emotional stability, and student performance, according to a paper published last year by the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*.

Greater hope for the future

For the study, researchers examined the impact of music on "positive youth development," a measure of the strengths of adolescents and their potential to contribute to society developed by scholars from Tufts University. Researchers also included measures for school connectedness and hopeful future expectations.

The researchers administered anonymous, online surveys to 120 students from 52 Los Angeles Unified School District middle schools. The survey questions covered the key domains of positive youth development including competence and confidence. Past research shows that adolescents who manifest these attributes are more likely to make positive contributions to society and less likely to engage in risky behaviors later in life.

Ilari and her fellow researchers, including USC Thornton alumna Eun Cho, found many positive effects. They found that students who started music education before age 8 were more hopeful about the future, and younger students receiving musical training scored higher in key measures of positive youth development.

The research team also found that younger students scored higher in key development measures than their older peers. Sixth-grade students, for example, scored higher for overall positive youth development than – eighth-graders, and scored higher in the confidence domain than both seventh and eighth-graders. Seventh-grade students also scored higher in overall positive youth development than eighth-graders.

In completing the study's survey questions, students were invited to choose from multiple gender categories beyond the usual binary gender options, including "non-binary" and "prefer not to answer," to identify themselves. Non-binary students scored lower in overall positive youth development and connection than girls. They also scored lower in confidence and connection than boys.

The study included students of diverse backgrounds. However, students participating in a virtual music education program primarily came from poor neighborhoods, indicating disparities in access to formal music education.

In addition, the study explored students' engagement in different music programs, including the Virtual Middle School Music Enrichment (VMSME), a tuition-free, extracurricular program that

see **Mental Health** on page 7

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Kirk Whalum plays the HR* Tenor 8

RF Venue Selected as Exclusive N.A. Distributor for the Li.LAC Microphone Disinfection System

RF Venue, a leading global manufacturer of antenna and RF communications wireless audio essentials, has announced its selection as the exclusive North American distributor for the Li.LAC Microphone Disinfection System. The Li.LAC Microphone Disinfectant offers a simple, quick and effective way of disinfecting microphones and microphone accessories using controlled exposure to ultraviolet light (UV-C). The announcement was made by Chris Regan, RF Venue president, and underscores the ongoing expansion of the company and its growing range of wireless audio essentials.

Designed by live event touring pro Tobi Hoff (Deep Purple, Rea Garvey) and his company LAC Labs, the Li.LAC Microphone Disinfectant is a rugged 19-inch, 3U rackmount unit that uses ultraviolet light to disinfect microphones (wired and wireless), belt packs, clip-on microphones, headsets, windscreens and more. The Li.LAC Microphone Disinfectant can "kill over 99% of bacteria and viruses on microphone surfaces, metal grilles and the windscreens underneath," based on scientific testing by the Biomedical Engineering Department and the Medical Microbiology & Infection Prevention Department of the University Medical Center in Groningen, Netherlands. The Li.LAC



The Li.LAC Microphone Disinfectant, now distributed in North America by RF Venue, offers a simple, quick and effective way of disinfecting microphones and microphone accessories using controlled exposure to ultraviolet light

Microphone Disinfectant has been endorsed by top touring engineers and production professionals including Ken "Pooch" Van Druten (Jay-Z, Justin Bieber, Iron Maiden, Linkin Park), Kevin "Tater" McCarthy (Judas Priest, Slash, Phil Collins, Eric Clapton) and Anthony Shlifka (Brooks & Dunn) and Paddi Krause (In Flames, Toto).

The Li.LAC system can be located in an equipment room where staff or volunteers can disinfect microphones while performing other duties, or packed in a road case to travel with other equipment. Applications include live entertainment venues, touring sound companies, conference and performing arts centers, houses of worship, corporate and government meeting rooms, schools and universities, and recording studios.

"The Li.LAC Microphone Disinfectant is the perfect addition to our RF Venue line of wireless audio essentials," stated Chris Regan. "You can't be too careful nowadays with the risk of infection, and audio professionals need to take every step possible to ensure that each microphone user is protected. We are proud to add this necessary tool to our comprehensive catalog of wireless audio essential products."

Mental Health

continued from page 6

focuses on popular music education and virtual learning. The program is available through a school district partnership with the Fender Play Foundation. Researchers found that students participating in multiple forms of music education and for longer periods of time scored higher in measures for competence and hopeful future expectations. Some participants in these groups were also enrolled in private lessons and/or playing in small ensembles that offer more individual attention than large group classes. In contrast, students in the extracurricular VMSME program came from low-income neighborhoods and participated in fewer extracurricular activities.

More research is needed to better understand disparities in access to formal music education, Ilari said, but she said programs that give student agency in their learning and allow them to engage with peers from other schools, like VMSME, have the potential to promote learning and well-being.

About the study

This study was partially funded by the Fender Play Foundation (AWD-00005768) and by USC's Advancing Scholarship in the Humanities and Social Sciences (ASHSS-2022) grant. The Fender Play Foundation assisted in the liaison with the schools for the purpose of participant recruitment

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Allen & Heath dLive to Handle Front of House and Monitors for Upcoming Maggie Lindemann Tour

Audio engineer and tour manager George Adrian was first introduced to Allen & Heath's dLive platform at a music festival, when he saw a fellow engineer using one. "I was really blown away by the compact form factor," he recalled. Adrian later began to realize the advantages of owning his own touring desk, and dLive was a top contender. After evaluating his options, he landed on a 20-fader dLive C2500 surface and a CDM64 MixRack, which features 64 dLive mic preamps and 32 line outputs. Although he obtained it just before the COVID pandemic, Adrian has already taken his new dLive rig out for several major live runs. "The palette of creativity and flexibility is unbelievable," he noted. "I'm learning new things all the time, and the workflow makes a lot of sense to me."

Next up for Adrian and his dLive system is an upcoming sold-out tour for American pop punk artist Maggie Lindemann, who released her debut album *Suckerpunch* in 2022. Adrian is preparing to simultaneously run both front of house and in-ear monitors for the tour - which will make full use of dLive's flexibility and processing power. "I try to use minimal compression for in-ear mixes," said Adrian. "So that means double-patching some of the inputs and sending a different processed version to the front of house mix."

dLive's DEEP plugin package also comes in handy for Adrian, including the new Dual Threshold Expander introduced in dLive firmware 1.9. "I like it a lot for drums," he explained. "I use it on basically all my channels." Adrian also makes use of the DYN8 Dynamic EQ for things like lead vocals and kick drums. "I like to be able to boost certain frequencies only when that frequency crosses a set threshold - and avoid just boosting everything in that signal at that frequency all the time, like you would with a static EQ." Adrian notes that Dynamic EQs can help a lot with minimizing feedback as well as minimizing the emphasis of undesirable bleed or spill from the stage or crowd. In the case of vocals, Adrian uses a fast



George Adrian mixing a performance on his dLive C2500 Surface

attack to grab and control peaks and then uses the dLive's Opt-Tronik compressor to add steady compression and balance out the signal.

Adrian also has a Dante card installed in his dLive, which allows for flexible connectivity and expansion. "Using Dante, I can get audio to and from my SMAART rig, I can record multitracks, and also run Virtual Soundcheck," he explained. dLive's Virtual Soundcheck feature has become a crucial tool for touring engineers on a tight schedule, by providing input sources to the PA without needing the actual band present. "On this run, we're gonna have limited time before each performance," noted Adrian. "We have to get a soundcheck done pretty quickly, and I can even check the IEM mixes without the artists actually playing on-stage."

Lindemann's tour begins in March of 2023 with U.S. tour dates, then moves internationally to Australia and Europe in May.

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Richard Z Kruspe of Rammstein Joins Fluence Artist Roster

Richard Z Kruspe, guitarist of the German industrial band Rammstein, has joined the Fishman Fluence artist roster.

Richard purchased his first guitar in Czechoslovakia at the age of 16 and quickly became dedicated to the instrument and began pursuing a career in music. A trip to the United States in the early 90's gave him first-hand exposure to the American hard rock style, but upon his return home, decided to commit himself to a sound the was uniquely German. Almost 30 years later, Rammstein has grown to become one of the biggest rock bands in the world.

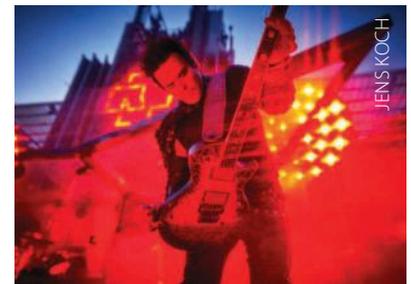
In addition to Rammstein, Richard fronts the U.S.-based side project Emigrate, which has released four albums since its formation in 2007.

A full-fledged, world-famous rock band, Rammstein plays in some of the biggest stadiums around the world, not only to a loyal fan base but to a new generation of fans who have discovered their music.

Richard is known for his huge, powerful guitar sound so he needed pickups that would consistently deliver all the muscular tone and sonic versatility of his playing.

The self-professed "guitar geek" knew exactly what he was looking for when he discovered Fishman Fluence Modern Humbuckers.

Fluence brand manager Ken Susi said, "Richard is a bona-fide rock star who knows tone, knows gear, and seeks perfection. A true performer in every sense of the word, he needed a pickup thar would perform to the level he demands of himself and his music."



JENS KOCH

Following the recent retirement of long time employee Bert Wall, **EMD** has appointed **Chris Bell** to the position of regional manager for the territory of Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico. Bell has worked in the MI industry his whole life managing several branches of Jent's House of Music, his family retail store. After the sale of the business, he worked as an educational sales rep for Music & Arts. He can be contacted via e-mail at c.bell@emdmusic.com



Hoshino (U.S.A.) Inc. ("Hoshino") is pleased to announce the hire of **Jill R. Cohen, Esq.** to the newly-created role of general counsel and vice president of administration. Hoshino is a wholly owned subsidiary of the privately held Hoshino Gakki Co., Ltd., manufacturer of Ibanez guitars and Tama drums, and headquartered in Nagoya, Japan.



Cohen joins Hoshino from the law firm

Eckert Seamans Cherin & Mellott, LLC (f/k/a Sterns & Weinroth, P.C.) ("Eckert"), where she was a partner. A seasoned attorney, Cohen spent the last 12 years of her career at Eckert's Princeton, New Jersey office, and previously practiced law at the international law firms of Nixon Peabody LLP (New York, NY) and Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP (Princeton, NJ).

As general counsel, Cohen will oversee Hoshino's diverse legal needs. Additionally, several of Hoshino's operational divisions will report directly to Cohen in her Vice President of Administration role.

traderegrets

Larry Greene, 72, passed away Dec 22nd. He is survived by his wife Janine, son Justin, father Brian Greene, and brothers Marc and Scott.



Larry started in the MI industry with Silver Eagle back in the '80's. He went on to be a founding partner of OMG Music in 1990. Over the next three decades Larry was a force for transformation in the MI accessories category, helping to catapult accessories (in particular guitar straps) from smaller secondary items to significant profit centers for thousands of dealers of all sizes. He was the consummate dealer advocate, constantly pioneering dealer friendly policies that were unheard of at the time, but are industry standards today.

His achievements were not limited to the MI portion if the industry. Larry was an accomplished singer/songwriter. Starting with stepping in to fulfill lead vocal duties for Steppenwolf in the '70's, he went on to front both Harlan Cage and Fortune. His solo achievements included performing "Through the Fire" on the multi-platinum selling *Top Gun* soundtrack as well as the theme song of the Sylvester Stallone movie *Over the Top*. Larry's musical contributions to the film and television industry over the years are too numerous to list, however he was a very active member of the Hollywood music community – his work is featured most recently on this season of *The Simpsons*.

To anyone who crossed paths with Larry, he always left you with a smile on your face. Ever the jokester, talking to Larry was guaranteed to brighten your day, regardless of what was going on in your life (or his). While the music industry will miss his talents, Larry's kind, gentle nature and ability to make us laugh will be missed by all of us who knew him.



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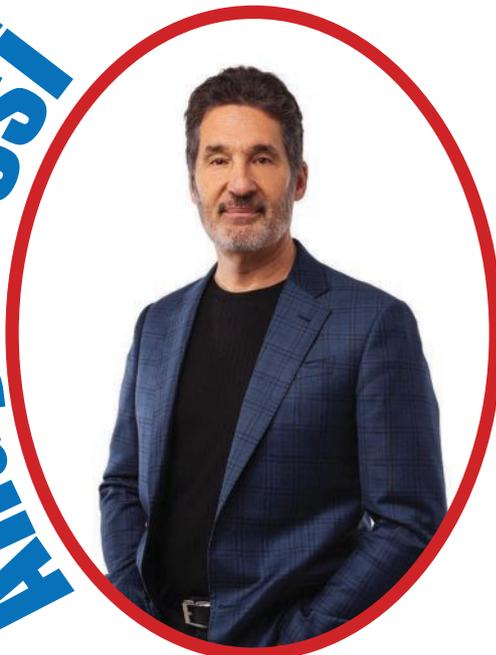





Sweetwater's



Andy Rossi



By Christian Wissmuller

In July of 2022, Sweetwater launched the Gear Exchange (GX), providing users a trusted platform from which to buy and sell used musical instruments and related gear. Users can leverage this site to earn extra cash – a welcome offsetting factor to combat inflation – and turn their old gear into new purchases, or buy a used instrument at a more affordable price or snag a hard-to-find vintage item. Sweetwater ensures the satisfaction and comfort of every customer and, through the company's "certificate of approval" badge, known buyers and sellers are verifiably dependable. *MMR* recently connected with Andy Rossi, VP of Gear Exchange, to learn more about this new and expanding MI retail platform.

What exactly was the catalyst behind the launch of Gear Exchange? When did the team over at Sweetwater start discussing it and why?

So, for quite some time, Sweetwater had what I'll call a bulletin board. It was merely there to allow musicians to have a forum where they could post an instrument, and it was truly sort of like an electronic "classifieds section." There was no actual marketplace activity, no card to transact, and Sweetwater really wasn't involved in those sales. Then a couple of things happened: one was Sweetwater is very much focused on helping musicians get the gear they want and doing it in a way that allows them to really have an amazing experience. I mean, that's what Sweetwater's been built on and doing for decades; two, it started to occur to folks at Sweetwater that, "Hey, there's a part of the journey that we think we could actually help with, that we're not currently really involved in" – and that's both the buying and selling of used gear. There's a long journey there that, generally, if you're a gear nut and you're going through the cycle, you're buying and selling new and used in one shape or form or another. And we thought that maybe we could make that process and that part of the journey better. At the same time, we were getting a lot of questions from our customers saying, "Hey, you know, we'd love to do this with you guys. Can you guys offer us a way to help move the gear?" And it all just came together.

Bearing in mind that most of our readers are MI retailers, many independent stores make use of platforms like Reverb, eBay, and the like. Is Gear Exchange a more advantageous resource for dealers?

Well, right now it's strictly C2C, it's peer-to-peer – musician-to-musician. And we are listening to other retailers. It's a funny thing because you'd think that other retailers might say, "Well, Sweetwater is my competition, there's no way I would want to be on that platform or in that marketplace." But they know the quality of Sweetwater and the way we treat all relationships. And so, we are getting some inquiries about that. But right now, we're not inviting other retailers to be on the marketplace. But that's not something that we've ruled out for the future. We're still really building the site right now.

Understood. Taking the retailer aspect out of the equation, why would an individual looking to sell, say, a vintage Gibson Melody Maker choose Gear Exchange over any of those other available and established platforms out there?

Well, the first thing is, I spent some time at eBay running the MI category. And before that, I was running global sales and marketing for Fender, and for KORG, and things like that. So, like many of the folks who will read this, I'm super familiar with the various marketplaces and what it's like, including outside of the MI industry. And one of the things that I've studied is that one of the drivers for sellers and buyers on a marketplace is how much they trust where they are, how confident that you feel, how comfortable they feel, how much they feel it's going to be a safe, secure, environment and transaction. Gear Exchange is the only platform, the only marketplace, that is owned, operated, and was created by a major retailer, the number one e-com retailer in the nation. So the first thing is that no other marketplace has a retailer attached to it. And behind that are all the Sweetwater "Do the right thing" tenets – the way we approach the business, integrity, honesty, and all of that. The comfort, safety, and trust factor, and what you know, and have experienced with Sweetwater, all applies to Gear Exchange. So right there, that's a big driver. Number two, is we're the only ones who have a zero-fee program. So you can sell that Melody Maker that you're talking about on Gear Exchange. And if you choose to take a gift card as your payout, we're going to waive the seller fee, the processing fee, and you will pay zero fees.

And in return, you get a Sweetwater card that you can use to buy whatever gear you like?

Right. You'll take that Sweetwater card and you'll spend it over at sweetwater.com. You'll work with one of our sales engineers, which is another differentiation point. We have a large group of experts that are there to help you purchase that new gear along with inventory expertise know-how, all the warranties, guarantees, and that Sweetwater approach. So, that links back to what I said about we can really help in the entire journey of selling used on Gear Exchange, and then moving over into sweetwater.com and buying new. We can be there really from the A to Z of that process. No one else is offering a complete zero-fee program, so you combine that safety expertise and zero-fee, and it creates a really unique experience.

For those sellers who, for whatever reasons, opt to go for straight-up cash compensation, what is the fee and how does that compare it to some of the similar, if not quite equivalent, platforms?

You can absolutely choose to take payout to your bank, so to speak, and a lot of folks would do that. It's a 5% selling fee, which is on par with some of our friends in other marketplaces, and it's a 2.5% processing fee. That's not something we keep. 7.5% is at or less expensive than our friends at other marketplaces. And I say "at or less," you see me sort of modulating there because other platforms sometimes have preferred levels. You get your preferred customer or different selling fees for different categories. Everyone is preferred. We treat everyone the same. And all categories are that 5% and 2.5, so 7.5.

Got it. Going back to the aspect of reassurance that comes from dealing through and with Sweetwater, can you talk a little bit about the "certificate of approval" badge, and how sellers go about attaining that, and how Sweetwater goes about vetting candidates before they bestow that sort of categorization?

“We want to do this *right*, not necessarily *fast*.”

Sure thing. So, the first thing is that, as a seller, when you come into the site for the first time to create your profile, your storefront, create your listings, and get engaged with the site, one of the things that we'll ask you is, "Are you a Sweetwater customer or have you been?" We may recognize you and say, "Oh, do you want to place a badge on your profile that says, in my case, I've been a Sweetwater customer since 2016?" And so that badge of honor is something that you can place there and it has a lot of meaning to it. It obviously means that we know you, you're in our records, we have a history together, we have a relationship, we know the products that you've purchased from us, what you prefer, how you'd like to pay, all these types of things. Then, as a buyer, when you see that, you know it's someone that's vetted and someone that we know, so we're proud to have them on the site.

There's also all the usual feedback mechanisms where if you sell that hypothetical Melody Maker we've been discussing and I buy it, and it was a great experience, and I rated you, it will show that feedback. It also helps in terms of the speed of the payout and things like that.

So it is merit-based, either as it pertains to an individual's history with Sweetwater or on the history of using Gear Exchange. Now, once a seller has the Sweetwater "badge of approval," if somebody orders in good faith from that source and things go south, is there some sort of recourse that Sweetwater offers?

Oh, absolutely. Obviously, in the transaction between the buyer and the seller, there's all means of ways to communicate back and forth. And if there's a miscommunication or there's a less than great-behaved buyer or seller, or there's some other issue – it could be one that is no one's fault – in any case, if

we're contacted, and someone says, "Hey, I need your help," we are there. Part of dealing with Sweetwater is that we have extensive customer service, customer support, fraud protection, credit check – all those types of safety factors that you want in the purchase of new gear all apply to any transaction that occurs on Gear Exchange.

So, we are absolutely there before, during, and after the sale. And every day, there's something going on where a mistake happens. And we are directly speaking to buyers and sellers helping to rectify and satisfy any situation. And we always have a good outcome. We also do a couple of things that only Sweetwater can do because we're a retailer. So, we apply all of that do the right thing mentality to everything that goes on on GX.

The screenshot shows the Gear Exchange website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with categories like Studio & Recording, Live Sound & Lighting, Guitar, Bass, Keyboards & Synthesizers, Drum & Percussion, Microphones & Wireless, DJ / Electronic, and Band & Orchestra. A search bar and buttons for 'Sell Used Gear' and 'Sign Up or Log In' are also visible. The main content area features a large banner with the text 'SAY GOODBYE TO SELLER FEES.' and 'Zero seller fees and zero transaction fees when you choose Sweetwater Gift Card as payout.' Below this, there's a comparison titled 'Get More For Your Gear' showing two options: 'Sweetwater Gift Card Payout' with a 'KEEP 100%' donut chart and 'Standard Payout' with a 'KEEP 92.5%' donut chart. The standard payout option includes a 5% seller fee and a 2.5% transaction fee.

Gear Exchange is still relatively "young" and, while I'm aware of it and have been because I'm a gear nerd, it's been curious talking to bandmates and other musician friends how relatively low-profile GX is for some out there. Do you have tons of folks on the site; are you trying to grow the tribe, so to speak, or is Sweetwater happy where it is?

Oh, several points there. First of all, we love, at this point, when we hear someone say, "Oh, I didn't know about it," because that tells us – and we know this already – that the potential to be able to interact with more musicians is there. And the reason I say that with a smile is because we want to do this *right*, not necessarily *fast*. We have been very, very careful and thoughtful about the way that we have been building the site. And it's been a very interesting evolution. If you look at the Gear Exchange site when it launched, and what it looks like today, and what it's going to look like 30 days from now, and 90 days from now, the evolution of the site in terms of UI/UX features, just the general visuals are all changing and evolving. And we're doing it very carefully.

And because we want it to be right before we invite everyone to the party, which is allowing for natural organic growth. We are alerting our customers and folks that we know, "Hey, we have this." We certainly are reaching out through folks like yourself. But we're not pushing very hard in terms of communicating to the entire musical community because we're still evolving the site. But we're there. Now, the site has been growing exponentially month over month – and it is every day that I look at the data, the next day, the data has completely changed. And that's because it's growing and the GMV or sales and the amount of sellers, the amount of listings, it's all growing very, very, very fast, organically.

Is there anything, whether it's in terms of promotion of the site, or added functionality, or any other developments on any sort of level when it comes to Gear Exchange that you have planned that you'd like to share with our readers? Are there any big initiatives, promotions, events, et cetera?

It's more about the user experience. One of the things that we're very, very focused on, and this runs all through the DNA of Sweetwater and certainly throughout Gear Exchange, is we listen very, very intently and intensely to customer feedback, good, bad, and in between. We have a lot of dashboards, we have a lot of feedback boards, where we're hearing directly from users, buyers and sellers, about their experience. We take that information throughout the teams here and we act on it, whether it's a feature suggestion, whether it was an experience that that was less than tremendous. If it's tremendous experience and really amazing, we make sure to continue that and bolster it.

So really, what you're going to see us do – and this may sound vague, but it's really our mentality right now – is we're really working very closely with the community that's on Gear Exchange to listen, learn, improve, evolve, and serve. We want to make sure that the site is evolving with the input of the community that's engaged in the site to really see it evolve, and take on features, UI/

UX, as I said, that really reflect what folks want. So, I wouldn't say that there's one big feature that I have hidden in my pocket. It's just a constant chipping away and molding to make the site really grow organically in its finest form. [@SBOMAG](#)



“Part of dealing with Sweetwater is that we have extensive customer service, customer support, fraud protection, credit check – all those types of safety factors that you want in the purchase of new gear all apply to any transaction that occurs on Gear Exchange.”

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SALES CONTACTS

Telephone: (800) 682-8114

Mari Deetz ext. 1
mari@mrmagazine.com

Gordon Snyder ext. 6
gordon@sbomagazine.com

Matt King ext. 2
matt@mrmagazine.com

Mike Lawson, Publisher, ext. 5
mike@artistpro.com

EDITORIAL CONTACT

Christian Wissmuller ext. 3
christian@mrmagazine.com



Don't Underestimate the Purchasing Power of the Educator



By
Rick
Ghinelli

As a former band director, campus administrator, and director of performing and visual arts for the Spring Independent School District (Houston, TX) I have been involved in quite a bit of purchasing during my 31-year career. As the educational support manager for Conn-Selmer, my responsibility is to help “connect the dots” between educators and dealers in order to facilitate a purchase. At trade shows such as NAMM, the sales focus seems to be on manufacturers and dealers, not necessarily educators. NAMM does a great

job with Music Education Days, and I’m grateful to have been a part of that for a number of years. However, do educators have a place on the show floor – meaning are manufacturers paying attention to them, too? I certainly don’t see this as a failure on the part of NAMM to include educators, but rather just the normal progression of how things have been.

Working for Conn-Selmer as an educational support manager has put me on the front lines with educators, and it’s music directors who are really driving much of what manufacturers are producing outside of professional players’ needs and, in turn, what dealers are ordering. For example, if a band director who teaches beginning band students suggests, requests, or even requires a student to play a particular brand and model of instrument, then when parents go to their local music dealer, they will be requesting that instrument. In order to stock those instruments, the dealer will need to place an order with the manufacturer, and that completes what I like to refer to as “the chain of influence.”

Just this year, school districts across the country have purchased millions of dollars of band and orchestra instruments due to the funds made available by the federal government. The Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief funds (ESSER) has allowed districts to purchase like they never have before. Originally intended specifically for COVID remediation, learning loss, et cetera, the requirements have become less stringent to the point

that the ESSER language specifically states that these funds “may be used to purchase musical instruments.” I have personally been involved in facilitating multi-million dollar purchases by school districts, and these purchases are being driven and influenced by the directors in the schools. Again, the chain of influence starts with the music teacher.

So, what can be done to get educators more involved in the entire process? Manufacturers and dealers need to work together and actively involve educators in conversations about new products and improving current products. I’ve told directors a number of times when trying a new instrument, “Tell me what you think, not what you think I want to hear.” We will only get better if we have open mind to the needs of the end user. Now... we certainly can’t make custom instruments for everyone that wants some special tweak or special feature, but if the majority of customers are requesting the same thing, it should be given strong consideration.

Shows like NAMM are a great resource for connecting manufacturers, dealers, and educators. There are literally thousands of educators that attend NAMM’s Music Education Days and the NAMM Show every year. This year, events like Million More Music Makers will be even another opportunity to band together and expand the market for music learning. However, many educators that are walking the show floor are typically just “taking it all in” and still may not feel comfortable interacting with manufacturers. Let’s welcome educators on the show floor so that these three groups can work hand in hand to meet the needs of schools and students. 🎸🎻

Rick Ghinelli worked in the Spring Independent School District (Houston, TX) for 31 years as band director, an elementary and middle school assistant principal, and a middle school principal. He completed his last 13 years prior to retiring as the director of performing and visual arts. He currently is the director of music administration outreach and the educational support manager – Southwest, for Conn-Selmer, Inc.



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THE MARCH ISSUE FEATURES

**Industry Roundtable:
Extended Range Electric Guitars**

7 (or more) strings! Elongated fretboards! Once a niche segment of MI, use of Extended Range Electric Guitars has increased significantly in recent years, so we’re connecting with leading suppliers of these instruments to learn about what models are flying off the shelves, trends impacting the market, and how best to spread the word to your customers.

Dealer Survey: Electric Guitar Strings

We hear from MI retailers about what brands and types of electric guitar strings are being favored by end-users in 2023.



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'Growing Each Year'

The Electronic Drum Set Market

By Christian Wissmuller

Extensive volumes of percussion sounds available at a player's fingertips, the ability to practice or track at low volumes, the power to bring virtual instruments to life and take them on-stage – these and other factors have been driving interest in electronic drum sets for years. With rapidly advancing technology, design, and construction, these virtual kits are resonating with more and more end-users, and savvy MI retailers are riding this enduring surge in popularity to ever greater profits.

MMR recently spoke with reps from five major brands in this segment to learn about what models are selling in 2023, what trends are impacting the market, and how dealers most impactfully connect with customers in this realm.

What's the best-selling electronic drum set for your brand?

Mike Petrak: Our best-selling e-kit is our new ddrum Eflex kit. We released it in early 2022 and it has been a huge hit for us. It is more of an entry level kit; however, it will accommodate new players as well as advance players looking to practice in small areas. In addition to the Eflex kit, we have had the hybrid kit in our line for years. It's an electronic/ acoustic kit. Our partners at Sweetwater considered it one of the top e-kits for 2022. Please find more information on these kits at our website www.ddrum.com and our YouTube page.

Jake Wu: The DED-200 was one of our best-selling electronic drum sets last year. With this set, we target the educational player and beginning player markets. This year, we've released an upgraded version – the DED-200 Pro and Special model specifically for our dealer partners that features more voices, drum kits, and songs, as well as new materials for the kick drum.

Pat Kennedy: The TD-17 series has been the top-selling Roland V-Drums series since its launch back in 2018. They've set a new standard in the e-drum market and are absolute powerhouse drum kits, great for drummers of all levels, ages, and abilities. We are also excited about the recent refresh to the TD-17 series, consisting of significant hardware upgrades and software updates to the previous-generation TD-17 drum kits.

Matt Rudin: It's almost an even split, with our DTX402 Series just barely passing our DTX6 Series kits. The DTX402K would be the best-selling model, quickly fol-



“Create fun, engaging content for your customers to get excited about. Use the products to make the content and to show the endless possibilities that electronic drums have to offer.”

– Pat Kennedy, Roland Americas, Senior Product Manager, Drums & Percussion

lowed by the DTX6K-X.

Bob Sabellico: We have enjoyed sales success with three diverse e/products that represent the Pearl brand: the Mimic Pro Sound Module, EM1 malletSTATION, and The e/Merge.

In the long evolution of electronic drums, there have been milestone moments and advancements that have pushed the instruments forward in playability, sound, and player acceptance. What recent technological and production developments do you think have continued that progression? Do you see other such advancements on the horizon?

JW: When speaking about playability, we believe it's so important for a customer who uses a Donner instrument. Providing playable musical instruments to young and beginner musicians has been the biggest mission for Donner.

Recently, we worked on a new "smart" drum set that will provide a "smart tutoring" solution for educational customers overcoming barriers like distance and time. It also offers new experiences for learning and teaching drums. The smart e-drum will offer complete freedom when it comes to tone editing for players looking for more possibilities. The technology will offer more playability and connect instruments to people more closely.

PK: For Roland V-Drums, one of the biggest advancements has come in the form of our digital pad technology. These pads offer the industry's fastest triggering and ultra-sensitive response to capture all the nuances of a drummer's performance. The most recent has been the advent of the VH-14D digital hi-hats, which debuted in 2021 as part of the TD-50X series and completed the digital array alongside the already successful PD-140DS digital snare and CY-18DR digital ride pads. Due to the overwhelming success of these products, we have been able to incorporate this array of digital pads into other series kits in our line-up. As of today, these game-changing digital pads are now standard components of all TD-50X series kits (VAD706, TD-50KV2, & TD-50K2), as well as all recently-refreshed TD-27 drum kits (VAD507, VAD504, & TD-27KV2). Twenty-five years of V-Drums innovation have led us to this point, and we look forward to what the next 25 years will bring.

BS: We have two groundbreaking products that fit the description of milestone advancements. The Mimic Pro powered by Slate has introduced 24-bit high-quality drums sounds that give you the exact simulation of a studio recording session. This unit has offered multiple sound and OS updates that have set the standard for high-end sound modules. The e/Merge powered by Korg introduces a new twist with the addition of Wave Trigger technology that originated on the Korg Wavedrum. Wave Technology lay-

ers a trigger with an audio signal to create smooth layers with imperceptible latency.

MR: Obviously, technological advancements have led to continued improvements in latency, sound quality, memory/storage and EQ/effects, and we will continue to see improvements in these areas. We will also continue to see improvements in sampling. The quality of sound samples available, the variety, and the ease of acquisition of samples have significantly impacted electronic drums over the years. This trend will continue to progress as online e-drum communities grow and electronic drummers are presented with more options to create and share new and unique sounds.

However, I feel some of the most significant advancements with electronic drums will involve apps and integrations. An electronic drum set's compatibility and integration with other devices drive much value for end-users. As advances in communication tech, such as 5G and light fidelity, allow data to transfer at higher speeds, devices will continue to become more interconnected, and manufacturers will have more opportunities to improve how they integrate with apps, DAWs, and other devices. As computers become more intelligent, there will be some real leaps in how we interface with our electronic instruments.

MP: I think the biggest advancements over the past few years has been the approach of making electronic drums look and feel like an acoustic drum set as much as possible. We are seeing brands doing this as of late, including ddrum with our Hybrid Series drums. I feel there is this push to really blur the line between acoustic and electronic drumming. I believe the drumming community is, and will be, more accepting of this concept in the years to come.

In terms of end-user interest, how popular are electronic drum sets in 2023 compared to previous years?

MR: The electronic drum market continues to grow, driven by end-user interest. This includes electronic drum kits hybrid kits, and technologies that bridge the gap between acoustic and electronic worlds, such as mics and recording devices. No doubt this trend will continue through 2023.

BS: Pearl is committed to supporting our Electronic Percussion products, and interest from our end users is consistent in 2023. E-kits are showing up on live music stages that range from wedding bands to major concert acts and that popularity has only increased.

PK: The interest and popularity of electronic drums are growing each year, and this trend is expected to continue in 2023.

MP: I can't speak for other brands, but between our Eflex, hybrid drums, and our new NIO percussion pad, I'd say the popularity in electronic drums is as good as it's ever been, if not better. At one point it seemed as though drummers either had an acous-

“The electronic drum market continues to grow, driven by end-user interest. This includes electronic drum kits hybrid kits, and technologies that bridge the gap between acoustic and electronic worlds, such as mics and recording devices.”

– Matt Rudin, Marketing Manager –
Drums, Yamaha Corporation of America

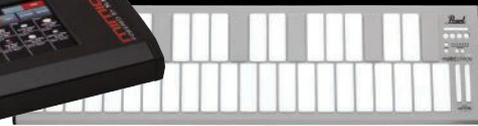


■ roundtable



“Interest from our end users is consistent in 2023. E-kits are showing up on live music stages that range from wedding bands to major concert acts and that popularity has only increased.”

– Bob Sabellico, Pearl Electronic Percussion Product Manager



tic or electronic kit. Nowadays it seems most players have both. An acoustic kit for rehearsal, studio, or live situations, and then an electronic kit for quiet playing at home or even to learn new songs and techniques.

JW: I believe there has been, and will continue to be, a significant growth when it comes to interest in electronic drums among entry-level musicians, bedroom musicians, and music-loving parents who would like to buy a musical gift for their children.

Donner will bring the highest model, the DED-400P, to market at the upcoming NAMM Show. This model is targeted at professionals. We will also launch the lower-end DED-200 Pro DED-80 model for kids, which will also target the educational and gifting markets, hoping to make it easier for people who love music to create music. So, overall we're optimistic about the electronic drum set market because of our clear understanding of our potential customers' need.

For dealers searching for ways to best market and promote electronic drums to customers, do you have any suggestions?

BS: As we all know, nothing beats playing the kit in a store. Unfortunately, the dealers have limited inventory and some products slip under the radar. Online video is the primary method to get generate exposure for these products. Dealers should consider creating their own content. As manufacturers we produce marketing materials using our artists to promote new products, but some great videos are produced by dealers that are entertaining and informative and reach the target audience.

JW: Some of our online dealers have had great success and seen great sales conversion by focusing on having a heavy presence on social media, especially YouTube. Additionally, when we talk about the best way to market our products, we remind dealers that it's important to identify your target audience. In my opinion, successful dealers and salespersons have the ability to create a desire and need in customers when a customer comes into the store and they can interact face-to-face.

MP: I think in today's market, content is king. Yes, usually the brand supplies product demos and other video content. However, if you are a dealer trying to persuade your customers to buy electronic drums or any products for that matter, doing raw videos of you

demoing the products or even doing an unboxing video would really help gain traction with customers. Whether it's a quick reel or doing a little more in-depth video on YouTube. Any one of these angles will help promote electronic drums and ultimately make the sale.

MR: Firstly, knowledge is critical. As customers are faced with not only an overabundance of choices (products and where to buy), but also available product information – some good, some bad – it will be harder for dealers to distinguish themselves and their products. Having a well-trained staff and resources available for customers will greatly impact a dealer's ability to market electronic drums. This product knowledge can be shared via social media, clinics, and events (virtual/in-person), in stores and online. Knowing the customer and their needs will be equally important as having thorough product knowledge. A dealer's ability to connect with customers far surpasses the manufacturers. So, building relationships with customers, discovering what they are looking for and connecting them with the right product is critical for improving e-drum sales.

Create experiences. Delivering an engaging experience with an electronic drum set can have a large impact on a customer's decision to purchase. Based on your audience, this could mean different tactics, from un-boxing videos on social channels to floor models for customers to touch and hear the product. Online video reviews or tutorials are also great because you can direct customers to your eCommerce page. All of this gives customers a positive way to engage with a product, bringing awareness and decision-making on purchasing an electronic drum set.

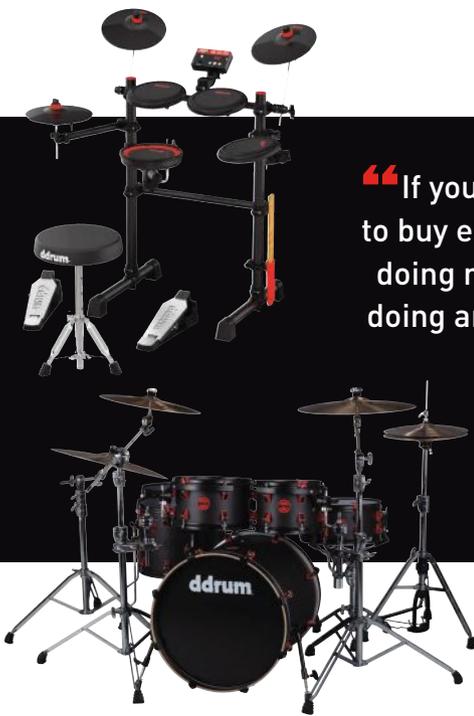
PK: Dealers have always been the best at finding new ways to reach customers and promote new products. So many tools are available nowadays, particularly in the social media realm. Create fun, engaging content for your customers to get excited about. Use the products to make the content and to show the endless possibilities that electronic drums have to offer. This is a great way to reach customers directly and to also make your store a destination for drummers. Become the place that they want to engage with, both virtually and physically.



“I believe there has been, and will continue to be, a significant growth when it comes to interest in electronic drums among entry-level musicians, bedroom musicians, and music-loving parents who would like to buy a musical gift for their children.”

– Jake Wu, Senior PR Manager, Donner





“If you are a dealer trying to persuade your customers to buy electronic drums or any products for that matter, doing raw videos of you demoing the products or even doing an unboxing video would really help gain traction with customers.”

– Mike Petrak, Brand Manager/Product Manager/Inside Sales/ Artist Relations / Customer Service for ddrum at Armadillo Enterprises



With raw material availability, freight rates, material costs, and other factors continuing to affect aspects of MI, to what degree are electronic drums feeling the pinch in early 2023?

PK: Thankfully, many of these aspects are beginning to correct themselves. Of course, challenges remain, and we are doing our best to develop creative solutions to ensure that products are readily available to the drumming community. If all goes well, then 2023 should show steady improvement and increased availability for electronic drums.

MP: The pinch is backing off a little. Freight costs and material costs have gone down slightly – not to what they once were, but at least there is a little breathing room. However, with costs on everything going up in the past year or two in general, overall sales may go down a little bit with people saving their money for other things other than drums. Only time will tell how 2023 pans out.

MR: The unexpected obstacles from unavailable materials certainly have put everyone on their toes the past few years. While we see a decrease in these occurrences, we still understand how quickly availability can shift and how dramatically this can impact the ability to manufacture and deliver drums. We found ourselves more alert and prepared to make quick changes if necessary.

Going into 2023, if freight rates continue to climb, it will impact entry-level electronic drums, or products geared to a more price-sensitive customer. As manufacturers we will need to seek out alternative ways to keep price points for entry level drums in check.

BS: While freight issues have normalized, raw material availability and costs

remain a concern. These complexities will continue to cause slowdowns and release dates will have to be impacted.

Any new, recent, or upcoming electronic drum set releases or related news you'd like to share with MMR readers?

MP: We are still stabilizing our supply chain from the pandemic. With that said, no new products this year in the electronics realm. Not to mention we did release the EFLEX kit and NIO percussion pad in 2022. We do expect to have some new items in time for 2024. Stay tuned!

BS: There is always something new on the horizon, but nothing we can discuss at the moment.

MR: Nothing I can talk about yet...

However, I'm very excited about our pipeline of new products and what Yamaha has on the horizon.

PK: Roland recently introduced the TD-02 entry-level V-Drums series to a whole new group of potential drummers and customers during the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas. The TD-02 series is made up of two kits, the TD-02K and TD-02KV. Both are powered by the newly designed TD-02 module, which is packed with features so that you can start your drumming journey the right way. The team at Roland is also looking forward to the upcoming DWe launch from Drum Workshop and the blending of acoustic and electronic drum worlds into one seamless package that benefits all drummers. [REDACTED]

**Everywhere you go,
there we are.**

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Crash, Splash, and Trash (and More)!

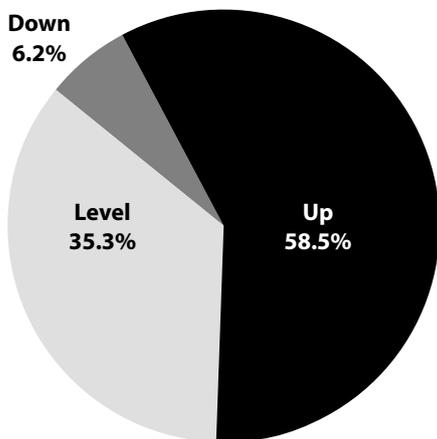
The State of the Cymbal Market By Christian Wissmuller

With over 90 percent (93.8%) of participants in this month's retailer survey reporting that sales of cymbals are either up or level compared to early 2022, it would appear that the return to live performances has been a true shot in the arm for this portion of the MI landscape, post-pandemic. Additionally, only 21.2% of those we polled indicated that supply chain challenges are a major factor in orders and delivery-times – more good news! That said, many relate that increased prices have led to robust sales – and consequently a greater scarcity – of used cymbals.

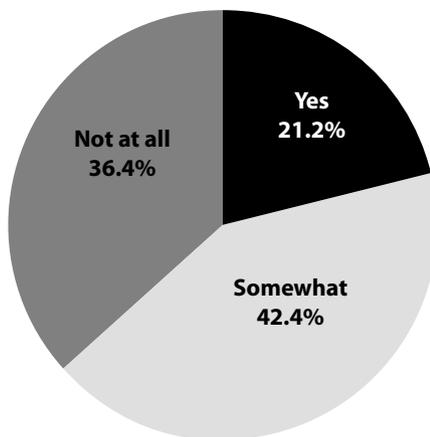
While the usual suspects are cited as the top-selling brands by many, there were a few names that hadn't appeared in similar surveys over the past few years (UFIP and Schlagwerk, among others). It would also seem that, from a sonic standpoint, players are going for heavy and "dark" these days. As Matt Donaldson of Tulsa, Oklahoma's Drum World/Tulsa puts it, "Larger and darker are still the trend."

Read on to learn more of MI retailers had to say about cymbals this month.

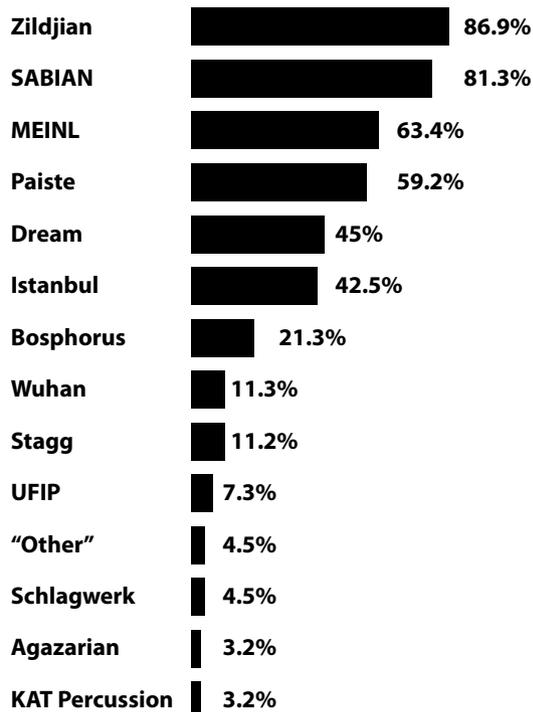
Sales of cymbals, when compared to this time last year, are...



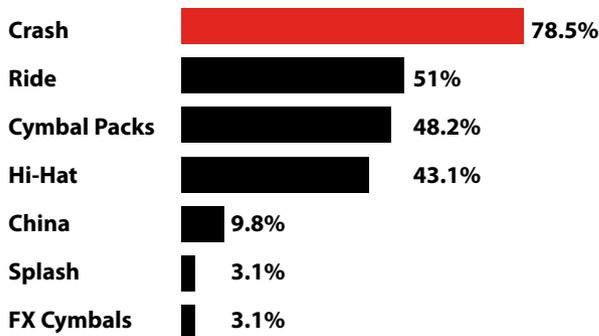
Have delivery times of cymbal orders been significantly impacted by supply chain issues lately?



Which brands are generating the most profit for your operation?



What types of cymbals do you sell the most of (feel free to select more than one)?



"Hand-hammered, thin, dark and large diameter cymbals (18"+) continue to be the trend for those who can afford them. Most cymbal buyers have to stick to budget-friendly options, especially given recent price increases."

– Seth Dralle,
The Music Shoppe

"With issues related to supply and raw materials, it pushes retail prices higher. This factor creates an increased demand for used cymbals and finding quality used cymbals is becoming much harder."

– Steve Patterson,
Full Score Music





“Drummers shop differently than everyone else. They usually walk the store in a big circle and then go out the door if they don’t see what they want. To meet the challenge, we have a large Zildjian display in their flight path!”

**– Anthony Mantova,
Mantova’s Two Street Music**

What trends have you been noticing with respect to cymbal sales?

“Definitely not selling as many cast cymbals due to the high price tags. Musicians can only afford so much and a parent does not want to spend \$250 for their kid’s crash cymbal.”

**Peter Knudson
Drums West/Boomer Music Company
For Collins, Colorado**

“Hand-hammered, thin, dark and large diameter cymbals (18”+) continue to be the trend for those who can afford them. Most cymbal buyers have to stick to budget-friendly options, especially given recent price increases.”

**Seth Dralle
The Music Shoppe
Normal, Illinois**

“We seem to remain exempt from many trends, cymbals included. While I know ‘stackers’ sell very well in Atlanta, they don’t do much for us. We have a more traditional clientele. The S series [Zildjian] and XRS [SABIAN] do well for us.”

**Musician’s Warehouse
Athens, Georgia**

“Larger crashes and larger rides are selling more.”

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

“Drummers shop differently than everyone else. They usually walk the store in a big circle and then go out the door if they don’t see what they want. To meet the challenge, we have a large Zildjian display in their flight path! Right below it we have a big blue plastic bin full of used cymbals. Drummers love to dig for deals.”

**Anthony Mantova
Mantova’s Two Street Music
Eureka, California**

“We are selling more box sets by Turkish , Zildjian, and Meinl!”

**Terry Nirva
Dave’s Drum Depot
La Crosse, Wisconsin**

“With issues related to supply and raw materials, it pushes retail prices higher. This factor creates an increased demand for used cymbals and finding quality used cymbals is becoming much harder.”

**Steve Patterson
Full Score Music
Toledo, Ohio**

“Bigger diameter, thinner, lower-pitched cymbals seem to be the direction of the trend with smaller, thicker cymbals filling the used bins.”

**Derek S. Sharp
Supersonic Music
Topeka, Kansas**

“With the price of new cymbals being out of the range of our mostly student buyers, we try to obtain as many used cymbals as possible from trade-ins or private purchases.”

**Ed Intagliata
Cassels Music
San Fernando, California**

“Customers are looking for lower cost solutions and are much more open minded towards new brands than in the past. The box sets seem to be the most popular solution for newer drummers, while the low volume cymbals have created a whole new revenue generating category for the manufacturers. I think we’ll see continued development in the pursuit of offering quieter cymbals.”

**Shane Kinney
Drum Center of Portsmouth
North Hampton, New Hampshire**

“UFIP Cymbals have been gaining views and sales.”

**Dana Bentley
Bentley’s Drum Shop, Inc.
Fresno, California**

“When shopping for a ride, hi hat, or crash cymbal, folks are usually steering for a more traditional sound rather than an experimental one. Most people also seem to favor darker, thinner cymbals and often larger diameters as well (15”/16” hi hats, 20” crashes and 24” rides).”

**Evan Miller
Rupp’s Drums
Denver, Colorado**

“As much as drummers love to try new effect cymbals and new series of cymbals using new materials, most wind up going back to their tried and true. Zildjian and SABIAN are running neck and neck with electronic cymbals making an inroads.”

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

You Cannot Miss What is Meant for You



By
**Jaimie
Blackman**

Of all professions, music retailers are keenly aware of life's duality. On the one hand, music offers us a constant reminder of life's harmony. On the other hand, the never-ending struggle between loss and gain is forever present.

Of course, loss can be clothed in money, or in people. Either actual loss or the fear of loss can be crippling. What is the solution?

A recognition that there are some things you cannot control. I am not suggesting you go into a fetal position, or hide under your desk when action is required. I am suggesting by simply responding calmly to what is happening in the present moment, rather than making it a gigantic problem, will often provide you with the best solution.

Let me give you an example. When my granddaughters were born, my wife and I experienced a joy that is hard to describe. Our struggles seemed to be insignificant compared to the love that they brought us. When my beloved wife passed after 45 years of marriage, the grief was intense. Initially, I could not breathe. I could not act. Then I surrendered to what was. Then change came quickly for me. I moved from my NYC home to Houston, where my granddaughters lived. I reconnected to my love of music education by teaching in a local college. I recommitted to a daily physical workout that is giving me newfound energy. Now I believe this is what had to be.

Thinking that we can control every aspect of our life can be exhausting. Once one accepts what is, life's energy returns, no longer weighed down with life's events. Life unfolds, as it must. There is freedom in letting go of control. I used to think if I only learned a specific new skill, I could change the way things were. Now I accept who I am, and I am learning to like this person. I still read, talk to smart people, explore new ways of interacting with the world, but I do this from a place of strength and love – not from a place of scarcity, not from a place of saying that, I'm not good enough.

Business owners are especially hard on themselves. Money and the perceived lack of it is often accompanied with shame.

The longer I live the more I realize that the obsession of striving for perfection is an illusion. To think that by reading a book, listening to a motivational speaker, or getting an advanced degree we can change who we are is foolish. We cannot change who we are. I have tried most of my life, and it did not work for me. I have found I can open my eyes and my heart to what is happening, accept what is happening, and authentically respond.

Have you ever felt that you could be doing more? That what you are doing at any one moment is not enough? Have you ever questioned if all your work will or create sufficient wealth and happiness? I have. I spent too many years with these crushing thoughts. It took the birth of my granddaughters and the death of



my wife to realize that life is happening and is unfolding the way it must. All I can do is respond in peace.

This is not a passive approach to life. I am not hiding under my desk. I am more proactive now than I have ever been. But I know longer believe that it is a matter of me having to change who I am, because no matter how hard I try, I can't be anyone else but myself. What can be done is to open up our eyes and stop blaming our environment, our repair guy, a school district for losing a bid, or poor sales people. We can take responsibility for what is and respond, as we must.

We cannot miss what is meant for us. I believe this with all of my heart. We do not even have to know, nor can we know, what is meant for us. I like Mike Tyson's quote, "Everyone has a plan until they are punched in the face." Music retailers have faced, and will continue to face, a myriad of challenges: shrinking profit margins, manufacturer competition, and chronic underfunding. The universe is unfolding the way it must. There is no other way. The only control we have is how we respond. This recognition will set you free.

Descartes had it wrong when he said, "I think, therefore I am." Excessive thinking consumes us and saps our energy. Over analysis cause paralysis. Simply respond.

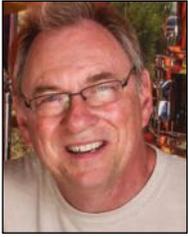
Birth and death have taught me not to overthink, but to simply respond. In the end, and I cannot miss what is truly meant for me.

After all, the symphony of life has a master conductor. We just play our parts as best we can. Surrendering is where we find our freedom. 

Jaimie Blackman is president of BH Wealth Management, an organization dedicated to providing financial advice, education and business coaching. Jaimie is an adjunct music instructor at Lone Star College located in Texas.

“Business owners are especially hard on themselves. Money and the perceived lack of it is often accompanied with shame.”

The Moment



By
Menzie
Pittman

experience is unique.

“The moment” happens spontaneously, so it isn’t possible to predict the time when it will occur. Too many unique factors exist. However, when the moment happens, you know that it’s been aligning for years. You never know for certain what exactly makes it happen, but we know to some degree that it’s a multi-faceted event. Relationships are part of that, trust is also a component, romance and dreams are aspects, and, of course, the element of surprise. That all adds up to excitement and walks us right up to “the moment.”

Let’s analyze “the moment” by reviewing a true story. Recently, I had a customer bring in his 5-year-old son with his ukulele in tow. I have been friends with this family for many years, and the young man’s father shared with his son that he was going to visit an incredibly special place. He was going to the “music store;” it was the boy’s first visit to CMC. That was step-one in the relationship part of the story. But that was not “the moment.”

The next part of the story involved trust. The dad wanted his son to know that becoming a musician is special, and the process involves many factors, including people in your life that you can trust and depend on, help you to achieve your goal. Trust is step-one.

Dad and his son set off to the magical music store for supplies and for the boy to introduce himself as the newest musician in town. One quick note: the trust in this story is multigenerational. If Dad didn’t trust the store, there would be no chance for this event to have happened. Of all the tools a retailer has, no tool is more important than developing and keeping a customer’s trust.

When you are 5 years old, everything is larger than life; this is where the romance comes in. We have intrigue, we have curiosity, we have imagination, and we have dreams. Managed with care, this young man is a musician for life.

So, Dad already had a plan in place to memorialize the magic. Oh, yes, with his trusty, dusty cell phone, he captured the event. In 20 simple seconds, Dad became Cecil B. DeMille. Below is a quick recap (If you want to see the video, it’s on our Instagram page).

(Dad walking & filming CMC’s front door) “Aright, my little minstrel, show me what ya got.”

Special customer relationships develop over time; creating “the moment” is often the result of many prior, smaller moments and interactions. Romantic products help create that moment and being part of a specialized community also helps create it. But trust is what always unlocks the door.

Being a specialized retailer also makes that job easier. Take, for example, businesses such as bike shops and hobby shops. There is romance tied to the products, and of course, in music, the dream that’s tied to the experi-

(Son) “Is this the guitar store?”

(Dad) “Yup, CMC. Here we are: our first visit!”

(Son, walking and pointing) “Dad, is this where we go for music?”

(Dad panning the camera up to our sign) “Yup, it sure is.”

(Son) “The music store?”

(Dad) “CMC – It’s your first visit.”

(Dad opening the door while the camera is still rolling) “Come on in, my boy!”

So, have you figured out “the moment” yet?

Independent music stores must keep every possible customer that walks in their doors. It’s our only chance at surviving the ferocious advertising budgets of the chains. We only have a few unique tricks to help customers realize the benefit of the personalized experience the small-scale retailer offers. That interaction with the customer is “the moment.”

When that moment works, there is a chain reaction that generally keeps that customer engaged for years. It’s a way, it’s a civility, it’s a tone in your voice when you answer the phone. It’s energy, it’s pleasantries, it’s environment.

What happens when you get that right? “Moments” multiply. Word of mouth populates, and the right things about your business begin to get attention. Your store’s reputation bourgeons, and customers know that you are a welcoming, enjoyable, and educational business.

Simple civilities, like a quick tune on an instrument, give us the chance to talk. A drum key in your hand for the customer who says, “I’ll pick up the head on the way to my gig in 20 minutes.” That customer may or may not have you change out the head, but that’s not the point. The point is you offered a courtesy. That’s “the moment.”

The best feeling ultimately occurs when a customer flips the script and gifts you “the moment.” That video of the little boy on our Instagram page was sent to my cell phone. That customer intentionally gave me that “moment” because he knew it would be appreciated. He knows music changes lives, and he knows I support music education in schools, and that I endeavor to have the best quality education CMC can provide.

When a customer shows you that he wants to return “the moment,” pay it forward! You never know the value of your civility toward others until it shows up on your phone.

Now that’s a “moment.” 📱🎸

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.”

“Independent music stores must keep every possible customer that walks in their doors. It’s our only chance at surviving the ferocious advertising budgets of the chains.”

ACCESSORIES

Get'm Get'm Launches Limited Edition 'Third Eye' Guitar Strap

In addition to the company's extensive collections for electric and bass guitars, Get'm Get'm, Inc. introduces an exclusive limited edition guitar strap inspired by music legend Prince, and his eclectic style: The Third Eye Guitar Strap, available now.

Prince wore many of Get'm Get'm, Inc.'s guitar straps for nearly 17 years, most famously the Dark Leopard and Faux Fur styles, before his untimely death in 2016. He graced the cover of *Guitar Player* wearing their Indochine design, and even featured Get'm Get'm straps in his *Paisley Park Hall of Fame* book.

Founder and CEO Virginia Castro states, "This is something I would have made for Prince if he was still with us today. This strap honors Prince's legacy, and celebrates the impact he made on the music world and millions of lives..."

The "Third Eye" strap features a beautiful 3D painted fabric facing, with holographic glitter details in silver and antique gold. Includes strong welded metal hardware in a nickel finish, free from poisons and lead, and is lined with quality nylon webbing for durability and comfort. Latigo black leather tips ensure your guitar is secure, even with the heaviest of jam sessions.

Only 60 "Third Eye" straps will be available. Based on the cut of the fabric and the application of holographic paint, you'll know you have a one-of-a-kind strap in your hands. The straps are a fully adjustable 65" in length and 2" wide. These limited edition straps are priced at \$250.

All of their collections are handmade in the USA with a portion of every sale donated to animal rescue groups.

www.getmgetm.com



Frameworks' Keyboard Sustain Pedal

Gator Frameworks has launched its new traditional style sustain pedal, designed specifically for keyboards and electronic pianos. This new pedal offers professional musicians a compact and practical solution that provides genuine tension, mimicking the feel of a traditional acoustic piano's damper pedal.

The sustain pedal is a critical component of a piano, allowing for the continued resonance of notes after they have been played. This function provides keyboard players with the ability to create both beautiful harmonies and enriched melodic lines. The GFW-KEYSUSTAIN offers a realistic experience akin to a traditional piano pedal, through its integration of pedal resistance, promoting professional-level control.

The device features an integrated 6-ft cable with a ¼-inch input jack, providing versatility and ease of use. The rear panel includes a switch that enables users to adjust the polarity for universal compatibility with any keyboard that has a matching female input. Textured rubber feet on the bottom and a non-slip, removable cover on the pedal provide a sturdy grip during performances and rehearsals, keeping users focused on the music.

MAP: \$29.99

www.gatorco.com



BeastMode Bass Strings from Von Frankenstein Monster Gear

Hot off a workbench in the fiery pits of hell, Von Frankenstein Monster Gear introduces new Beastmode Nickel Plated Bass Strings. The latest creation of a company formed by legendary guitarist

Doyle Wolfgang von Frankenstein and long-time industry insider Josh Vittek and his company, Sheptone, Beastmode Nickel Plated Bass Strings are made from real USA steel and are handcrafted one at a time for killer tone and brutal durability. Players will leave blood on their axe before one of these strings breaks. With four sets to choose from, players can find just the right fit to go absolutely Beastmode.

Doyle Wolfgang von Frankenstein, legendary guitarist of the punk-crusading Misfits, knows the trials and tribulations of using strings that can't survive what he unleashes. During his 2022 Latin America Abomination Tour, he slayed sold-out venues while playing his signature Von Frankenstein Nickel Plated Electric Guitar Strings, introduced early last year. Doyle now wants his bass player fans and fiends to enjoy this same feel and durability, with strings made using the same reliable process.

Vittek and the tone freaks at Sheptone happily answered Doyle's rallying cry of "Can you handle Beastmode?" They applied the same handcrafting process to these Nickel Plated Bass Strings, starting with a hard tempered hex core and a meticulously wound nickel plated wrap. The string is wound at tensions and speeds accurately dialed in to provide the best-performing string possible. This process leaves each string feeling and playing like a dream, even when the player is delivering a musically brutal beating on stage or in the studio.

It's a process that takes time and thought, but Doyle wouldn't have it any other way. Avoiding rushing and mass production ensures the quality, feel, and durability required by the most discerning of tone freaks.

Four sets of Beastmode Nickel Plated Bass Guitar Strings are available and designed for long scale bass guitars. Each string is individually sealed and labeled in its own anti-corrosion bag. Players can choose the pack that feels best: #AB4505 has medium light gauges (.045/.065/.085/.105); #AB5005 is medium (.050/.070/.085/.105), #AB5010 is medium heavy at (.050, .070, .090, .110); and #AB5525 is heavy gauge (.055, .075, .095, .125).

Starting at \$28.99.

www.vonfrankensteinmonstergear.com



Aguilar Unveils New Look to Ever-Popular All-Analog Circuitry Pedals

New for 2023, Aguilar has taken the pedals that you know and love and given them a fresh, sleek new look. Featuring original artwork, compact pedalboard-friendly matte

black chassis, and premium machined knobs, these pedals house Aguilar's iconic all-analog circuitry, tone, and performance under the hood. Available in a wide variety of flavors from the deep, synth like texture of the Octamizer, to the lush bucket-brigade tones of the Chorusaurus, Aguilar's effect pedals are designed from the ground up to bring inspiration to your music.

The refreshed line-up includes:

Fuzzistor—Vintage-inspired bass fuzz pedal that conjures 70's distortion vibes and beyond.

Agro—Bass overdrive pedal with a wide range of tones, from tube-style distortion to all-out grit-and-grind saturation.

Grape Phaser—User-friendly, fat and funky two-knob analog bass phaser.

Filter Twin—Dual-envelope bass filter pedal that offers a range of tones from classic 70's funk to new and original filter tones.

Octamizer—Analog Octave Bass Pedal with Independent Clean/



Octave Volume and Filter Controls.

Chorusaurus-All-analog, lush and organic sounding buck-brigade bass chorus pedal.

TLC Compressor- Proprietary compression for flexible, transparent, studio-quality compression.

"Since the beginning, Aguilar effect pedals have built a reputation for delivering rich, inspired tones designed for the needs of bassists, regardless of the genre they play," stated Jordan Cortese, Brand Manager for Aguilar Musical Instruments. "Continuing our philosophy of inspired engineering into the future, we're excited to re-introduce these iconic designs to serve the next generation of bassists and the music they'll gift to the world," added Cortese.

The pedals range in price from \$199.99-\$249.99.

www.aguilaramp.com

AMPLIFICATION

Magnatone Announces the New Super Fifty-Nine M80 Combo Amp

Magnatone has just recently announced the highly anticipated release of its new Super Fifty-Nine M80 Combo Amp.

This much-requested 2x12" Combo version of the 45-watt, EL-34-driven model combines low to medium gain tones with an extra gain stage. Accessing it all is easy via the front switch or footswitch. This amp comes with a tube-buffered effects loop and a well-planned palette of tone controls.

A solid features list includes:

- Two EL34s, 45 watts Push-Pull, Class AB
- Footswitchable gain stages in a flexible package
- British voiced master volume design with treble, middle, bass, and presence
- Tube-buffered effects loop send and return
- 2 x 12" WGS-made ET90 speakers

The Combo also comes with a footswitch, Impedance Selector (4, 8, AND 16 Ohms Combo - 8 and 16 Ohms), and backlit logo.

The Super Fifty-Nine M80 2x12" Combo will be available at authorized Magnatone dealers and is priced at \$3,799.

www.magnatoneusa.com

BOSS Expands Katana Guitar Amplifier Range with Three New Models

BOSS announces three new models in the best-selling lineup of Katana guitar amplifiers. The Katana-50 MkII EX is an expanded version of the entry-level Katana-50 MkII, offering enhanced performance features derived from higher-end Katana models. The Katana-Artist MkII Head provides the premium sound and features of the flagship Katana-Artist MkII combo in a powerful 100-watt amplifier head. The Katana Cabinet 212 Waza is the ideal companion for the Katana-Artist MkII Head, offering ultimate rock tones in a 2x12 configuration loaded with custom Waza speakers.

Katana-50 MkII EX

Armed with 50 watts of stage-ready power, the Katana-50 MkII EX expands on the capabilities of the popular Katana-50 MkII model, providing more live performance versatility in the same portable design. Support for the dedicated BOSS GA-FC and GA-FC EX foot controllers allows users to select Tone Setting memories, turn effects on/off, and more. There's also a line output for sending mix-ready tone to a house PA, plus the ability to link a second Katana-50 MkII EX or 100-watt Katana MkII model with the Stereo Expand feature.



Katana-Artist MkII Head

The 100-watt Katana-Artist MkII Head comes with all the core features of the acclaimed flagship Katana-Artist MkII combo amplifier. Five unique amp characters and five variations provide 10 different tone options, while five simultaneous effects categories put the sound-shaping power of a massive pedalboard inside the amp. And with BOSS Tone Studio, users can customize the onboard effects with over 60 different types and dive deep into internal parameters to craft their personal sound.

The Katana-Artist MkII Head offers many features for extended performance control, each with customizable options accessible with the editing tools in BOSS Tone Studio. A foot-controllable, post-amp Solo boost function is available, with a front-panel knob for fast adjustment plus dedicated delay and EQ. Users can directly shape the cab emulation on the line output with selectable Air Feel settings on the rear panel, including three presets and two custom settings. And it's also possible to adjust the middle setting of the amp's Power Control in 10-watt increments via the editor for different performing needs.

Katana Cabinet 212 Waza

The Katana Cabinet 212 Waza is precisely tuned to support the massive range of the Katana-Artist MkII Head. This robust cab features a 2x12 configuration loaded with custom Waza speakers, delivering sought-after rock tones inspired by the benchmark British stack speakers from the 1960s. Two cabinets can be stacked to create a clean 4x12 setup, and the versatile design features a removable panel for closed-back or open-back operation.

The BOSS Katana-50 MkII EX, Katana-Artist MkII Head and Katana Cabinet 212 Waza will be available in the U.S. in January for \$339.99, \$569.99 and \$599.99, respectively.

www.boss.info

DRUMS & PERCUSSION

TAMA Announces New STAR Reserve Solid Japanese Cedar Snare Drum

For 2023, TAMA has announced a new addition to their STAR Reserve snare drum series, Solid Japanese Cedar, the 9th entry into the collection.



This snare drum features a traditional Japanese woodworking technique called *uzukuri*, which creates a three-dimensional texture and appearance on the outside of the shell. The 8mm solid cedar shell is steam bent and fitted with matching steam bent Cedar Sound Focus Rings (reinforcement hoops) that are hand cut by skilled Japanese artisans. The cedar shell is outfitted with (8) Low Mass STAR Lugs, 2.3mm Customized Brass Mighty Hoops and Starclassic Bell Brass Snare Wires (20-strand). The hardware specifications were chosen to complement the mellow tonal character of the shell to pull out thick, rich tones with powerful attack and dynamic sensitivity. The *Uzukuri* exterior shell is finished in natural oil, which highlights the attractive natural aesthetic of the cedar wood grain.

Features

- 8mm Solid Japanese Cedar shell
- 14"x6" size
- STAR Lug (MSL90SC)
- Customized Brass Mighty Hoop (8 hole)
- Strainer/Butt: MLS50A/MLS50B
- Snare Wire: 20 strands Starclassic
- Bell Brass Snare Wires (MS20SN14B)
- Finish: Burnt Oiled Cedar (BOC)
- TLJC146BOC

LIST: \$2,306.00 • MAP: \$1,399.99

www.tama.com

FRETTED

Taylor Guitars Expands Its Popular American Dream Series With New Sunburst Trio

Taylor Guitars is excited to introduce three new additions to its popular American Dream Series – the Grand Theater AD11e-SB, Grand Concert AD12e-SB and Grand Pacific AD17e-SB. The new guitars feature a



hand-painted tobacco sunburst top, firestripe faux tortoiseshell pickguard and 4mm Italian acrylic dot fretboard inlays for a rootsy, vintage look. The sound is flavored by a combination of a solid Sitka spruce top and solid walnut body, delivering a warm, woody midrange tonal character that's comparable to mahogany, with unique clarity and sparkle. The guitars are available now in authorized Taylor dealers worldwide.

Each American Dream guitar is voiced with Taylor's tone-enhancing V-Class bracing system (and new C-Class bracing for the AD11e-SB). Appointments on the new sunburst American Dream guitars support the rootsy, organic vibe, with black top purfling, a black/maple/black rosette, black satin tuners and a thin matte finish. Chamfered body edges add additional playing comfort alongside Taylor's ultra-playable necks.

AD11e-SB

The all-new AD11e-SB features the new Taylor Grand Theater (GT) body shape, which sports a comfortably downsized frame and scale length. Tonally, it's voiced with C-Class bracing (a variation on V-Class bracing) that enhances the low-end response to give the guitar the tonal depth of a full-size guitar. The new model includes a special 24-1/8" scale length and is strung with light-gauge D'Addario XS coated phosphor bronze strings. Starting at \$1,799.

AD12e-SB

The AD12e-SB brings the first spruce-top grand concert to the American Dream Series. Powered by V-Class bracing, the clarity, responsiveness and note-to-note definition of the compact body makes it perfect for fingerstyle guitarists, nimble flatpickers and recording applications. The guitar is strung with light-gauge D'Addario XS coated phosphor bronze strings. Starting at \$1,999.

AD17e-SB

The AD17e-SB features Taylor's Grand Pacific body shape, a round-shoulder dreadnought inspired by classic acoustic guitar recordings. With a 25-1/2" scale length and medium-gauge D'Addario XS coated phosphor bronze strings, this guitar is a midrange powerhouse that serves up seasoned tone without sacrificing balance or articulation. Starting at \$1,999.

The new sunburst American Dream guitars include Taylor's onboard ES2 electronics and a brown or gray AeroCase.

www.taylorguitars.com

New Iris Concert Ukuleles from Flight

Flight has released a new model in its Princess Series, the Iris. The Flight Iris is a concert ukulele featuring a painted solid spruce top with laminate mahogany back and sides, a pick guard, white acrylic binding on the top and bottom of the ukulele, a white acrylic rosette, a slotted headstock with Der Jung tuners, Flight fluorocarbon strings, offset front position markers, a 36mm bone nut, a compensated bone saddle, and a deluxe Flight gig bag.



Meet the Flight Iris, a solid spruce top concert ukulele sporting a painted top in black, blue, or red, pick guard, and laminate mahogany back and sides. The Iris is Flight's take on a painted-top ukulele, offering a host of features with Flight's recognized quality and value. The Iris includes a slotted headstock, rear facing Der Jung tuners, offset front position markers on a rosewood fretboard, a 36mm nut, a compensated saddle, fluorocarbon strings, and a deluxe gig bag. The Iris is a joy to play and sounds sweet! Want to make a bold statement with a modern ukulele design? If so, the Flight Iris is the ukulele for you!

Concert scale

- Painted solid spruce top with pick guard
- Slotted headstock with Der Jung tuners
- Japan Carbon Fiber
- Bone 36mm nut and compensated saddle
- White acrylic binding on top and bottom of the ukulele
- White acrylic rosette
- Offset front position markers
- Deluxe Flight gig bag

Body Shape: Concert (19 frets)

- Top: Solid Spruce
- Back & Side: Laminate Mahogany
- Bridge: Rosewood
- Strings: Japan Carbon Fiber
- Neck: Okoume
- Fretboard: Rosewood
- Nut & Saddle: Bone
- Nut Width: 36mm
- Deluxe padded gig bag, instructional booklet, and sticker pack included.

www.flightmusic.com

Ibanez Introduces Two New BTB Singlecut Basses

New for 2023, Ibanez has introduced two new additions to its singlecut BTB lineup. The BTB865SC and BTB866SC combine the unique, high-end aesthetics of a single cut bass with sleek and aggressive visuals. These instruments bring to bear many popular BTB features such as neck-thru construction, a mono-rail bridge, an Ibanez custom 3-band EQ, and a 35" scale length. What sets them apart is the unique combination of Ash capped body wings finished in a compelling Weathered Black Low Gloss. These design choices deliver an appearance the combines, quite effectively, the boutique attributes of natural wood tops, with the modern energy of solid finishes. Other notable features include a Rosewood fretboard, zero fret, detachable finger ramp, and medium stainless steel frets.



Features

BTB865SC

- BTB5 5pc maple/walnut neck-through w/graphite reinforcement rods
- Zero fret

889mm/35" scale

- Ash top/ash/okoume wing body
- Rosewood fretboard w/abalone dot inlay
- Medium stainless steel frets
- Bartolini BH2 neck pickup
- Bartolini BH2 bridge pickup
- Ibanez Custom Electronics 3-band EQ
- 3-way mid frequency switch
- MR5 bridge (19mm string spacing)
- Black hardware

- Detachable Finger ramp
 - Finish: weathered black low gloss
- list: \$1,584.43 • estimated street price: \$1,149.99

www.ibanez.com

PIANO & KEYBOARD

Roland Announces FP-E50 Digital Piano

Roland announces the FP-E50, a powerful new addition to the acclaimed FP series lineup of portable digital pianos. The FP-E50 delivers a premium piano experience enhanced with advanced technologies derived from other Roland keyboards, including the ZEN-Core sound engine, interactive accompaniments, and professional vocal effects. Adding in Bluetooth audio/MIDI support, onboard recording, computer connectivity, and expansion options on Roland Cloud, the FP-E50 is a complete creative hub for learning, entertaining, and writing music.



The FP-E50 offers all the core features that have made the award-winning FP digital piano series so popular worldwide. The portable and attractive design is easy to carry, while onboard stereo speakers provide immersive sound for home playing and intimate performances. Users can connect external speakers for more sound coverage if needed and plug in headphones to practice without disturbing others.

While the FP-E50 is filled with advanced features, getting around on the instrument is frustration-free. The top-level display shows sound, tempo, and other essential information, and the clean panel layout provides direct access to sound selection, favorite tones, keyboard transposition, and more. Many buttons include long-press functions to save settings or tweak deeper parameters without menu diving. And with Scenes, users can instantly recall complete keyboard setups with single actions.

Roland's SuperNATURAL Piano sound engine provides the authentic feel and interactive response of an acoustic grand. The 88 full-size keys complete the experience, with hammer action, escapement, and Ivory Feel material providing the same touch as a world-class acoustic instrument.

The FP-E50 also features the expandable ZEN-Core sound engine, the same advanced sound generator used in professional Roland synthesizers like JUPITER-X and FANTOM. A total of 1018 onboard tones include historic Roland synth sounds, brass and orchestral voices, guitars and basses, world sounds, drums, and many others. Users can freely layer piano and ZEN-Core tones or assign different sounds to the left and right hands.

With its intelligent auto-accompaniment tools and nearly 200 onboard music styles, the FP-E50 put a full band under the player's command. Arrangements are controlled with left-hand fingering, from easy one-note triggering for beginners to full-chord detection for advanced players. Interactive mode lets the player guide the volume and energy of the backing in real time, while the Chord Sequencer provides colorful chord progressions for improvisation and melody development.

FP-E50 users can take their music further with an ever-expanding selection of content on Roland Cloud. EXZ Wave Expansions and SDZ Sound Packs are available to customize the ZEN-Core sound engine with genuine Roland sounds and curated content from leading sound designers. Coming early in 2023, Z-Style Packs will allow players to grow and personalize their accompaniment library with pro styles for popular music and regional genres around the world.

Players can also sing along with keyboard performances using the FP-E50's mic input and studio-grade vocal effects. The auto-harmony function creates real-time vocal harmonies that follow the chords, while the fun voice transformer provides controls to change the vocal gender or create robot sounds. There's also a powerful vocoder, plus an ambience effect, compressor, and noise suppressor to enhance vocal sounds.

The FP-E50 includes Bluetooth audio/MIDI support, allowing users to stream music through the onboard sound system and work with music production apps like Roland Zenbeats. Numerous stands and pedals are available for home and mobile use, including an option that creates a unified upright piano look with three integrated pedals.

www.roland.com

PRO AUDIO

Universal Audio Sphere DLX & LX Modeling Microphones

Universal Audio announces that the UA Sphere DLX and Sphere LX microphones are now shipping worldwide.



UA Sphere mics allow users to change mic type, polar pattern, and other characteristics even after tracking. Each UA Sphere condenser features models of classic mics from Neumann, Telefunken, AKG, Sony, and more, with Dual Mode for blended mic combinations, Realtime UAD Processing for low-latency recording with Apollo interfaces, and included presets for getting pro sound quickly.

The UA Sphere DLX features emulations of 38 classic studio mics, while the UA Sphere LX offers 20 mic models in a smaller package. Each features IsoSphere technology for reducing room coloration, along with gold-sputtered diaphragms and the lowest noise of any mic in its respective class.

Sphere DLX: \$1,499

Key Features:

Record with 38 sought-after ribbon, condenser, and dynamic microphones — with mic models of Neumann, Telefunken, AKG, Sony, and more

Change mic type, polar pattern, and other characteristics, even after tracking with any interface, in any DAW

Record or monitor through modeled mics with near-zero latency using Apollo interfaces

Capture acoustic guitars, drum overheads, and more in stereo with a single mic

Easily tame room coloration for cleaner, more professional recordings using IsoSphere presets tailored for bedroom studios and popular isolation filters

Includes shockmount, mic stand mount, 25' cable, and carrying case

Sphere LX: \$999

Key Features:

Record with 20 sought-after ribbon, condenser, and dynamic microphones — with mic models of Neumann, Telefunken, AKG, Sony, and more

Change mic type, polar pattern, and other characteristics, even after tracking with any interface, in any DAW

Record or monitor through modeled mics with near-zero latency using Apollo interfaces

Add the ultimate modeling mic to your collection, with dual gold-sputtered diaphragms and the lowest noise of any mic in its class

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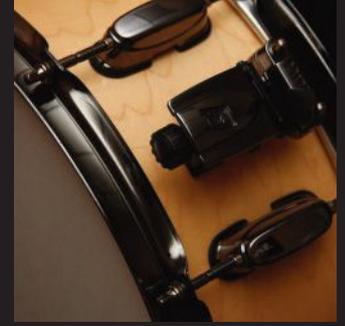
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