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MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

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‘Elevated Visibility and Desirability’
Resonator Guitars Ride the Americana Wave
to Record Sales



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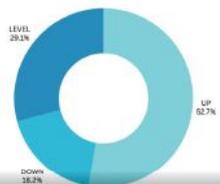
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David Mandelbrot



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Dealer Survey:
To DI For... – Bass DI
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C O N T E N T S



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Since its founding in 1989, Mapex Drums has continuously pushed the boundaries of drum design, delivering high-quality instruments that cater to beginners, seasoned professionals, and everyone in between. *MMR* recently connected with Mapex Drums' Jeff Mulvihill to explore a bit of Mapex's legacy, its impact on the music industry, and what's next for this trailblazing brand.

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A revered niche instrument that's always held a valued role amongst players and die-hard enthusiasts of certain genres of music, resonator guitars have been in the spotlight considerably more the past decade or two – and ever-increasing sales in MI retail outlets across the nation reflect this shift.

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With over half (52.7%) of participants in this month's MI retailer poll reporting upwards-trending sales when it comes to bass DI boxes, this may well be one of the sleeper-segments of the industry at the moment. Learn what trends are shaping this portion of the MI industry in 2025 and what brands are currently producing the good stuff that players and FOH engineers seek.

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Three Gear-buying Trends that Will Shape 2025: by Reverb CEO David Mandelbrot 19

Reverb has a bird's-eye view of changing trends in MI, and they've seen quite a few come and go over the past decade. More recently, these shifts have been less about the gear, itself, and more about where, why, and how musicians purchase it. As 2025 races on, CEO David Mandelbrot has identified three major musician shopping trends he believes will shape the rest of the year.

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By Christian Wissmuller

Twang, Nostalgia, the Americana Boom – and Why Now is the Time to Take Advantage

“A regular acoustic guitar might be fine for strumming at a backyard bonfire, but if you really want to lean into the whole vintage, boot-stomping, whiskey-drinking vibe, you’re going to need something that looks like it was made from repurposed tractor parts.”

For an instrument that was designed in the 1920s to be louder than a banjo-wielding lunatic in a speakeasy, the resonator guitar has aged surprisingly well. Once the scrappy underdog of the guitar world, it has become a beloved symbol of roots music, folk revivalism, and people who look like they own a suspicious number of leather vests and brew their own beer. But why the sudden resurgence in its popularity? The answer lies in the rise of Americana and the broader movement toward acoustic-based music that doesn’t require three different distortion pedals just to be taken seriously.

Americana music – an enjoyable (if, at times, a little... “self-consciously curated”) blend of folk, blues, country, and a little bit of “my granddaddy used to play this on the front porch” energy – has exploded in popularity over the last couple of decades. Artists like The Avett Brothers, Gillian Welch, and Jason Isbell have helped usher in a new appreciation for music that sounds like it was discovered in a dusty old suitcase under someone’s bed. And let’s not forget Billy Strings, whose lightning-fast picking makes even the most cynical metalhead say, “Okay, yeah, that’s pretty cool.”

With this shift, the resonator guitar has stepped out of the shadow of obscurity and into the limelight (or at least into dimly lit folk festivals and intimate coffeehouse gigs). The instrument’s distinct metallic twang and undeniable rustic charm fit perfectly with the yearning, sepia-toned aesthetic that modern Americana thrives on. A regular acoustic guitar might be fine for strumming at a backyard bonfire, but if you really want to lean into the whole vintage, boot-stomping, whiskey-drinking vibe, you’re going to need something that looks like it was made from repurposed tractor parts.

The revival of the resonator guitar (the subject of this month’s cover story, page 14) also speaks to a larger cultural trend of people yearning for something “real” – something handcrafted, rich with history, and impossible to mass-produce with a few clicks on a laptop. It’s the same reason vinyl records have sent hundreds of thousands of CDs to the dustbin and why people are suddenly very, very into making their own sourdough and learning to knit. In an era where everything is auto-tuned and algorithm-driven, a resonator guitar offers the musical equivalent of a firm handshake and a knowing nod.

These same factors that appeal to a seasoned picker looking to expand his or her sound, a blues enthusiast channeling their inner Son House, or just someone who wants to look effortlessly cool at the next open mic night, should quite possibly apply to you, the MI dealer with a reasonable supply of “normal” acoustic and electric six-strings, a handful of ukes – maybe even some banjos and mandos – in stock.

The resonator guitar is ready to welcome you with its gleaming metal body and unmistakable sound and to get customers in the door. Just be prepared for a lot of people asking, “Hey, is that one of those guitars with the hubcap on it?” Yes. Yes, it is. Want to try it out? That one’s currently on sale...

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THE Musical BOOKSHELF

Connecting Diverse Children's Literature with Music

By DR. SUZANNE HALL

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KHS AMERICA LAUNCHES THE ALIANZA ACADÉMICA WITH FREE VIRTUAL FESTIVAL

KHS America is proud to present the Alianza Académica, a unique opportunity for school programs to join a vibrant community of top educators, artists, ensembles, and music retailers, along with leading mariachi, conjunto, and Regional Mexican music programs nationwide. In celebration of this new program, KHSA will also host a free virtual festival to showcase school ensembles.

Since 2017, the offerings and activity of the Alliance program have provided next-level support to school band programs throughout the country. Now, with the growing popularity of Regional Mexican music and its increasing adoption in educational programs, the KHS America family of brands, including HOHNER, H. Jimenez, Hercules, Jupiter, XO and Mapex, strive to strengthen the connection between Latino musical heritage and the next generation of musicians.

When schools join the KHS America Alianza Académica, they will receive access to benefits intended to enhance the experience of students, promote program growth, and bring attention to the great things that educators are doing to pass along this musical heritage. Benefits will include access to exclusive resources from renowned educators, purchase rewards, clinician or artist

appearance support, and national exposure for member schools. This is offered in close cooperation with the best music retailers in the country in order to foster important

relationships between educators, KHSA, and other businesses that support music education.

To celebrate this new Alianza Académica, KHS America is hosting a free virtual festival, inviting schools to submit video entries in one of three categories: Middle School Mariachi, High School Mariachi, or Conjunto/Regional Mexican/Open.

The KHS America Alianza Académica Virtual Festival supports and salutes schools across the United States as they showcase their Latin music ensembles. This free, virtual event provides schools with expert feedback from renowned educators and rewards top-performing groups with high-quality instruments. By eliminating travel expenses and simplifying the competition process, the festival lifts barriers to participation and empowers schools to focus on delivering an exceptional experience for their students.

Entries for the festival can be submitted between March 10th and April 15th, and prize packages will be awarded to the top three ensembles in each category.

To learn more and enter the contest, please visit academicalliance.com/virtual-festival.

SCHOOL OF ROCK CELEBRATES MAJOR MILESTONE WITH OPENING OF 400TH FRANCHISE LOCATION

School of Rock, the global leader in performance-based music education, announces the opening of its 400th franchise location with a new school in Reno, Nevada, marking a monumental milestone in its mission to transform lives through music education. This achievement highlights the brand's unprecedented growth, industry leadership, and unwavering dedication to its students, franchisees, and global community.

Since its founding in 1998 as a single school in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, School of Rock has evolved into a worldwide phenomenon, operating or developing in 23 international markets. With over 650 schools open or in development and a rapidly expanding student base of over 70,000 aspiring musicians, School of Rock continues to redefine music education with its patented, performance-based curriculum. In 2024, School of Rock bolstered its global footprint through a landmark master franchise agreement for the United Kingdom, expanding into England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

beyond its global expansion, the School of Rock community has made waves on some of the world's biggest stages, including performances at Bonnaroo, Lollapalooza, and Broadway. School of Rock alumni have also featured prominently in major entertainment projects and gone on to achieve global fame and success.

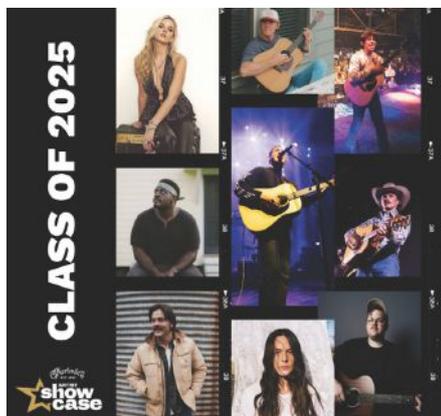
The opening of the 400th location continues

what has already been an extraordinary year for School of Rock. Already in 2025, the brand was recognized with a Top Franchise Award by Franchise Business Review, ranking in the Top 200 Franchises for 2025 based on outstanding franchisee satisfaction. It also earned the title of #1 Children's Enrichment Franchise in Entrepreneur's 46th Annual Franchise 500®, marking its fifth consecutive year at the top. In addition, School of Rock was named Best Children's Services & Education Franchise at

the Global Franchise Awards 2025.

With dozens of new school openings on the horizon and ongoing innovations in its curriculum and student programs, School of Rock is poised to build on its legacy of transforming lives through music. This milestone is about more than just franchise development and business success. School of Rock is redefining music education globally, making an impact on countless lives, and inspiring the next generation of rock stars.





JD Clayton

JD Clayton delivers a timeless blend of country-rock shaped by his Arkansas roots. After years of grinding in Nashville and touring with legends like Dwight Yoakam, Old Crow Medicine Show, and Parker McCollum, Clayton returned home to craft Blue Sky Sundays, a deeply personal and adventurous album that led to his signing with Rounder Records. His music, rich with storytelling and authenticity, resonates with a sound that is both grounded and exhilarating. He is set to tour extensively in 2025.

Karley Scott Collins

Karley Scott Collins pairs ethereal charm with razor-sharp storytelling. Her latest project, Write One—featuring Keith Urban and Charles Kelley—dives deep into heartbreak and self-reflection. A 2024 CMT Next Women of Country honoree, Collins co-produced the album with GRAMMY® winner Nathan Chapman and played multiple instruments throughout. Having toured with icons like Willie Nelson and Dwight Yoakam, she is set to join Urban’s HIGH AND ALIVE TOUR in 2025, further solidifying her place in modern country music.

Kashus Culpepper

Alabama-born singer-songwriter Kashus Culpepper embodies the raw sound of the South. His husky, sandpaper growl tells stories of heartbreak and resilience, first honed during a Navy deployment in Spain. Back home, he built his name in dive bars along the Mississippi Gulf Coast, selling out headline club shows before releasing a single song. Now signed to Big Loud Records, Culpepper has shared

MARTIN GUITAR ANNOUNCES THE MARTIN ARTIST SHOWCASE CLASS OF 2025

Martin Guitar is proud to introduce the Martin Artist Showcase Class of 2025, a dynamic and diverse group of musicians shaping the future of music.

Launched in 2024, the Martin Artist Showcase was created to celebrate, support, and amplify breakthrough artists who are redefining genres, telling unforgettable stories, and inspiring the next generation of songwriters

and performers.

Following the success of the inaugural class, the 2025 lineup features nine extraordinary artists spanning country, folk, Americana, rock, and beyond. Each of these musicians brings a unique voice and perspective to the industry, and Martin is honored to provide them with a platform—and the instruments—to continue sharing their music with the world.

Meet the Martin Artist Showcase Class of 2025

stages with Charles Wesley Godwin, Charley Crockett, and NEEDTOBREATHE. His debut album is set to arrive in 2025.

Madi Diaz

GRAMMY-nominated artist Madi Diaz continues to push the boundaries of folk and Americana with her album Weird Faith, exploring love, self-discovery, and transformation. After opening for Harry Styles and later joining his touring band, Diaz has cemented her place as one of the most compelling voices in contemporary music. The deluxe edition of Weird Faith, featuring collaborations with Kacey Musgraves, Lizzy McAlpine, and Lennon Stella, is out now, and she will be headlining a major tour this year.

Wyatt Flores

Wyatt Flores is making waves with his debut album Welcome to the Plains(Island Records). He has performed on The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, NPR Music’s Tiny Desk Concert series, and CBS Saturday Morning, while earning accolades from Rolling Stone and NPR. A proud Mexican-American artist from Oklahoma, Flores has amassed over 325 million streams to date. His growing fan base can expect a full slate of live shows and festival appearances in 2025.

Dylan Gossett

Dylan Gossett, a 25-year-old singer-songwriter from Austin, Texas, made his mark in 2023 with his viral hit “Coal,” earning critical acclaim from The New York Times. His raw, heartfelt songwriting has amassed over 700 million career streams. With a 23-city headline tour on the horizon, Gossett is proving to be a force in modern country and folk music, captivating

audiences with his storytelling and emotive performances.

Braxton Keith

Braxton Keith is leading a revival of classic honky-tonk country. Raised in Midland, Texas, he honed his sound in Texas dancehalls, blending smooth two-step rhythms with a barbed-wire twang. His 2024 single “Cozy” showcases his fresh take on traditional country, and with more music on the way, Keith is ready to make an even bigger impact in 2025. His highly anticipated album is expected later this year.

Michael Marcagi

Cincinnati-based Michael Marcagi has built a loyal following through grassroots support and honest storytelling. His Warner Records debut EP, American Romance, highlights his folk-rock sensibilities and deep connection with listeners. Rejecting the traditional rock-star persona, Marcagi’s music is refreshingly authentic. He will be taking his signature sound to audiences worldwide as he embarks on an extensive tour in 2025.

Michigander

With over 60 million streams and praise from NPR, Paste, Consequence, SPIN, and Forbes, Michigander has established himself as a force in alternative music. His self-titled debut album, released February 7, 2025, follows a successful career of radio hits and festival appearances at Lollapalooza and Shaky Knees. His upcoming tour will see him playing venues across North America and Europe.

Visit martinguitar.com for more on the Martin Artist Showcase.

ROLAND ACHIEVES ‘B’ SCORE IN THE CDP CLIMATE CHANGE REPORT 2024

Roland Corporation, a world leader in music creation and musical and multimedia product manufacturing, announces its newly accredited “B” score in the 2024 climate change survey conducted by CDP, the world’s only independent environmental research and information disclosure system. Widely recognized as the global standard for corporate environmental reporting for 25 years, the UK-based international non-profit organization CDP surveys and discloses the results of the environmental initiatives of more than 24,000 companies worldwide. The “B” rating achieved by Roland is considered “Management” level and indicates that CDP evaluated Roland as a company that is “managing and working on its own environmental risks and impacts.”

As a voluntary CDP survey participant, Roland is expressing its commitment to accountability and transparency for its environmental impact and its willingness to track, manage, and reduce carbon emissions for a more sustainable future.

Founded in 1972 in Osaka, Japan, Roland has contributed to the sustainable development of society for decades by driving innovation and inspiring creativity within music and video cultures. At the same time, these artistic cultures rely on the stability and prosperity of the environment and society to thrive.

Roland is continuously working to strengthen its sustainability contributions through traditional industries and creative cultures and to make meaningful efforts to solve social issues such as climate change and human rights—always striving to achieve a sustainable society. The teams at Roland also live by a simple but powerful ambition—WE DESIGN THE FUTURE—believing that when innovation meets creativity, the results can be remarkable.

To learn more about Roland’s sustainability initiatives, visit <https://www.roland.com/global/sustainability/>.



MAJESTIC PERCUSSION EXPANDS ARTIST ROSTER WITH HALL OF FAME PERCUSSIONIST TERRI HALEY



Accomplished percussionist and arranger Terri Haley has joined the Majestic Percussion artist roster. With over 35 years of experience in performance and instruction, Haley's extensive background in drum and bugle corps, percussion ensembles, and music education makes her a valuable addition to the Majestic artist roster.

Haley earned a B.S. degree in Nuclear Medicine, as well as a B.A. and M.M. in Percussion Performance from the University of Nevada—Las Vegas. Her musical journey began with the piano, but it was percussion that truly captured her passion in high school. Haley spent a cumulative seven years as a member of the Marion Cadets, Velvet Knights, and Blue Devils before moving on to teach the Velvet Knights with Paul Rennick and Tom and Catherine Float. She has also instructed and arranged for top groups like the Troopers and Seattle Cascades. She was inducted into the Blue Devils Hall of Fame in recognition of her contributions. Her work

extends beyond the drum corps to include writing for and instructing high school indoor drumlines, marching band drumlines, and various percussion ensembles nationwide.

In addition to performing, Haley has been an advocate for percussion education and wellness. She has presented at Percussive Arts Society conventions, contributed articles and exercises to Percussive Notes, and served as Vice President of the PAS Nevada chapter. Haley currently teaches instrumental music in the Clark County School District and operates a private percussion studio in Henderson, NV.

Haley has a deep appreciation for Majestic's craftsmanship. She highlights one of her favorite instruments, the Synthetic Bar Xylophone, saying, "The woodgrain-print bars produce clear tones with minimal overtones, and the solid, streamlined frame makes setup and breakdown effortless."

SENNHEISER JOINS NORTH AMERICAN SPECTRUM ALLIANCE

Sennheiser has announced that the company has joined the North American Spectrum Alliance, a project of the non-profit North American Broadcasters Association (NABA) committed to identifying and taking action on technical and operational issues affecting radio and television broadcasters in Canada, Mexico and the United States. The alliance unites broadcasters, rightsholders, venues, and the entertainment industry to protect the critical radio spectrum used for broadcasting, wireless microphones, cameras, and other production tools – a goal that Sennheiser has been actively pursuing, too, both as a company and as a member of various associations.

The North American Spectrum Alliance presents a strong, unified voice for spectrum retention in a broadcast and production environment that is marked by recent spectrum reallocations and plans for potential additional UHF auctions. With ongoing encroachment from mobile services (IMT) and unlicensed devices, the association takes action to safeguard the resources that power content creation and delivery.

Rebecca Hanson, director-general of NABA says, "We believe that users of media spectrum in North America need to band together to defend all aspects of spectrum that the industry needs, and wireless audio is an essential part of this effort. We are delighted to welcome Sennheiser as a new member to the North American Spectrum Alliance. Their long-standing global advocacy for radio spectrum and leadership in wireless technologies will significantly strengthen our collective efforts."

Dr. Andreas Wilzeck, head of Spectrum Policy and Standards at Sennheiser, emphasizes that Sennheiser's commitment extends beyond technology, with the company fostering close collaborations with customers, end users, partners, industry leaders,

and regulatory bodies: "Our strategy revolves around forging meaningful alliances across industries, actively participating in standardization efforts, and engaging in regulatory discussions. This approach allows us to effectively articulate and serve common interests, ultimately driving progress for our customers and the entire audio industry. Joining the North American Spectrum Alliance is a natural progression of this commitment, and we hope our decision will inspire others to follow suit."

For Joe Ciaudelli, director of Spectrum and Innovation for Sennheiser in the USA, collaboration is key, too: "We firmly believe in the strength of collective action as we safeguard the TV-UHF band, which stands as the world's most successful spectrum sharing ecosystem. Simultaneously, we're actively pursuing additional frequency options and spearheading technological innovations like WMAS to fuel growth. This unified approach

is not just important—it's imperative. We cannot afford fragmentation among various interest groups. NABA's initiative in bringing stakeholders together is commendable, and we're fully committed to this collaborative journey."

Protect (that which creates) what you love

While the term "spectrum" may sound abstract for many people, it is a prerequisite for creating, experiencing and disseminating the content and live events we all have come to love. Spectrum enables the content that mobile and streaming services rely on. Wireless technology is behind the concert of a megastar or an intimate gig in a club; it delivers the passion and excitement of sports to fans across the globe. Celebrations, theatre performances, live events, theme parks, exhibitions – all have come to rely on wireless to immerse their guests in a vivid, captivating experience.

Entertainment, news gathering, exciting movies, documentaries: they are produced using wireless technology. Behind all of this is the radio spectrum – a resource that is as finite as it is precious, and which is harnessed with expertise and care by professional users.

Join to make a difference

Rebecca Hanson extends an invitation: "We welcome all users of media spectrum, be they large or small, to join the Spectrum Alliance. Together, we can protect the future of wireless content creation."

Visit <https://habanet.com/naspa/> for more information. To inquire about joining the Spectrum Alliance, contact Rayne Morgan at rayne@habanet.com. Membership in NABA is not required to join the Alliance.



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Shure Incorporated, a global leader in audio electronics and technology, has collaborated with two other international audio equipment brands to address a network in China engaged in the large-scale manufacture and export of counterfeit products, including microphones, headphones, and amplifiers.

In May 2023, Shure received information about a network of nine entities in China exporting counterfeit audio equipment to Southeast Asia. The network operated more than 80 separate online stores selling to customers in Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Philippines.



CUSTOM MAINS INSTALLED AT SOUND FACTORY RECORDING STUDIO CREATED BY ACOUSTICIAN GEORGE AUGSPURGER AND KRK

Originally opened in the early 1960s as Moonglow Records, The Sound Factory name was coined by Producer David Hassinger, who purchased the studio in 1969. A little over a decade later, the studio was sold to Sunset Sound Recorders' owners Paul and Tutti Camarata, who ran the facility until it was sold in 2017. After 60 years of serving the music industry, LA's Sound Factory boasts a history of working with some of the world's greatest artists. Among these are Marvin Gaye, the

SHURE SCORES MAJOR VICTORY AGAINST PRODUCT COUNTERFEITING NETWORK

Shure, working through IP services business Rouse and its strategic partner firm, Lusheng, collaborated with two other audio equipment manufacturers to launch coordinated action against the counterfeit operation.

China's police force in the province, the Guangdong Province Public Security Bureau (PSB) launched simultaneous raids against the targets, seizing counterfeit products onsite at several locations in August 2023. The PSB investigated the trading company at the heart of the network and through careful forensics, discovered records showing more than \$1.7 million USD in sales of counterfeit products from various international brands, including nearly \$900,000 USD of counterfeit Shure products.

The case concluded in December 2024 with seven suspects sentenced to imprisonment

ranging from two to four and a half years and fines totaling \$1.1 million USD. Shure and one other participating brand also concluded settlement agreements with the suspects for considerable compensation.

"We are grateful to China's PSB, prosecutors, and courts for showing determination to fight these counterfeit crimes," said Eric McAlpine, Shure's Vice President and Chief Legal Officer. "Counterfeit products hurt everyone, including customers and authorized retailers, and we will continue to protect our brand from these illegal activities. Shure has been in business for 100 years and we want our customers to experience the quality of a genuine Shure product."

Shure recommends customers only purchase Shure products through authorized retailers.

LOS ANGELES' ICONIC SOUND FACTORY INSTALLS CUSTOM MAINS WITH KRK AND LEGENDARY ACOUSTICIAN GEORGE AUGSPURGER

Jackson 5, and Linda Ronstadt in the 60s and 70s; Sheryl Crow and Red Hot Chili Peppers at the turn of the century; Doja Cat, SZA, and Mark Ronson, as well as artists currently working with Sound Factory's own record label.

In an effort to keep up with the changes in technology and musical styles, the studio's current leadership sought to upgrade the space while still paying homage to its history. In doing so, they connected with George Augspurger to create new mains for the facility's two recording studios. The legendary acoustician and speaker designer had previously designed aspects of the Sound Factory during its expansion in the 1970s, and his experience in the studio was a perfect complement to the upgrade. After designing the new custom mains, Augspurger worked in collaboration with Craig Hockenberry, Gibson Director of Product Development, Pro Audio, to have the

speakers built. Augspurger's expansive pro audio knowledge, coupled with Hockenberry's expertise in designing and building Gibson's KRK monitors, proved to be ideal for this unique project.

"After they had run the studio for about a year, [the present owners] asked me what would be involved in designing custom monitors for Studio A, the original room," says Augspurger. "The room itself was one that I had designed, but it [now] had standard commercial monitors in it. So, using the components of the so-called 'Augspurger monitor,' we created a design for the room. Then, more recently, they wanted to upgrade the monitors in Studio B. The same design was physically able to be accommodated [in both rooms,] so we went ahead and [designed] the retrofit in Studio B as well."

L-ACOUSTICS AND D&B AUDIOTECHNIK LAUNCH DEDICATED MILAN MANAGER WEBSITE

Following the successful launch of Milan Manager at InfoComm 2024, d&b audiotechnik and L-Acoustics announce the launch of milanmanager.com, a dedicated website for accessing this innovative network management solution. The platform serves as a unified resource for audio professionals and manufacturers seeking to implement Milan/AVB networks across various applications. The website provides a centralized, manufacturer-neutral location where all users can download Milan Manager software free of charge. The launch of a dedicated Milan Manager website coincides with the release of Milan Manager V2.0. This major upgrade includes many new features, the most significant being the addition of an advanced offline mode that enables the pre-configuration of Milan/AVB networks using an embedded library of certified products. Designs can then be saved as a file for future

use or directly applied to the devices once they are connected to the network.

The introduction of milanmanager.com and Milan Manager V2.0 marks a significant step in promoting the widespread adoption of Milan/AVB technology. Recently recognized by Mix Magazine with the Best of Show award, the Milan Converged Media Network specification and certification continues to demonstrate its value to the professional audio community. This initiative demonstrates both companies' commitment to fostering an open ecosystem that benefits the entire professional audio industry.

d&b audiotechnik and L-Acoustics remain actively committed to receiving feedback from the professional audio industry, particularly members of the Avnu Alliance. This ongoing

dialogue ensures Milan Manager continues to evolve to meet the needs of the broader professional audio community.



Milan Manager continues to be free to use and provides essential features including automatic device discovery, streamlined network configuration, and real-time status monitoring. The software's intuitive interface allows users to efficiently manage Milan/AVB networks of any scale while maintaining optimal performance.

For more information and to download Milan Manager, visit: <https://milanmanager.com/>

PEOPLE

Hal Leonard has announced the departure of **David Jahnke**, senior vice president, North America, after more than 30 years with the company. Stepping into new leadership roles, **Tom Gierke**, chief growth officer for Sales and Education, will oversee B2B sales alongside **Timothy Cose**, head of Global Strategic Sales Operations.

Jahnke, who began his Hal Leonard career as a telesales representative in 1993, played a pivotal role in building and expanding the

company's sales division during a period of significant global growth and digital transformation. Beyond his contributions to Hal Leonard, he has been deeply involved in the music industry, serving on the boards of the Music Achievement Council and the Retail Print Music Dealers Association, as well as being a beloved member of NAMM's legendary show band, Printz.

Reflecting on his tenure, Jahnke shared, "When I first started working at Hal Leonard, I

discovered the deep satisfaction of helping our customers, and I've been lucky to spend my career ever since doing what I love. Working with the best sales team in the industry and forming lasting friendships with our retail partners has been a privilege. I'm proud of what Hal Leonard has accomplished in my 32 years here, and I'm extremely excited to see where Muse Group/Hal Leonard will go in the next 32."

For the past six months, Jahnke has been

working closely with the new leadership team to ensure a smooth transition.

New Leadership Team

Tom Gierke, who joined Muse Group and Hal Leonard in 2024, brings a dynamic background as a percussionist, educator, and sales leader. During his 13-year tenure at Google, he played a pivotal leadership role in shaping the company's education business, driving strategy, partnerships, and transformation to the EDU tech sector. Now, he spearheads initiatives to develop new strategies, programs, and technology to fuel Hal Leonard's growth in sales, education, and partnerships.

Timothy Cose, a 16-year Hal Leonard veteran, has been promoted to Head of Global Strategic Sales Operations. With experience spanning both the Sales and Finance teams, he will focus on implementing advanced analytics tools to equip sales reps and customers with the best data to drive business growth.

Gierke expressed his enthusiasm for the future, stating, "What drives great musicians to push boundaries and perfect their craft is the pursuit

of the impossible—turning effort into virtuosity. We have a leadership team full of people with that same passion, committed to exponentially growing the number of music learners, teachers, and creators. This team is poised to help our sales reps and retail partners unlock even more potential in print music and gear."

Larry Morton, Muse Group Executive Board advisor, said, "I'm extremely grateful to David, not only for 30+ years of leadership excellence at the company but for developing the partnership mentality that has been our trademark in the industry. David also did incredible integration work over the past year after Hal Leonard joined Muse Group. During the transition, David worked closely with Tom Gierke, who is perfectly suited to take our business to the next level. I am supremely confident in Tom and our global sales team."

With this dynamic new leadership team, Hal Leonard reaffirms its commitment to serving the music industry with innovation, expertise, and a passion for helping retailers thrive.



Eastern Acoustic Works (EAW®), a leading innovator of professional loudspeaker systems and technologies, announces the hire of **Mark Posgay** as vice president of Global Sales. In this newly created role, Posgay will assume the management of EAW's global sales channel. He will be responsible for leading and scaling global sales teams, building strategic partnerships and ensuring the organization's sales operations are aligned for growth.

"Under Mark's leadership, we look forward to growing and strengthening our sales partner network and maintaining healthy and predictable sales performance, the fuel for our

business," says T.J. Smith, president of Eastern Acoustic Works. "I am pleased to welcome him to the executive leadership team at EAW."

Posgay has been a part of the professional audio industry for over 20 years where he has held multiple global sales roles. Most recently he worked at Sennheiser as the global sales VP for professional audio. In this role he directed global oversight of the company's professional audio business unit's sales and business development team. Posgay has also previously worked in sales at HARMAN International, Monster Cable and MARS Music.

American Music & Sound (AM&S) is excited to announce the appointment of **Erin Parisi** to their Music Industry Internship Program in partnership with Women in AV/IT (WAVIT).

Parisi enters the program as a working professional for over a decade. Formally educated in Audio Engineering from Clemson University, Parisi has lived and worked in Los Angeles since 2013.

Hiring Parisi demonstrates the eager continuation of efforts between WAVIT and Exertis | JAM's American Music & Sound (AM&S) division, geared towards diversifying the AV/IT industry and providing career opportunities for professionals of all backgrounds.

"AM&S has seen incredible success in so many aspects of our partnership with WAVIT," said Jeff Hawley, marketing director for American Music and Sound. "Our past interns in the program have been such an integral part of the marketing team, providing new insights through their market research projects and stepping up to tackle a wide range of campaigns and content

creation initiatives. I'm excited to work with Erin to apply her unique background and audio production skillset in cool ways!"

In her spare time, Parisi creates her own music under the DJ moniker Crescendoll. She also heads a boutique record label, Shadow Wulf Records, which engages her passion for curating world class talent, and marketing and delivering music to the masses on a global scale.

The WAVIT internship works tirelessly toward promoting gender diversity, inclusivity, and fostering a supportive environment for women in the AV/IT industry. "WAVIT was formed to actively promote, empower, support, and attract women to the AV and IT industries through a variety of initiatives," says Althea Ricketts, WAVIT president and vice president of corporate initiatives at Shure. "This internship and mentoring program is vital to not only attracting but retaining new female talent."

As a female in the professional AV industry for over a decade, Parisi is a great fit for a program

such as this. "This internship comes at a time where I am looking to pivot in my career, and the experience provided by WAVIT and American Music & Sound is incredibly valuable as I make this shift. I look forward to all that I will learn, and especially from other women in the industry."



The Music People (parent company of the **On-Stage** brand and distributor of more than 250 pro-audio, video, lighting, and accessories brands) has announced three promotions in their sales department.

Jeremy Payne, who previously held the position of senior director of Sales, has been promoted to vice president of Sales. **Matt Payne**, formerly a key account manager, is now Pro-AVL sales manager. **Ethan Wesley's** promotion sees him advance from sales coordinator to key account manager.

Speaking on all three appointments, president



and CEO of The Music People, Tom Tedesco, said, "We are thrilled to recognize the outstanding contributions of Jeremy, Matt, and Ethan with these well-earned promotions. Jeremy's long-standing dedication and leadership have been invaluable, and we are excited to see him step into the role of vice president of Sales. Matt's promotion to Pro-AVL sales manager marks not only a new chapter in his career but also his addition to our leadership team. Ethan's transition to key account manager reflects his hard work and commitment to serving our customers. We are confident that all three will continue to drive our success in their new roles."

MAPEX: 35 YEARS OF CONSTANT IMPROVEMENT AND INNOVATION

by Christian Wissmuller



Jeff Mulvihill of Mapex Drums

Since its founding in 1989, Mapex Drums has continuously pushed the boundaries of drum design, delivering high-quality instruments that cater to beginners, seasoned professionals, and everyone in between. As the company celebrated this milestone anniversary in 2024, it wasn't just about reflecting on its rich history, but also looking ahead to the future of drumming.

MMR recently connected with Mapex Drums' Jeff Mulvihill to explore a bit of Mapex's legacy, its impact on the music industry, and what's next for this trailblazing brand.

CAN YOU TALK ABOUT 1996 AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MAPEX USA IN TENNESSEE? WHAT WAS THE CATALYST BEHIND THE MOVE (BOTH LITERAL AND OTHERWISE)?

This was simply a matter of growth of the Mapex Brand. Up until this point, Mapex had been distributed through a few different 3rd party distribution companies and by the 1990s demand for the brand had developed enough to require a stand-alone distribution facility.

FLIPPING A PREVIOUS QUESTION ON ITS HEAD: IN THE PRESENT-DAY, HOW MANY EMPLOYEES ARE THERE? HOW LARGE ARE THE FACILITIES AND WHERE ARE THEY?

Well to answer this accurately, I need to add a few details. Mapex is one of the KHS family of brands including Jupiter Band Instruments, XO Brass, Altus Flutes, Majestic Percussion, Hercules Stands among others owned and operated by KHS Musical Instruments. The Jupiter brand was founded in 1980, and established a US facility in Austin TX in 1985 for many of the same growth reasons as Mapex would go on to experience a few years later. Both Jupiter and Mapex saw tremendous growth and demand in the market through the 1990's and early 2000's so much that is required the establishment of KHS America in 2009 thereby combining both entities moving forward. Currently we are a company of 110 people headquartered in Mt. Juliet, TN, just east of Nashville, with a satellite distribution facility in Corona, CA.



I UNDERSTAND THAT PRIOR TO THE FOUNDATION OF THE MAPEX BRAND, KHS HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN INVOLVED IN PRODUCING PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS FOR OTHER BRANDS. WHAT LED TO THE DECISION FOR STEP AWAY FROM "PRIVATE LABEL"/"WHITE LABEL" PRODUCT AND LAUNCH MAPEX IN 1989?

Jeff Mulvihill: Wow this is such a great first question with an even better answer! It was simply a matter of a maturing company interested in further growth and bringing the core values of the company to further fruition. The origin of the business goes back to 1930 as a supplier of educational products founded by Mr. Jin-Chung Hsieh and his brothers that by the conclusion of World War II renames itself KHS, an abbreviated Mandarin saying translating to "Contribution to School and Society." This name encapsulates the core value of the business to enhance the quality of life and culture in step with the belief that music is an essential part of life. This core value drives the family to grow and expand through the years into many different musical supply endeavors. Specific to Mapex, the pursuit of the business of making products for others provided the basis in manufacturing experience, knowledge of materials and the refinement of processes essential to drum making. The next logical step for growth was launching a proprietary brand.

BACK IN 1989, AT THAT POINT HOW MANY FULL-TIME "MAPEX EMPLOYEES" WERE THERE AT KHS? HOW LARGE WAS THE HQ/FACILITIES AND WHERE WERE THEY?

I am not sure about the exact number of people, but the overall effort started with a dedicated manufacturing facility in Taiwan, with American distribution and some short-lived American manufacturing established in the Nashville area, followed by an expansion of manufacturing into Tianjin China in the year 2000 and continued growth ever since.

IN THE BRAND'S FIRST 35 YEARS, WHAT "MILESTONE MOMENTS" STICK OUT IN YOUR MIND AS REALLY ADVANCING MAPEX – PRODUCT INTRODUCTIONS, ARTIST ENDORSEMENTS, EVENTS, MOVES, HIRES, AWARDS, BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS?

Here are some brand Milestones:

- 1989** – Mapex launches
- 1992** – The first high-end drums Orion Custom Maple & Orion Studio Birch were introduced and became extremely popular among drummers worldwide
- 1993** – Mars Pro Series released. First mid-range Kit with lacquered Finish Spec
- 1997** – Black Panther snare drum series introduced.
- 2009** – Quantum Series marching drums introduced.
- 2014** – SONIClear™ bearing edge introduced in conjunction with the class-leading mid-range Armory Series
- 2017** – Black Panther Design Lab introduced showing the highest level of Mapex Innovation.
- 2022** – Venus series returns producing a class-leading full kit package in conjunction with the "Drummer For Life" Campaign.

■ Anniversary

Mapex has won many awards and has had too many incredible artists and achievements to list but the one “milestone moment” that sticks with me more than any other is the legacy of a mentor and hero of mine, the late, great, unforgettable Joe Hibbs. Joe joined Mapex in 2003 after successful positions with ProMark, Tama, and Premier to elevate the Mapex brand through product development and artist relations. On me, many in our company, and many more in the MI industry as a whole, Joe would have an impact so deep and memorable that most of us think about his laugh, insight, love of drummers and drumming, and his simple wisdom every day without even realizing it. Joe would similarly produce a profound impact for the Mapex brand through this same love of music and people of all walks until his unexpected passing in 2016 at age 63. The Mapex of today embodies much of Joe’s spirit as those of us tasked with carrying on the work of producing Mapex Drums do so having known him, learned from him, and loved him.

HOW IMPORTANT HAVE ASSOCIATIONS WITH RESPECTED DRUMMERS/ARTISTS AND ENDORSEMENTS BEEN IN ESTABLISHING MAPEX ON THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL STAGE AND CONSCIOUSNESS?

It’s a very important part of what we do. Collaborating with players at all levels and in all genres really feeds the innovation and development process.

YOU JUST RELEASED THE SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY EDITION OF THE SATURN EVOLUTION DRUM KIT. ARE THERE ANY OTHER ANNIVERSARY EVENTS, INITIATIVES, ET CETERA UPCOMING TO CELEBRATE THIS MILESTONE? ANYTHING SPECIAL PREPARED FOR THE NAMM SHOW?

Mapex celebrated rather heavily during our 30th anniversary and this 35th sees us settling into a little bit different pattern. Our philosophy has developed into one of nearly constant improvement and innovation. Anniversaries and trade shows are important to recognize and to be a part of, but the market and our world are ever-evolving and changing and so is Mapex. We were loud and proud at the NAMM Show 2025 showing off our latest developments, but our new product releases are nearly quarterly now in the last few years, not tied to certain events or dates. It’s really a constant evolution.

WITH 35 YEARS NOW IN THE BOOKS, WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES AND EXPECTATIONS FOR THE MAPEX BRAND IN THE COMING YEARS?

My hopes and expectations are to continue to do two very important things that sound very similar but are fundamentally different:

1. Develop new and exciting instruments for experienced musicians based on sound-first principals.
2. Develop new and exciting instruments that meet and inspire new young drummers to not only play today, but to really become Drummers for Life.



The late Joe Hibbs



“ Our philosophy has developed into one of nearly constant improvement and innovation. Anniversaries and trade shows are important to recognize and to be a part of, but the market and our world are ever-evolving and changing and so is Mapex. ”

'ELEVATED VISIBILITY AND DESIRABILITY'

Resonator Guitars Ride the Americana Wave to Record Sales

by Christian Wissmuller

A revered niche instrument that's always held a valued role amongst players and die-hard enthusiasts of certain genres of music, resonator guitars have been in the spotlight considerably more the past decade or two – and ever-increasing sales in MI retail outlets across the nation reflect this shift.

Blues and country musicians in the 20s and 30s initially embraced the resonator six-string for its ability to (wait for it...) resonate without amplification, enabling performers to play for larger crowds in areas without PAs or, often, even electricity. Their unique timbre kept resonators in the mix, though rarely center-stage. Artists such as Keb' Mo', Larkin Poe, Reverend Payton's Big Damn Band, Left Lane Cruiser, and others have brought this unique, and distinctly American instrument out of the shadows, however, and clever musical instrument dealers have been taking note.

MMR recently touched base with Ashley Atz of The Music Link and Jon Van Horne of Gold Tone Music Group to learn what models are ringing the register in 2025 and how retailers can best take advantage of this still-growing wave of enthusiasm for the resonator guitar.

FOR YOUR BRAND, WHAT MODEL(S) OF RESONATOR GUITARS IS CURRENTLY THE HOTTEST SELLER?

JON VAN HORNE: Generally our Paul E. Beard Signature Series are the hottest resonator sellers. The Top 3 would be the PBS, PBR-CA, and PBR models.

ASHLEY ATZ: One of Recording King's hottest-selling resonator guitars right now is the Swamp Dog Style-O Resonator (RM-997-VG). This model stands out with its distressed vintage green bell brass body, giving it a bold aesthetic that pairs perfectly with its classic, powerful resonator tone.

The hand-spun European Recording King cone ensures exceptional projection, sustain, and depth, making it a favorite among players who want an instrument that delivers both traditional bluesy growl and modern versatility. Whether used for slide, fingerstyle, or ensemble playing, the Swamp Dog continues to attract musicians looking for a distinctive and expressive resonator guitar.

ACOUSTIC-BASED AND ACOUSTIC-HEAVY MUSIC – AMERICANA, TRAD COUNTRY, FOLK, ET CETERA – HAS BEEN HAVING SOMETHING OF A MOMENT THESE PAST FEW YEARS. TO WHAT DEGREE IS THAT TREND IMPACTING THE PROFILE AND OVERALL SALES OF RESONATOR GUITARS?

AA: Resonator guitars have seen multi-digit year-over-year sales growth, thanks in large part to the rising popularity of acoustic-based music genres like Americana, traditional country, and folk. This surge is being driven not only by the broader trend toward roots-oriented music but also by a powerful combination of social media influence and effective marketing from resonator builders.

Artists like Joshua Quimby have played a key role in bringing resonator guitars into the spotlight. The accessibility of platforms like TikTok and Instagram has allowed these guitars to reach new demographics, far beyond traditional bluegrass and blues circles.

Resonator builders have embraced this momentum with strategic marketing efforts. Recording King, for instance, leverages video and social media to showcase both the traditional role of resonators and their ability to enhance modern music, bringing fresh energy to classic songs. This blend of historical reverence and contemporary application has helped expand the appeal of resonator guitars, making them a

compelling choice for a new generation of musicians.

JVH: The resurgence of acoustic-heavy music – particularly in Americana, traditional country, and folk – has certainly had a noticeable impact on the demand for resonator guitars. While resonators have traditionally been a niche instrument, closely associated with bluegrass, blues, and slide guitar styles, the broader popularity of roots-based music has elevated their visibility and desirability among both traditionalists and new players.

WHAT FEATURES ARE RESONATOR GUITAR PLAYERS IN THE MARKET FOR A NEW OR ADDITIONAL INSTRUMENT LOOKING FOR IN 2025?

JVH: Resonator guitar players in 2025 are looking for a mix of classic tone, modern playability, and versatility to fit a variety of musical contexts.

Cone Design: Hand-spun cones (like Quarterman or Beard-style) remain the gold standard for superior projection and dynamic response. Players are paying more attention to cone materials and sizes for a more customizable tone. **Lighter Builds:** Some traditional metal-body resonators can be quite heavy, so lighter alloys or chambered designs are becoming more attractive.

AA: Resonator guitar players are looking for a combination of historical authenticity, premium tonal quality, and modern innovations that expand the instrument's versatility.

One of the most sought-after features is the hand-turned, lathed resophonic cones that set premium resonators apart. Recording King continues to lead the way by crafting spider, biscuit, and tricone cones by hand from premium aluminum billets – never settling for stamped alternatives. These cones produce the shimmer, warmth, and rich overtones that discerning players crave, whether they are traditionalists or pushing the instrument into new musical spaces.

Players are looking for the right bridge-cone combination to match their musical style. Spider bridge resonators remain a top choice for bluegrass players and ensemble musicians due to their strong fundamental tone and loud projection. Meanwhile, biscuit bridge models offer a broader range of overtones, perfect for swampy blues and solo performers. Tricone resonators, with their added sparkle and volume, continue to be popular for musicians exploring jazz, Hawaiian music, and fingerstyle playing.

While many players appreciate the vintage inspiration drawn from classic designs, modern musicians also seek contemporary refinements. Recording King has blended the past with the future through innovations like the open pedestal soundwell found in the Phil Leadbetter Signature Model, offering enhanced projection and responsiveness. Unique finishes like the Swamp Dog's distressed look also cater to players who want a visually striking instrument that stands out on stage.

Whether it's a true bell brass body for classic metallic resonance or carefully chosen hardwoods that enhance warmth and sustain, today's players demand instruments made with high-quality materials. Premium components like bone nuts and maple/ebony saddles ensure maximum tonal clarity and durability, making these resonators stage- and studio-ready for years to come. Ultimately, today's resonator guitar players are seeking expert craftsmanship, tonal variety, and thoughtful design updates that honor the instrument's heritage while embracing modern musical needs.

WHAT ARE SOME STRATEGIES EMBRACED BY SUCCESSFUL RETAILERS WHEN IT COMES TO MARKETING AND DISPLAYING THESE GUITARS?

AA: We see successful retailers use a 3-pronged combination of engaging content, in-depth product knowledge, and live experiences to effectively market and display resonator guitars. Here are some key strategies that have proven to drive interest and sales:

Video Marketing for Web and Social Media

Retailers who leverage high-quality video content on their websites and social media platforms see a significant boost in engagement. Demonstration videos showcasing the unique tonal differences between spider, biscuit, and tricone cones help educate potential buyers. Additionally, featuring artists playing resonator guitars in different musical styles highlights their versatility and inspires customers to explore new sounds.

Roundtable



Jon Van Horne, marketing, Gold Tone Music Group



“While resonators have traditionally been a niche instrument, closely associated with bluegrass, blues, and slide guitar styles, the broader popularity of roots-based music has elevated their visibility and desirability among both traditionalists and new players.”

Educating Staff and Customers

Since resonators come in various designs with distinct tonal characteristics, the most successful retailers ensure their staff can confidently explain these differences to customers. A great resource for this is the Recording King Resonator 101 course (Resonator 101), which provides essential knowledge about how different cones, bridges, and body materials impact tone and playability. Well-informed staff can make better recommendations, helping customers find the resonator that best suits their style.

In-Store Artist Performances and Clinics

Partnering with manufacturers for in-store artist performances and clinics is a powerful way to generate excitement around resonator guitars. Retailers who have hosted these events with Recording King have seen firsthand how they draw crowds and create a buzz around the product category. These events give customers the opportunity to hear resonators in action, interact with skilled musicians, and get expert insights into playing techniques and gear selection.

By combining compelling video content, knowledgeable sales teams, and engaging in-person events, retailers can create an immersive buying experience that not only boosts sales but also solidifies resonator guitars as a must-have instrument for players of all levels.

JVH: Good campaigns, video, and sound. Displaying the guitars separate from all the rest with a comparison of 2 models is a great eye opener.

DO YOU HAVE ANY RECENT OR UPCOMING RESONATOR MODELS YOU'D LIKE TO DRAW OUR ATTENTION TO?

JVH: We do! Have a New/Recent resonator, The Mojo! The Gold Tone MOJO is a unique folk/alternative resonator guitar, combining classic style with modern features. It sports a 1-3/16" ZeroGlide Nut, a mahogany neck with a rosewood fingerboard, and sealed guitar tuners for smooth playability. Its flamed maple body, accented with multicolor pearloid binding and a blonde nitrocellulose finish, adds striking visuals. A Lipstick Tube pickup, bone saddle, and resophonic 6-string tailpiece ensure rich, resonant tones. Weighing 6.3 lbs. with a 26-3/8" scale, the MOJO is built for players who value style, sound, and craftsmanship.

AA: roundneck and squareneck, but here are three key models worth highlighting:

Dirty 30s Minnie Bucker Resonator



The Minnie Bucker is a powerhouse for players who love gritty, swampy tones. Featuring a mini humbucker pickup, it delivers a thick, bluesy sound that's perfect for both slide and fingerstyle playing. The spruce top, pedestal-style soundwell, and hand-spun European Recording King cone provide a balanced mix of warmth and projection, making it a great choice for players looking to amplify their resonator sound without losing vintage character.

Swamp Dog Style-O Resonator

With its distressed vintage green bell brass body, the Swamp Dog has a striking look and a tone to match. Inspired by classic pre-war resonators, it features a hand-spun European cone that delivers incredible projection, depth, and sustain. This model is perfect for players who want a bold, vintage-style resonator with a distinct aesthetic and exceptional volume, whether for blues, jazz, or slide guitar.

Phil Leadbetter Signature Resonator

Designed in collaboration with Phil Leadbetter, this model is built for resonator players who demand versatility and clarity. It features an open pedestal soundwell, which enhances resonance and sustain, and a construction tailored for smooth playability and precise note definition. Whether used for bluegrass, country, or modern slide work, the Phil Leadbetter Signature resonator resonates with professional players looking for a high-performance instrument with classic resonator tone.

EXPECTATIONS FOR THIS MARKET SEGMENT IN THE COMING MONTHS?

AA: The resonator guitar market is poised for continued growth in the coming months as both traditional and modern acoustic music gain a wider audience. With more players exploring roots music, folk, blues, and even alternative styles, resonators are receiving increased attention from musicians looking for unique and expressive tones.

Regardless of economic conditions, musicians continue to seek high-quality instruments at accessible price points, and Recording King's resonators offer premium craftsmanship, hand-spun cones, and thoughtful design at a price that makes them an easy choice for both new and experienced players.

As interest in Americana, bluegrass, blues, and even experimental acoustic styles continues to rise, expect resonator guitars to remain a key part of the conversation—both in traditional settings and as a fresh voice in new musical landscapes.

JVH: The resonator guitar market is expected to remain strong and evolving, influenced by continued interest in Americana, folk, blues, and acoustic-heavy genres.



Ashley Atz, Director of Social Media & Artist Relations, The Music Link

“Resonator guitars have seen multi-digit year-over-year sales growth, thanks in large part to the rising popularity of acoustic-based music genres like Americana, traditional country, and folk.”

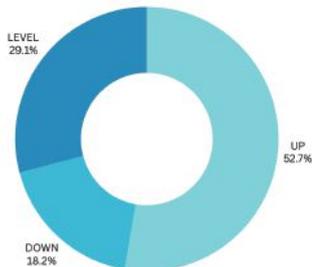
TO DI FOR... Bass DI Boxes in 2025

by Christian Wissmuller

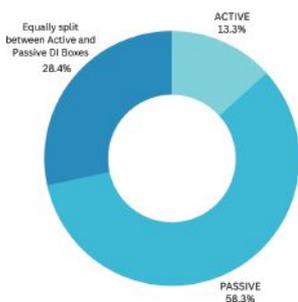
With over half (52.7%) of participants in this month's MI retailer poll reporting upwards-trending sales when it comes to bass DI boxes, this may well be one of the sleeper-segments of the industry at the moment.

While not necessarily visually striking (in most cases) or especially "cutting-edge" – as a concept, anyway – or "sexy," DI boxes are pretty darn essential, allowing a bass guitar to be directly connected to a mixing console, PA system, or audio interface while preserving signal quality and reducing noise. "Little" things like signal balancing, impedance matching, and eliminating ground hum may, again, not seem especially exciting, but you try playing a gig in a mid-size or larger room without one!

Read on to learn what trends are shaping this portion of the MI industry in 2025 and what brands are currently producing the good stuff that players and FOH engineers seek.

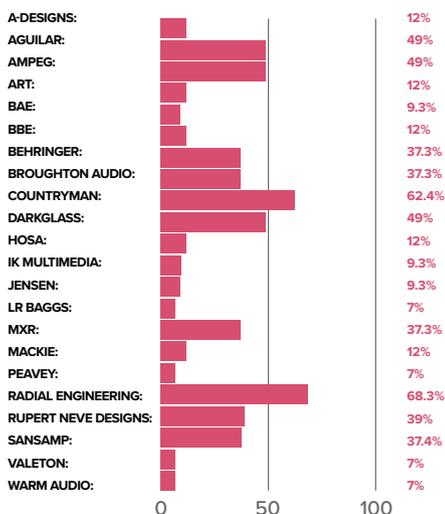


WHEN COMPARED TO THIS TIME LAST YEAR, SALES OF BASS DI BOXES AT YOUR STORE ARE...



MOST BASS DI BOXES SOLD AT YOUR STORE ARE...

AT YOUR STORE, WHAT BRANDS OF BASS DI BOXES ARE GENERATING THE MOST PROFIT?



HAVE YOU BEEN NOTICING ANY SIGNIFICANT TRENDS WHEN IT COMES TO DI BOX SALES OR DESIGN?

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 Dan D Patterson
 Patterson's Music
 Fort Wayne, Alabama

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MAKING. MUSIC. MATTERS. “

by Dan Vedda

Hello Everyone,

I'm grateful for the opportunity to share some thoughts with you here. After over 20 years writing the Veddatorial in the pandemic-departed Music & Sound Retailer, time, business, and the vagaries of life have kept me in a bunker of sorts.

But events – more industry- and economy-specific than political – have me thinking daily about our MI community and the way it maneuvers into the future. Certainly we've had crossroads events throughout our history: the advent of sound films, when thousands of theatre musicians were suddenly out of work, for example. Our response was to subsidize and launch what has become the school band arm of the industry. WWII factory conscription, the advent of Rock 'n' Roll, the rise of DJs and Hip Hop, synths... all demanded adjustments, offered opportunities, and produced markets that allowed us to grow, often as we chose, but sometimes as we were forced to.

I believe we are at such a crossroad again, and perhaps for our industry, a more perilous one. Believe what you will politically, I think that it's imperative we put concerted thought and effort into new ways to secure and grow the music products industry before it's too late.

First, a disclaimer: I firmly believe there will always be a market, and many of the issues we and our manufacturers face daily – raw material sourcing, supply chain woes, distribution, and marketing – will still be there, as will, as least in the near term, the consumers eager to get their hands on gear, be in school band, or record, perform, and enjoy music making. I am looking two, five, ten, twenty years down the road, and to achieve secure and positive results, feel that it's crucial we take action NOW.

The tariff situation is what started my rumination. Realistically, I don't think a 10-20% boost in the tag price of a lot of our products will stop anyone currently playing. Finagling with supply sources and manufacturing efficiencies can mitigate some of the pain. But the real danger, in my opinion, is at entry level.

For example, we've just come off of a more than 20 year period where picking up the guitar had a minimal financial barrier to entry. Playable, name-brand instruments were readily available under \$200, and even cheap, get-you-in-the-door knockoffs below \$90. I often told customers, "You can't afford NOT to play guitar!"

The pandemic immediately proved that the impulse to make music is both broad and deep, as repeated NAMM Gallup polls had already shown over a number of years. (I mean, I was getting calls before the shutdown about playing "now that I'll have free time." Before *sourdough*, even.) The market is there, and from my experience, has always been there.

But we've long known that as a leisure activity, we compete with every other leisure activity, plus, the need for food, shelter, medical care, et cetera. We have to earn our spot in our customers' lives.

Here's the rub: for the newbies, adding 10-20% to the cost of entry raises the barrier to the point that we stand to lose a chunk of the people that

I believe we need an industry-wide, concerted, well organized, aggressive marketing campaign, specifically about the joys and benefits of music making. ”

we could otherwise have captured easily. Even if they're fiscally OK, raising prices means choices have to be made. I just read an article this evening documenting that Wal-Mart is seeing a growing number of new customers in ever higher income brackets, where historically their demographic has been a far less affluent consumer.

Choices.

So if we start seeing a throttle down at the entry level – and this goes for band instruments, keyboards, the whole music family – we see long term diminishment of our customer base. A blip now, a growing choke as time goes on. For an industry that I see as having unlimited potential, (the Gallup polls I mentioned consistently showed **OVER 90%** of the people asked would like to play an instrument "if barriers of time and cost weren't an issue".) losing these people could stop our growth in its tracks.

So what do we do to forestall or erase this? Well, the strategies of manipulating supply chain, manufacturing, and sourcing still help. But I believe we need an industry-wide, concerted, well organized, aggressive marketing campaign, specifically about the joys and benefits of music making. It needs to be launched in every direction, at every level, and we may need to be the ones to bankroll it: not just the marketing, but the implementation of programs, just as we jump started the school band market a century ago. NAMM can't shoulder the burden alone for a project of this scope. With government funding disappearing, market pressures, and the myriad distractions of modern life, we've got to get in the face of our target customers constantly and woo them. We have to do it immediately. Brand doesn't matter. Instrument doesn't matter.

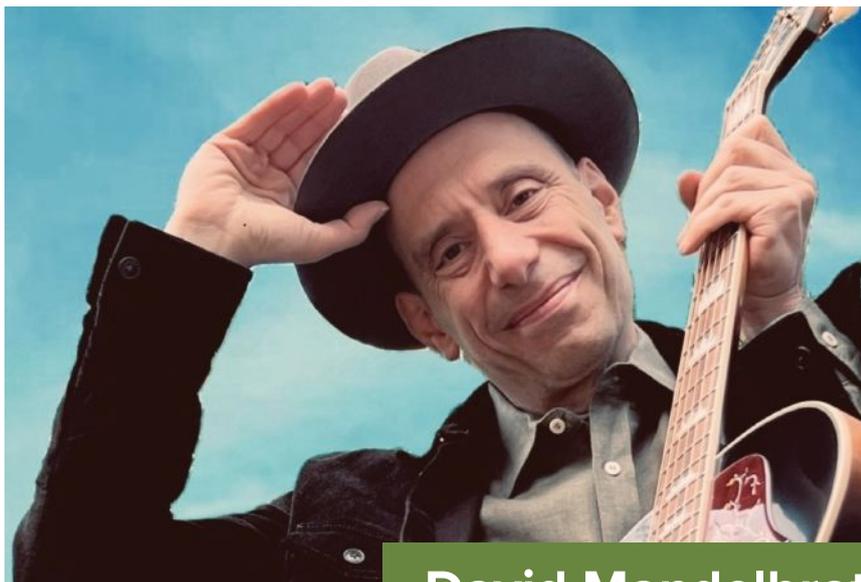
Making. Music. Matters.

Dan Vedda entered the music products industry working in a small guitar shop over 40 years ago. In 1987, he opened Skyline Music, serving the western suburbs of Cleveland with lessons, repairs, and instruments and products for band, orchestra and combo needs. In 1997, he began writing the Veddatorial for one of our industry's trade magazines, and continued his monthly column for over 20 years until the publication folded during the Pandemic. He is still in his store helping customers every day, and he brings that real-time market research to this column.



THREE GEAR-BUYING TRENDS THAT WILL **SHAPE 2025**

By Reverb CEO David Mandelbrot



David Mandelbrot

The needs of musicians are ever-changing. From Bob Dylan's electric performance at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival, to the more recent adoption of effects pedals by synth players, the gear used to create music is constantly in flux.

At Reverb, we have a bird's eye view of these changes, and we've seen quite a few trends come and go over the past decade. More recently, these changes have been less about the gear itself, and more about where, why, and how musicians purchase it. As 2025 races on, we've identified three major musician shopping trends we believe will shape the rest of the year.

Let's start with the positives: Musicians are still buying plenty of gear to make music. In particular, used gear is making great strides as musicians seek out variety and value. In fact, while overall industry sales were down nearly 5% between 2019 and 2023, sales of used music gear on Reverb were up 53% during that same time period. Why are sales of used gear performing so well compared to their new counterparts? Reverb recently ran a survey with insights company Material, and the top reason musicians cited for choosing used music gear is affordability. Simply put, music makers are always looking to refresh their rig, and choosing used allows them more options to do so for less.

Used gear isn't only benefiting buyers, either. Dealers and manufacturers are seeing increased demand for – and success from – used instruments. That's why nearly all of the top sellers on Reverb offer used – with used driving more than half of their growth over the past five years. This presents a great opportunity for those that can increase their inventory mix to offer more used, whether online or in-store. Doing so not only provides musicians with more price points to choose from, but a greater variety of instruments as well. The used section of the music shop is often the first stop because you never know what you'll find there!

That brings me to my second point: Music makers are increasingly selling their old gear to fund their next gear purchase. Now, you might think that more sellers means more competition, but this trend is a good thing – musicians' ability to sell their old gear gives them the space and money to buy new gear. On Reverb, more than 50% of musicians who sold an instrument went on to buy another within the next year, as data from another Reverb-commissioned survey shows that the top reason musicians sell their gear is so they can buy a different piece of gear. Better yet, musicians that both buy and sell music gear spend nearly twice as much as those that only buy. When

musicians are able to try out more gear, experimenting with sounds as they switch from one pedal to another, our industry – from players to dealers to manufacturers – benefits from the circular music gear economy with musicians and professional sellers selling and buying over and over again.

How can you join in? It's simple: Make selling a natural part of the buying process by accepting trade-ins. Already have a trade-in program? Consider how you can expand it or make it a more prominent part of your online or brick-and-mortar store. With nearly 40% of respondents to our survey indicating that they'd sell their music gear in a music store so they could trade it in for something else, it shouldn't take long for you to have a healthy inventory of used gear to sell.

That leads me to my last point – which might seem counterintuitive coming from Reverb. Based on the regular interactions we have with our buyers, one thing is clear: Musicians want an in-store experience. Yes, you read that right: We're an online marketplace, and we wholeheartedly believe in the importance of physical music shops!

According to one of our recent surveys, around 40% of musicians purchase music gear in-store and online equally and more than 40% go to a store to test out instruments when they want to learn more. Testing out and inspecting music gear is still very much part of the gear buying process, which means that brick-and-mortar stores will continue to play an important role in the future of gear buying. So what does that mean for you? Your store is your super power. If you have a physical space, rethink how it can support today's music gear buyers who are increasingly shopping both in-store and online. Consider how to better promote options like local pickup. As it relates to trade-ins: Make your space part of the process with a dedicated and visible space for inspections, authentication, and more. Overall, consider how your physical shop can act like an extension of your online shop.

My local guitar store, Tall Toad Music, is a

fromthetrenches

great example. I love to browse their inventory online and when I spot something that piques my interest, I head over to the store to check it out. Once I'm there, I'm always inevitably drawn to their pre-owned guitar section. The variety I find there always blows me away, from vintage Martins and Gibsons to more current used Waterloo's; it makes the store-going experience an absolute must for me and has kept me coming back for almost 20 years.

The numerous releases of new gear throughout the year are an important part of our industry, offering music makers new instruments to try and enjoy. However, it's both the sound and long-term value of well-worn used gear that provides music makers with the flexibility they need to refresh their rig.

The wants and needs of musicians are ever-changing, and it's our job to empower them throughout the evolution of their musical journey.

David Mandelbrot is CEO at Reverb, the largest online marketplace dedicated to music gear. Prior to joining Reverb, David was CEO of Indiegogo, where he helped small businesses raise more than \$1 billion, as well as the VP and GM of Yahoo!'s media and entertainment division. David has co-founded two companies, including Fretbase, a former online hub for guitar players. In his free time, David plays acoustic guitar, primarily Martin and Waterloo acoustics, and spends time with his three kids, all of whom play musical instruments.

Reverb

“Your store is your super power. If you have a physical space, rethink how it can support today's music gear buyers who are increasingly shopping both in-store and online.”



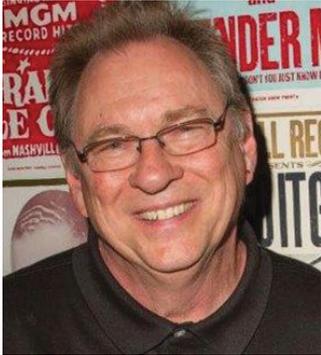
Taylor Phat Boy flugelhorn

 Taylor Trumpets - hand made in the UK

taylortrumpets.com

THIS MAGIC MOMENT

The Experience of Jacob Collier



by Menzie Pittman,
Author of *The New Musician*

I believe the year was 1968 when Ben E. King and The Drifters released their classic single, “This Magic Moment.”

Magic moments in music still happen, but because nearly everything is instantly accessible online, it can feel more difficult to find live experiences that are truly unique and special. That being said, NAMM and Jacob Collier certainly provided a magic moment at the NAMM Grand Rally for Music Education.

I was first introduced to Jacob Collier – deemed “The Colorful

Mozart of Gen Z” by The New York Times – when I stumbled across a live version of his cover of The Beach Boys classic “In My Room.” In that video, Collier delivers a synth heavy vocoder version of the classic song that is as otherworldly as it sounds. And just when you think he might only be about gadgetry, he shifts to piano and melts you with a beautiful solo.

If you are a musician yourself, you have to appreciate that Collier plays upwards of ten different instruments. To his credit, he simply emotes music. Even knowing that, what I find most interesting about him is his passion for the arts and the human condition, which he put on full display at his NAMM performance. His secret power is his ability to evoke true emotion in his audience.

One of Collier’s most effective tools is his ability to transform his audiences into unrehearsed choirs. Though I had previously seen videos of him doing this, to experience it live was something else entirely. The energy in the room was transformative, and the reason for that is a secret most musicians know. The Beach Boys shared it with the world in 1967 – it’s Good Vibrations!

It took Collier mere minutes to own the room. The first point of entry was his deep conversation with NAMM president John Mlynczak about the importance of music and arts education. As many readers will know, Mlynczak is a world class musician himself, so there was a very natural chemistry between the two of them, and the conversation flowed easily.

When Collier spoke, he reflected on several powerful truths. Below are some quotes of his, to the best of my recollection:

“I don’t believe there’s ever been a more important time for music. For all the things to stand for, music is the thing.”

“When we learn music, we learn all there is to know... We learn mathematics, we learn physics, we learn history, and geography. We learn about the human body and how it works, and we learn about the heart. We learn about leadership, community, and connection, because everything begins with listening.”

“I am one to believe that music education is not only important, but that its value to society is immeasurable.”

It was this final quote from Collier that put everything into perspective for me.

After his conversation with Mlynczak, the audience was gifted a live Jacob Collier performance. If anyone in the audience had doubts of his genius, that was quickly put to rest. He didn’t just play music... he was music!

There was no separation between Collier and his instruments. His grace on the piano gave the illusion of ease, similar to the natural movement of a waterfall. Its beauty left you breathless, and he was just getting started. As if mastery of the piano wasn’t enough, he paused, walked over to his guitar, played for a bit, then found his way back to the piano... continuing to sing and play masterfully, but now with a humorous twist. He began playing piano left-handed, and punching chords on his acoustic with his right, all the while continuing to sing a beautiful melody.

It was at that moment that I realized that Collier is not of this world. I was actually relieved, because once I realized he wasn’t human, I could relax.

For his finale, Collier is known to play his crowd as an instrument. He has the audience sing a starting pitch, then he begins conducting chord changes as he himself sings along. Participating in this as a part of the room, being tuned into different chords, is a truly unique experience.

It is the perfect example of why music is so important.

Kudos to NAMM for having the vision to select the perfect musician to bring home the message that music matters. Jacob Collier brought the receipts, and made Ben E. King and The Drifters proud, as he created a very Magical Moment!

“ *I am one to believe that music education is not only important, but that its value to society is immeasurable.*

– Jacob Collier

”

NewProducts

Accessories

Vandoren Reed Subscription Card

Vandoren is proud to introduce the Vandoren Reed Subscription Card.

Designed to bring reed revenue back to local music stores, the Vandoren Reed Subscription Card allows stores to easily deliver four fresh reeds each month to subscribers, ensuring students have convenient access to fresh, high-quality reeds through their local music retailer. Additionally, the back of the card features reed care and rotation instructions, helping students maximize the performance of their reeds.

"This initiative is about more than just reeds—it's about reinforcing healthy playing habits and keeping music stores at the heart of music education," said Gary Winder, EVP of Sales and Marketing, DANSR, inc.

Vandoren Reed Subscription Cards are available in JUNO and Traditional (Blue Box) options for Bb Clarinet, Alto, and Tenor Saxophone. For more information, contact Stephanie Murphy at



stephaniem@dansr.com

Lac R' Shot! FLASH COAT! UltraThin Clear Gloss Lacquer from GluBoost

UltraThin Lacquer Flash Coat from GluBoost is developed especially for guys who are serious about Wood. Now quick and easy professional repairs of gloss finishes after repair work is attainable! Plus complete ultra-thin gun like finishes are also now doable right out of a can! Lac R' Shot! UltraThin Flash Coat provides you with an ultra-thin, ultra-clear, hard and durable finish that is more flexible and far more chatoyant than any competitor's lacquer.

Adjustable Vertical / Horizontal spray nozzle coupled with a specially tuned "even flow" formula.... Lac R' Shot! UltraThin provides you with Flash Coats As Close To A Spray Booth As You Can Get Without the Artillery!

Features And Benefits:

- Quick and easy professional gloss finishing and touch ups after repair work
 - Use as a complete finish
 - Eliminates Need For a Spray Gun! Ultra-Fine Spray Flows And Lays Down Beautifully
 - Able to level sand between coats if needed after overnight dry time
 - Can be buffed in 24 hours if needed
 - Can recoat as soon as dry to the touch
 - Hard, Durable, Resistant, Ultra Clear Finish
 - Wide Adjustable Horizontal And Vertical Spray Pattern Tip
- MSRP: \$12



gluboot.com

Pearl Introduces PTT1824C Trap Table w/ Casters and PMBDL3W Multi-Fit Bass Drum Legs w/ Casters

Expanding upon Pearl's industry-leading line of Trap Tables and Accessory Mounts, today Pearl introduces the PTT1824C Trap Table, now more mobile than ever with premium, rolling, double-locking casters. PTT1824C is equipped with an 18" x 24" felt-line tabletop constructed of black Medium-Density Fiberboard with reinforced corners and 5/8" walls to prevent items from rolling off

and ensuring an "always-silent" performance. The single-braced tripod stand features a chrome center post with a memory lock and a black powder-coated base.



In 2013, Pearl revolutionized the marching and concert accessory space with the introduction of the PMBDL3 Multi-Fit Bass Drum Legs, a simple and durable solution giving percussionists the ability to mount bass drums flat or at an angle. The all-black, powder-coated legs attach to any bass drum with wood hoops and are fully height and angle adjustable, perfect for solo chamber music, marching band, or the concert hall. In 2025, Pearl introduces the PMBDL3W Multi-Fit Bass Drum Legs, which now feature premium, rolling, double-locking casters for an even easier and more secure experience.



pearldrums.com

Convenient, quick, and now equipped with wheels, Pearl's PMBDL3 and PMBDL3W Multi-Fit Bass Drum Legs are a must-have accessory for any band room, rehearsal, or performance space.

Aclam Guitars Launches the Go Rocky Go Effect Pedal

Aclam Guitars proudly introduces Go Rocky Go, a meticulously crafted replica of the Vox Conqueror's preamp. This pedal is made for those chasing the tones of Magical Mystery Tour and The White Album.

Staying true to the original, Go Rocky Go captures the clean Brilliant channel of the Vox Conqueror, while incorporating its built-in distortion (with a vintage fuzzy character) and the M.R.B. (Mid-Range Boost). To ensure seamless live performance, Aclam has introduced several upgrades and refinements, including Crunch mode, independent distortion volume, voltage flexibility and more.

Following the same methodology used in Dr. Robert, The Mocker, and The Windmill Preamp, Aclam has carefully studied the original unit to recreate its unmistakable character.

MAIN FEATURES

Vox Conqueror's Brilliant Channel Replica: Faithful reproduction based on a meticulously restored and analyzed Vox Conqueror (S/N: 2004).

Refined Distortion with independent volume control: Match the clean and distorted output levels or even make the distortion effect louder

Crunch mode: Slightly increases gain, adding a slight overdrive. An internal Crunch Gain control lets you fine-tune the amount of overdrive.

Multifunction switches: Two footswitches provide access to 4: Bypass, Distortion, M.R.B and Crunch Mode

Wide Voltage Range: Runs from 9V to 18V. Higher voltage will provide greater headroom and increased output volume.

Artwork inspired by George Harrison's Rocky Strat: A tribute to one of the most iconic guitars in rock history. Ultra-silent switching: no clicks or pops for the Bypass and Distortion.

Smart Track® Fastening System: Compatible with Aclam's adhesive-free pedalboards.

MAP: \$329 USD (ex. Tax)

DEALER INFORMATION

Aclam Guitars is committed to supporting its authorized dealers to help drive sales.

Dealer Pricing Available: For dealer inquiries and wholesale opportunities, please contact Joel Gelabert at sales@acclam.cat

acclamguitars.com



Submarine Pickups Introduces the SubSix

Following the success of the Submarine and SubPro, Submarine Pickups is pleased to announce the release of the SubSix, Submarine's first truly hexaphonic pickup. At only a few millimeters thick the SubSix can slide under the strings of nearly all guitars, delivering the isolated signal from each string to its own discrete output. The SubSix can be fitted in minutes without drilling, routing, soldering or other modifications to the guitar. The pickup is fully height adjustable on electric guitars and the same mechanism doubles as a soundhole clamp for acoustics. The die-cast body is finished in chrome plate, containing within it twelve custom-made N42 neodymium magnets and six microminiature copper coils. Together these act as transducers to isolate sound from individual strings of the guitar. Each of the two minijack outputs carries three channels of audio which when used with the supplied pair of custom cables gives the user six channels of guitar audio each on its own 1/4" jack.

As a fully passive pickup it does not require batteries and delivers hexaphonic analogue audio. No MIDI, no low quality preamps, just full range discrete, open source, multichannel audio that can be routed and processed by your DAW, console, effects pedals, or collection of guitar amps. New frontiers are opened up in fields of music production, immersive audio and research giving the user infinite creative control.

FIVE USES OF THE SUBSIX:

1) Stereo Guitar: As the SubSix gives each string its own channel, the guitar can be made fully panoramic. Try left/right correlating to low/high. Or start with the bass strings in the middle and alternate outwards. Or alternate hard left/hard right. Depending on the guitar part different setups will provide different experiences.

2) Hexaphonic Fuzz: Applying large amounts of distortion to polyphonic signals can add unwanted overtones and subharmonics that can muddy the sound. A searing lead guitar solo with masses of distortion can really cut through and shine but a complex jazz chord played on that same instrument can sound a mess. Applying distortion to each individual string before the signals are combined can give very, very different results. Add some eq, pre and post and you can take the guitar to a very different place. You choose to use this as your main sound or blend to augment and lift a more traditional guitar tone.

3) Octaves and Pitch-shifting: Applying Sub octaves to the bass strings can fill lower ranges for solo performers and small bands. Octave-ups on higher strings can add sparkle without octave-doubling the whole guitar like a Hammond organ. Dynamic pitch bending can achieve pedal steel guitar effects whilst autotune paired in combination with different scales and temperaments can yield fascinating results.

4) Modulation and time based effects: A great trick for fingerstyle players is to try layered effects like chorus, delay and reverb on just one string. Try with different and play with the settings until you find a new inspiring part. This can be especially effective when working within immersive audio. Lots of extra aural candy for your mix in Dolby Atmos, binaural or live options like d&b Soundscape.

5) Editing: As the separation is so good with a SubSix it does mean that the abilities of a guitarist are no longer an impediment to getting the take. Save yourself some time by punching in fluffed notes, Comping becomes a breeze, whole takes can be quantized and manipulated. And of course what starts as a fix could quite easily lead to new creative ideas as you play with time and space on a track by track basis.



submarinepickup.com

CQ

MIX SMARTER
WORK FASTER
SOUND BETTER



Sound your best on stage,
in rehearsals, and in the studio.

CQ makes it easy, whatever your mixing style. Musicians can jump in with instrument-specific Quick Channels and dynamic FX, tweak their monitor mix via an app and let our intelligent Gain and Feedback Assistants handle the details.

Engineers will love the in-depth channel processing and apps for remote position mixing. Multitrack recording couldn't be easier with an integrated USB interface and SD Card slot.



CQ-18T



CQ-20B



CQ-12T



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ALLEN & HEATH

NewProducts

Fretted

Gibson Custom Announces the RD Custom

As it celebrates over 130 years of music history, Gibson, the iconic global instrument brand, is proud to announce the return of the cult classic RD Custom, marking the first time this iconic guitar has been offered as a Gibson Custom Shop core model, and the very first 25.5" scale length solidbody core instrument from Gibson Custom. The Gibson RD Custom is available worldwide at authorized Gibson Custom dealers, at the Gibson Garage flagship stores in Nashville, and London, and online at www.gibson.com.

Initially released in 1977, the Gibson RD model has been a cult classic for years. It is famous for its unique appearance, which takes inspiration from both the Gibson Explorer™ and Firebird™ designs, as well as its functionality and use by several popular guitarists across multiple genres.

Now, the iconic RD Custom joins the Gibson Custom core lineup for the first time. Not only is this the first Custom Shop-built RD model, but it is also the first 25.5" scale length solidbody core model offered by Gibson Custom. Complete with the classic and comfortable RD body shape, including a rear tummy cut for extra comfort, this model also features a mahogany body with multi-ply top binding, Gibson Custom aesthetics, including gold hardware and mother-of-pearl block inlays on the neck, and a mother-of-pearl Custom split diamond headstock inlay. The RD Custom also has a 25.5" scale mahogany neck with a Medium C profile and long neck tenon, a bound ebony fretboard with 22 medium jumbo frets, and a bound headstock with Grover® Rotomatic® tuners. The updated electronics include 490R and 498T pickups, CTS® potentiometers, and a hand-wired harness.

The Gibson RD Custom is designed to help players stand out from the crowd with its longer scale length, curvaceously elegant body, and classic design. Now is your opportunity to experience the unique and comfortable playing experience of the cult-favorite Gibson RD Custom for yourself. A Custom Shop hardshell case is also included.



gibson.com

Flight Ukulele Unveils the Mini Bass Lite – Big Tone in a Pint-Sized Package

Flight Ukulele are proud to announce the new Mini Bass Lite. This pint-sized boogie machine features standard bass tuning (EADG) with a smaller 23" scale that is perfect for gigging and traveling bass players. Available in Black, Blue, and Seafoam Green this portable powerhouse features a solid poplar body, maple neck, and a laurel fretboard. With Alnico 5 pickups, the Mini Bass Lite offers a clear, sweet tone perfect for any session.

With its super compact size, quality build, and accessible price, the Mini Bass Lite is a perfect addition to any player's setup.



flightmusic.com

PRS Guitars Releases Paul Reed Smith's Personal Instrument, the Charcoal Phoenix Limited Edition

PRS Guitars has announced the Charcoal Phoenix Limited Edition, Paul Reed Smith's current personal instrument choice as a guitar maker and a guitar player. Introduced on Smith's birthday, February 18, the Charcoal Phoenix Limited Edition is part of the PRS Guitars 40th Anniversary celebration. Only 150 of these instruments will be available worldwide, with each including a 40th Anniversary certificate hand signed by Paul Reed Smith himself.

"When we released the Private Stock John McLaughlin Limited Edition in 2023, I was inspired by its exceptional sound and playability. For the Charcoal Phoenix, I wanted to create something equally remarkable but with a stoptail bridge," said PRS Guitars founder & managing general partner, Paul Reed Smith. "Using chalteco for the neck and ziricote for the fingerboard, I achieved an instrument that sustains beautifully and rings with clarity. The deep crimson back and the charcoal microburst top inspired the name 'Charcoal Phoenix,' evoking the imagery of a phoenix rising from the ashes. Over the past year, Smith has road-tested this guitar, refining its design and tone. Most recently, he played this model on stage at the late-January 2025 PRS Guitars 40th Anniversary concert at the House of Blues in Anaheim. A deep crimson back contrasts with the Private Stock-grade figured maple top in a charcoal microburst finish. The ripple abalone "Old School" bird inlays on the ziricote fingerboard add a vintage touch.

The Charcoal Phoenix also features the PRS TCI pickups, newly updated for 2025, and EQ mini-toggle switches. The TCI pickups are crafted with American Alnico magnets and slightly modified winding, wiring and electronics specifications. Based on Smith's experience playing this guitar live and in the studio for more than a year, these pickups offer clear tones from spanky single coils to full soapbars. The EQ mini-toggles act as tuned high-pass filters when engaged, removing shelved low end and allowing the high frequencies through for more clarity and musical highs.

Rounding out the details are the PRS Stoptail bridge and PRS Phase III Non-Locking Tuners. The bridge is engineered with curved string slots, brass inserts and steel studs. It is designed to maximize the transfer of the strings' vibrations through the guitar. The lightweight tuners promote tone transfer for a louder, more resonant instrument.



prsguitars.com

Print & Digital

Hal Leonard Announces Updated Editions of Essential Elements Band and String Methods

For over 25 years, Hal Leonard's Essential Elements Band and Strings methods have helped thousands of directors and millions of students grow and improve their band and orchestra programs. Hal Leonard is excited to unveil updated editions of both iconic methods for all three levels. These updates enhance the student learning experience and ease the workload for educators, all while retaining the core methodology that has made Essential Elements a trusted resource for decades.

These new editions are entirely compatible with existing versions, ensuring seamless integration for bands and orchestras.

Exciting New Features

The updated editions include:

Over 400 new professionally recorded videos between

the band and string books featuring real music educators and offering students engaging, on-demand instruction. 50 new copyrighted pop songs sequenced for all levels are available via the Essential Elements Interactive online platform.

Enhanced visuals, including vibrant color photography, to create a more engaging learning experience.

Revised content, replacing three songs with a troubled history with three fresh, inclusive selections. All supplemental materials are accessible through the method's free Essential Elements Interactive (EEI) platform, ensuring students and teachers have easy access to valuable resources.

"Updating nearly 70 books simultaneously was no small feat, but we knew it would be most convenient for music directors," said Matt Wolf, Hal Leonard's Instrumental Education Specialist and project coordinator for Essential Elements. "We're thrilled with the results and confident that these updates will benefit bands and orchestras for years to come."

Availability

The new editions will be in stock by April 2025, perfectly timed for the new school year.

With these updates, Essential Elements continues to lead the way in music education, supporting the success of both students and educators alike.



halleonard.com

RBC Publications Releases Popular 'Texas Prep' Sight-Reading Series for Choral and Concert Band II

RBC Publications is thrilled to release the much anticipated second volume of Texas Prep Series: Daily Exercises Based on the State Sight-Reading Criteria series for Concert Bands and the inaugural volume of Texas Prep series for Choral. These releases come on the heels of the release of the Texas Prep series for String Orchestra in November 2024. Ideal for use by Directors – both in Texas and throughout the country and beyond – Texas Prep is designed to increase sight-reading skills and prepare students for contest adjudication.

Concert Band: The second volume of Texas Prep Series: Daily Exercises Based on the State Sight-Reading Criteria series for Concert Bands features six levels of collections written by esteemed educators and composers from Texas, Carol Brittin Chambers, Clifton Jones, William Owens, Jason K. Nitsch and Jack Wilds. Each of the six levels in the Texas Prep series follows the widely respected University Interscholastic League (UIL) sight-reading criteria for band and a progressive, pedagogic sequence. Available as full Concert Band sets, the Texas Prep series covers all keys, rhythms, and time signatures that ensembles may encounter while sight-reading under the Texas state sight-reading criteria.

Choral: Completely redesigned to meet the needs of vocal groups, Texas Prep Series: Daily Exercises Based on the State Sight-Reading Criteria series for Choral is also aligned with the UIL standards. The individual octavos include numerous daily exercises in rhythm, melody, and harmony, and provide all possible voicings within each level. The teacher's book, which encompasses all five levels of Texas Prep and UIL Sight-Reading criteria, offers a wealth of helpful resources, including piano accompaniments and notes from the authors. Texas Prep series for Choral is written by Texas composers and educators Jimmy Baas, Anna Marie Maddalena Gonzalez, and Tim Winebrenner, each of whom has extensive knowledge of UIL criteria.

As a longtime collaborator with UIL in providing musical pieces for the sight-reading portion of UIL's assessment, RBC Publications understands the ins and outs of Texas

state music education, criteria, and adjudication. Texas Prep is the Band, Choral, or Orchestra Director's tool to assist in these endeavors.

Full Concert Band sets are available for \$65 each (scores are \$10 each). Choral Teacher Editions are available for \$34.99 and individual octavos for \$4.99. String Orchestra sets are available for \$55 each (scores are \$10 each). Texas Prep is available to purchase from music retailers and the publisher.



rbcmusic.com

Kendor Jazz Releases 'Lick Library' Book for Beginning Improvisers

Kendor Music Publishing announces the new release of Lick Library: Jazz Patterns for Beginning Improvisers by Peter Blair. Created to give developing musicians a reliable start to learning Jazz improvisation, Lick Library contains over 250 example licks that work their way through major, minor, and dominant chords. Packed with resources, Lick Library includes accompaniment tracks at a variety of tempos for all the licks as well as unique "echo tracks" which allow students to hear each lick played by a professional musician to better internalize Jazz phrasing and style.

"From the beginning, my goal with Lick Library was to introduce Jazz vocabulary to students who are just starting their journey into improvisation," said author and composer Peter Blair. "Since Jazz is an aural language, I included an audio component to Lick Library. More than just including rhythm section accompaniment tracks, we recorded 2-bar licks and set them up as 'echo track' exercises. This enables students to hear the lick played with the rhythm section. This unique feature of Lick Library will help students understand and internalize the concept of swing and give them a solid foundation toward improvisation."

Lick Library is presented in four sections, with each building upon the last. Section One, Major, Dominant, and Minor, introduces a collection of versatile two-bar licks that work when playing over major chords, then dominant chords, and finally, minor chords. Section Two, Chord Progressions, introduces licks that can be played over easy ii-V7 progressions. Section Three, Expanding and Developing Licks, aids students in creating their own unique phrases. Section 4, Putting it Together, presents longer etudes that give students the opportunity to use all of the techniques and concepts they have learned throughout the rest of the book.

Books are available for the following instruments: Alto & Bari Sax, Tenor Sax, Trumpet/Clarinet, Trombone/Euphonium, and Vibraphone. Lick Library is available for \$14.99 per book from music retailers, as well as from the publisher.



kendormusic.com

Drums & Percussion

DWe Acoustic-Electronic Wireless Kit Introduces New Finishes

DWe is the first-of-its-kind wireless, convertible acoustic-electronic drum set introduced by Drum Workshop, Inc. (DW) in 2023. In 2025, DWe will have a wider choice of shell finishes with the release of Diamond Nebula, Laser Blue Metallic, and Limited-Edition Exotic Santos Rosewood.

DWe's fully convertible, handcrafted drums are built using the finest 100% American Maple 333 shells DW's

factory in California, U.S.A. DWe offers an authentic playing experience that seamlessly blends acoustic and electronic drum elements to support the diverse needs of modern drummers.

The new DWe colors for 2025 are:

A new Diamond Nebula FinishPly™ wrap reflects a glowing rainbow of interstellar colors. The rich, luminescent finish really pops under the stage lights of any musical setting.

The polished Laser Blue Metallic lacquer finish has an eye-catching, icy fluorescence, which dazzles when overhead lighting bounces off its shiny surface.

Finally, the stunning Hard Satin Natural finish of the Limited-Edition Exotic Santos Rosewood offers a striking natural wood grain that is streaked with reds and browns. Available in 5- and 7-piece complete bundles, only 40 of these kits will be produced.



dwdrums.com

SABIAN Releases 7 New Cymbals by Mike Portnoy

SABIAN is proud to announce the release of no less than eight new products in conjunction with Mike Portnoy that coincides with Mike's touring duties with Dream Theater. The new products are made up of:

AA Bell Chimes in 6", 6.5", and 7" sizes, along with a set of all three

AA MAXX Splashes – these are the updated versions of the original MAX Splashes, originally released in 2000, in 7", 9", & 11" sizes

22" HHX MAX Ride
"With Dream Theater back out on tour and Mike's drumming sounding better than ever, the timing was too good to be true to miss working with Mike on some new cymbals," says SABIAN's VP Sales & Marketing, Stacey Montgomery-Clark. "Please excuse the pun, but he's a dream to work with and we're very proud of the new cymbals we're releasing today."

Adding further, Chris Stankee, SABIAN's global artist relations director, "All of these new models are already part of Mike's set-up on the Dream Theater tour and there's no better demonstrator than Mike himself to show you how these new chimes, splashes, and ride sound." The new AAX MAXX Splashes have a larger, raw bell and new shape, producing more volume and projection compared to the original versions.

The AA Bell Chimes are thinner than a cup chime or ice bell but thicker than a splash, with a number of ways of mounting them either singularly or upside down on top of other cymbals. Crisp, clear, and well defined while also fitting in with any melody, these bell chimes are yet another sound innovation from SABIAN.

Finally, the 22" HHX MAX Ride was Mike's vision of combining elements of the 22" HH Rock Ride that he played for many years, along with his more recent favorite, the 40th Anniversary Artisan Raw Bell Dry Ride. It is lathed on the bow to the edge on both the top and bottom and finished with an un-lathed HHX hammered bell, making this medium-heavy ride a true powerhouse cymbal. Said Mike, himself, "I wanted to talk about how much I love SABIAN: I've been with them for over 30 years. They believed in me in the early days when I was just coming up. And their love and support to me has always meant so much. Obviously the cymbals speak for themselves, they're so beautiful... The MAX Chimes, I love them, they just sing, they're absolutely gorgeous... The 22" Max ride – which is a work of art, absolutely beautiful, is clean and crisp, it sings, and the bell just cuts like a knife."

All eight SKUs are shipping now.



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Drums & Percussion

TAMA Announces Limited Edition Starclassic Walnut/Birch Kit in Vermillion Bosse Fonce Fade Finish

New for 2025, TAMA has announced a new, limited-edition Starclassic Walnut/Birch drum kit in a stunning Vermillion Bosse Fonce Fade finish. The kit is offered in a 5-piece, 2-up/2-down configuration with an optional matching snare drum. The 6mm-thick rack and floor tom shells feature 4 plies of Birch, 2 inner plies of Walnut, and 1 exterior ply of Bosse Fonce. The 8mm-thick bass drum shell boasts 5 plies of Birch, 2 inner plies of Walnut, and 1 exterior ply of Bosse Fonce. Complementing the premium shells are Black Nickel shell hardware, Die-Cast hoops, Starclassic lugs, and a natural lacquer interior finish. This is a limited-edition kit, with only 70 units available worldwide.

Features

- Walnut/Birch hybrid shells
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- BD: 8mm, 5ply Birch + 1 outer ply Bosse Fonce + 2 inner ply Black Walnut
- Black Nickel shell hardware
- Interior Lacquer
- Star-Cast Mounting System
- Die-Cast hoops
- Starclassic lugs
- Evans® drum heads
- Finish: Vermillion Bosse Fonce Fade (VBF)
- Limited: 70 kits
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Cases & Bags

Flight Ukulele Unveils the Mini Bass Lite – Big Tone in a Pint-Sized Package

Gator Cases has introduced two new additions to its G-TOUR Series, expanding their range of professional-grade road cases with customized solutions for the Pioneer XDJ-RX3 DJ Controller and Yamaha DM3 Digital Mixing Console. The GTOURXDJRX3, custom-designed for the Pioneer XDJ-RX3 DJ controller, features a precision-cut, padded interior with thick foam lining for shock absorption. A removable front panel offers quick access to headphone jacks and controls, allowing DJs and audio techs to operate their equipment directly from the case. The GTOURYAMDM3-NDH, tailored for the Yamaha DM3 mixer, delivers a snug fit to protect the mixer from impact and vibrations during travel. This case shares the same heavy-duty features as the Pioneer XDJ-RX3 model, including red recessed twist latches, rubberized spring-loaded handles, and commercial-grade hardware and construction, ensuring reliable protection and portability.

The G-TOUR Series offers road-ready cases for a wide range of instruments and pro-audio equipment, including mixers, DJ controllers, keyboards, guitars, effects pedals, tour furniture, utility equipment, and more.



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