

# M M M R

## MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

Celebrating 145 Years of Serving the MI Industry

Est. 1879

# BASS INSTINCT

Trends in the 4-String  
Electric Bass Segment



**WHERE WORKFLOW AND  
FX INNOVATION SETS THE SCENE**

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Nadine Skolaude of Teufel



**Small Business Matters**  
The Acoustic Shoppe

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# C O N T E N T S



MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

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Teufel, an iconic German audio electronics manufacturer, recently partnered with Fender for their first line of products in the U.S. market. The new ROCKSTER series of Bluetooth speakers – including one with a ¼ input and XLR output and the ability to be used as a PA wedge – straddles the line between targeting “consumers” and “performers.” We speak with the company’s VP of Customer Acquisition and International Markets about how and why the pairing with FMIC came about and what Teufel’s future plans may include for the American MI realm.

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‘Tis the season during which many MI retail operations generate the greatest amount of profit during the entire fiscal year. This guide, arranged by price points, outlines some surefire customer favorites to stock up on in advance of the holidays. From stocking stuffers to big-ticket instruments and gear, this resource covers all the bases.

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12



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D-12E

*Martin & Co.*  
EST. 1833



By  
Christian  
Wissmuller

# Is it Truly Post-COVID 'Normal' You Seek?

Since January of 2021, the domestic labor market has added over 14 million jobs, with the unemployment rate reaching a 50-year low at the beginning of 2024. In May of this year, The Federal Reserve noted that, "real GDP in the U.S. has already returned to its pre-pandemic trend" (while, in the same report, observing that in many other advanced foreign economies – AFEs – Gross Domestic Product had not).

Within our own corner of the economy and culture, much has stabilized since the dark days of COVID: The annual Winter NAMM Show is back in a big way – while perhaps not at the record-setting attendance registered in January, 2020; Music China returns as a fully international gathering this October; and both those market segments that experienced lockdown-related booms, as well as those which were hit especially hard by the pandemic, have all eased back towards something approaching "business as usual" – or at least usual-ish.

In this month's Roundtable feature on 4-string electric basses, both YCA's Yoh Watanabe and Hoshino's Keita Sakamoto chime in on this latter phenomenon. Watanabe says, "The bass segment has been regressing in sales coming off the pandemic spike and I expect it to level out and, within a year or so, start to behave more normally," while Sakamoto adds, "During the pandemic, we saw a surge in demand for beginner guitars, making it one of the busiest times in the industry. While that has now subsided, more professional-minded players are still investing in high-quality instruments to meet their needs."

And, yet, when talking to, or receiving messages from, many MI retailers – you can see this nearly every month in our regular Dealer Surveys – there's a widespread anticipation and yearning for a "return to normal after COVID."

Normal for who, and in what way? And, in 2024, does it really have that much to do with the pandemic at this point?

There have been major changes since the beginning of 2020, for sure, but during what four-plus year stretch in our industry, or any other, have things remained static? I began working at MMR in January of 2002 and folks were still reeling from the after-effects of the dotcom bubble crash in 2001. Nobody wants to go back to that time. Who wants a return to the "normal" that was 2008?

Was life considerably easier for brick-and-mortar MI retailers pre-Internet? Damn skippy, it was. That "normal" isn't coming back, either. And, prior to the interwebs, catalog sales were a challenge and a thorn in everyone's side – yes, also true! And big boxes, while we're at it! Boo, change!

But sure, some MI staples that existed in 2019, pre-pandemic, do not exist, here in the present-day.

For example, Musikmesse is (for now, anyway) a thing of the past, but that has next to nothing to do with COVID. My own Show Report from what wound up being the final such gathering (with the hardly confidence-inspiring headline, "Musikmesse and Prolight + Sound 2019: A Changing Show Grapples with its Identity") had exhibitors such as Hal Leonard's Larry Morton conceding, "We do have concerns about the long-term health of the Musikmesse show. With many larger MI suppliers not exhibiting, along with the Tuesday-Friday schedule, we found the overall show traffic and attendance to be less that last year," and Steve Harvey of C.F. Martin & Co. adding, "We have seen some of our key competitors withdraw completely, or drastically reduce their presence at the show."

Summer NAMM is also (again, for now, at least) no more, but in its place is the universal well-received NAMM NeXT event, the first of which took place this summer.

Out with the old, in with the new; To everything turn, turn, turn – that kinda thing.

Some 2,500 years ago, Heraclitus observed, "The only constant in life is change." While I don't know enough about the man to comment about any other thoughts or maxims that may have issued from his noggin, I feel this one assertion of his, at least, is pretty inarguable. Our regular columnist, award-winning MI retailer and educator Menzie Pittman, bases most of his highly informative monthly installments on the concept of adapting to such change, rather than waiting for whatever recent waves of transformation to magically un-do themselves.

Change is "normal"; Expecting the specific realities of the past to return isn't.

Christian Wissmuller  
christian@mrrmagazine.com



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PUBLISHER  
Mike Lawson  
mike@artistpro.com

EXECUTIVE EDITOR  
Christian Wissmuller  
christian@mrrmagazine.com

CONTRIBUTORS  
Menzie Pittman, Jaimie Blackman

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

ADVERTISING MANAGER  
Matt King  
matt@mrrmagazine.com

ACCOUNTING  
Shannon Kebschull Lawson  
accounting@artistpro.com

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT  
Angel Carbonell  
angel@artistpro.com

PRINTING/FULFILLMENT  
Liberty Press  
1180 N. Mountain Springs Pkwy.  
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artistpro  
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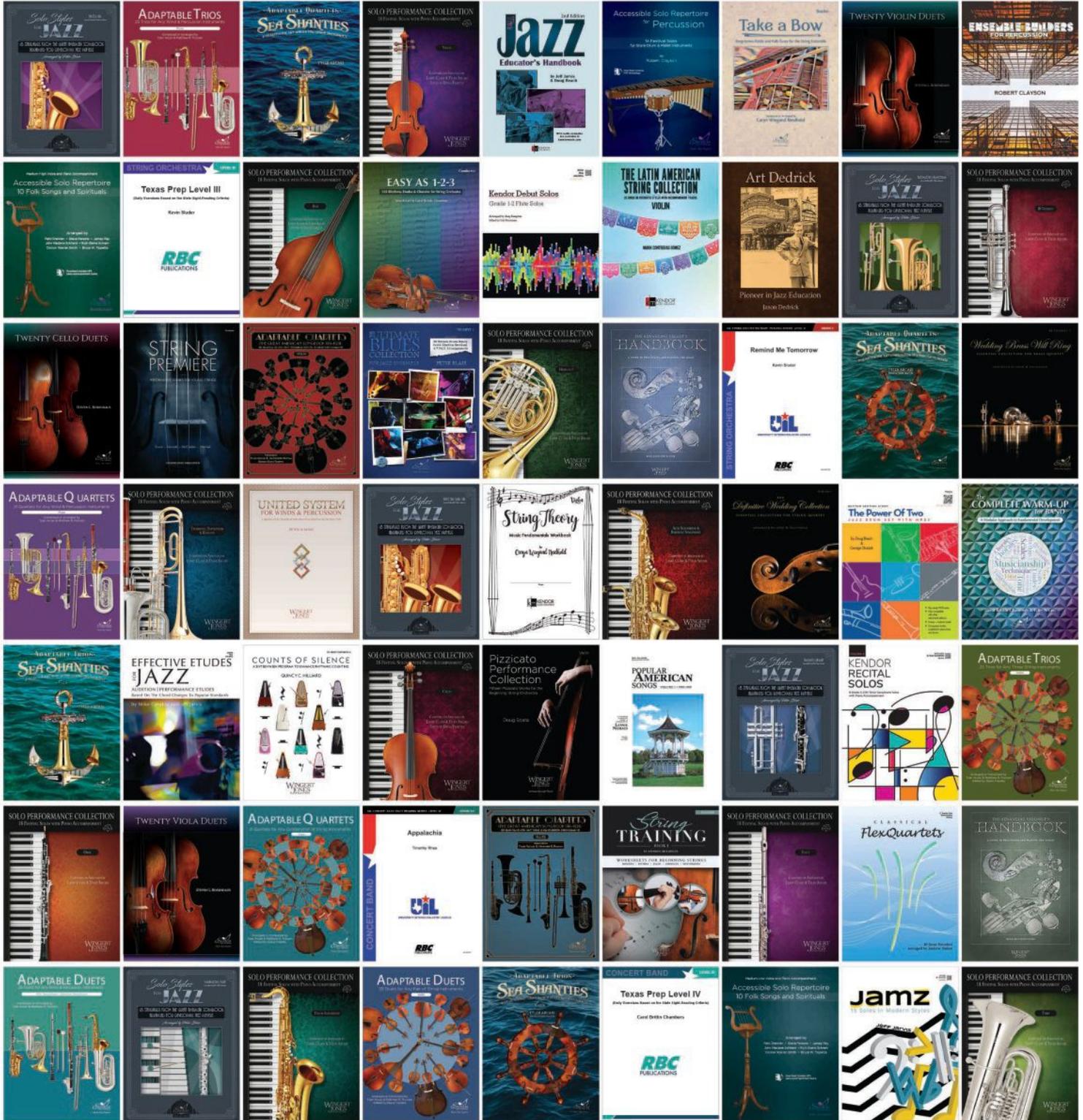
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# NAMM Show Expands to Five Days of Events with Three Days of Exhibits

NAMM has announced its initial lineup of events and exhibits for The 2025 NAMM Show, taking place at the Anaheim Convention Center January 21–25, with events beginning on Tuesday, January 21. Exhibits start January 23, creating nonstop energy through late Saturday evening, January 25, 2025.



“The NAMM Show continues to evolve based on our members’ needs, and we have heard loud and clear that we need more opportunities to network and extend our robust education offerings, while also focusing on the core exhibit hours and buying power that are the cornerstone of the week” said John Mlynczak, president and CEO of NAMM. “The 2025 NAMM Show will kick off five days and nights with a schedule that ensures each community and attendee can have the personalized experience they need to be successful in their business and profession.”

The expansion of event dates allows The NAMM Show to offer even more robust education programs for every NAMM member, including retail, brands, pro audio, entertainment technology, music education and music technology professionals, as well as tracks for artists and college music business students. Tuesday and Wednesday will include more long-form, workshop-style opportunities for attendees to dig deeper into relevant topics that will help grow our industry. To help ensure that networking leads to success in business, more global networking receptions will take place earlier in the week, allowing attendees to make vital connections right away that will lead to focused opportunities when the exhibits are open for business.

A full list of 2025 NAMM Show exhibitors, companies and brands from around the globe can be found at <https://www.namm.org/thenammshow/attend> NAMM will continue to announce, throughout the fall and winter, new additions to exhibits and events as well as must-see artists and performances that will make The 2025 NAMM Show the ultimate destination for the global music industry.

The initial full schedule of detailed events will be posted on November 4.

NAMM Week 2025 Preliminary Schedule:

Tuesday, January 21 • NAMM Foundation Day of Service and Networking with the Pros • education offerings for exhibiting brands, including a workshop on influencer-marketing strategy • Networking opportunities • International Networking Reception

Wednesday, January 22 • Global Media Day, featuring iconic brands and formal executive remarks that focus on new music industry product introductions from top music brands to startups • Education sessions and workshops on the latest in AI for business, content creation and the financial management of a music business, as well as hands-on Dante training for pro audio. • International Coalition meetings and global receptions • Top 100 Dealer Awards ceremony

Thursday, January 23 • Industry Insights breakfast session with NAMM president and CEO John Mlynczak, along with music industry special guests • A robust program of educational sessions for retail, manufacturer brands, pro audio, entertainment technology, event safety and music education professionals, as well as artists and college music business students • Exhibits open 10 am to 6 pm at the Anaheim Convention Center • Yamaha Concert Series and Bands@NAMM • TEC Awards

Friday, January 24 • NAMM U Breakfast Session Focusing on Business Marketing Trends for 2025 & Beyond • Education sessions continue for retail, manufacturer brand, pro audio, entertainment technology, event safety and music education professionals, as well as artists and college music business students • Exhibits open 10 am to 6 pm at the Anaheim Convention Center • Yamaha Concert Series and Bands@NAMM • Parnelli Awards

Saturday, January 25 • Grand Rally for Music Education • Best in Show awards • Exhibits open 10 am to 5 pm at the Anaheim Convention Center • Bands@NAMM • SheRocks Awards

## Fender, Reverb, and MIRC Launch First-ever Fender Certified Pre-Owned program

Fender Musical Instruments Corp, Reverb, and MIRC have announced the launch of Fender’s first-ever Certified Pre-Owned program. Fender Certified Pre-Owned on Reverb will allow musicians to purchase affordable instruments that are professionally inspected by MIRC and backed by a Fender one-year limited warranty, while promoting the circular ecosystem of used music gear and supporting the growth of the industry through sought-after pre-owned musical instruments.

Over the past two years, used and like-new musical instrument sales have been a bright spot in the industry. On Reverb, sales for used guitars have grown by more than 50% from 2019 to 2023, while MIRC, which sells refurbished musical instruments as Franklin Guitar Works on Reverb, has grown into a top seller on Reverb over the past two years.

Importantly, programs like Fender Certified Pre-Owned on Reverb help keep more guitars in circulation, creating opportunities across the industry.

“Making more used musical instruments available to music makers is positive for the entire music-making community – it means that even when players are challenged by economic pressures, they can still get the instrument they want within their budget and more easily sell the music gear they’re not using to fund new purchases,” said Reverb CEO David Mandelbrot. “Two things have been core to Reverb’s business since its inception: making it easy to buy and sell used musical instruments and supporting the industry’s retailers and manufacturers. The launch of Fender Certified Pre-Owned on Reverb marks a convergence in these two goals, with programs like this enabling the industry to more actively participate in the important circular used music gear flywheel.”

The Official Fender Certified Pre-Owned Reverb Shop is now open.

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## Alfred Music Teams Up with Disney Music Group

Alfred Music, the world leader in educational music publishing since 1922, is thrilled to announce a strategic alliance with Disney Music Group. This collaboration will bring beloved Disney music to students, educators, and music enthusiasts, providing access to high-quality educational arrangements of timeless Disney classics.

Through this collaboration, Alfred Music will produce and distribute a wide range of sheet music for various instruments and skill levels, showcasing songs from Disney's rich repertoire.

Key highlights of the partnership:

**Extensive Catalog:** Alfred Music will offer an array of beloved Disney music in our educational product lines, ensuring a broad range of musical interests are covered.

**Exclusive Arrangements:** Exclusive arrangements and new releases will be developed, allowing musicians to explore and perform Disney music in fresh and exciting ways.

**Access and Availability:** The Disney music collection will be available through Alfred Music's extensive distribution network, making it easily accessible to educators, students, and music stores. In addition, these Disney arrangements will be available for interactive practice on MakeMusic Cloud, formerly SmartMusic, the reference online platform for music practice from MakeMusic.

"We are ecstatic to team up with Disney Music Group," said Ron Manus, Alfred Music's chief business development officer. "This collaboration brings together Disney's iconic music and Alfred's expertise in music education, creating an inspiring and engaging learning experience for students. We are excited to see the positive impact this alliance will have on aspiring musicians everywhere."

Alison Koerper, director, Music Publishing Administration at Disney Music Group said, "Both Disney Music Group and Alfred Music have rich histories of over 100 years and are dedicated to bringing the joy of music to people around the world. This teamwork marks a new chapter in our shared commitment to inspiring and nurturing the next generation of musicians."

The collaboration aims to enhance the music education landscape by combining Alfred Music's expertise in music publishing with Disney's unparalleled legacy in creating enchanting music. Both organizations share a commitment to excellence and a passion for inspiring musicians of all ages and backgrounds.

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**Kayserburg proudly announces that Ed Bazel,**

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people on the move

JHS is delighted to announce the appointment of **Han Van Den Essenburg** as new sales agent responsible for their retail customers in France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Cyprus & Malta.



With over 30 years of experience working in the MI representing many world class brands, industry veteran Han, already represents JHS's proprietary brands in the Benelux areas, which include Vintage, Fret King, Encore, and Rapier fretted instruments and best-selling audio products and accessories from Kinsman, KAM, Dean Markley, Easy Karaoke, Odyssey and The Beatles licensed products. With a fine reputation for introducing new brands, building customer relations and strong dealer networks, Van Den Essenburg will work closely with the JHS team in the UK.

Following its strategic U.S. collaboration with Wisycom, **DPA Microphones** is expanding its team with the addition of several wireless systems professionals to facilitate the tremendous growth trajectory of these leading pro audio companies. Included among its latest appointments are industry veterans **Adinaldo "Adi" Neves** as director of business development, Wireless, and **Marcos Nieves** as area sales manager, D.C. Metro. Geoff Baynard also joins the team as business development manager, Wireless.

A seasoned product management executive with extensive experience in the technology sector, Adi Neves will spearhead DPA Microphones/Wisycom wireless business development. Prior to joining DPA, Neves was with Shure Incorporated, where he held a variety of product management, market development and technical training positions for over a decade. Neves also held sales or business development roles with Sennheiser, JBL Pro/Harman and AVID/Digidesign.



Adinaldo "Adi" Neves

Neves is joined by Marcos Nieves, who comes to DPA via the Wisycom partnership. With a wireless systems career that spans more than two decades, Nieves got his start in the industry at Systems



Marcos Nieves

Wireless/Bexel, where he gained ground-up knowledge of the inner workings of broadcast and production wireless.

**Geoff Baynard** also joins DPA as part of the alliance with Wisycom, where he served for five years as product marketing manager and previously product specialist.

**Kevin Boyle**, a distinguished Georgia educator with nearly two decades of experience, is the newest affiliated educational artist within the **KHS America Academic Alliance**, representing Jupiter Winds, Mapex Marching Drums, and Majestic Percussion. Boyle earned his bachelor's degree in Music Education from the University of Georgia in 2005 and his master's degree in Music Education from the University of North Texas in 2019. He currently serves as the Director of Bands at Daniell Middle School, where his ensembles consistently receive Superior ratings at Georgia's annual Large Group Performance Evaluation. Boyle's band students regularly participate in All-District and All-State Bands, and his middle school percussion ensembles have performed at the Southeastern Percussion Symposium. His marching ensembles have also been active in the Georgia Indoor Percussion Association, SAPA, and WGI.



Boyle is a passionate advocate for Jupiter, Mapex, and Majestic, saying, "I am thrilled to be joining the KHS America team. This community of quality educators and artists is second to none, and their commitment to their customers is the best in the business."

**Celina Bolanos** has been named marketing and social media coordinator for **Jackson, EVH, Charvel, and Gretsch** brands. Bolanos will be overseeing all PR/Comms efforts for Jackson, EVH and Charvel. Originally from Virginia, they have previously worked within marketing and publicity at Warner Music Group, APG and Mythical Entertainment. They've also previously collaborated with four different independent music publications, specializing in punk/metal coverage. Bolanos is a Japanese-Salvadoran fine artist turned entertainment marketer, creative producer, and digital community builder.



traderegrets

On September 4, we received the following sad news from Dennis J. Drumm, executive chairman of John Hornby Skewes & Co., Ltd.:



*It is with immense sadness that I must announce the death of our company's founder **John H. Skewes**, who passed away peacefully whilst he slept at his home during the night of September 4th, 2024, aged 90.*

*Born in 1933, John Skewes was an archetypal sales professional, marketer and ideas man who worked in our industry from January 1960 and then went on to found John Hornby Skewes & Co. Ltd., in October 1965, working tirelessly for his business until retiring in March 2016.*

*A mentor to many, John Skewes exhibited the kind of Yorkshire grit, tenacity, determination, and sheer hard work, which is famous for overcoming adversity, producing tremendous success and being an example for all to learn from.*

*He will be sorely missed.*

Malletech Joins Eastman's Family of Brands

Eastman Music Company has acquired Malletech, a renowned name in keyboard percussion instruments. This strategic move marks Eastman's entry into the percussion industry, expanding its portfolio and paving the way for innovation in a new musical domain.

Founded in 1983, Malletech produces high-quality keyboard percussion instruments, including marimbas, xylophones, vibraphones, glockenspiels, and a wide range of mallets. Known for their meticulous craftsmanship and superior sound quality, Malletech products are favored by professional musicians, educators, and percussion enthusiasts worldwide.

Eastman Music Company has long been known for its dedication to producing instruments that inspire musicians at every level. This acquisition underscores Eastman's commitment to expanding its horizons and exploring new territories in the music industry. Musicians and educators can expect continued excellence and groundbreaking developments in percussion instruments.



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## ■ roundtable

They put the heavy in heavy metal, the rhythm in R&B, and the funk in... well, funk. 4-string basses hold down the low end and help establish the rhythm for nearly all styles of contemporary popular music, while simultaneously playing a crucial melodic role, driving harmonic and contrapuntal creativity.

We recently sat down with reps from four major brands of these distinctly powerful instruments to learn what trends are driving this market segment, how successful MI dealers are marketing basses, and what specific models are ringing up sales in 2024.

# BASS INSTINCT



### Trends in the 4-String Electric Bass Segment

by Christian Wissmuller

#### For your brand, what is/are the top-selling 4-string electric bass model(s) at the moment?

**Keita Sakamoto:** Currently that would be the SR300EDXCZM and SR300EDXBZM.

**Blue Wilding:** ESP's LTD B Series basses are always among our top sellers. They're affordable, they offer the feature set that players from many styles need, they look cool, and they are available in 4-, 5-, and 6-string versions with the B-204SM, B-205SM, and B-206SM.

**John Stippell:** Our best-selling model right now is the NS Pulse II, particularly in the Ultra-Violet finish. The NS Pulse II series is competitively priced, featuring a Quilted Maple top, lightweight Swamp Ash body, Roasted Maple bolt-on neck with a Macassar Ebony fingerboard, and active EMG pickups. It delivers the signature Spector sound and experience at an accessible price point.

**Yoh Watanabe:** Our best-selling 4-string bass model is the TRBX174.

#### Do you feel bass players are more drawn to "tradition" and legacy when considering a purchase, or are technological and production innovations as (or more) important?

**BW:** It's a balance of those two philosophies. Smart manufacturers have selections that appeal to both crowds. In ESP's offerings, that's why we offer basses like the LTD Surveyor '87, which has a traditional look with some souped-up features, and basses like the LTD Deluxe M-1004 with very modern tech including stainless steel frets, Fishman Fluence pickups, a 35" scale for extended range performance, and more.

**YW:** I think it's less about tradition versus innovation that drives choices and more about what type of music the player is interested in. That drives their decision. Bass players are not monolithic and they are playing both traditional-style basses as well as modern designs. However, they are mostly starting with traditional-style basses.

**JS:** Spector offers a blend of tradition and innovation. While our brand has nearly 50 years of history, our unique body design, neck-thru construction, and active electronics set us apart from "traditional" bass specifications. Bassists value proven design and quality construction. As for innovation, they prioritize technology that solves problems or creates new sound possibilities. If it enhances their playing, bassists are open-minded and eager to try new things.

**KS:** Striking a balance between tradition and innovation is key. Certainly, players have their go-to instruments and many bassists today favor multi-scale construction, active electronics, and other modern build features. However, those same players may still reach for a more traditional bass when the situation calls for it. Conversely, many bassists still feel at home on those classic instruments, but are still willing to branch out and use a modern bass when needed. I think more than anything bassists are about using



"Bass players are not monolithic and they are playing both traditional-style basses as well as modern designs."  
— Yoh Watanabe, Director of Marketing, Guitars, Yamaha Corporation of America



**“If you have the opportunity to host a bass clinic for a brand, it can draw a ton of people who wouldn’t ordinarily be stopping by your store.” – Blue Wilding, Brand Manager, ESP Guitars**

the right tool for the job. We also just happen to live in a time when there are a wealth of different options available to players.

**How important is it to your brand to have endorsing artists or, even if not officially linked with your company, the affiliation with well-known musical icons? Do such affiliations truly drive sales in a meaningful way?**

**YW:** We believe supporting artists is very important. Yamaha has long and fruitful partnerships with artists, especially bass artists. We produce artist signature models with legendary bassists Billy Sheehan, Nathan East and John Patitucci and we have a deep roster of artists that play BB and TRBX models. The right artist with the right model has shown to be an effective way to drive awareness.

**JS:** Artist affiliation is crucial for us. Many bassists discover Spector through iconic players like Doug Wimbish, Rex Brown, Guy Pratt, and Sting, who have used Spector basses in key moments of their careers. We often reference these artists and their music when potential customers inquire about our instruments. In cases where we have a signature model, like with Doug Wimbish, we see a direct impact on sales.

**KS:** Our artists’ influence significantly shapes our instrument development. Their preferences and feedback guide our decisions on design and features. Moreover, they serve as brand ambassadors, inspiring customers to consider our basses. So yes, it definitely plays a significant role in driving sales.

**BW:** Artist endorsements are always important to ESP. The effect of visibility that comes from seeing people onstage with our basses can’t be underestimated. We’re coming off the summer/fall touring season, and 2024 in particular was a great year to see bass players at these huge festivals around the world turning to ESP. This is also an area where brands can showcase their products in a wide variety of music genres. ESP has some of the biggest names in bass from the world of metal like Tom Araya of Slayer, John Campbell from Lamb of God, and Mike Leon of Soulfly. That said, we also have many players from other genres like Shiah Core of Damien Marley’s band and many others.

**Any tips or “tricks” you can suggest to MI retailers when it comes to displaying or promoting bass guitars. Electric guitars tend to get the spotlight, with basses often taking a back seat – how do effective dealers give their basses a chance to stand out for customers?**

**BW:** The same retail techniques that help drive guitar sales apply to bass, like having instruments and amps available for to people to get their hands on. It’s something that can’t be replicated on your e-commerce site. Listing the unique features that dif-

ferentiate these models on their product tags, above or even instead of the more common features within a price range, like scale length, body wood or pickup brand, is a good way to make one stand out over another to wandering eyes. Also, if you have the opportunity to host a bass clinic for a brand, it can draw a ton of people who wouldn’t ordinarily be stopping by your store.

**KS:** Keeping a few high-end or popular bass models prominently displayed near the store’s entrance or high-traffic areas can help attract customers to the instrument. Additionally, not all basses need to be grouped together. If the store has a designated used section, including some basses there, mixed in with the guitars, could be a great way to generate interest.

**JS:** My best advice is to choose the brands you want to sell and invest in their full catalog. Often, bass departments feel like an afterthought compared to fully merchandised guitar sections. For example, Spector offers instruments across all price ranges, from entry-level to Custom Shop models. Our best retailers support the entire brand, creating a destination where bassists can experience the full range. Even if Custom Shop basses don’t sell daily, they drive interest and sales in our more attainable models like the Euro Series and NS Pulse.

**YW:** Invest the time to train staff to understand the nuances of basses. To the untrained ear, basses may sound all the same, but they are tonally different and serve music differently. Obviously, passive and active pickups are very distinct, but really understanding the differences in tone of a P or J configuration as well as how different a short-scale bass sounds and feels to play and being able to articulate the range of options is key to giving customers a great retail experience.

**Any recent or upcoming bass model introductions that, while they may not yet be the best-seller for your brand at the moment, you feel are poised to make a significant impact?**

**KS:** The BTB605MLM is a bass we introduced at the beginning of the year and features what we call ‘light multi-scale’ construction. It starts with a 34” scale G-string and changes to 35” scale B string. The concept behind this model is to serve as a multi-scale option for players who generally prefer traditional, parallel fret basses. It’s still relatively new and bassists are still finding out about it, but we’re optimistic about its potential.

**YW:** Yamaha has a superb lineup of basses for every level of player. We have solid entry-level models, like the previously mentioned TRBX174 as well as the BB234. We also have professional-level basses like the BB734A and TRBX604 – both with an active/passive circuit



**“Our best retailers support the entire brand, creating a destination where bassists can experience the full range.” – John Stippell, Director, Korg Bass Division**





“I anticipate that more bass players will seek out premium-quality instruments this holiday season.” — Keita Sakamoto, Bass Merchandising Manager, Hoshino (USA), Inc.

and a number of other great features. Beyond those, we have the premium Japan-made BBP34 and the Billy Sheehan ATT LTD3. Given how well received these models are, we don't have plans to materially change their designs, but we

tend to refresh them from time to time.

**JS:** We're excited about our new Euro CST Series, which launched in July 2024. As the new flagship model in the Euro line, it features elements inspired by our USA Custom Shop, including new color options, unique wood combinations, and a custom

preamp designed with Darkglass. The early response has been overwhelmingly positive.

**BW:** 100 percent yes... but until we announce those new basses that we're planning for a 2025 roll-out, we can't go into the details.

Currently, our LTD Phoenix Series basses are generating a lot of excitement with their neck-thru-body construction and superb components.



### Expectations for the bass market in the coming months?

**JS:** I expect the market to remain steady. We've seen a slowdown in lower-priced beginner models due to excess inventory, but demand for high-end Custom Shop and professional models has remained strong and should continue throughout the year.

**BW:** Bass is essential for every style of music... in some, even more so than guitar, frankly. Bass is crucial to pop music in nearly every style, and it never goes away. When musicians tour, audiences don't just want to see someone playing bass lines on a keyboard, or DJs "dropping the bass." They love seeing real musicians creating art in real time right in front of them, and that's why bass can be an exciting part of your store's offerings.

**KS:** During the pandemic, we saw a surge in demand for beginner guitars, making it one of the busiest times in the industry. While that has now subsided, more professional-minded players are still investing in high-quality instruments to meet their needs. Despite certain economic conditions, the high-end guitar market has been steadily growing. I anticipate that more bass players will seek out premium-quality instruments this holiday season.

**YW:** The bass segment has been regressing in sales coming off the pandemic spike and I expect it to level out and, within a year or so, start to behave more normally. I believe that bassists who started within the last couple of years will start to expand their collections and everyone needs to be prepared to support and nurture this new group of players.     

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# Nadine Skolaude of Teufel

By Christian Wissmuller



Earlier this summer, Teufel™, a respected German speaker manufacturer known for designing and engineering audio products since 1979, and Fender Musical Instruments Corporation (FMIC) launched the new ROCKSTER™ series of Bluetooth speakers geared towards a variety of applications and lifestyles.

United by the rally of “Here to be Heard,” the two brands joined forces to create speakers that both look and sound outstanding, melding Teufel’s German-engineered audio with the Fender design and aesthetic that are loved by millions of musicians and artists globally.

At the time of the new collaboration’s announcement in late June of 2024, Sascha Mallah, managing director of Teufel, offered: “We’re very proud to be introducing the ROCKSTER Series in collaboration with Fender and to be offering our proven Bluetooth speaker technology in the United States for the first time. The Fender x Teufel ROCKSTER series is designed for audio lovers, and we know the fans and customers will truly hear the difference in sound quality. Paired with Fender’s innovation and design input, the ROCKSTER Series really stands apart on the market.”

We recently sat down with Nadine Skolaude, VP of Customer Acquisition and International Markets for Teufel, to learn more about this new line and the partnership with FMIC.

**For those MMR readers not yet familiar with Teufel, let’s talk a little history: What prompted Peter Tschimmel to found the brand back in 1979?**

Teufel is celebrating 45 years as a company this year. Founder Peter Tschimmel had one goal in mind: creating a speaker with really good quality at an affordable price. Everything he had interacted with on the market did not satisfy him.

**In the subsequent years, what were some “milestone” moments and product introductions for Teufel?**

Expanding categories by launching Wi-Fi, multiroom stream-

ing, headphones, soundbars, and Bluetooth speakers after starting as a pioneer in the floor-standing stereo and home cinema segment. The Introduction of the Ultima, Real Blue, and Rockster series were key milestones! Additionally:

- Moving to a much bigger representative office in downtown West Berlin to provide the fast growing Teufel employees with excellent engineering capabilities and attract new customers and partner brands
- Successful D2C Expansion to multiple other European markets outside of Germany.
- Opening of Teufel-owned brand stores in order to create physical touchpoints for potential customers and build trust and brand awareness
- Launch to the U.S. with Fender

**Can you discuss the company’s European business model (direct-to-consumer, as well as fielding retail storefronts)?**

Peter knew that in the ‘90s [by] using DTC it would allow for more quality and energy that would go into the products. Given he would not have to give money to big consumers like Walmart/BestBuy, he could use profit to put it back into the company. He also knew being a D2C company allows you to develop products independently from mass market retail trends and cater to real needs of existing fans and potential new customers. Over time, opening retail storefronts allowed us to grow trust with consumers. People would be able to go in and feel/hear/see the speakers and really begin to develop trust for Teufel and its products.

**What was the catalyst for Teufel finally entering the U.S. market and why was the partnership with FMIC seen as the ideal first step on that journey?**

After building the #1 DTC Bluetooth speakers all across Europe, Teufel knew it was time to take the step into the U.S.



The Rockster Go 2 Amp



The Rockster Cross Amp

The Rockster Air 2 Amp

# There are more exciting products in the pipeline, and we will disclose these as soon as possible.

markets. Teufel was aware that entering the U.S. markets alone would leave them in a dicey situation, [as] it would take time to gain trust and reliability. It was time to take the step into the U.S. markets, since Americans love good sound, quality products, and set trends globally; that can lead to positive spillover effects into other markets for Teufel.

Thus why teaming up with Fender, an extremely well known and trusted U.S. brand, [as] it would be the best approach when coming into the U.S..

**The ROCKSTER Series has three distinct models entering a highly competitive market segment. What about these speakers sets them apart from the competition?**

A few things set these speakers apart from their competitors: Sound quality. Once you test one out it speaks to how incredible the sound is, especially depending on the size of the speakers; Aesthetic. These speakers do not look cheap, they are made well, and made to last; Price. The price in comparison to quality is unreal, and ultimately not seen anywhere else in the U.S. market for Bluetooth speakers.

**Will Teufel follow their European model in the U.S. and sell direct to end-users, or is the company looking to have retailers in the MI space come on board as partners?**

We are open to good partnerships and will adapt to the spe-

cific needs in the markets we are active in, [including] if this would entail selling our speakers via selected brick-and-mortar retail partners.

**Related to the above, are there any expectations of re-releasing Teufel gear that's not geared towards the "average consumer," but to musicians, specifically? Obviously, the ROCKSTER AIR already does have direct appeal for musicians. Will there be more along those lines?**

There are more exciting products in the pipeline, and we will disclose these as soon as possible.

**What are the plans, post-ROCKSTER? Are there other product introductions on the horizon?**

Post-ROCKSTER series, there are plans to introduce more speakers to the U.S. markets. Given Teufel has been established in the EU for some time now, there are products there which, if successful, will transition into the U.S. markets when the time is right.

**Will Teufel be exhibiting at the 2025 NAMM Show?**

The CES and NAMM [shows] are being evaluated right now, as we know how important it is to have direct contact with potential customers and media/journalists. Teufel might exhibit there.

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# 2024 Holiday Buying Guide

## New and Significant Musical Instruments and Gear to Stock in Preparation for This Year's Holiday Season

**Under \$50**

### French Cut by Légère

Introducing the French Cut by Légère, a symphonic reed designed for alto and tenor saxophones and B $\flat$  clarinet that offers richness, stability, and responsive play. With a completely reimagined profile, the French Cut is crafted for a dark, centered tone that supports deep emotional expression. This reed features an even distribution of material across its vamp, contrasted with a thinner tip, achieving a perfect balance between responsiveness and resistance. The design reduces excessive high overtones while enhancing the overall resonance and warmth, making it ideal for classical and orchestral settings. This thoughtful innovation ensures a fuller sound, suitable for grand performances and discerning classical musicians.



The creation of the French Cut blends scientific research with the artistry of woodwind music. The result is a reed that meets the needs of those who have tried Légère's other cuts but desired something more, bridging the gap between tradition and modern innovation.

Alto saxophone: \$32.99 • Tenor saxophone: \$35.99 • B $\flat$  clarinet: \$34.99

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

### Grip ONE from MusicNomad

The GRIP ONE is an all-in-one string winder, cutter, and puller for electric & acoustic guitar, bass, ukulele, banjo, and mandolin

The product's unique scratch-free and clank-free rubber lined head design that fits and grips virtually all tuning pegs. Additionally, the narrow profile design keeps the user from accidentally hitting other pegs during use. Innovative precision-bearing construction provides for effortless, silent, and super-fast winding with an ergonomic comfort grip centered below the bearing for a perfectly balanced spinning rotation.



The GRIP ONE is made with strong carbon steel and works great for all string types – big and small. The device's innovative pin puller is designed to be compatible with most popular acoustic pins. MSRP: \$16.99

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

### BOSS BSM-20 Guitar Strap

The BOSS BSM-20 Guitar Strap combines style and durability, perfect for showcasing your favorite gear brand. Made in the USA, this high-quality strap features a repeating monogram BOSS logo pattern and is crafted from tough nylon with rugged American baseball leather strap ends, ensuring a secure hold and lasting durability through years of playing. \$35.99



[www.boss.info](http://www.boss.info)

### Roland CB-RAC AIRA Compact Carrying Case

Intended for Roland's portable and giftable AIRA Compact Series, this carrying case is streamlined and rugged, featuring a semi-rigid EVA shell and tough polyester exterior and a convenient interior pocket. Whether transporting the T-8 Beat Machine, E-4 Voice Tweaker, J-6 Chord Synthesizer, or S-1 Tweak Synthesizer, the CB-RAC has you covered this holiday season and beyond. \$30.99



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

**Under \$150**

### Roland Cloud Connect Pro Membership and Wireless Adapter

Roland Cloud Connect delivers instant gratification with wireless connectivity. Just plug the included WC-1 wireless adapter into your supported Roland hardware and use the iOS/Android mobile app to browse and install Sound Packs, Wave Expansions, Model Expansions, and more. \$102.99



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

### BOSS KATANA-MINI Guitar Amplifier

BOSS's Katana amps have been favorites among guitarists and bassists for years, with high-quality sound and onboard effects at a tremendous value. The Katana-Mini offers the look, sound, and feel of acclaimed Katana amps in a portable size, allowing musicians to take the Katana tone anywhere they want to play, creating a solution for a variety of lifestyles. \$99.99



[www.boss.info](http://www.boss.info)

### Atlas-C1A from Olor Cantus

Olor Cantus LLC announced the launch of the Atlas-C1A, providing targeted, precision support exactly where it's needed, the vulnerable headstock-neck junction protecting the instrument while in transit, in the stand, in storage, and as a bonus, serves as the perfect repair jig for the legions of previously broken headstocks out in the wild awaiting some love. Simple, practical, and essential. The Atlas-C1-A is a stainless-steel tool that attaches securely but gently to the headstock area of any 3 on 3 stringed instrument. Our patent covers all stringed instruments including violins, cellos and basses etc. It applies adaptable mechanical resistance that counters the string pressure created when the instrument is tuned to pitch and serves as guardian at other times. After years of research and development, the Atlas-C1-A is here and ready to address these long-standing concerns and help musicians protect their investments. MSRP: \$129.99



[www.atlas-c1.com](http://www.atlas-c1.com)

## NUGEN Audio NUtility Toolkit

NUGEN's NUtility Toolkit is ideal for entry-level and professional music makers alike. Combining the brand's acclaimed SigMod, AB Assist, Jotter and Aligner plug-ins into one bundled solution, it fills gaps in DAW functionality and speeds up tedious admin tasks, which is a gamechanger for audio engineers.

NUGEN's NUtility Toolkit is available in AAX, VST3, AU and AudioSuite formats in 64-bit for both Mac and Windows OS. The bundle provides a savings of over \$100 versus purchasing each of the individual tools, and existing users can upgrade to the bundle for a reduced price.

With the SigMod plug-in, users can create custom signal architecture to enhance the functionality of both the DAW and third-party plug-ins. AB Assist 2 receives and compares up to four audio sources – different takes, plug-in options, mix revisions or versions of a master, with support for all surround channel counts.

Aligner is an automatic phase and polarity alignment tool designed for convenience and speed. With the automatic linking functionality, users can connect multiple instances of the plug-in to phase-correct all channels via one single user interface. Jotter provides easy sharing of timestamped notes and comments between the plug-in and the free standalone Jotter app. MAP: \$99

<https://nugenaudio.com>



## BOSS IR-2 Amp & Cabinet

The IR-2 packs the inspiring sounds of classic tube amps and mic'd speaker cabinets in a standard stompbox footprint, giving you easy access to studio-grade tones on quiet stages, fly dates, recording gigs, and practice sessions. Backed by decades of BOSS tone expertise, every selection delivers the same expressive nuance and dynamic touch response of a real amp and cabinet. Audio quality is also top-notch, thanks to advanced DSP, 32-bit floating point processing, and a 96 kHz sampling rate. \$199.99

[www.boss.info](http://www.boss.info)



## Roland GO:KEYS 3

GO:KEYS 3 is a portable music creation keyboard that offers an intuitive and fun way to explore music, perfect for beginners and experienced players alike. With a touch-sensitive 61-note keyboard and a built-in stereo speaker system, it delivers a streamlined set of core features that encourage creativity. Powered by Roland's renowned ZEN-Core sound engine, the GO:KEYS 3 includes over 1000 sounds, from acoustic pianos to modern synthesizers. It's packed with ready-made chord progressions and dynamic accompaniments, enabling users to create melodies and remixes effortlessly. Compact and battery-powered, the GO:KEYS 3 lets you make music anywhere, anytime. \$349.99

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



## Reunion Blues Expedition Series Guitar Cases

The new Expedition Series by Reunion Blues features the brand's hallmark impact-resistant Flexoskeleton, with a robust and efficient internal structure that effectively protects, while reducing bulk and overall weight. A newly redesigned, 2025D Ballistic AEGIS Abrasion

Resistant Exterior is exceptionally durable, wears well, & delivers a modern, high-tech vibe. The interior bracing system improves stability during transport with an adjustable neck block, & user-configurable protection pads at the endpin.

All of the tried & true ergonomic features Reunion Blues is known for are included as well, from an always-comfortable hideaway backpack, easy-grip subway handle for tight spots, and the signature weight distributing Zero-G handle, to make traveling with your guitar convenient & effortless.

Best yet, RB Expedition cases no longer need to journey alone. The new SideKick D-ring system delivers more storage than ever, with your choice of integrating one of the new SideKick add-on bags (available in small or large), or clipping on carabiners or bungees for stowing other items right on your case. With easy to attach, but heavy duty Velcro loops, SideKick lets you bring everything you need, in one easy to carry solution.

Expedition cases are constructed utilizing industrial-grade high-tensile thread, reversed water-resistant zippers, abrasion and scuff resistant corded edges and seams, EVA backed materials, & internal reinforcement in all high stress areas, along with an industry leading limited lifetime warranty. MAP: \$269.95

<https://reunionblues.com>



## Amati Guitars Classic Series

Amati Guitars' new Classic Series includes four traditional guitar styles: #70STSB Sunburst Double-Cutaway, #60STSV Vanilla White Double-Cutaway, #40TCBS Butterscotch Single-Cutaway and a sharp #90MTBK Tuxedo Black Offset Body. This lineup also includes the #43JBSB Tobacco Sunburst Bass Guitar for musicians in search of a warm, low-end. Each guitar comes with a padded gig bag and a laser-etched backplate. Amati Guitars: high quality at low prices.

#70STSB Sunburst Double-Cutaway | MAP: \$249

#60STSV Vanilla White Double-Cutaway | MAP: \$269

#40TCBS Butterscotch Single-Cutaway | MAP: \$299

#90MTBK Tuxedo Black Offset Body | MAP: \$299

#43JBSB Tobacco Sunburst Bass Guitar | MAP: \$359

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



## TONEX ONE from IK Multimedia

TONEX ONE mini pedal puts IK's AI Machine Modeling technology on any size pedalboard, enabling you to perform with the world's most sought-after tones in more ways than ever.

Ultra-compact and powerful, TONEX ONE stores up to 20 hyper-realistic modeled amps, cabs and stomps from a nearly infinite supply from Tone.NET. You can even load models of your own gear captured using the included TONEX software.

TONEX ONE packs the same incredible responsiveness and dynamics as the larger TONEX Pedal, but in a mini format that saves space and travels anywhere. You can fine-tune presets on the fly using the onboard gain/volume and 3-band EQ, then adjust FX levels like noise gate, compression and stereo reverb to complement any live situation. With auto save you can quickly adjust settings on the



# ■ holidaybuyingguide

fly without needing a computer. Not only does TONEX ONE deliver jaw-dropping tones and essential effects, but also the right connectivity and controls that make it easy to sound your best at any gig or performance.

TONEX ONE represents a revolution for guitar and bass players. Throw it in your gig bag and never leave home without the best rigs in the world. MSRP: \$179.99

[www.Tone.NET](http://www.Tone.NET)

## Buffet Crampon ClariMate

Upgrade your clarinet practice session with ClariMate, the silent digital practice tool and MIDI controller developed by Buffet Crampon that allows musicians to play without concern for disturbing neighbors or family members. This unique accessory converts any standard Bb clarinet into a digital clarinet, transferring real-time breath and fingering directly to your computer via USB, or to wired headphones via a headphone jack.

ClariMate is the perfect digital companion to play along to your favorite symphony orchestra or jazz combo, compose new compositions or arrangements from the comfort of your own clarinet, or venture into the wide soundscapes of MIDI! The ClariMate MIDI Mode allows you to play with VSTs and synthesizers, and Bluetooth and USB connectivity allows you to track volume, pitch, and fingering patterns.

ClariMate is ideal for touring professionals and students alike; those who need extended practice solutions in noise-sensitive environments, such as apartments or hotels, or for those who would like to benefit from a digital workspace designed for your own clarinet. Most importantly, ClariMate provides a natural and authentic playing experience with customizable features such as plugs to adjust resistance. For a limited time, your ClariMate purchase also includes a 90-day free trial to Metronaut, a practice app for classical musicians. Retail Price: \$349

[www.clarimate.us](http://www.clarimate.us)

## KRK ROKIT 5 Generation Five Studio Monitors

The five-inch KRK ROKIT 5 Generation Five Studio Monitors are advanced, active two-way studio reference monitors that feature three new voicing modes, an enhanced tweeter design, and a refreshed LCD. The three voicing modes cover all the bases for today's music makers. Mix Mode offers a flat frequency and phase response that is ideal for mixing, mastering, and critical listening. Create Mode provides more inspirational voicing and is best used for writing, producing, and casual listening. Finally, Focus Mode has a mid-focused voicing for critical analysis of the midrange band, where vocals and instruments have the most energy.

The monitors also feature 25 evolved DSP boundary and tuning EQ combinations that help minimize and correct problems in any acoustic environment. Additionally, the newly designed tweeter benefits from a highly damped acoustic silk dome diaphragm for improved phase performance and an extended frequency range (up to 40 kHz).

The monitors also feature KRK's iconic woven Kevlar aramid fiber cone woofers for superior damping and modal breakup control. Class D power amplifiers drive the transducers evenly and more efficiently at reduced operating temperatures to ensure maximum transient response and dynamics reproduction for audio integrity during long work sessions. MAP: \$199/each; \$398/pair

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



**Under \$2,000**

## Roland TD-17KV2 V-Drums

Experience Roland's acclaimed TD-17 Series at its most affordable price with the TD-17KV2. With an updated TD-17 sound engine, 12-inch mesh-head snare, and newly developed thin cymbals, this kit delivers a high-end experience that's stunningly close to playing acoustic drums. In addition to its affordable price point, the TD-17KV2 is designed to be compact, making it ideal for smaller studios, homes, or apartments. \$1,449.99

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



## BOSS KATANA-500 Bass Head

The Katana-500 Bass Head raises professional bass amplification to the next level with advanced BOSS technology. Refined pre-amp circuitry and the newly developed 500-watt Class D power amp support your touch and technique with deeply expressive tones. And with the innovative Cab Resonance feature, you can quickly calibrate the amplifier's output voice to achieve the ideal response with any speaker cabinet. You also get a wide range of premium tools to shape your personal sound, plus expansive connectivity for every playing situation. \$799.99

[www.boss.info](http://www.boss.info)



## POG3 from Electro-Harmonix

The POG3 is the most powerful pedal in Electro-Harmonix's revered line of polyphonic octave generators that continues to inspire musicians of all styles. The POG3 delivers lightning-fast tracking and perfect polyphony over 4 octaves with smoother tone and performance than ever before. From 12-string jangle to 6-voice drawbar organ sounds, the POG3 delivers an endless possibility of tone creation. The pedal has received many updates that further expand its tone shaping possibilities to enhance your performance on stage and in the studio.

Featuring 6 voices: DRY, -2, -1, +5th, +1, & +2, you can mix each with individual sliders and create enveloping stereo effects with dedicated pan knobs and selectable LEFT/RIGHT/DIRECT outputs. The effects section has been expanded to offer envelope control and adjustable Q for the new multi-mode FILTER, enhanced DE-TUNE section with SPREAD, plus the famous ATTACK slider for subtle or dramatic swell effects. All voices, effects, and additional features are controllable via expression and MIDI for more creative control. Unlock new expression effects including Freeze, Glissando, Volume, Filter, X-Fade, and Warp with advanced programming and performance controls. The INPUT GAIN slider is an old friend from the original POG that can add dirt to your tone mix. \$645

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



## DPA Microphones 2017 Shotgun Microphone

DPA consistently pushes the barrier of innovation, and the 2017 is no exception. Designed to capture authentic sound with high directivity, clarity and consistency, the 2017 excels in various challenging live performance and live recording scenarios. Its



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## NS Design WAV Electric Violin

The NS Design WAV Electric Violin is a highly versatile and affordable instrument that offers exceptional performance for musicians of all levels. Crafted with precision, the WAV features a maple body and neck, providing both durability and a resonant, rich tone. Its lightweight design ensures comfort during extended play, making it ideal for both stage performances and practice sessions.

Equipped with the innovative NS Polar Pickup System, the WAV Electric Violin captures the nuances of both bowing and plucking, delivering a full, natural sound across a wide dynamic range. The instrument's ergonomic design includes a patented shoulder rest and chin rest both of which are fully adjustable, ensuring a perfect fit for any player. This violin has passive circuitry with high impedance output, with volume and tone controls.

4 String: 670g and 5 String: 695g

Available in a full range of finish options

D'Addario Prelude Strings are standard. Compatible with solid and stranded core violin strings.

Includes custom hardshell case with handle and shoulder strap with separate compartments for shoulder rest and accessories, a bow compartment and exterior zipper pouch.

MSRP for the WAV4 is \$1,120. Please contact [sales@nedsteiner.com](mailto:sales@nedsteiner.com) for dealer net and MAP information.

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



## Château CAS-50 Alto Saxophone

The Château CAS-50 Alto Saxophone features a large bell that enhances volume and produces a rich, dark sound. Available in stunning finishes, each saxophone is adorned with elegant engravings on the bow and bell. Its ribbed construction design ensures durability and excellent sound quality. This series is well-suited for solo performances. Recommended for beginners to high-intermediate saxophonists and students. MSRP: \$1,899

<https://chateauusamusic.com>



## CS011C Cello Case from Gatchell Violins

The CS011C Poly Carbon Cello Case is ultra-durable for protection of your beloved instrument. It weighs just 6.5 pounds and is one of the lightest cases available! Includes backpack design and full suspension. Exterior finish is black/silver weave. Other colors may be available upon request. Lightest weight, excellent protection, and fantastic price! MSRP: \$699.99

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



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

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# ATLAS-C1



[www.Atlas-c1.com](http://www.Atlas-c1.com)  
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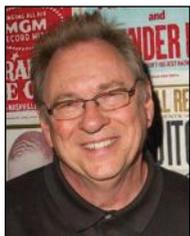
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# The Acoustic Shoppe



By  
Menzie  
Pittman

It's time! It's time to take a moment to reflect on something that is really working, and I am not the only one who knows it.

I first met Jeremy Chapman through a NAMM program; As we got to know each other, he shared information with me about his business, The Acoustic Shoppe, and casually spoke of his band with his brothers. It was not too long after, at a NAMM Top 100 awards dinner, that I did meet John and Jason Chapman.

However, it was not until the following year when The Chapman Brothers were the featured artists at a NAMM breakfast, that I had my real introduction to them. Once I picked myself up off the floor after realizing the prowess of this awesome band of brothers, I chased them down, and my exact words were, "Really?! You could have told me – I mean some kind of a hint would have been nice." To put it mildly, The Chapman Brothers play bluegrass music to an artful level, and their vocal harmonies are fire. You must do yourself a favor and listen to them on Spotify.

The Chapman Brothers are the proud owners of The Acoustic Shoppe, located in Springfield Missouri. If I was not already impressed by the music aspect of the brothers, their shop is every bit as impressive as the love and respect The Chapmans exude in their music. The store's web page is as clean as a whistle, and their mission statement makes it explicitly clear to the person browsing that they have found a music store with integrity. When you click on "Meet the Staff," reading about the team and their mission spellbinds you.

*The Acoustic Shoppe is a team of experienced musicians driven by an obsession to create a larger acoustic music community.*

*Our Mission:*

- Thrill EVERY customer
- Improve lives through music
- Be a positive impact on our environment and community
- Make acoustic music and education accessible to everyone at every stage

*• Leverage our experience to curate the best products to help customers succeed*

*If we live up to these promises, the opportunities for personal and financial growth of our employees and families will follow.*

Let's examine various points in their mission statement. It's not until their last bullet point that they mention products, and when they do, they mention "the best products to help customers succeed." Because they state it that way, it is clear to the consumer that this shop has the customer's best interest in mind. In

other words, they do not just want a sale: they want a relationship. That equates to service, and that will always be to their customers' advantage. Think for a minute. Who would not want to shop there? Trust is what turns a sale into a long-term customer. However, let's keep digging into their philosophy of success.

Reflect on the third bullet, "Make acoustic music and education accessible to everyone at every stage." The phrase "to everyone at every stage" shows clearly that this family and their staff want you to feel like you are part of their family too; and "every stage" means you are never too young or too old to learn the joys and benefits of making music. No wonder they are successful.

By now you must have a feel for the passion of the Chapman Brothers, but it does not stop there. I'm just rolling up my acoustic sleeves. How does Old School meets New School sound?

The Acoustic Shoppe's web page is simply a work of art. Their site is informative, easy to navigate, family oriented, and of course takes you to their extensive blog post, and their YouTube page. The layout of their site is fluid, the pictures are great, and it compels the user to keep clicking. The Chapmans have found interesting ways to keep you engaged, and their hook is through the idea of community. It is no wonder they have become a trusted source in both the bluegrass community, and their local community. The Acoustic Shoppe has managed to charm its viewers with style, grace, and expertise. It is easy to see why their online sales are through the roof, and why they have won the respect of all major manufacturers. The Acoustic Shoppe is celebrated as the No.1 Eastman acoustic guitar dealer worldwide.

What else can this team of wizards do? Music education of course.

The Acoustic Shoppe Academy is their lessons program, and they hail as the top destination in their area for learning to play guitar, banjo, mandolin, violin, or about any other stringed instrument! You know you have arrived when artists such as Sierra Hull, give you a personal shout out, or Rhonda Vincent shares a Bill Monroe story on your blog. It is then that you realize your business is making a meaningful contribution to the music industry.

Congrats to this music family, and the entire staff at The Acoustic Shoppe! Here's to continued success. 🎸🎻🎷

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

**“The store's web page is as clean as a whistle, and their mission statement makes it explicitly clear to the person browsing that they have found a music store with integrity.”**

**AMPLIFICATION**

**Fender Introduces the Mustang Micro Plus**

Fender Musical Instruments Corporation (FMIC) has launched the latest addition to its widely-acclaimed Mustang amplifier series, with the release of the Mustang Micro Plus. Building on the success of The Mustang Micro, this latest iteration takes affordable personal guitar amplification to the next level, right in your pocket, with a wide selection of innovative tones, amp models and effects from the acclaimed Mustang Series amps.



Forming that latest part of the acclaimed Mustang amp series, the Mustang Micro Plus is Fender's most versatile on-the-go amplifier. With over four hours of continuous play time, it can be plugged directly into your favorite Fender guitar while connected to wired headphones, allowing you to play anywhere without disturbing others.

The Mustang Micro Plus takes everything players love about the Mustang Micro, to the next level. With 25 amp and 25 effects models straight from the Mustang Series of amps, it makes it quick and easy to get iconic Fender tones anywhere; players can effortlessly select from a variety of presets tailored to their musical style.

Boasting 100 fully editable preset slots with Fender Tone® App support, the Mustang Micro Plus offers unparalleled customization. Featuring an integrated tuner and a clear display, this amp ensures everything a player needs to jam is right at their fingertips. The built-in Bluetooth audio streaming lets you play along with your favorite songs or videos in real-time. As the ultimate personal guitar amplifier, the Mustang Micro Plus delivers high-quality sound anywhere, anytime, without compromise.

"We're incredibly excited to unveil the latest evolution of our widely-acclaimed Mustang amplifier series with the introduction of the Mustang Micro Plus," said Justin Norvell, EVP Product at FMIC. "This new addition represents a significant leap forward in both technology and user experience, offering unparalleled versatility and tone in an incredibly portable package. The Mustang Micro Plus is designed to inspire musicians at every level, providing a powerful, intuitive, and accessible way to create and explore new sounds. We can't wait to see how this innovative amp will ignite creativity and elevate performances around the world."

**PRODUCT HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:**

25 amp models and 25 effect models: Extensive combinations allow players to experiment with versatility to tailor their sound for any genre or style, from smooth jazz cleans to aggressive metal distortion, enhancing creativity and expression.

100 editable presets: Musicians can save time and instantly recall their favorite amp and effect settings. This feature is particularly valuable for performers who need quick access to different sounds during a set, as well as for those who want to experiment and perfect their tones.

Integrated display with onboard tuner: The display makes it easy to navigate settings and presets, while the onboard tuner ensures that the guitar is always in tune, which is crucial for sound quality and note accuracy.

Compatible with Fender Tone: iOS and Android app as well as Bluetooth audio streaming with audio/ video sync for playing along in real time, enhancing practice sessions.

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

**PRINT & DIGITAL**

**Flexcel Concert Works Series for Band Expands: Twelve Popular Pieces Now More Accessible**

Excelcia Music Publishing's popular flexible concert band series, *Flexcel Concert Works Series*, has expanded with the new release of twelve top-selling works by beloved composers, making these favorite works even more accessible. The new releases, like all works in the Flexcel Concert Works Series, are designed to be used with significantly-reduced ensemble sizes.



Pieces in the *Flexcel Concert Works Series* can be performed by as few as five players, plus percussion. Each piece is arranged in five-part writing by transposed keys, rather than by instrument, providing flexibility when a limited number of students are in the classroom. Scored lines are included for C instruments, B $\flat$  Instruments, E $\flat$  Instruments, F instruments, as well as bass clef instruments when appropriate. Other instruments such as violin, guitar, viola, and piano are used as well when appropriate.

Excelcia Music Publishing's *Flexcel Concert Works Series* release for 2024-2025 includes pieces from composers and arrangers Carol Brittin Chambers, Christina Huss, John. M. Pasternak, Larry Clark, Laura Estes, Sean O'Loughlin, Tyler Arcari, and Matthew R. Putnam. New pieces in the series are Point Five, Christmas Race, Aliens in the Attic, A Jubilant Spirit, Santa's Spring Break, Dark Star, Bandtopia, S'vivo!, Brace for Impact, Centrifugal Force, Buckets Full of Christmas Joy and Flashpoint.

All pieces within the Flexcel Concert Works Series are available from \$60-\$75 from music retailers and from the publisher.

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

**Essential Elements Disney Favorites from Hal Leonard**

There's no better way to motivate a young band than with some popular Disney music! The new Disney Favorites collection from Hal Leonard's *Essential Elements Band Method* works with all ensembles, regardless of what method they're using. The books feature eleven great songs from a variety of hit Disney movies that band members are sure to know.



The books include arrangements for the whole ensemble to play together as well as solo arrangements for each instrumentalist. The songs are carefully correlated to correspond with instruction in the *Essential Elements* method books 1 and 2 so directors will know exactly when their group is ready to take on another song. A handy chart is provided in the table of contents with the progress requirements.

Songs include: Beauty and the Beast • Colors of the Wind • He's a Pirate • Let It Go • Remember Me (Ernesto de la Cruz) • Under the Sea • We Don't Talk About Bruno • We're All in This Together • and more!

The series includes a conductor's edition with full scores for all the band arrangements and a sample solo page for each song, as well as access to full-band recordings of each song.

*Essential Elements Disney Favorites* instrumental books retail for \$9.99 each, and the conductor edition retails for \$29.99.

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

## Jazz Solo Book from Excelcia Music Features Selections from The Great American Songbook

Excelcia Music Publishing is excited to announce the new release of *Solo Styles for Jazz: 18 Standards*



From *The Great American Songbook*, a new book arranged for developing Jazz players by veteran author and musician Peter Blair. Perfect for exploring a variety of jazz styles, the 18 songs in this collection cover ballads, bossa novas, blues and straight-ahead swing. The arrangements in *Solo Styles for Jazz* were created for woodwind, brass, and percussion players with performance opportunities in mind, functioning as both effective teaching tools and as additions to students' jazz repertoire.

"To say that this project was truly a labor of love for me would be an understatement," says author and arranger Peter Blair. "The arrangements in *Solo Styles for Jazz* are fresh takes on timeless standards from jazz, Broadway, and Hollywood – the Great American Songbook – that I know students will enjoy playing today. I stayed true to the original intent of each song but presented them in a style that demonstrates the way a contemporary jazz player might perform in a jazz club or concert setting."

*Solo Styles for Jazz* includes the melody and chord changes for each song in the book as well as two recorded tracks for each song: one with rhythm section accompaniment for easy play-along, and a full demonstration recording with soloist.

Books are available for the following instruments: alto saxophone/baritone saxophone, tenor saxophone, trumpet/clarinet, trombone/euphonium, and vibraphone/flute. *Solo Styles for Jazz* is available for \$14.99 per book from music retailers and from the publisher.

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

## CASES & STANDS

### Ultimate Support Systems' Venue Mic Stand Now Available

Ultimate Support Systems' new VMC-T-T Venue Mic Stand is now shipping. Designed in direct response to requests from venues, production companies and touring crews around the world, the stand brings Ultimate Support's best-in-class design, construction and materials to the traditional height boom microphone stand format. ACT Entertainment is the official U.S. distributor of Ultimate Support System solutions.



"These latest updates to the Ultimate Support Systems VMC-T-T venue mic stand are a perfect example of the efforts we're making to provide our customers with the tools and support they need to enhance creative visions, recording projects and live experiences," says Paul Nunn, creative director, ACT Entertainment. "We look forward to delivering them to new and existing customers alike."

The VMC-T-T Venue Mic Stand combines Ultimate Support Systems' quality with a more standardized boom stand design. Among the latest enhancements are a larger barbell and extended post, allowing for simple adjustments without impacting other knobs on the stand, as well as additional improvements to the physical construction.

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

## PRO AUDIO

### Audio-Technica Launches Limited-edition ATH-M50xLAB and ATH-M50xBT2LAB Headphones Following Fan Design Contest

Audio-Technica, a leading innovator in transducer technology for over 60 years, announces the winning limited edition color design of the wildly popular fan-favorite ATH-M50x and ATH-

M50xBT2 headphones. The winning design was chosen by fans.

After more than a decade of limited-edition color models of the ATH-M50x, Audio-Technica let fans custom design the 2024 color. The designs were created through the special interactive "LAB M50x" experience website, where fans could select from different colors in either matte or metallic for select headphone parts. Audio-Technica received over 15,000 submissions, all of which were then shared on social where fans could vote for their favorite design. Our expert panelists, including the product manager of the ATH-M50x, selected three finalists from those submissions, and then the winning "LAB M50x" design was selected with 3,127 votes from fans on social media.

The winning fan-voted design, a stunning mix of blue, orange, and gray, was designed by Brazilian DJ Sergio Gamarra. Speaking about his chosen color selections, Sergio said, "First, blue represents confidence, reflecting the quality and reliability of the M50x headset. Orange evokes energy and creativity, highlighting the excitement of the music in us. Finally, gray adds a sense of sophistication and elegance, balancing the color palette and adding a touch of modernity."

[www.audio-technica.com](http://www.audio-technica.com)



## ACCESSORIES

### Tech 21 Introduces Private Stock Killer Wail Wahs

Tech 21's Killer Wail v2 (MSRP: \$195) preserves the original tonal integrity of vintage wahs and overcomes familiar shortcomings, such as excessive noise and unreliable mechanical parts. Utilizing light sensor technology, there are no clunky pops, no irritating scratching sounds, and no pots to wear out. Machined from solid billet aluminum, the heavy duty housing will provide long life – on and off the road.

Rather than utilizing simple band-pass or low-pass filters, the Killer Wail v2's faithful emulation uses a specially-designed filter. It not only changes the frequency, it also changes the Q, which is the sharpness of the filter.

The Richie Kotzen Signature Killer Wail (MSRP: \$245) features a spring-loaded rocker that returns to its resting/bypass position when you remove your foot from the pedal and automatically engage when you press forward on the pedal. The RK Signature Killer Wail is phantom power operable with a Richie Kotzen Signature RK5 v2 Fly Rig with a modification. Operable via standard 9V alkaline battery or optional Tech 21 DC9 power supply. Measures 3.375" w x 8.0" l x 1.75" h and weighs 24 oz.

Available direct exclusively through Tech 21's store on Reverb:

<https://reverb.com/shop/tech21>



## FRETTED

### Martin D-11E Rock the Vote

The Martin D-11E Rock the Vote acoustic-electric guitar is a special edition instrument crafted to inspire people to participate in our democracy. This collaboration between Martin Guitar, David Crosby's estate, Rock the Vote, and artist Robert Goetzl tells a powerful story. "David was a patriot," says executive chairman Chris Martin IV. "He believed deeply in this great experiment of ours, and his passion for voting is something we wanted to honor and continue."

The vision for the original D-16E Rock the Vote guitar launched

back in 2020 was born from a conversation between Martin and Crosby, partnering with Rock the Vote to encourage people to register and participate in federal, state, and local elections.

A reissue of that original guitar, the all-new D-11E Rock the Vote model includes new features like an LR Baggs M80 soundhole pickup paired exclusively with Luxe by Martin Kovar strings. Kovar is a unique alloy of two ferromagnetic metals, nickel, and cobalt, not found in conventional phosphor bronze strings. When paired with the adjustable M80 humbucking coil, these strings are guaranteed to deliver an exceptional acoustic-electric experience. It's the ideal pairing for players seeking warm, authentic, amplified tones in any performance setting.

The D-11E Rock the Vote acoustic-electric is crafted with premium materials, including American sycamore satin back and sides and a spruce gloss top showcasing Robert's custom artwork. Its Dreadnought size and unique 000 depth offer players a powerful, projective sound with strong bass and a comfortable feel. It also features a satin select hardwood neck, ebony bridge and fingerboard, silver binding, and includes a softshell case made of hemp.

This guitar not only commemorates Crosby's legacy, but through this collaboration, Martin Guitar is proud to support Rock the Vote with a \$5,000 donation. Rock the Vote is a non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to building the political power of young people, and over the past 30 years it has helped register over 14 million voters. According to the organization, "In 2024, Millennials and Generation Z will comprise 44% of American voters. Young voters are new voters and as new voters they face unique obstacles to voting... Our efforts focus on research-driven programs and innovative solutions to right the system and ensure each youth generation is represented in our democracy."

With only 47 of these guitars made, honoring the election of the 47th U.S. president, each one represents a commitment to encouraging civic participation through the universal language of music. "I believe it's our responsibility as citizens to participate in our democracy," says Chris.

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

**Cort Guitars Announces New G Series Model: G250 SE**

The Cort G250 SE is a double-cutaway dream. It starts with the basswood body. Known for its full-bodied and warm tones, basswood is the perfect choice for musicians playing a wide range of styles. The basswood body is then lacquered in four gorgeous finishes: ocean blue grey, olive dark green, vivid burgundy, and black. A finish to suit every mood. The body is then adorned with a gorgeous "old school" black pickguard giving off it's perfect vintage vibe. With the neck and fretboard, Cort spared no expense to come up with a visually stunning and sonically superior choice: roasted maple. The roasted maple neck is created by specially selecting choice maple and "roasting" it in an oxygen-free oven at hot temperatures. This allows for the wood to cure to the perfect golden brown enhancing its looks, stability, and overall robust tone. The 25 1/2" scale length neck is then finished in satin allowing for easier playability and comfort. The roasted maple fretboard has 22 frets and black dot inlays adding



to its' vintage appeal. Where the neck meets the body, the G250 SE avoids the same old squared-off heel joint opting for a classier round beveled heel for easy access to those high notes.

The Cort G250 SE features Cort's brand-new Voiced Tone pickups. Drawing on their decades of pickup winding experience, Cort's engineers were able to create pickups that give any of the name brands a run for their money. The VTH-59 bridge humbucker partnered with the VTS-63 Single Coil Pickups give the G250 SE its tonality, clarity, and vintage warmth. One Volume, One Tone (Coil-Tap), and 5-way selector switch allow to change up the sound to the perfect setting, no matter the genre. A two-point tremolo with steel bent saddles displays that vintage feel with all the vibrato needed while keeping proper body contact. D'Addario EXL 120 strings add the finishing touches to this amazing guitar.

Cort Guitars continues to create guitars that musicians can rely on. The Cort G250 SE is exactly the right guitar for any musician looking for a dependable instrument with the looks, sound, and affordability to back it up. Street Price: \$349.99 USD

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

**AMPLIFICATION**

**Positive Grid and Steve Vai Join Forces to Unleash Spark MINI Vai**

Positive Grid presents Spark MINI Vai, a portable smart guitar practice amp with an exclusive lightweight cable. Custom-designed by Vai himself, Spark MINI Vai captures his iconic sound and personal design touch. This unique, battery-powered amp delivers multi-dimensional sound and Vai-crafted presets, making it the ultimate rig for playing, practicing, and recording. Plus, during Positive Grid's pre-order period, customers have a chance to receive a hand-signed model.



Steve Vai is one of the world's most groundbreaking and influential guitarists, and Spark MINI Vai reflects his unique tone and style. The amp features a custom burgundy Tolex, custom gold piping and a gold lined strap, hand-picked by Vai himself. The mandala on the front grille – made famous on his Hydra guitar – pays tribute to Vai's distinct energy and focus. Spark MINI Vai also comes equipped with a matching lightweight 10 foot guitar cable featuring 24K gold-plated connectors and a durable burgundy weave nylon jacket.

Four exclusive on-board presets created by Vai deliver the raw power of his tone. They include:

- FRESH – Crystal clear clean tone
- MILD – More bluesy clean tone with some grit
- HOT – Well distorted rock rhythm tone
- FIRE – Full-on lead tone

The companion spark app also provides access to backing tracks and loops direct from Steve Vai's catalog that users can play along to.

In addition, Steve Vai has personally autographed 100 of these amps, which will be awarded to random recipients who purchase during the pre-order period starting 9/3/2024. Anyone who purchases during that time will be automatically entered for a chance that their order will be one of these exclusive hand-signed models.

Portable and battery-powered, the 10-watt Spark MINI smart guitar practice amplifier delivers surprisingly loud, multi-directional sound and features easy-to-use onboard controls. Spark MINI can also be used as a Bluetooth audio speaker for streaming music or as an audio interface for recording musical ideas.

[positivegrid.com](http://positivegrid.com)

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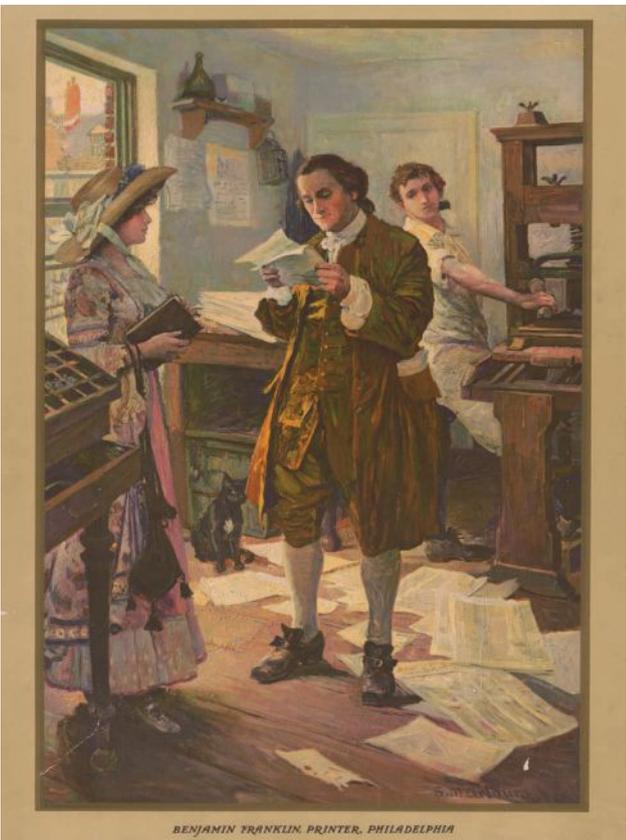
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