

# MMR

## MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW



36

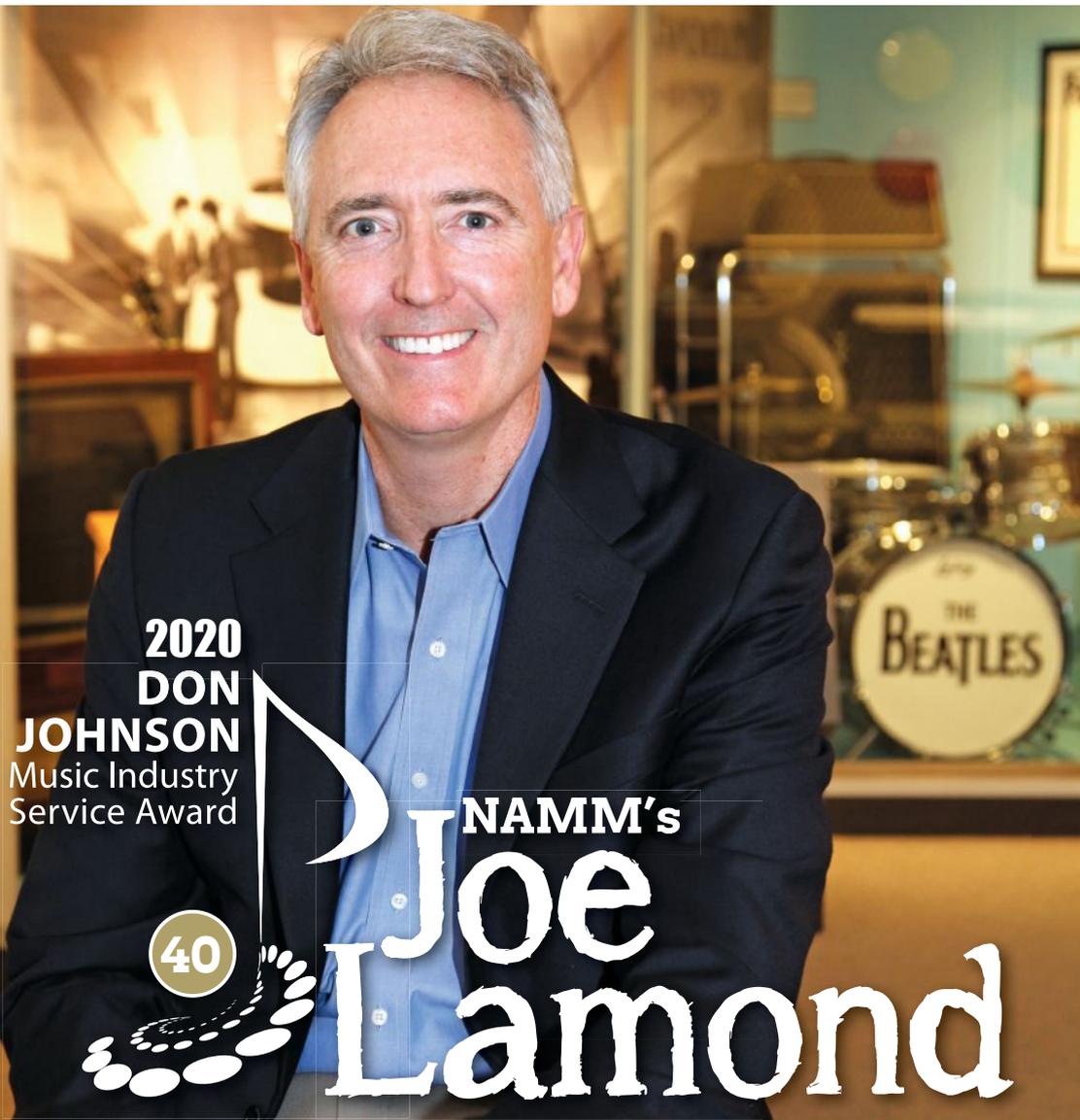


**Survey:**  
Get a Grip - Clarinet Ligature Sales

60



**The Beat of Ernie Ball Goes On:** Newly Appointed CEO Brian Ball Steps Up (Again)



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40

NAMM's  
**Joe Lamond**

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- UK880C Quilted Ash
- UK990C Ebony
- Deluxe Ukulele Straps
- Amahi Ukulele Tuners
- Matching bags
- (10) Extra D'Addario Concert String Set



# C O N T E N T S

# MMR

MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

## FEATURES

Vol.179 JANUARY 2020 No. 1



### Upfront Q&A

**Crystal Morris of Gator Cases Looks Back on Two Decade: '20/20 Perfect Vision and Outlook' 30**

Formed in 2000 by Crystal Morris and her father Jerry, Gator Cases quickly emerged as designers and producers of some of the most beloved cases and bags for instruments, percussion, pro audio, A/V, and more. We recently chatted with Crystal about Gator's origins, evolution, and future

### Roundtable Going Flat Out: E $\flat$ and B $\flat$ Clarinets 32

For this month's "mini Roundtable," we touched base with Brian Petterson and Matt Vance of Yamaha Corporation of America and Buffet Crampon, respectively, to learn what's new and on the horizon for E $\flat$  clarinets, while Jupiter's John Richardson shed some light on what's afoot over in "B $\flat$  land"

### Survey Get a Grip: Clarinet Ligature Sales 36

With only 7.1 percent of participants in this month's dealer survey reporting that sales of clarinet ligatures are down and nearly 93 percent (92.9) claiming sales that are up or level when compared to December 2019, this appears to be a fairly robust market segment

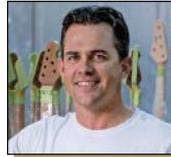
### Don Johnson Award NAMM's Joe Lamond – 2020 Recipient of MMR's Annual Don Johnson Industry Service Award: 'We do This Because it is the Right Thing to Do' 40

In many ways he's the face of the MI industry – and, ever-smiling, Joe Lamond's is a face nearly all of us see at each NAMM Show and many other industry gatherings. This year, MMR presents Lamond with the prestigious Don Johnson Industry Service Award



### 2020 Winter NAMM Buyer's Guide 50

Before you step inside the Anaheim Convention Center this year at Winter NAMM, check out some of the hottest new products that will be on the show floor with our annual guide



### Fretted The Beat of Ernie Ball Goes On: Newly-Appointed CEO Brian Ball Steps Up (Again) 60

After years of following in the footsteps of Sterling – quite literally, we might add – Brian officially took on the company's highest title and greatest portion of responsibility on November 12. Upon receiving his new position, MMR chatted with Brian about yet another major chapter in the Ernie Ball history books

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# Setting the Pace for a Strong Year



By Christian Wissmuller

**"I**f someone tells you trade shows are yesterday's news, they are making a gross miscalculation," wrote Henry DeVries in a May, 2019 *Forbes* article. "When I ranked marketing tactics during a ten-year lead generation study I conducted, networking at trade shows finished in the top five. The best marketing tactics are educational in nature, and a trade show lets you educate prospects face to face (or 'belly to belly,' as one of my mentors used to say)."

The 2020 Winter NAMM Show is upon us (many of you are likely seeing this issue of *MMR* for the first time in Anaheim) and few gatherings provide as compelling evidence to support the views of DeVries and many others who believe in the enduring value of trade shows. While this convention is one of the largest international MI shows – last year's NAMM Show saw 115,301 attendees and over 2,000 exhibitors (for comparison: 2019 Music China hosted 2,414 vendors and 122,519 visitors; last year's Musikmesse reported 1,606 exhibitors and over 85,000 visitors) – the numbers, alone, don't fully capture why this trade show remains relevant.

While there's no question that more and more organizations, including those in MI, are relying on digital mediums to attract partners and conduct business, the aforementioned "belly to belly" dynamic of actually sitting across from a dealer or supplier and conversing face to face, or finalizing an order or sealing a deal over a cup of coffee

or drink at the bar simply cannot be realized via Skype or FaceTime. As David Day of RBI Music described last winter's NAMM Show in our February issue, "[it] was like a big family reunion! 2019 seemed to be another great year for the NAMM Show, with a lot of great performances and new products." Allen & Heath's Jeff Hawley spoke directly to the positive impact the gathering can represent for business: "We expanded our booth footprint substantially, and could have gone even bigger given the steady traffic we saw over the course of the show. It was an amazing way to turbocharge the brand early in the year and set the pace for a stellar 2019."

Trade shows, such as NAMM, offer unique opportunities wherein "all the pieces come together:" clients, partners, competitors, and industry experts. Deciding to join your peers in California each January represents no insignificant commitment of time and money (the latter considerably magnified if you're an exhibitor), but for many, the benefits that emerge from having those human, social interactions and the chance to gain a more accurate feel for the market by networking with prospects, clients, and competition over the course of a few days is invaluable.

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# Industry News

## D'Addario Announces Leadership Changes

The D'Addario Company has announced that effective January 1, 2020, John D'Addario III, son of John D'Addario, Jr. and nephew of the current CEO, has taken on the title of CEO in addition to his current role as president. John D'Addario III has held many positions in the organization over his 23-year tenure with the company – from working in the shipping department as a teenager to positions in operations and sales, to his current position as president. J3 has been instrumental in helping to drive D'Addario's meteoric growth from an American guitar string company to a global powerhouse in the music accessories business.



John D'Addario III and Jim D'Addario

"There's no question that my grandfather, father, and uncle had a unique vision for our company," he says. "My goal is to build on that vision and ensure sustainable growth, while never losing sight of our core values and the integrity of our brands."

Jim D'Addario, one of the company's founders and leaders since its inception in 1973, will be stepping down as CEO and assuming a new dual role as chairman of the board and chief innovation officer. In this capacity, Jim will continue to be responsible for driving innovation throughout the enterprise, particularly in product development and the engineering of D'Addario's vast portfolio of accessory products. As chairman of the board, Jim D'Addario will also help to lead the company's stockholders and board of directors in shaping the vision and mission of the largest music accessories brand in the world.

Jim says, "I look forward to being able to focus on the aspects of the business I've always loved most – creating new, dynamic products that solve musicians' problems and the innovative marketing behind them."

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

## 2019 'Armadillo All Access'

Instead of having a full booth presence at the 2020 NAMM Show, Armadillo Enterprises – the parent company of Dean Guitars, Luna Guitars, and ddrum – hosted an exclusive event at the Armadillo headquarters in Tampa, Florida this past December for select dealers, media, and artists: "Armadillo All Access" (AAA).

"There are many key industry related events that take place throughout the year, but none of them truly allow enough time to spend with dealers, distributors, and other people close to each of the brands," explains Adam Gomes, director of marketing and artist relations at Luna Guitars. "You're lucky if you have enough time to show new product lines!"

"Putting on AAA (Armadillo All Access) at our 118,000 square-foot facility gave us an opportunity to not only take the time to show attendees 2020 product, but also witness first-hand how we conduct operations, and the intricate process-



Armadillo Enterprises president & CEO Evan Rubinson with MMR's Christian Wissmuller

es that take place to make things happen. The idea is to learn more about Dean Guitars, Luna Guitars and ddrum in an environment that welcomes it.

"From the USA Dean Custom Shop to the quality inspection line, attendees could see and learn about the most integral parts of the business via daily factory guided tours and Q&A sessions with department leadership," he adds. "At the same time, we built a schedule to accommodate meetings

with current or potential dealers/distributors for closed-door meetings or New for 2020 Dean, Luna & ddrum product walk-throughs at our tradeshow booth."

Based on the strong turnout and enthusiastic response from all in attendance, the 2019 AAA was a success.

"Our first AAA totally exceeded expectations!" says Gomes. "People loved the artists appearances and performances,

See **ARMADILLO** page 13

## jj Babbitt Names Rorie New President

Steven L. Rorie has joined the jj Babbitt Company as president, effective December 2, 2019. The announcement came from Rocco (Rocky) Giglio, retiring president and CEO. "Steve has extensive knowledge and experience in the music industry," said Giglio, who has had a strong working and personal relationship with Rorie for over 25 years. "He is the first and only person I thought of when I decided to retire. Steve is a 'people person' of integrity, who is fair and caring and has a unique blend of experience that is applicable to virtually every aspect of our operation. Now I can retire – at the age of 82 – knowing jj Babbitt will be in good hands," he added.

Rorie brings over 35 years of music



Steve Rorie and Rocky Giglio

industry experience to his new position. He went directly from high school to the factory floor of the Selmer Company, a major producer of musical instruments in Elkhart, Indiana. During 28 years with Selmer, he worked at their Vincent Bach, Ludwig Drum, and Main Street Woodwind Divisions, rising through management positions to director of manufacturing in 2000.

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# NAMM Foundation Recognizes College Students with the President's Innovation Award

The NAMM Foundation has recognized 103 college music students with the organization's President's Innovation Award. The annual award provides college music students focused on a career in music education, music business and/or music products a stipend to attend The 2020 NAMM Show and explore concepts,

sessions and technologies across music, pro audio and entertainment technology.

At The NAMM Show, the Innovation Award winners will have the opportunity to network with established industry professionals, check out the latest products and technologies, and participate in The NAMM Foundation's GenNext initiative:

a professional development program for college students to help jump-start their careers. Held during each day of the show, and presented in conjunction with the College Music Society, NAMM's GenNext is open to all college and university students and provides dedicated educational sessions to help the emerging professional advance in their career, including Saturday's "Careers in Music" summit where they will hear from professional trumpeter, Jonathan Dely and NAMM president and CEO, Joe Lamond.

The 103 recipients span colleges from New York to California, and come from a diverse variety of backgrounds and college majors, dedicated to pursuing a career in their respective fields.

## SWIM Fund Announces NAMM Show Winners

The Smart Women in Music fund (SWIM) has announced six recipients of the fund's 2020 NAMM Show awards program. The awards will provide the emerging female leaders in the music products industry a travel stipend to attend the NAMM Show. While there, the group will have access to hundreds of professional development sessions, job shadowing with female industry leaders, and networking with peers.

"The SWIM Fund was born out of a desire to reach and serve women who wish to expand their horizons and professional proficiencies, and who demonstrate ambition to enhance their leadership skills," shares SWIM captain, Robin Walenta. "It's our sincere hope that the female leaders of tomorrow will arise through this opportunity."

The 2020 NAMM Show SWIM Fund awardees are:

**Stacy Swanson**, Regional Manager of Lessons, Music & Arts

**Jane Angel**, Lessons Manager, Middle C Music

**Kristi Jacobson**, Customer Service Manager, Alfred Publishing

**Heather Mansell**, Marketing Manager – Education, Yamaha

**Alice Monk**, Communications and Events Coordinator, Music Industry Association

**Alexandra Bosier**, Band, Orchestra and Printed Music Manager, Strait Music



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# Yamaha to Host Three Major Concerts at NAMM

Yamaha will be presenting three major concert events on the NAMM Yamaha Grand Plaza Stage at the 2020 NAMM Show, to be held January 16-19, 2020 in Anaheim, California.

This year marks the first NAMM Show in which Yamaha will be presenting every major event on the Grand Plaza stage. These productions will include the blockbuster main event of the weekend, and all three will feature superstar-caliber artists, among them multiple Grammy honorees.

The stage itself will be situated outdoors on the opulent Anaheim Convention Center Grand Plaza, between the Anaheim Marriott and Hilton Anaheim hotels. The Grand Plaza concerts will dazzle the audience with wall-to-wall visual and multimedia effects over the course of the weekend.

Beginning at 6 p.m. on Thursday, January 16 will be the "NAMM Foundation Celebration for Music Education," featuring three-time Grammy-winning singer and songwriter Sarah McLachlan. The concert is a salute to musicians and music lovers who devote themselves to nurturing and motivating budding musicians as teachers, mentors and advocates, as well as those



Sarah McLachlan

KHAREN HILL

who inspire by example on stages large and small.

On Friday, January 17 at 6 p.m. Yamaha will present the premier event of NAMM, the "Yamaha All-Star Concert on the Grand 2020," a multi-artist, multimedia spectacular for all attendees. The Concert on the Grand has built a lasting reputation as the big draw among NAMM events every year. While the coming roster of featured acts is still under wraps, every year some of the finest Yamaha Artists gather under the spotlights for a pulsing, energetic performance. Past performers have included such luminaries as Elton John, Stevie Wonder,

Tony Bennett, John Legend, Earth, Wind & Fire, U2 founder and drummer Larry Mullen, Jr., and many others.

The weekend's festivities on the Grand Plaza Stage will culminate on Saturday, January 18 at 6 p.m. when Yamaha presents the "Tower of Power 50th Anniversary Concert."

For more information, please visit the Yamaha booth at the 2020 NAMM Show in the Anaheim Marriott Hotel, Marquis Ballroom, January 16-19, 2020.

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## Kyser Celebrates 40 Years of Texas Craftsmanship

Kyser Musical Products, Inc., is kicking off its 40th anniversary, commemorating the brand's 1980 incorporation and a storied history of growth from humble East Texas roots into one of the foremost crafters of handmade capos and fretted instrument accessories in the world. This milestone 40th year not only celebrates Kyser's longstanding commitment to empowering artists globally, but also recognizes that commitment as a core philosophy of the company's late founder, Milton Kyser.

In celebration of this anniversary and Milton Kyser's profound impact on the musical community, Kyser will unveil a commemorative capo, available in highly limited quantities of 2,020 units. Beginning in 2020, as part of its commitment to empowering future musicians for another 40 years, the company will present 40 of these capos to emerging artists, individuals and organizations who have demonstrated profound influence and impact on today's music landscape.

The official anniversary festivities will kick off at the 2020 NAMM Show. McClung will speak to the growth of Kyser over 40

years during a live podcast at the NAMM Idea Center on Saturday, Jan. 18, 2020, at 1 p.m. The company will also kick off the year of festivities with an invite-only press conference and celebration on the opening day of the show. The announcement will be followed by a performance by guitarist Lloyd Spiegel along with small bites and brews.



### Armadillo *continued from page 8*

the booth looked stunning with all the 2020 product lines neatly laid out, and in turn, everyone left excited knowing even more about the brands they work with. We are thoroughly impressed with the success of the event and buzz it has created among the industry. This event has truly shaken up the industry!"

Of the many highlights from the event, Gomes singles out a few moments as being especially noteworthy: "There were many take-aways from AAA, but right off the bat, the Kerry King appearance and recently announced partnership still has people in the industry talking. On the Luna side, the Vista Ukuleles were all the buzz among dealers and attendees, which will add some flavor and shake up the ukulele industry. Finally, many were surprised and happy to know the Dominion Series has returned to ddrum's product line, sealing the deal as a trusty mid-level kit."

Early indicators point to more "Armadillo All Access" gatherings in the future. "We are looking to build off the success from this year's AAA," Gomes confirms. "In the coming weeks, we'll be discussing several ideas further enhance the AAA experience for everyone."

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# Supplier Scene

## S.E. Shires Company Partners with Alessi

The S.E. Shires Company, a division of Eastman Music Company, has announced that they have formed a new partnership with Joseph Alessi, world-class soloist, pedagogue, and principal trombone of the New York Philharmonic.

This new relationship brings S.E. Shires advanced instrument design and manufacturing into close partnership with Alessi's experience and musical genius. S.E. Shires and its team of dedicated designers and craftsmen will begin producing a line of products with Alessi. The mutual goal is to continue offering exceptional musical instruments and accessories to a wide array of brass musicians and dealers throughout the world.

Samantha Lane, director of sales and marketing, commented: "I am so excited to welcome Mr. Joseph Alessi to the S.E. Shires family. His virtuosic playing, orchestral career, and pedagogical expertise is legendary. This truly presents a unique opportunity for our company and brands to take yet another step forward in the brass and winds world."



Joseph Alessi

On the recent partnership, Alessi remarked: "I am very pleased to announce that I will be joining the Eastman Shires team. Why? Because I have fallen in love with a great trombone. After rigorous testing, I have found an instrument that is easier to play and also fits the sound concept in my mind. That sound has been embodied in the Shires-Alessi signature horn. Thanks very much to everyone at Eastman Shires and I look forward to many years of collaboration!"

# Yamaha Sponsors 2019 BOA Grand National Championships

The 2019 Bands of America (BOA) Grand National Championships concluded on Saturday, November 16, with Yamaha leading the way as National Presenting Sponsor of the event, a relationship the company has been honored to maintain for more than two decades.

As part of the company's mission to empower music teachers to build strong programs through professional development, program advocacy and access to resources, Yamaha participated in the Future Music Educator roundtable to support and encourage new music teachers entering the profession. To bolster participants' experiences at the event, Yamaha welcomed attendees to its booth to experience Yamaha SILENT instruments, a line of innovative instruments that allow players to practice silently using headphones. Family and friends were allowed to create signs to cheer on their favorite group at the company's Cheerful Station, as well as



take photos at a photo booth.

"Supporting music education in a meaningful way is what Yamaha stands for wholeheartedly, and our partnership with Bands of America and Music for All has helped us achieve that mission

for more than 20 years," said Heather Mansell, segment marketing manager, Education, Yamaha. "The Grand National Championships allow Yamaha to affect thousands of new music-makers from all over

the country, and support students and educators in achieving amazing heights of musicality and creativity through the marching arts activity."

The Championships, held at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, attracted more than 12,000 participants, representing more than 90 high school bands from more than 20 states, as well thousands of live spectators and those watching the events via live stream. The marching

*see BOA CHAMPIONSHIPS on page 20*

# Music's Biggest Stars Rely on Shure During the American Music Awards

The American Music Awards (AMAs) relied heavily on Shure products for its worldwide broadcast this year. A live performance by Taylor Swift, who was named "Artist of the Decade," featured a customized Shure Axient Digital KSM8 microphone.

Shure Axient Digital was used for several performances, including Billie Eilish, Green Day, Camila Cabello, Post Malone, Ciara, and Thomas Rhett. The audio team used 24 channels of Shure Axient Digital to power the artists at the AMAs.

"Axient Digital is quickly becoming the new standard for artists we see on



Taylor Swift

TOMMASO BODDI/WIREIMAGE

all the award shows," said Mikael Stewart, VP special events, ATK Audioteck, which handled FOH production for the awards broadcast. "I love its sound as a production mic. It has the reliability and quality we've come to expect from any Shure product."

In addition to Swift, other artists performing with Shure mics included: Shania Twain (SM58), Christina Aguilera (Custom Shure Capsule), Selena Gomez (KSM9), Halsey (KSM9), Ozzy Osborne (SM58), Dua Lipa (Custom Shure Capsule), and Big Freedia (SM58).

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**CELESTION**



## LA's Echo Park Rising Gets Audio Support from Allen & Heath

Sandwiched between Silver Lake and Angelino Heights, Echo Park has emerged as one of the most happening neighborhoods in Los Angeles. Home to prospering and aspiring artists, writers,

and musicians, it celebrates its community culture each year with Echo Park Rising. This year the event's main Liberty Stage relied upon control provided by Allen & Heath dLive S5000 and C1500 control surfaces supported respectively by the processing and networking power of DM48 and CDM32 MixRack systems.

Standing at the confluence of Liberty and Reservoir Streets, the Liberty Stage featured a plethora of bands including many of the festival's must-see acts. "The level of activity at Liberty Stage can best be described as that which you'd expect from what just may be the ultimate block party," explained Oscar Zambrano of AOP Entertainment, which managed production for the event. "Crowds ebbed and flowed throughout the day and night. The bands that performed ranged from those just starting out to some of the hottest acts around. In turn, we had to be ready for anything."

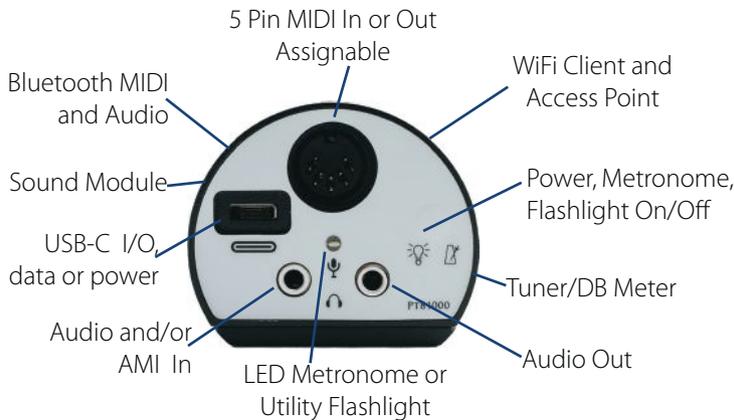
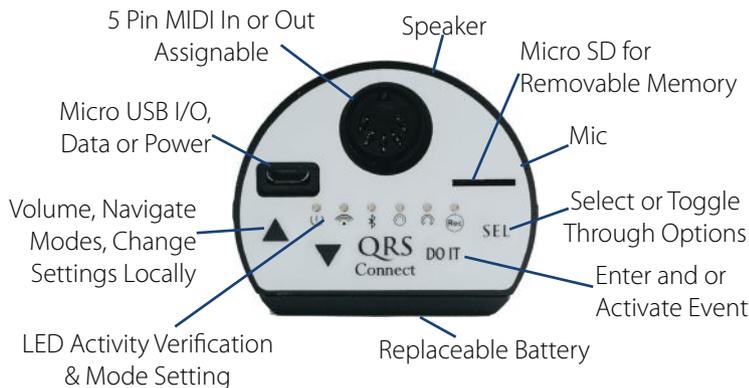
The stage's PA was implemented and tuned by Brandon Operchuck and Kyle Gish of Huntington Beach, California-based Audio Geer. Allen & Heath's dLive S5000/DM48 mixing system managed the sound out front. Onstage for monitors, the aforementioned dLive C1500/CDM32 system took charge, expanded to handle 48 channels of input with the aid of a 96kHz Allen & Heath DX168 I/O expander.

"Our consoles had to be user-friendly," Operchuck said of the mixing system choices that were made. "That way we could accommodate the less experienced guest engineers taking the helm at the beginning of the day. Conversely, we needed the horsepower and 96kHz sonic quality demanded of the riders submitted by the engineers serving the headliners at night. The Allen & Heath dLive systems gave us both, and couldn't have worked out better."

Beyond the guest engineers that rotated through both days of the festival, the majority of the acts had their house mix orchestrated by lead engineer Leticia Castaneda. During the few times she took a break, either Operchuck or Zambrano took over. "She was a real trooper mixing an eclectic and nearly nonstop stream of acts over long days," Operchuck said of his colleague Castaneda. "The rest of us can only wish we had that kind of stamina."

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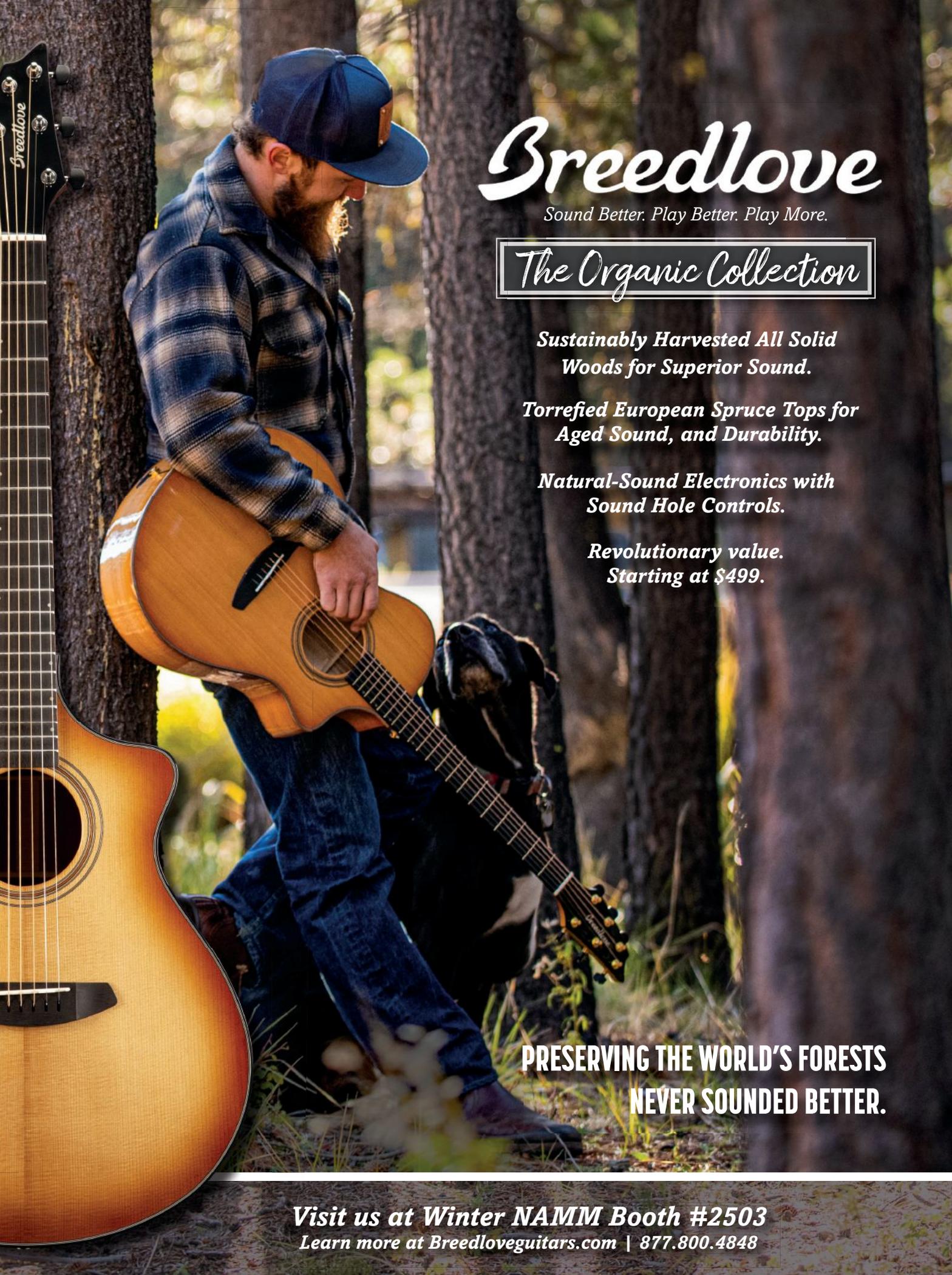


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## NAMM TECnology Hall of Fame Announces New Inductees

TECnology Hall of Fame founder George Petersen and the NAMM TEC Committee have announced seven defining audio products and innovations as the newest entrants to the prestigious TECnology Hall of Fame (TECHOF). The designations, which were voted on by a panel of audio experts, including authors, educators, engineers, and other professionals, honors audio products and innovations that have made a significant contribution to the advancement of audio technology and production.

"Every one of these innovations made a major contribution to how sound is created and reproduced – even years after their debut," says Petersen. "In fact, all of these technologies are still in use every day."

Joining the 160 previous honorees at the TECnology Hall of Fame, the seven inductees for 2020 are: Multichannel Film Sound for "Fantasia" (Walt Disney Productions – 1940); UREI CooperTime Cube (Duane Cooper/Bill Putnam – 1971); Roland TR-808 Drum Machine (Roland – 1980); Scholz Research & Development Rockman (Tom Scholz – 1982); Neutrik Combo XLR-1/4" connector (Neutrik – 1992); 2002 Crane Song Phoenix Plug-in (Dave Hill – 2002); and the QSC K-Series Speakers (QSC – 2010).

"The collaboration of Walt Disney Productions with Bell Labs and RCA to create the 4-channel 'Fantasound' playback process used in 1940 for the production of 'Fantasia' set the course for later breakthroughs in cinema sound, that also included Dolby Stereo's 'Star Wars,' recorded 35 years later," continued Petersen. "As

another example, Roland's TR-808 programmable drum machine became part of the foundation of music movements in hip-hop, rap and electronica. And although made in 1980 – almost 40 years ago – the once \$1,200 TR-808 remains a highly-prized studio tool today, with working units valued in the \$4,000 range."

Inductees to the TECnology Hall of Fame are selected by nearly 50 audio experts and will be officially inducted Saturday, January 18, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. in the NAMM Member Center inside the Anaheim Convention Center.

### Gibson and Give A Note Support Public Schools in Nashville

Gibson has partnered with Give A Note Foundation to bring the power of music to K-12 public schools in the heart of Music City USA.

On Tuesday, December 3, Gibson Gives joined the Give A Note Foundation for their Generation Next Nashville Event. The evening featured a special performance and talk from the Grammy-nominated winner of "The Voice," artist Casadee Pope, as well as a special appearance by local artist Devon Gilfillian – a Give A Note Music Education Innovator Award winner – and a major donation presentation from Gibson Gives to a local Nashville school music program.



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# Martin Audio is Founding Partner in the First Live Production Summit

Martin Audio is one of the founding partners of the Live Production Summit. Organized by OSA International and taking place at the JW Marriott Tucson Starr Pass Resort & Spa in Tucson, Arizona, on January 23-25, the event has been created by industry professionals to be the most encompassing entertainment industry conference covering the real issues that people face every day.

The conference will provide the opportunity to discuss important production industry issues, including logistics, travel, event technology, production, health, safety and much more. In addition to this, there will be a range of panel discussions covering everything from international touring to the future of the industry.

Alongside providing education and industry insights, Martin Audio will use the Live Production Summit to highlight the capabilities of the Wavefront

Precision family of loudspeakers and the advantages that scalable resolution can bring to production companies.

"We are delighted to sponsor the first annual Live Production Summit," said Martin Audio managing director Dom Harter. "There has never been more pressure on the international production industry, and events such as this provide the perfect opportunity to find new solutions to common problems. We are sure that the insights that visitors will gain from the conference will help them to drive their businesses forward."

Notable speakers confirmed for the event include the likes of production and tour manager Guy Sykes who will lead the panel discussion on international touring, as well as Brandi Lindsey, Jim Runge, Patrick Whalen, Dr. Brezinski, Lonnie Southall, Paul Bradley and Neel Vadavada.

## BOA Championships

*continued from page 14*

event is the culmination of the BOA season, which includes 22 regional events held across the country.

The participating bands competed in preliminary contests last Thursday and Friday, with each band vying to become one of the top 38 bands to advance to Saturday's semi-finals. The top 12 bands from semi-finals then competed in the finals Saturday night, where their performances were judged by a panel of nationally-recognized music educators and marching band experts. In the end, Mike Howard, band director, led Vandegrift Band & Vision Dance Company from Vandegrift High School in Austin, Texas to the Grand National Champion prize. Jay Webb, director, and Matt Harloff, assistant director and Yamaha Performing Artist, led the Avon High School band from Avon, Indiana to a silver medal finish. Among the winning ensembles, Carmel High School, led by Yamaha master educator and director of bands, Michael Pote, as well as Yamaha performing artist and director of percussion, Matthew Black, gave an outstanding performance in the Finals, as did The Woodlands High School, led by band and percussion director and Yamaha performing artist Andrew Salmon.

"It's wonderful to have the reliability of Yamaha products, as well as the support of the company during this event. The staff really cares about the future of these young musicians, and it's evident by the way they support the competition," said Harloff.

.....

## Weigl and Avolites Collaborate on Dollywood's Wildwood Grove Installation

Avolites and Weigl recently partnered on The Wildwood Tree, a unique installation located within Wildwood Grove at Dollywood. Designed and built by LifeFormations, with creative from The Imagination House, the centerpiece of this new land is majestic and unlike any other tree in the world.

Weigl president Mike Blasko met with Avolites sales manager Stephen Baird-Smith, who was demonstrating Synergy on the stand – the groundbreaking feature set of Avolites' Titan and Ai V12 software that integrates lighting and video

control together.

In June of 2019, Dollywood's Wildwood Grove opened with the mesmerizing Wildwood Tree as the centerpiece. The unique design, built by LifeFormations, stands over 50 feet tall and is covered with 650 custom RGB LED butterflies, each with pixel mapped wing quadrants. At night, they twinkle and change color in perfect synchronization with the music, moving and traditional lighting fixtures surrounding the tree, and video and static image content within the butterfly canvas designed by The Imagination House.

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## Warwick to be Exclusive Licensee for Sadowsky Guitars

With over 80 years of combined experience in traditional instrument craftsmanship, Roger Sadowsky of Sadowsky Guitars and Hans-Peter Wilfer of Warwick GmbH of Germany have teamed up to bring a full range of quality instruments and accessories to musicians worldwide under the Sadowsky brand name.

"I started in this business as a one-man shop, with the luxury of spending all of my time doing what I love most – crafting instruments. As the demand for my instruments increased, my role morphed beyond my workbench. After 40 years of working six days a week running the business, I'm thrilled that this partnership with Warwick will enable me to return my focus to custom-built instruments while introducing our instruments and accessories to more musicians than ever before," Roger said from his New York City shop.

Known for fine and effective working tools for professional musicians, Roger Sadowsky felt that finding a partner with the same reputation for impeccable quality and design, as well as outstanding customer service was essential. He awoke one morning in early January with the inkling that Hans-Peter Wilfer of Warwick might be the "one" to partner with, having become aware of Warwick's significant capabilities and successes. After meeting at the 2019 NAMM show, Roger visited the carbon-neutral Warwick facility in Markneukirchen, Germany. It was there that Roger met Marcus Spangler, director of manufacturing and R&D for Framus & Warwick. Roger and Marcus quickly bonded over their shared belief that wood is the foundation for making a great instrument.

With the new partnership, Roger will remain the visionary behind Sadowsky Guitars, with Warwick tasked with manufacturing and worldwide distribution. This arrangement allows Roger to remain close to the process while making available several lines of basses, strings and accessories at a wider variety of price points.

## Shure Opens New Experience Centre in London

Shure Incorporated continues to expand its worldwide presence by opening a new Experience Centre and office in London.

The move further establishes the company's presence in the U.K. and wider EMEA region by providing a location for product demonstrations for corporate, government, and education customers seeking audio solutions for their respective facilities.

This new Rose Shure Experience Centre is named for the company's former chairman, Rose L. Shure. Her husband, Sidney N. Shure, founded the business in 1925. Rose Shure remained closely involved with the company for more than 60 years, until her passing in 2016.

Shure executives, including president and CEO Christine Schyvinck, participated in the VIP opening of the facility. Speaking to guests, Schyvinck fondly remembered her many years spent working with Mrs. Shure.

"I think Rose would be honored by being named after such an amazing complex, especially given the short amount of time it has taken to complete such an ambitious project," she said.

The Rose Shure Experience Centre contains three state-of-the-art meeting rooms, representing a range of typical workplace environments as well as a train-



Shure's president and CEO Christine Schyvinck cutting the ribbon to the new Experience Centre in London

ing space with voice-lift camera tracking functionalities. It features a selection of products that reflect modern offices and educational facilities, offering clients the best possible environment to demonstrate and understand the performance and potential of various AV systems.

Specialist AV solutions provider proAV was tasked with integrating the systems on time and on budget, meeting the expectations of a personal environment for Shure sales and marketing staff, and an environment whereby customers – including consultants, AV vendors, and end users – could visit the facility and experience Shure's market-leading products in a working environment.

Front and center are Shure's audio products, including its Microflex Advance and P300 IntelliMix Audio Conferencing Processor. Conference and discussion

see **SHURE** on page 26

## Nugen Audio Awarded Chinese Trademark

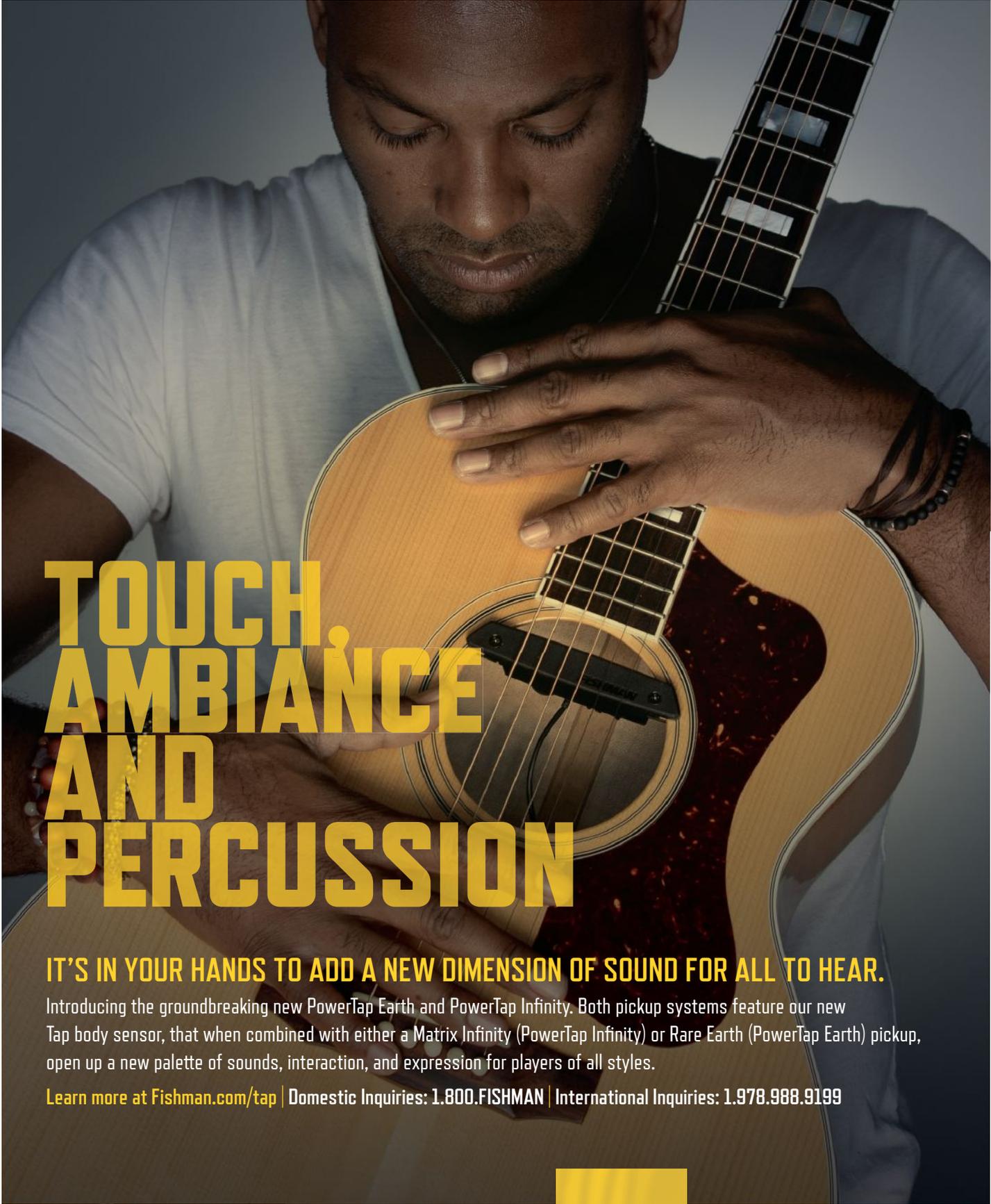
Nugen Audio is pleased to announce that the brand has earned an official trademark in China, following a several months-long approvals process. The trademark was fully authorized by the China Trademark Office on October 7, 2019. Nugen registered for the trademark on recommendation from its Chinese distributor, Music Marketing, as a means of protecting the brand name and company IP within the Chinese market. This trademark gives the company total control over its brand for the next 10 years.

"We are very honored to have been awarded a Chinese trademark for our brand and IP," says Dr. Paul Tapper, CEO, Nugen Audio. "We know that China is a vital market for audio producers, and we hope to leverage this trademark to



increase our relationships in the region. In support of these efforts, our plan is to translate manuals and key web pages into Chinese to make our products more accessible to Chinese-speaking customers."

The process to apply for a Chinese trademark typically spans the matter of 12 to 18 months, and requires a series of steps and submissions, with which Music Marketing assisted.



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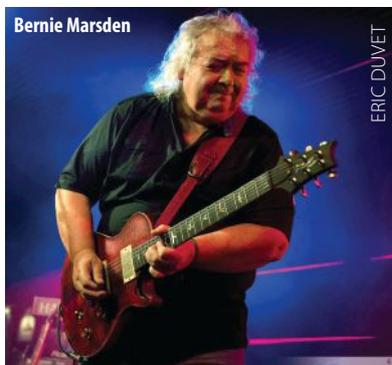
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# Bernie Marsden, Don Airey, Jennifer Batten: Top Stars to Appear During 'Ultimate Jam' at Musikmesse

Ultimate Jam is part of the "Musikmesse Festival 2020," the five-day music gala that, for the fifth time running, will offer a wide variety of great evening events at Frankfurt Fair and Exhibition Centre and in many of Frankfurt's clubs. Musikmesse visitors can also enjoy numerous program highlights during the day when musicians of the Ultimate Jam pass on their instrumental skills at workshops and clinics. Thus, on the occasion of the 40th birthday of Musikmesse, Frankfurt will once again be a magnet for all music lovers wanting to expand their musical knowledge and see and hear stars at first hand.

"Musikmesse is more than just a product show. More than ever before, it revolves around experiencing and creating music in all its facets, around unforgettable musical moments, around networking in the scene and around direct contacts between musicians of all ages and legendary artists," says Wolfgang Weyand, Musikmesse and Musikmesse Festival director. "We are proud to present spectacular events such as the Ultimate Jam and are delighted that so many big names will be taking part."

Ultimate Jam: Legends & Icons



The Ultimate Jam is set to raise the roof of the "Festival Arena" on the first day of Musikmesse 2020 (April 1). The main stage of the fair is big and equipped with ultra-modern event technology. Altogether, there is room for around 2,000 music fans. Under the motto "Legends & Icons," the focus of the songs selected will be on milestones of pop and rock history in which, thanks to their outstanding musicality, the event's star guests will have also played a role. A glance at the line-up gives more than a hint of the programme diversity to be expected.

British-born Bernie Marsden is a doyen of rock history. A founding member of Whitesnake, he was involved in many of their successful titles as songwriter. Prior to this, Marsden had already made a name for himself as a guitarist with UFO and Babe Ruth.

Don Airey can also look back over an impressive career as a keyboard player, having contributed to more than 200 records and worked together with acts such as Black Sabbath, Rainbow, Ozzy Osbourne, Gary Moore, and Jeff Beck. Since 2002, he has been playing the Hammond organ as a permanent member of Deep Purple.

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A dream came true for Jennifer Batten in 1987. At a casting with 100 guitarists, she emerged as lead guitarist for the “King of Pop” Michael Jackson, with whom she performed at the world’s foremost venues for 10 years. She is a co-founder of the popular tapping technique and is currently also in great demand as a solo artist.

Although drummer Pete York comes from the northeast of England, he is particularly popular in the German percussion scene having presented the cult television series “Super Drumming” on the ARD television station for three years. On the international scene, he has also been highly successful as a member of the Spencer Davis Group, as half of the Hardin & York duo, and through collaborations with stars such as Eric Clapton, Jon Lord, and Klaus Doldinger.

On the microphone, Andreas Kümmert presents his powerful voice. He is considered to be one of Germany’s best blues and soul singers having won the final round of “The Voice of Germany” casting show in 2013. This was followed by the gold-winning album *Here I Go*, innumerable live performances and many chart placings.

From multi-million sales to multi-million clicks: although only in his early twenties, Alexandr Misko is already one of the leading stars of the fingerstyle scene and his videos on YouTube regularly register seven-digit viewing figures. His extravagant cover versions of hits such as “Careless Whisper,” “Billie Jean,” and “Take on Me” are a source of amazement even for music-history icons.

The musical foundation of the Ultimate Jam is the band led by guitarist, producer and concert promoter Siggi Schwarz – one of the scene’s leading figures after five decades in the music business. A multi-talented musician, Schwarz has collaborated with artists as different as Steve Lukather, Billy Gibbons, Chris Norman, and Chris Thompson. Moreover, he also works as a film-score composer.

Musikmesse visitors and festival ticket holders can attend the Ultimate Jam, as well as the various workshops and clinics, free of charge as long as places are available. Additionally, there will be a limited number of special tickets giving guaranteed admission. Musikmesse 2020 will be held from April 1 to 4. The Musikmesse Festival begins a day before, on March 31.

Further information can be found at [www.musikmesse.com](http://www.musikmesse.com) and [www.musikmesse-festival.com](http://www.musikmesse-festival.com).

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## Focusrite Acquires Martin Audio

Focusrite plc., which comprises the Focusrite, ADAM Audio, Novation and Ampify Music brands, has announced the acquisition of LDC-backed Martin Audio Ltd and associated companies, the British, Buckinghamshire-based designer and manufacturer of high-performance loudspeaker systems for the touring and installation markets.

This acquisition follows hot on the

heels of Berlin-based studio loudspeaker manufacturer ADAM Audio, but has been a consideration for Focusrite founder and chairman Phil Dudderidge for years, who comments: "I have known Martin Audio since its beginnings in Covent Garden in 1971. Founder Dave Martin and I became close friends in 1989 when I served as an advisor to him and non-executive chairman for a year or so as we prepared the



Focusrite founder and chairman **Phil Dudderidge**, Martin Audio managing director **Dominic Harter**, and Focusrite CEO **Tim Carroll**

company for sale to Tannoy Goodman International plc (TGI) in 1990. Martin Audio is a close neighbor to Focusrite Audio Engineering in High Wycombe and their current management recognized that Focusrite plc was the obvious trade candidate to acquire the business from its private equity and management ownership structure. My conviction as to the outstanding performance of the Martin MLA system was cemented at BST Hyde Park concerts in recent years, notably Tom Petty in 2017 and Eric Clapton in 2018."

Martin Audio will continue to operate from their HQ offices and factory in High Wycombe, England, under the leadership of managing director Dominic Harter, who looks forward to an exciting future, leading Martin Audio as part of the Focusrite Group.

## Shure *continued from page 22*

applications are met by Shure's comprehensive Microflex Complete and Microflex Complete Wireless solutions. Wireless presentation requirements are addressed by products such as the industry-leading ULXD. Shure products are complemented by the availability of a range of hardware and software-based AV conferencing options, so clients can experience Shure audio capabilities enhancing their preferred vendors' solutions.

"The Rose Shure Customer Experience Centre has been the accumulation of many, many hours of work by Shure Associates from all areas of the business," said James Hill, U.K. director of Integrated Systems Sales, at Shure. "We look forward to welcoming all our existing and new customers to the Centre and understanding their AV needs and requirements in the best possible environment."

Shure is now welcoming customers to the new London Experience Centre to understand and appreciate the collaborative solutions available to them within the conferencing, meeting, and education sectors. For more information visit [www.shure.com](http://www.shure.com).

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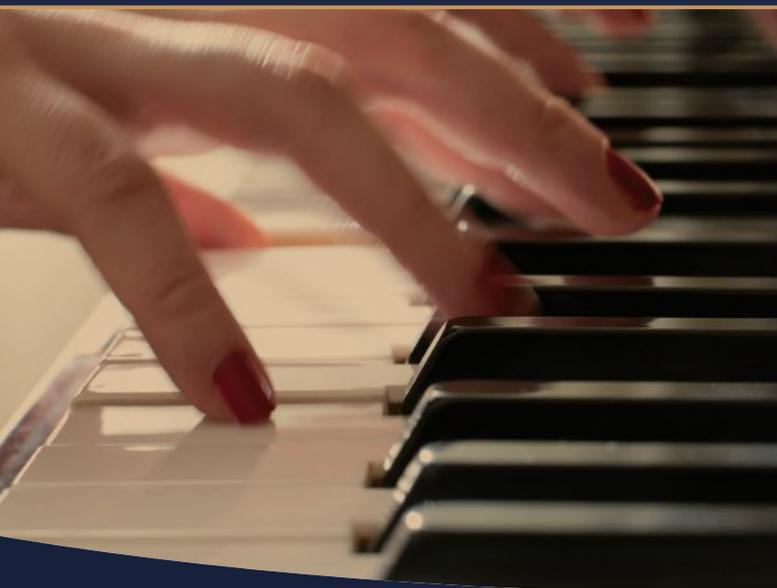
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## ON THE MOVE

**Deering Banjo Company** has announced the appointment of **Jamie Deering** to the position of CEO. Jamie Deering has been an integral part of Deering Banjo Company from a very young age.



"Stepping into this role has been a process of learning, and over the last year gradually taking on aspects of it," she says. "My view is looking at the next 20 years of Deering with a vision in the direction of streamlining our processes, and towards even greater efficiency to the benefit of all who work at Deering, and all our current and future customers."

Jamie attended her first NAMM trade show when she was just 6 weeks old, being the newborn daughter of Deering Banjos founders Greg and Janet Deering at NAMM in 1979. Throughout her growing years she worked both production and administrative positions, gaining experience in every aspect of their family company. Later taking on management roles Jamie has succeeded in every area where she has worked at Deering Banjos, most recently in holding the position of VP Public Relations since 2017.

Janet Deering who has been the CEO for 44 years will be enjoying more flexibility, focusing on her role as co-founder along with Greg Deering. She will continue to be a valuable mentor at executive meetings. She welcomes Jamie's new role and the freedom to work on new projects with Greg.

**Kyser Musical Products, Inc.** has appointed **Scott Attebery** as CEO effective immediately. Attebery will succeed former CEO Meredith McClung, who will remain active as president and owner of the company.



McClung will continue to lead the company alongside Attebery as the company ramps up its organizational efforts toward a broader global business strategy, new opportunities for brand innovation, and an expanded family of products.

**JAM U.S. Music Group** has announced the promotion of industry veteran **James Tsaptsinos** to the position of vice president of global sales. According to JAM U.S. Music Group president



Mark Terry, Tsaptsinos will continue to serve as vice president of Sales for KMC Music. He will be assisted in his new position by Willem van Keulen, who joins the company as European sales manager, based in Hengelo, The Netherlands.

**Pioneer DJ** has announced the addition of industry veteran, **Drew Bach**, to its product planning team. Bach, who has extensive experience as a working DJ, product management and business development at Gibson, Apple, Guillemot, and other leading brands, joined Pioneer DJ in August, and now operates from Pioneer DJ's Torrance, California office, reporting to Lars Schlichting, director of product planning, artist relations at Pioneer DJ Americas, Inc.



**St. Louis Music** has announced that **John Richardson** has joined the SLM team as its national sales manager.



John will be taking over for Richard Grossman, who retired at the end of December after more than 30 years of service to the music industry.

**Gibson** announces the appointment of **Sergio Villanueva** as head of the Custom Shop. Villanueva spent the last five years at Taylor Guitars as the plant manager of its new Tecate, Mexico facility.



Gibson is also pleased to announce the appointment of **Tom Murphy** as master artisan of the newly created Murphy Lab at the Gibson Custom Shop. In his new role, Murphy will take responsibility for re-imagining and implementing new ways of delivering the Gibson Custom Shop historic experience to our extended fan base of guitar enthusiasts.



**Maple Leaf Strings** has named **Hayley Voorhees** as their western regional sales manager. Voorhees' primary instruments are piano, violin, flute, and saxophone. She grew up singing in church which is how she and her husband now spend their Sunday mornings together as worship leaders. As western regional sales manager, Voor-



## Trade Regrets

**Ken Warmoth**, founder and former president of Warmoth Guitar Products, Inc. passed away on November 27, 2019 in Seattle, Washington.



Ken was born on December 30, 1951 in Oakland, California and grew up in Wenatchee, Washington where he spent most of his school years. His family moved to Bonney Lake, Washington where he graduated from Sumner High School on June 5, 1970.

He joined the United States Air Force in 1970 and served eight years, including two tours in Thailand, mainly as a Missile Guidance Control Systems specialist. He was promoted to a staff sergeant on April 1, 1975. Ken was honorably discharged on April 14, 1978.

When he returned home from the Air Force, Ken spent a short time working for his father, Jim Warmoth, who was a partner in the company, Boogie Bodies. They went on to start Warmoth Guitar Products, Inc. in April 1980 where Ken was able to utilize his skills in mechanics and engineering.

Ken served as president of the company for 33 years. He developed innovative manufacturing machinery and methods as well as innovative features for the custom guitar parts he made. His love of wood and woodworking brought unique guitar necks and bodies, in a variety of beautiful and exotic woods, to musicians all around the world. Ken strived to benefit guitar players by helping them improve their playing ability through custom, made-to-fit guitar parts. Through his tenacity, creativity, and old-fashioned work ethic, the company grew into a leader in the custom guitar industry. Warmoth Guitar Products, now lead by Ken's daughter Sandy Hosfelt and her husband Sean Hosfelt, will be celebrating their 40th anniversary in April 2020.

hees will be supporting dealers and their string programs and advocating for school music.

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# Crystal Morris

## of Gator Cases Looks Back on Two Decades '20/20 Perfect Vision and Outlook'

By Christian **Wissmuller**



**F**ormed in 2000 by Crystal Morris and her father Jerry, Gator Cases quickly emerged as designers and producers of some of the most sought-after cases and bags for instruments, percussion, pro audio, A/V, and more.

Subsequent years have seen the company's OEM division grow to be an industry-leader, while acquisitions of well-respected brands such as Viking Cases and Protektor Cases have grown Gator's overall product line. The 2018 purchase of Levy's Leathers was a game-changer, which has seen the business' growth reach new heights.

We recently chatted with CEO Crystal Morris about Gator's origins, evolution, and future.

**For those unfamiliar, can you briefly discuss the origins and early history of Gator? What prompted you and your father to enter this market segment and what was your background prior to founding the company?**

Gator started in my kitchen. My dad was in the music business for a long time and had a lot of experience in the industry. I grew up in the music industry and learned a lot from him. I was just finishing up business school in Tampa and we were brainstorming on how we could start our own case company. I was learning about variable cost models and we decided to start Gator using this model. We started with five cases at Summer NAMM under the Gator Case brand and now have over 2,000 products with multiple brands and diverse products that serve the music industry – Gator Cases, Gator Frameworks, Gator Rackworks, and Levy's – cases, bags, stands, stage and studio accessories, guitar straps and accessories. It was just the two of us and now we have 185 team members.

A lot of people ask about the name. Since we were starting a case company, we wanted the name to convey something that was tough, would protect, and last. We were in Florida so Gator was the perfect fit. And no, I did not go to the University of Florida. I'm a Stetson University Hatter and University of South Florida Bull.

**In a relatively short time, Gator has already become an "industry standard." What were some of the key moments and achievements that you think were pivotal in getting the brand to the next level?**

Our mission was and still is to make high-quality, unique, affordable products that people love and trust. Our products protect and perform, so our fans can focus on their passions. It's our mission to be best-in-class and set the standard.

We've prided ourselves on being the first and willing to take risks to test and explore new opportunities. We push ourselves to innovate not only in product, but how we make business decisions to best serve our customers.

For example, when we started, competitors were either experts by category or experts by manufacturing type. We were the first to take vacuum forming offshore and make a quality product. In 2000, we made plastic vacuum-formed guitar cases. We took the product to Summer NAMM, and from there, quickly started to develop more products. We realized people liked us because we were a one-stop shop. What we found in the marketplace was there were companies who might have had great guitar or DJ products but not much else. We decided we wanted to become a solutions provider for all customers' needs and problems, and service different product categories, from DJs to keyboards to band instruments, by focusing on these markets and by having a broad diversity of materials. Today, we do products in plastics, sewn, wood, leather and metals.

Another idea for us to differentiate and lead the industry was to rethink our sales model. Our key competitors were all selling through distribution. We analyzed other options and saw a big opportunity to go dealer direct. It was a new type of sales model in our category, and we were willing to challenge ourselves to try something new.

That's something that we are always willing to do, and it's a big driver of our growth.

**Can you talk a little about the OEM division? Roughly how many other companies does Gator manufacture cases for at this point? What percentage of overall revenue does the OEM side of things account for?**

OEM is a very exciting growth business for us. We have over 50 OEM partners in all different markets.

We have leading expertise in manufacturing that can serve multiple markets and industries. Music is of course a big piece of that pie, but we do have business in other verticals – medical, utility, outdoor and recreation, et cetera.

Almost everything needs a case, and we know how to make exceptional case and transport solutions. The music industry segments into different categories and all of those products – instruments, gear, et cetera – need a case solution. This is another unique advantage that Gator has to diversify and expand our value proposition in different categories – make great product, offer a great price and deliver exceptional customer service.

And on top of that, with Levy's, we have even more OEM solutions

with our straps and accessories – more quality product for brands to partner with us on.

**Can you describe the current physical and personnel layout at Gator? What are the facilities like?**

Gator has enjoyed a lot of growth – not just on the business side, but also our talent. We're truly global with team members in the U.S., Canada, and overseas and looking to add more internationally on the sales side. Right now, we have about 185 talent team members who make up our "rock star team" and inspire and motivate me every day.

Our corporate office is in Tampa, Florida. We have factories and distribution centers in Nova Scotia, Asia, and Indiana.

Levy's started in Canada and is an important part of the Levy's legacy, especially our quality craftsmanship. Our Nova Scotia team is the heart and soul of Levy's. Our product is born from that factory and distribution center.

Our distribution center in Indiana holds all our U.S. inventory – Gator and Levy's – and we have a factory that does all of our rotational molding. We are one of the few onshore roto-molding factories which gives us a big manufacturing advantage to best serve customers who require this type of manufacturing technology like drum cases and racks.

**You've had some significant acquisitions in the past – Protektor Cases and, more recently, Viking Cases – but the 2018 acquisition of Levy's Leathers made serious waves. What was the catalyst behind that business move, what had been your history (if any) with Levy's prior to that, and – post-acquisition, how many of the previous Levy's management team remain in place?**

In January 2018, we acquired Levy's, which is an iconic brand that started 1973 in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, best known for high-quality, unique guitar straps, loved by millions of musicians, but also known for its bags and other accessories.

Levy's was a natural fit and perfect opportunity to expand the Gator Co. family. Both were family-owned businesses. Both serve what I call "passion industries," started with a love for music, hard work and "dream big" visions to innovate and create amazing products for our awesome fans. In acquiring Levy's, we had a mission to understand what the fans loved and desired most and use those insights to reinvent Levy's with exciting new strap designs and products to delight every musician around the world.

We have an amazing brand director, Jen Tabor, who joined Levy's in August 2018.

As I said earlier, we have dedicated and inspiring team in Nova Scotia and U.S. They work so incredibly hard to carry on the spirit of Levy's as a music hero – with care, passion, and quality.

**Any big plans on the horizon – new product introductions, new business partnerships, et cetera – that you'd like to share with our readers? Expectations for both the cases & bags and the guitar strap markets in the coming months?**

We'll continue to push ourselves to innovate, grow our core business and look at new opportunities in spaces where we can really drive value. We'll continue to listen to our customers. We love feedback and we strive to respond to what they need and desire.

On the product innovation side, for example, we had a lot of success with the Levy's Right Height straps. We heard a lot of guitarists saying they wished they had a strap that was quick and easy to adjust on the fly without having to take off their guitar. So, we solved for that and developed a new RipChord technology and integrated that into the design of the Right Height straps that we launched in July. We've received great feedback on them and will be launching more models at Winter NAMM. Similarly, we'll be launching products with new, natural materials that our customers are craving – think vegan, cork.

You can expect more solutions to solve our customers problems and fit their personalities and not just in cases and bags. We will still focus on growing our core, but as the industry changes, our customers' needs also evolve.

For example, musicians do a lot more "off the stage" in this information age. They are now content creators – YouTubers, bloggers, podcasters – and we are creating a range of products in our Gator Frameworks brand to serve that need. We've had a lot of success with our mic stands already like the GFW-MIC0822 and GFWMICBCBM series of desktop boom stands. At Winter NAMM, fans can check out more quality products to outfit a content creator's studio or workspace.

Gator is celebrating 20 years in 2020. It's a meaningful number for us – 20/20 perfect vision and outlook. We have about 1,000 Gator products and 1,000 Levy's products so 2020 products to celebrate. We've enjoyed 20 great years of growth, friendship, teamwork, and fans and we look forward to another outstanding 20 and more. 



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# Going Flat Out

## E♭ and B♭ Clarinets

By Christian **Wissmuller**

**T**wo of the most common and popular types of clarinets are the E♭ and B♭ clarinet. This is largely due to the fact that both are transposing instruments, meaning that, on an E♭ instrument, when the musician plays C, the note sounding is a concert E♭; On a B♭ instrument, when a C is played, the resultant note is a concert B♭.

For this month's "mini Roundtable," we touched base with Brian Petterson and Matt Vance of Yamaha Corporation of America and Buffet Crampon, respectively, to learn what's new and on the horizon for E♭ clarinets, while Jupiter's John Richardson shed some light on what's afoot over in "B♭ land." Check out their observations below to learn more about trends that are driving sales of these popular woodwinds.

**What's your overall impression of this market segment? Are clarinet sales up, down, or level when compared to this time last year?**

**Matt Vance:** Specific to E♭ clarinets, sales remain consistent for this segment. Between individual players, professional clarinetists, schools, and military bands, E♭ clarinets are always in need for these different groups of players and institutions/ensembles.

**For your brand, what specific models of clarinet are currently top-sellers?**

**Brian Petterson:** Among the E♭ clarinet options in the U.S. market, the professional level Yamaha YCL-681 is the most in-demand option. The Custom level YCL-881 model is a close second and is a great option for those looking for a premium quality instrument. Small changes in design between the two instruments clearly differentiate them for discerning players.

**MV:** Buffet Crampon is able to offer E♭ clarinets at multiple price points and levels. For many schools that don't have the budget to purchase a professional instrument, the E11 performance E♭ clarinet is a fantastic option. It offers an African blackwood body, silver-plated keywork and double fish skin pads at a very affordable price, offering many school bands and clarinet choirs the ability to tackle more advanced literature.

For those looking at a professional E♭ clarinet, we offer four different models: The R13, RC, RC Prestige, and Tosca. At this level, one is not necessarily considered "better" than

the others; each model presents its own unique response characteristics and sound quality. Of course, all four feature silver-plated keys and African blackwood bodies, with the RC Prestige and Tosca utilizing premium unstained Grenadilla wood (the RC Prestige is also available with a Green Line body). Most of our artists select either the RC Prestige or Tosca, and those selections are dependent on the sound the player is seeking – the Tosca E♭ is often described as having a sound more similar to the B-flat clarinet, while the RC Prestige characteristically has more upper harmonics in the sound, giving the player a unique sound to their E♭ clarinet when compared to the rest of the clarinet family. Of course, each player is different, and your results may vary!

**When it comes to promotion, display, and marketing of clarinets, what practices have you observed successful dealers adopting?**

**MV:** As with all of our clarinets, artist selection and input is vital to our instruments and their continuing quality and growth. Regarding E♭ clarinets, artist involvement is even more key. E♭ clarinets seem to have much less margin for error when it comes to an expectation of quality and playability as the E♭ clarinet is often a very prominent "voice" in a band or orchestra. Dealers are also reliant on our artists to select quality E♭ clarinets for their stock, and artists often hand-select E♭ clarinets for their respective schools or ensembles.

**BP:** Knowledgeable staff members with a clear understanding of the products and the market are the cornerstone of successful



Matt Vance, woodwind product specialist, Buffet Crampon



“E♭ clarinets seem to have much less margin for error when it comes to an expectation of quality and playability as the E♭ clarinet is often a very prominent ‘voice’ in a band or orchestra.”





Brian Petterson, senior marketing manager, winds & strings, Yamaha Corporation of America

“E♭ clarinets are specialty instruments and it makes a difference when dealers can inform customers and musicians about production consistency and the importance of trying an instrument before making a purchase.”



clarinet dealers. E♭ clarinets are specialty instruments and it makes a difference when dealers can inform customers and musicians about production consistency and the importance of trying an instrument before making a purchase. These trusted advisors are well-versed in the E♭ clarinet. They understand the different needs that a clarinetist has when playing the small, but advanced instrument, even down to mouthpiece and reed choices that work well with the instrument.

#### Have you been noticing any trends of note when it comes to clarinets, either on the vendor or end-user sides of things?

**BP:** The market has been trending for some time now towards E♭ clarinets with silver-plated keys and adjustable thumb rests. The silver-plated keys offer a wider range of sound characteristics and also the tactile feel many players prefer. Adjustable thumb rests help with the ergonomics of the instrument, which is quite different from the larger B♭ and A clarinets.

**MV:** The introduction of the Tosca E♭ clarinet was interesting with regards to sound concept. The tonal characteristics of an E♭ clarinet were, generally speaking, thought of as light and brilliant. The RC Prestige provides those qualities and has been considered the gold standard for E♭ clarinets for many years. The Tosca, however, embodies more of a sound concept akin to the B♭ clarinet while providing the needed range, which may appeal to some players and ensembles.

#### Any recent clarinet releases or upcoming clarinet models that you'd like to draw MMR readers' attention to?

**BP:** The current offering of Yamaha E♭ Clarinets is set. However, Yamaha continues to take great pride in the commitment we make to research and development, always looking to improve our instruments for all levels of clarinetists. Our renowned technicians and designers, along with our worldwide network of artist Atelier facilities are constantly working closely with top musicians to determine their expectations for the E♭ clarinets and customize them to best fit their needs.

#### Expectations for the clarinet market in 2020?

**MV:** 2019 was another very successful year for Buffet Crampon student, performance and professional clarinets. The Prodiges is cementing its place as the best student clarinet on the market and our performance and professional clarinets continue to be the choice of educators, players and professionals worldwide. With such a wide variety of excellent models available at varying price points, we expect Buffet Crampon E♭ clarinets to maintain their place as the market's first choice in 2020.

**BP:** The recently adjusted regulations on the import of Grenadilla wood instruments are going to make a big difference to smooth the flow of wood clarinets into the United States. We expect to see growth in the market with the clarinet segment continuing to expand, as well as a continued demand for premium quality instruments for the foreseeable future. This spring, Yamaha plans to support dealer sell-through efforts by offering promotions during the step-up sales season and around graduation time.

**John Richardson:** In this category, Jupiter specializes in student and advanced-level instruments. The market doesn't really change much here. Within the market, preferences change. Educators are preferring that students be able to produce a characteristic clarinet sound at an earlier stage with a beginning instrument. We have spent much time ensuring Jupiter designs help cater to this preference.

The Jupiter JCL1100S is taking off for us. You get advanced features such as a left hand E♭/A♭ and a raised left-hand C/G tone hole that previously you could only find on very expensive instruments. These features paired with select Grenadilla wood and silver-plated keys make this instrument a favorite for many educators.

Trial programs have helped Jupiter clarinets to become one of the preferred instruments by educators. Once an influential educator experiences Jupiter clarinets, the instruments end up on preferred lists for rentals and purchases.

I think in general, younger educators as well as dealers are open to new ideas. If they can find instruments that have a good scale, are easy for beginners to get a sound out of and are built to take the rigors of beginning band, acceptance is inevitable... especially if the price is right!

The market is ever changing. The requirements, expectations and preferences are always moving. We just need to be ready to move with it!



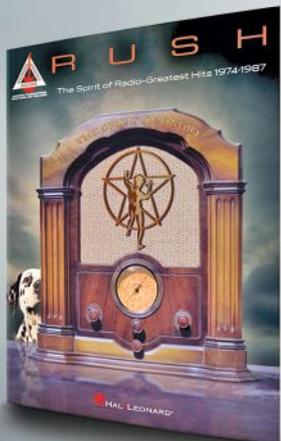
John Richardson, Jupiter brand manager



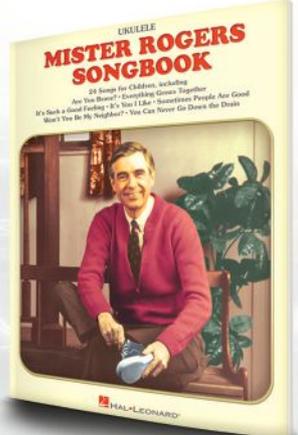
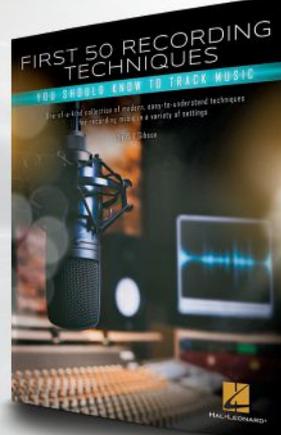
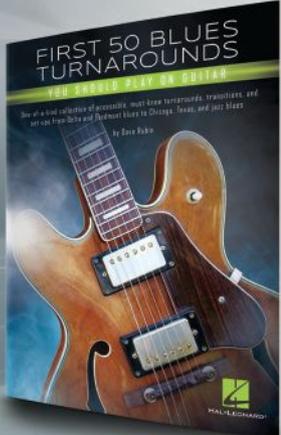
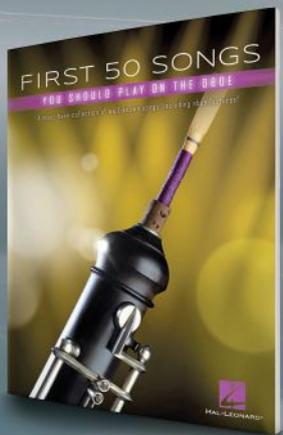


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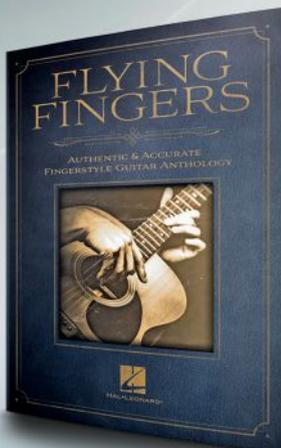
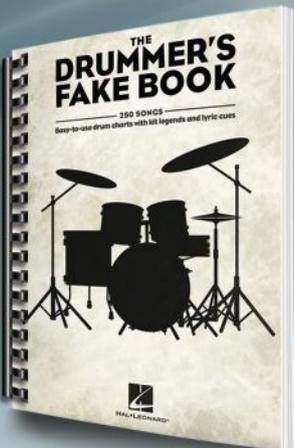


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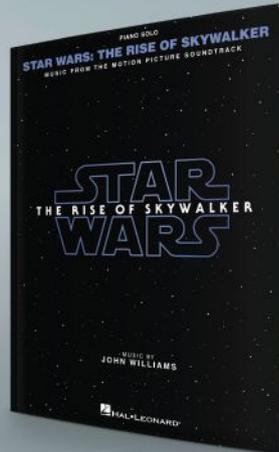
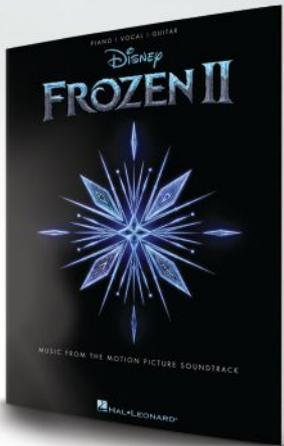
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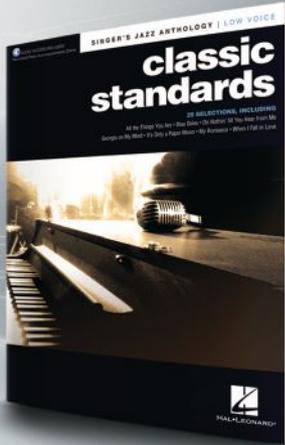
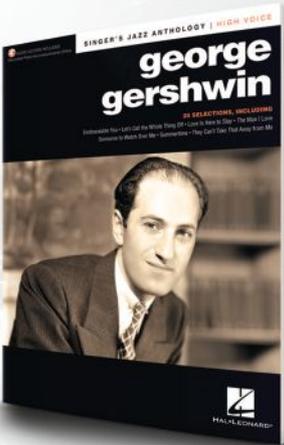
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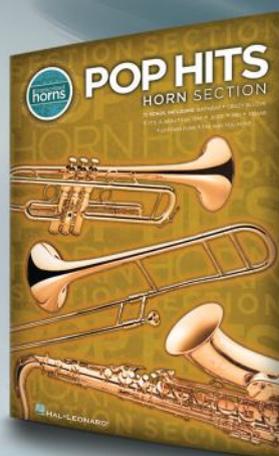


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# Clarinet Ligatures

## Clarinet Ligature Sales

By Christian **Wissmuller**

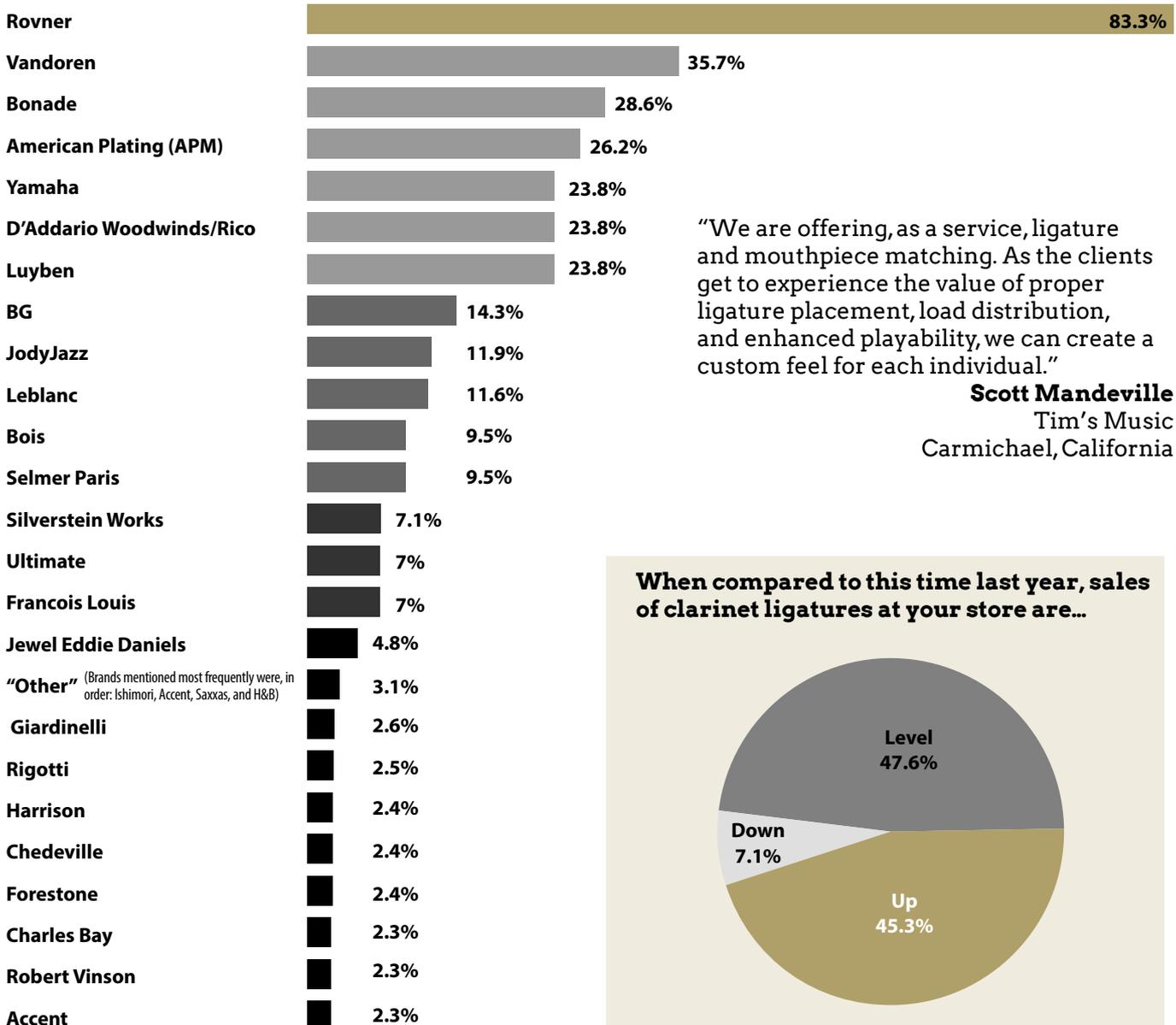
**W**ith only 7.1 percent of participants in this month's dealer survey – sent out to over 250 MI retailers – reporting that sales of clarinet ligatures are down and nearly 93 percent (92.9) claiming sales that are up or level when compared to December 2019, this appears to be a fairly robust market segment.

Another big takeaway? Rovner is an absolute monster when it comes to ligatures.



Almost 85 percent (83.3) of dealers cited the brand as a top-seller. As Pat M. Bowles of North Little Rock, Arkansas' Saied Music Company observes, "More and more people are using the Rovner ligatures." Tim Paul of Piano Trends Music & Band Company (Crystal Lake, Illinois) agrees and offers reasons for the brand's loyal customers: "The Rovner is almost always preferred when we demonstrate how easy and how much better the fit is."

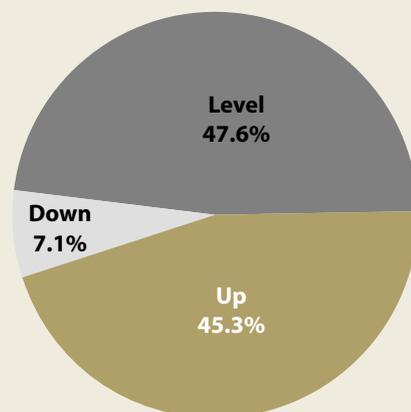
### What brands of clarinet ligatures generate the most profit for your store?



"We are offering, as a service, ligature and mouthpiece matching. As the clients get to experience the value of proper ligature placement, load distribution, and enhanced playability, we can create a custom feel for each individual."

**Scott Mandeville**  
Tim's Music  
Carmichael, California

### When compared to this time last year, sales of clarinet ligatures at your store are...



## What trends have you been noticing in terms of clarinet ligatures – end-user preferences, design and features, et cetera?

"Stocking multiple grade levels of the products we sell is our modus operandi. For non-pro customers, we encourage an upgrade to the inquiry by explaining the FAB of doing so during the presentation. It's also an opportune time to have the 'reed discussion' for the beginning and intermediate player. We also allow our discerning pro clientele to demo the product on the gig. It's 'old school' retail, but it still works for us."

**Jerry Vesely**  
Vesely Music  
Parowan, Utah

"Mississippi Music, Inc. has a large percentage of schools that require a step-up mouthpiece and a Rovner ligature. Rovner's recent packaging change has helped to increase profit even more with the 'no box needed' savings. We also see an almost 0 percent fail rate."

**Mike Guillot**  
Mississippi Music, Inc.  
Flowood, Mississippi

"Certain teachers encourage and require cloth ligatures and others can't be bothered at the middle and high school levels."

**Karen Janiszewski**  
Music Room  
Cheektowaga, New York

"The school kids break or lose their ligatures on a regular basis. When they come in for a replacement we don't just sell them a \$5 cheap replacement – we sell them up to a Luyben or Rovner. Those are far superior ligatures and they cost quite a bit more, but they seem to take care of them better due to the extra expense involved. Remember, you're supposed to be a salesperson...so SELL!"

**Tim Bascom**  
Morgan Music Service, Inc.  
Lebanon, Missouri

"Rovner Dark remains the leader for us."

**Eric Downs**  
PM Music Center  
Aurora, Illinois

"Once a student gets past beginning band, they want the best they can get."

**Dan Patterson**  
Roger's Music  
Fort Payne, Alabama

"The market YTD over last year is only down nominally. The 80/20 rule is in full effect with ligatures – you need a broad selection to move what the best sellers are for your market."

**Nick Rail**  
Nick Rail Music  
Santa Barbara, California

"Rovner products are hands-down our best sellers. We're even seeing Rovner knock-offs; some are pretty good quality, too, but nothing beats the real thing."

**Steve Gibson**  
Absolute Music  
Reno, Nevada



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Note From Joe

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## A New Year: Finding Meaning at the Crossroads

Or, as my favorite Australian band Crowded House once sang, “Always take the weather with you!”

It seems to me that the New Year is often the time for thoughtful entrepreneurs to carefully assess their business assumptions, look for new opportunities and strategically place themselves and their businesses on a path for success. This oftentimes means acting contrary to prevailing thought, taking on additional risk and painting an optimistic vision for others to follow. In the best of times, this is not a job for the timid. Add in the current economic and political uncertainties and this task requires the courage of our hero in Ayn Rand’s “Atlas Shrugged!”

And isn’t that your true role in your business—to be the hero in your own epic story? Your team and customers are looking for you to make the right decisions, seize new opportunities and ensure your business’s ability to succeed, achieving our industry’s goal of a more musical world. In short, you will be asked to “always take the weather with you” and create a positive environment for all of this to happen.

In my opinion, there is no better place to kick-start this than The NAMM Show. Seeing the entire global industry convene on one campus is a priceless way to unleash your creativity, energize your vision and clearly define your company’s end zone for the year ahead.

The NAMM Show floor is filled with the creative results of over 7,000 brands, spanning music, sound and entertainment technology. It’s well over a million square feet of exhibits, so careful planning is in order. Meeting with the craftsmen and designers behind the most innovative products in history, along with the leaders of these companies, will undoubtedly provide you with ideas and inspiration.

Each year’s NAMM U sessions are filled with clues to retail success and offer tangible ideas you can put to use right away. Led by members, for members, these targeted sessions continue to address the industry’s toughest challenges in marketing, sales, website development, strategy, inventory management, succession planning and more, providing additional perspectives into key technologies and best business practices to supercharge your business in the year ahead. And at the Crossroads, our members have the opportunity to consider new product lines, business models and other revenue opportunities, via multiple tracks across the sound and entertainment technology markets. Emerging opportunities in live sound, lighting and entertainment technology are attracting more and more smart NAMM retailers.

And for musical and community inspiration, each evening is filled with the kinds of events that make our industry truly unique. This may be where you fill/refill the inner optimism that is at the base of our musical pyramid. We are all part of the global industry that brings music to the world, and being around others who feel the same way can empower your inner entrepreneur to new heights.

Perhaps in some industries, the impact of any single person is minimal. But I believe that each NAMM member has the ability to positively influence their team, their community, and indeed, the entire industry with their actions. So, in spite of the negativity that seems to be prevalent today, “take the weather with you” and realize the incredible power you have to change the world through music!



**Joe Lamond**  
NAMM PRESIDENT AND CEO

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## Thank You!

Your membership and support of The NAMM Show directly impacts our Circle of Benefits business model, channeling proceeds back into the industry to stimulate market demand, fund music education advocacy programs and craft public relations campaigns that help create more music makers.

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2020  
DON  
JOHNSON  
Music Industry  
Service Award

NAMM's  
**Joe  
Lamond**

*'Advancing Music Education is the Right Thing to Do'*

By Christian **Wissmuller**

**I**n many ways he's the face of the MI industry – and, ever-smiling, Joe Lamond's is a face nearly all of us see at each NAMM Show and many other industry gatherings. At the helm of the National Association of Music Merchants as president and CEO since 2001, Lamond has overseen a period of unprecedented growth for the industry organization while also expanding efforts to advocate for music education for all on a national level (and beyond).

Since 2009, *MMR* has commemorated the life and legacy of our former editor with the Don Johnson Industry Service Award – an honor bestowed upon those within MI who think beyond units sold and revenues earned, using their energies to better their communities and to help ensure that the culture of music and benefits of music-making are available to everyone.

Few, if any, fit the above description more completely than Joe Lamond.

You likely already know quite a bit about him and his accomplishments, but read on – you may learn a thing or two! Joe's path has been a unique and fascinating one...

**Let's start right at the beginning: What were your first exposures to music? Did you take lessons as a child and, if so, on what instruments? What artists, songs, shows, et cetera were pivotal in shaping your appreciation of music?**

Our house was always filled with music. My parents encouraged us all to play an instrument and my older brother played guitar and bass in our neighborhood garage bands. I was lucky enough to tag along and play drums with all his cool, older friends. This started in grade school and continued as my brother went away to college. I have blurry but fond memories of that period; while my peers were doing typical high school stuff on the weekends I

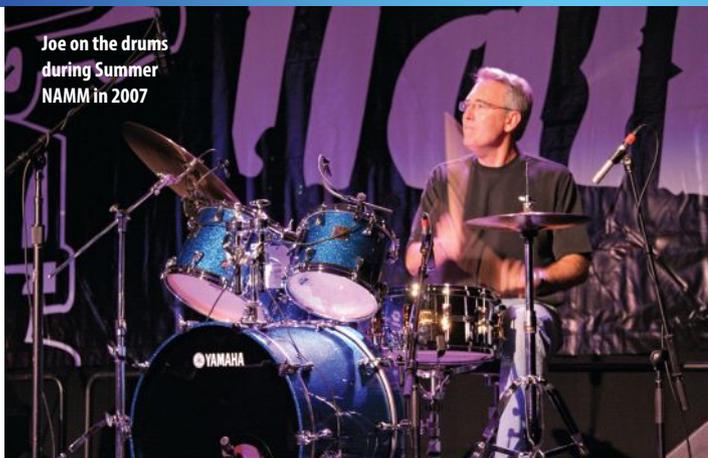
was playing some pretty outrageous fraternity parties at Hobart College in upstate New York.

**As a sort of parallel narrative, you were involved with both professional music-making and MI retail for a time. Can you talk about how you came to be involved with the latter and how your career progressed along that path?**

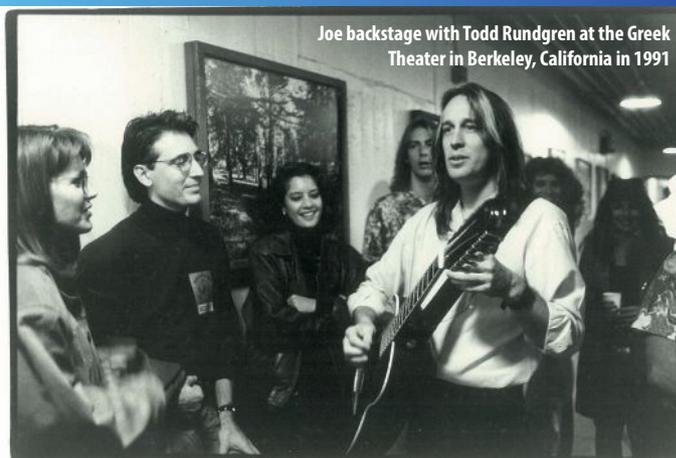
I moved from where I grew up in New York to California when I was 21 – fresh out of school and ready for rock stardom. I quickly started gigging with local bands in Northern California, living the musical life I had dreamed of. Having a day job also seemed quite practical for ensuring things like food and shelter. I have a distinct memory of walking into Drum and Guitar City shortly after arriving in Sacramento and asking this red-haired kid at the counter, "How does someone get a job around here?" He pointed to the back office where the owner was coincidentally getting ready to make a manager change. I was hired on the spot as a bookkeeper, becoming the store manager shortly after that.

Interestingly, the "kid" at the counter continues to be one of my closest friends, Scott Cameron who has been with Drum Workshop for quite some time now. Fun fact: Scott and I attended our first NAMM Show in January 1983. Andy and Diane Pennisi, the owners of Drum and Guitar City were generous enough to send us to the NAMM Show as a reward for a profitable holiday selling season that year. I could have never dreamed at the time that one day I would be responsible for "leading the team" in producing the industry's annual family reunion!

**Can you talk a little bit about your experiences as a performing and recording musician? You've crossed paths with and/or played with at least a couple names folks will be familiar with.**



Joe on the drums during Summer NAMM in 2007



Joe backstage with Todd Rundgren at the Greek Theater in Berkeley, California in 1991

Bread & Loaves 1991

for Joe 1992

It is a long and pretty typical story. Like so many NAMM Members, if one works in this industry in as many roles as I have – retail, recording and touring musician, sound contractor, touring professional, et cetera – you eventually end up working with so many great people.

One of my favorite memories was from the period when I was juggling a series of incredible opportunities all at the same time. I was production manager for an artist named Todd Rundgren who was touring quite regularly while I also had an amazing opportunity to work with Skip Maggiora just as Skip's Music was undergoing a big growth period. I was also playing a lot of drums, in-

cluding tours with San Francisco artist Tommy Tutone ("867-5309" fame!). I think there is a little hyperactivity in every creative person in our industry and the variety of projects during that era was really energizing.

**You joined NAMM in the late '90s in a marketing capacity. How did that transition come about and what were some of your early duties with the organization? Had you grown tired of working directly in MI retail? Do you miss that aspect of the industry?**

In the early to mid-'90s, Skip's Music had pioneered a program

An advertisement for Schilke Music. On the left, there are two trumpets: a gold one and a silver one. Below them is the Schilke logo with "CHICAGO, U.S.A." underneath. Text reads "The all NEW Schilke SB4-OT Bb Trumpet". A red badge says "music EDITORS CHOICE NAMM 2019". On the right, a man in a black suit holds a gold trumpet. At the bottom left, it says "PRINCIPAL TOKYO METROPOLITAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA". At the bottom, the website "WWW.SCHILKEMUSIC.COM" is written in large letters. On the far right, the name "OSAMU TAKAHASHI" is written vertically in red.

Skip Maggiora of Skip's Music with Joe



for adult musicians called “Weekend Warriors.” NAMM was aware of the program, and also sensed the growing opportunity to get lapsed baby boomers back playing again. Around 1996 we (Skip’s and NAMM) came together to launch the Weekend Warriors program for all NAMM

members to use. During this process I had (and very much enjoyed) the opportunity to work with NAMM’s CEO Larry Linkin and Market Development director Bob Morrison. In the summer of 1998, Bob was recruited to start VH-1’s Save the Music program and reached out to me to see if I would be interested in doing what I was doing at Skip’s, only on a broader scale. While I was very happy in MI retail and my young family was settled, I just could not let what I felt was the opportunity of a lifetime pass me by.

Probably the biggest influence in me taking on the role however was my respect for Karl Bruhn, who became NAMM’s first director of Market Development after a very successful career at Yama-

ha, virtually creating the association’s vision for industry growth. I called him up and we had a long talk about the opportunity, he said he would help me in any way possible – a promise I held him to! It was decided that I would not move right away, but rather remain in Northern California. So, for the next few years, I would wake up every Monday morning at around 3a.m., drive to the Sacramento airport and fly down to the NAMM Headquarters in San Diego and begin the work that eventually led me to being selected to take on the CEO role when Link retired in May of 2001. My family and I eventually relocated to San Diego in 2002.

**NAMM’s involvement with music education efforts really ramped up upon your appointment as president and CEO. One of my first NAMM Show memories was the “NAMM Concert Honoring Sir Elton John,” which wound up raising nearly \$350,000 for music education in your second year at the helm. While there are obviously many moving parts and players involved – including your fellow Don Johnson Industry Service Award-winner, Mary Luehrsen – can you share your own thoughts on music education advocacy? Why is music so important to you, personally?**

Thanks to the efforts of many who came before us, I was lucky enough to have music in my school growing up. Seeing firsthand the positive impact this had on me and my friends and then later being involved with the education programs at Skip’s like “Stayway to Stardom” convinced me of the importance of ensuring that every young person had the same opportunity. With the help of

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NAMM Booth 207AB

countless industry friends and supporters, and the financial engine of NAMM's "Circle of Benefits" business model where trade show revenues are invested back into growing the industry, we have been given the tools and the mandate to change our educational laws to ensure that music and art were taught as core subjects alongside math, science, and reading.

**The benefits to our industry of encouraging music education and the creation of more music makers should be pretty self-evident to all, but how would you summarize the positive impact of these things to retailers and vendors who may still – inexplicably – be like, "Yeah, yeah – big deal..." and not grasping the full import?**

Such an interesting and important question. We are an industry that benefits from the spending by the state and federal educational system, which in this country is somewhere north of \$650 billion dollars annually. Having a seat at that budget table, which gets refilled each and every year is an industry imperative. Creating lifelong music makers has a downstream effect on every category of products including those used in a robust live



Joe at his first retail job, Drum and Guitar City, 1982

music and touring industry. This is a global effort but it is clear that the U.S. model is the envy of nearly every country, making our market the largest in the world. But I have to be honest, if this was the only reason for dedicating our life's energy to music advocacy I'd rather be parking cars. We do this because it is the right thing to do and has changed and will continue to change the lives of millions of young people.

**NAMM has grown in so many ways under your stewardship and so many innovative programs, partnerships, and initiatives have been launched. What accomplishments, in particular, stand out to you as achievements of which you are most proud?**

Not quite sure of that, but then again, my memory isn't what it used to be. I was joking with the staff the other day that I couldn't even recall all the hotel rooms I'd stayed in during the past 30 days! If I've accomplished anything, it has been to find the most talented people for every position, ensuring that NAMM was the place they wanted to be and then encouraging and championing their success along the way. And by attracting the best and brightest minds in the

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industry for the NAMM Board and Executive Committee we have been blessed with a clear and focused definition of the end zone. Ironically, simply by accomplishing this, I've had some of the most memorable experiences, myself. In what other role could a person testify on Capitol Hill with Elmo or play drums with Derek Smalls from Spinal Tap?

**Are there any moves or decisions during your tenure with NAMM that, with hindsight, you would have approached differently?**

Ahem, the list is pretty long – how much time do you have? I guess the thing that I wish I could do over would be to have more time with my industry friends and peers. Seems like the pace today leaves so little time for the personal side and I have certainly let important relationships wither due to not being attentive enough.

**The NAMM Fly-in continues to do amazing work, but even after “pro music education” legislation is passed and even after milestones are reached, it seems there’s still always an uphill battle. Do you ever see us reaching a point where music education for all is a goal that has been achieved in an enduring manner? Do you ever see that “fight” as being truly won and over?**

Every two years a new House of Representatives is seated and a third of the Senate is up for re-election. There are new lawmakers coming into powerful positions and committees who need to



On Capitol Hill with Elmo

“We have been given the tools and the mandate to change our educational laws to ensure that music and art were taught as core subjects alongside math, science, and reading.”

hear from us. Priorities change, funding comes and goes, but advocating for music in our schools will likely be something that will be important for the industry long after we're all gone from the scene. As the saying goes in D.C., “You are either at the table or on the menu...”

We are also more involved than ever in fighting for the business issues that are important to our members like taxes, regulations, and health care. For example, the well-intentioned but terribly misleading California Prop 65 has impacted our members from all around the world. We need safe and accurate labeling laws and NAMM, along with many partners, are going to make that happen.

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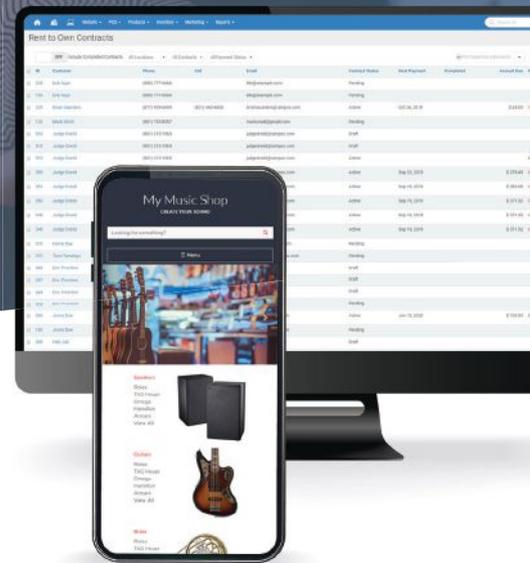
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Yoko Ono and Joe in 2010



Graham Nash with Joe in 2016



Stevie Wonder and Joe at NAMM's "Breakfast of Champions"

**What are your thoughts on the current state of the industry and what are your expectations in 2020?**

Our industry tends to be made up of idealists and optimists, otherwise we'd have all pursued more practical and lucrative careers! With that being said, I believe we are on the right track, focusing on music education and growing the services part of the business in live sound, lighting, and entertainment technology. More music is being made live, in our classrooms, in our houses of worship, on theater stages, and in tours and festivals than in any time in our history. And at the same time, more music is being recorded and used in gaming, TV, and films and in new and emerging technologies like virtual and augmented reality. Its disrupting the status quo for sure, but how exciting!

**Any final thoughts?**

It is so meaningful to me to receive this. Don Johnson was a

colleague and a friend. We bonded when he and Sid Davis came to Sacramento to do an *MMR* cover story on Skip's Music. I also recall a great trip to Montreal when we were launching the Weekend Warriors program up in Canada. It seemed that Don and I were among the few visitors from the U.S., so we spent a lot of time during the MIAC Show discussing life and the industry. And years later, during one of the emotional annual tributes that we have each opening night of the NAMM Show, Don and I stood together watching the names and photos of our industry friends and colleagues that were lost that year. The very next year at the tribute, Don's photo come up on the screen. I realized how lucky we all were to have known Don and to have had him in our lives. If I have learned anything over the years, it is to never let an opportunity pass to express one's gratitude for the lifelong friendships we've been so fortunate to enjoy in this industry, the rest is all just a bunch of fun and games. ©2019 MMR

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# 2020 Winter NAMM® Buyer's Guide

Take a peek at some of the hottest items hitting the show floor this year

## Accessories

### Whirlwind's Leader Standard Series Cable Booth 16116

The Leader is Whirlwind's lifetime guaranteed cable, which is premium, rugged, and practically indestructible. The Leader plug's patented cable grip absorbs any typical straining in the field and its flexible boot extension has virtually eliminated breakage at the cable exit. Combined with Accusonic+1 cable, the Leader is the highest quality instrument cable manufactured today. Available in 1, 3, 6, 10, 15, 18, 25, 30, and 50-foot lengths. The model number is formed by L + length (e.g. "L10"). Cables are also available with a right-angle classic style plug on one end.



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

### Morley's New Pedals Booth 8910

Morley has unveiled four new pedals: the Wah Boost, Wah Lock, Lead Wah, and Volume Plus.



All 20/20 Wah pedals include a new buffer that protects your tone, restores, improves and delivers. All 20/20 pedals are built like a tank, last forever, and now feature a lifetime warranty. They are now pedal board-friendly at just 6.85" x 4.5" x 2.75" (L x W x H). Additionally, all 20/20 Wah pedals include Switchless activation, and all 20/20 pedals will include optical circuitry and glow-in-the-dark details.

The 20/20 Wah Boost is a switchless Wah with a 20dB Boost, midrange focus, and wide frequency sweep. The base is industrial silver and has street price of \$159. The Wah Lock has three Wah modes (Wah, WHOA, and Wah Lock so you can use a tone filter), a Halloween Orange base, and a street price of \$169. The Lead Wah is a switchless Wah with a wider frequency sweep, low-end boost, an internal Wah Level trimpot to customize your Wah Loudness, with a base in Shred Red and street price of \$149. Finally, the Volume Plus is an optical volume with an added Minimum Volume feature so you can also use it as a Rhythm/Lead Pedal. It comes with a Gator Green base and a street price of \$129.

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

### The SY-1000 Guitar Synthesizer from BOSS Booth 10702

The SY-1000 Guitar Synthesizer is an advanced synthesizer and modeling processor for guitar and bass. Backed by a cutting-edge sound engine, high-speed DSP, and evolved GK technology, the SY-1000 delivers the finest performance and most organic playing experience yet. SY-1000 users can build patches with three simultaneous instruments – each with a number of distinctive types to choose from – and combine them for an endless range of sounds. Fed by the processor's 13-pin GK input, every instrument offers an extensive set of parameters for tone shaping, mixing, and tuning. A normal 1/4-inch input is also available to blend in regular guitar/bass pickup sounds.



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

### The FONE Unfinished Fretboard Care Kit from Music Nomad Booth 1502

Music Nomad's new FONE Unfinished Fretboard Care Kit contains one F-ONE Fretboard Oil, Fretboard Brush, and a 2' n 1 Fretboard Cloth. The F-ONE Fretboard Oil is formulated using a complex mixture of the finest ultra-refined tree and seed oils to clean, condition, and protect your fingerboard. The innovative 2' n 1 microfiber fretboard cloth is soft on one side for gentle applying and cleaning with the F-ONE Oil, while the other side is designed with small scrubbers woven into the fabric to penetrate and lift dirt and grime buildup off the fretboard. The specially designed fretboard brush is the perfect tool for precision cleaning and conditioning around the frets and deeper wood pores.



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

### Levy's Leathers New Hemp and RipChord Straps Booth 6413

Levy's Leathers Hemp Line of straps features natural, sustainable, and vegan straps for environmentally conscious musicians. In addition, Levy's Right Height Line Straps with RipChord Technology allow players to easily adjust strap height with Levy's patented pull tab.



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

### Tech21's SansAmp PSA 2.0 Booth 5653

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[www.tech21.com](http://www.tech21.com)

### Hosa's Pro Guitar Patch Cables Booth 14316

Hosa's Pro Guitar Patch Cables improve upon the previous patch cable version by incorporating a new pancake REAN connector that keeps the ruggedness of Hosa Pro and



maximizes the limited space on pedalboards. Hosa Pro Series Guitar Patch Cables feature flat, nickel-plated REAN connectors by Neutrik AG, minimizing empty space and creating room for additional effects. They also feature 20 AWG Oxygen-Free Copper (OFC) conductors for signal clarity, making them a significant upgrade over standard guitar patch cables in both economy of space and signal transfer.

A 90% OFC braided shield protects against interference and helps make these cables among the more durable and long-lasting guitar patch cables available. Hosa Pro Guitar Patch Cables will be available at MSRPs of \$16.05 for 6', \$16.50 for 12', and \$16.80 for 18'.

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

**Mojotone's Premium Historic Limited '59 P.A.F. Humbucker Set**

Mojotone's Premium Historic Limited '59 P.A.F. Humbucker Set is a recreation of the late-'50s Gibson P.A.F. humbuckers. Mojotone has created the Premium Historic '59 P.A.F. using all vintage-correct components, and coils that are hand-wound to the precise layering and mismatching of vintage P.A.F. coils to re-create a dynamic, articulate, harmonically rich, yet inspiringly clear set of neck and bridge humbuckers – all at an impressive circa-1959 price.



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

**Limited-Edition Milton Kyser Signature Acoustic Quick-Change Capo Booth 7011**

The Limited-Edition Milton Kyser Signature Acoustic Quick-Change Capo, or the "Milton" capo, celebrates the 40th anniversary of Kyser in 2020. Available in an exclusive run of 2,020 units and hand-crafted in Texas, the "Milton" capo features a special powder-coated chrome finish, a "Milton Kyser" original signature stamp, and blackout appointments, including a black boot, black rubber pad, and black low-tension spring for seamless, in-tune performance.



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

**Flat Patch Cables, Grateful Dead Accessories, and LokNob Dials from D'Addario Booth 7002**

D'Addario Accessories' Custom Series Flat Patch Cables optimize pedalboard space by allowing you to place pedals closer together, while accurately transferring all the subtle details of your playing. Utilizing the latest in cable manufacturing technology,



these cables feature an oxygen-free coaxial copper conductor with two layers of noise-rejecting shielding, formulated for extremely low capacitance and handling noise. The lower cable capacitance allows your instrument's brilliance and character to be transmitted with the utmost transparency.

The Flat Patch Cable plugs feature the patented Geo-Tip, ensuring a secure connection in any instrument, pedal, or amplifier. Additionally, encapsulated soldering points and molded strain relief combine to deliver the ultimate long-lasting, high-performance patch cable.

In addition, with the help of Warner Music Artist Services, D'Addario has taken on the vast art portfolio of the Grateful Dead to release a brand-new line of Grateful Dead licensed products. A line of woven nylon guitar straps featuring two designs in four different colors and one 10-pack celluloid pick design available in two colorways are available now.



D'Addario Accessories' LokNob is the "set-it and forget it" knob for your amplifier, pedals, and guitar knobs. The LokNob eliminates the chance of accidentally hitting the knob and changing your settings. The knobs stay put until you want to change them. The LokNob

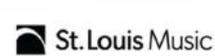
is available in three forms in various materials and finishes; LokNob, Tour Cap, and Brake Pad. The easy-to-install LokNob dials and locks in your sound settings. Once in place, simply rotate the knob to click into the sound you need. For larger adjustments, simply lift the knob, rotate to your desired sound, then release to lock in the setting. LokNob retrofits to most amplifiers, effects pedals, instruments, and live/studio gear and is fully reversible.



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

**The Snark ST-8HZ 'Super Tight' Chromatic All-Instrument Tuner Booth 4807**

The Snark ST-8HZ "Super Tight" Chromatic All-Instrument Tuner is a favorite choice for players who require a powerful, fast, and extremely accurate headstock tuner. This offers two super-tight tuning modes, conventional fast-response auto note display with stable and accurate

graduation, or engage the Hertz Tuning button for precision accuracy within the ST-8HZ's Hz frequency scale, calibrated between 415 - 466Hz.

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

**Légère's European Cut Reeds for Clarinet**  
Booth 8526

The European Cut for Clarinet is Légère's most flexible reed. The unique profile design allows for a bright, colorful yet warm and clean sound. It responds without hesitation and easily glides from the low registers to the high registers of the instrument. Its ease of playing is the reason this reed is used by almost all Légère Endorsing Clarinetists performing on the French system.



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

**RS Berkeley's Chris Potter Elite Series Alto Saxophone Mouthpiece**

The Chris Potter Elite Series Alto Saxophone Mouthpiece was developed with acclaimed saxophonist and RS Berkeley artist Chris Potter, himself. This versatile mouthpiece is excellent for all styles of music and is made from rubber in the USA. Tip opening: .066"



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

**New Embroidered Straps from Henry Heller**  
Booth 4802

Henry Heller's new Tan Embroidered Series guitar straps are embroidered with five original designs and feature Henry Heller's sewn-in flat signature pick pocket on the underside. Each strap is 2.75" wide, extendable to 53" in length.



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

**Triple Foot Controller from Electro-Harmonix**  
Booth 5249

The new Triple Foot Controller from Electro-Harmonix is an external foot controller that can add functionality to compatible pedals. Its small footprint is pedalboard-friendly and the pedal comes with its own TRS cable. It works with Electro-Harmonix pedals, as well as those from other makers.



**New Mouthpieces from JodyJazz**  
Booth 8727

The HR\* CUSTOM DARK Tenor mouthpiece from JodyJazz offers more warmth, which comes from the company's proprietary "CHR" Chedeville Hard Rubber it is con-



structed from. The new HR\* CUSTOM DARK Tenor also features a heavy stylized ring on the shank of the mouthpiece. The profile and height of this ring was inspired by JodyJazz's popular POWER RING ligature. With significantly more mass on the shank of the mouthpiece the HR\* CUSTOM DARK Tenor enjoys a boost of body and increased harmonics.

The new JodyJazz HR Clarinet mouthpiece model is a free-blowing, warm-sounding and versatile mouthpiece, very much in the tradition of the entire HR\* saxophone mouthpiece series. The lower tip openings (1-5) are designed to blend in Concert band, Marching band, Symphonic, Chamber and Pit Orchestra settings, while the higher tip openings (6-10) are designed with a facing curve and higher baffle to enhance projection and brightness for Jazz, Klezmer, Latin, and Eastern European Clarinet styles.



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

**Cases & Stands**

**Cello and Clarinet Covers from Maloney StageGear**  
Booth 7901

The cello cover from Maloney StageGear Covers is reversible, changing from silver to black. Use the silver heat reflective side when outdoors to block the sun's heat and UV rays. Use the black side indoors to keep gear dust-free or simply obscured and inconspicuous when positioned on stage while other bands are performing. It includes an attached pocket to keep your bow nearby and protected. The cover is made from durable polyester with an acrylic coating, has reinforced edges, and is water repellant. At 49" in height and 29" in width (at bottom) the cover will fit most standard size cellos. The bow pocket measures 30" x 2" and has a Velcro flap closure.



Similarly, the clarinet cover includes an attached pocket (4.75"x2.75") with a Velcro flap closure to keep your mouthpiece nearby and protected as well. At 24" in height and 9" in width (at bottom), the cover will fit most standard size clarinets.



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

**The Retro-Rack Series and Lightweight Speaker Tote Bag from Gator Cases**  
Booth 6413

This series of vintage amp-style wooden rack cases from Gator offers modern protection with a classic appearance for the stage or studio.



**CLEVELANDER MALLETSM<sup>TM</sup>** MADE IN THE U.S.A.

**THE CLEVELANDER DRUM COMPANY**

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

This series pays homage to the '50s and '60s style with three colored tolex options: Seafoam Green, Tweed, and Black. Fit your favorite processors and recording equipment into 2U, 3U, or 4U rack-size options with 12.5 inches of rackable depth. \$159.99

Gator's Lightweight Speaker Tote Bag is designed to fit a Mackie FreePlay LIVE Personal PA Speaker has quality features like water-resistant polyester, a soft-lined interior, and dedicated side compartments. The water-resistant exterior fabric shields your speaker from the harsh elements, while the soft-lined interior provides gentle protection for your valued PA speaker. The Lightweight Speaker Tote bag features dedicated side compartments with hook-and-loop closure flaps that provide plenty of storage for cables and accessories. A set of comfortable carry handles on top distribute weight evenly, making transport stress-free.



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

**Wall-Mounted Guitar Hangers  
from On-Stage  
Booth 10713**

On-Stage's new GS8730 Wall-Mounted Guitar Hangers provide instant and safe access to guitars and basses in a space-saving design. The EVA-padded yolk provides double protection of an instrument: the ample padding cradles an instrument's headstock while the weight-sensing automatic lock gates off access. To unlock, a player simply lifts it up and away. The hangers are available in five finishes: Natural, Black, Cherry, Mahogany and Walnut, and feature high-quality wooden components to complement any studio or music room.



[www.on-stage.com](http://www.on-stage.com)

**GBU4100 Series Ukulele Gig Bags  
from On-Stage  
Booth 10713**

On-Stage's new GBU4100 Series of Ukulele Gig Bags feature 360 degrees of padded coverage with a highly durable woven outer shell that's built to withstand the rigors of the road. Setting the GBU4100 apart from other uke bags is its heavy-duty stitching and bolstered anchor points. A rigid external edge piping retains the bag's shape so that a player's ukulele is always in the optimum internal position, surrounded by On-Stage's abuse-absorbing padded armor enclosure.



Available in four different models, the Ukulele Gig Bags also boast both a rugged handle for briefcase-style handling and two adjustable backpack straps for hands-free transport. Zippered pouches ideal for housing tuners, picks, strings, and other accessories round out the features of the lightweight bag.

[www.on-stage.com](http://www.on-stage.com)

**Fretted**

**Prestige's Signature 'Empath' Acoustic Guitar  
Booth 3321**

Prestige Guitars, in collaboration with Devin Townsend, have released the Signature "Empath" Acoustic Guitar. The Empath Acoustic is a hand-built Dreadnought cutaway guitar, featuring a Torrefied Adirondack Spruce Top, Indian Rosewood Back and Sides, and 3A grade Flame Maple bevels on the Arm Rest, Back Rest, and Cutaway. Following an all-organic build, each Empath guitar is built with a hand carved Mahogany Neck, Ebony Fingerboard, Ebony Bridge, Bone Nut and Saddle, and a nat-



ural Satin Finish. Each guitar includes a unique, individualized and numbered, handwritten autographed letter from Devin Townsend, hidden inside the soundhole.

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

**Reverend's New Roundhouse and Robin Finck Signature Model Guitars  
Booth 5550**

Reverend Guitars' new Roundhouse model features a carved top set neck, a first for Reverend Guitars. Lightweight and balanced, but with a heavy tone, the new Roundhouse reimagines the classic single cutaway for today's player. Featuring Reverend's HA5 humbuckers, a flame maple top, and a tuneomatic stop-tail bridge, the Reverend Roundhouse is available in Violin Brown, Transparent Black, and Transparent Turquoise.



Reverend Guitars' new Robin Finck Signature Model boasts Railhammer Chisels and a high-performance bound ebony fretboard. Finck only uses the volume and bass contour knobs, so the control layout

**New from JodyJazz**

In celebration of our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary we are proud to offer the DV PLATINUM 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Limited Edition models. Also new for 2020 the HR\* CUSTOM DARK Tenor and HR\* Clarinet.



DV PLATINUM Limited Edition



HR\* CUSTOM DARK Tenor



HR\* Clarinet



See us at NAMM Booth #8727



is streamlined to volume/bass contour/3-way switch. Vintage pedal-style knobs mean that players can see them, even on dark stages, with laser lights and smoke machines erupting all around.

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



**Relish's Trinity Guitar**  
Booth 3920

Relish's newest guitar model is the "Trinity by Relish," their first solid body model, produced in close cooperation with PT Cort in Surabaya, Indonesia. This model features their patented Pickup Swapping System, which al-

lows regular humbucker-sized pickups to be accessed from the back and plugged in and out in a heartbeat. Mounting frames with pre-soldered connecting points and strong magnets on both the frame and the body ensure easy handling and high resilience.

[www.relish.swiss](http://www.relish.swiss)



**Godin's Radiator Guitar**  
Booth 211AB

Godin Guitars' new Radiator guitar features a matching body faceplate and headstock and a short-scale Silver Leaf Maple Neck. Loaded with custom Godin humbuckers and twin volume and tone controls, this new model also includes a Chambered Silver Leaf Maple body, a Rosewood fretboard, and a Wraparound bridge. The Radiator comes in three finish options: Matte Black, Trans Cream, and Bourbon Burst.

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

**New Ukuleles from Amahi**  
Booth 2400



Amahi is bringing more color to an affordable EQ line with the UK-205. Constructed of mahogany, each ukulele is shop adjusted and includes Aquila strings, chrome guitar tuners and a 10 mm padded bag. With a satin finish and attractive rosette and binding, this new model is available in concert size with a choice of 6 colors-dark blue, light blue, green, red, yellow, and natural finish. Street price: \$139

Amahi's newest line of colorful ukuleles includes the UK-110 Soprano. Made from mahogany, these tiny ukes offer intermediate quality at an entry level price. Comes standard with Aquila strings, chrome guitar style tuners and a padded gig bag. Available in 6 distinct colors-green, red, purple, gold, blue and natural mahogany. Street price: \$69

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

**SOLID CHOICE**



Designed by Swedish amp and pedal guru Björn Juhl, the new **BJF-S66** from One Control faithfully captures the essence of the famed mid-60's American tube amp sound, yet is small and light enough to fit into a gig bag, and robust enough to handle any gig.

**ONE CONTROL**

[one-control.com](http://one-control.com)

**NAMM BOOTH #3729**



**Gibson's Limited-Edition Chris Cornell Tribute ES-335 Guitar**  
**Booth 300A**

Gibson's limited-edition Chris Cornell Tribute ES-335 guitar features aged Lollartron humbucking pickups, clear "no number" Top Hat knobs, an Olive Drab Satin finish, and Mother-of-Pearl Chris Cornell signature peghead inlay.  
[www.gibson.com](http://www.gibson.com)

**Band & Orchestra**

**Maple Leaf Strings' LS130 5-String Violin**  
**Booth 9140**

Maple Leaf Strings' LS130 5-string violin combines the 4 strings of the violin with the C string of a viola, so that beginning strings teachers are able to demonstrate the part a violin, a viola, or a cello, all while using the same instrument. This helps the students by being able to hear their parts played in the correct key and octave, and positions them to learn at a faster rate.



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



**The Wilmington Flute from Music Medic**  
**Booth 9536**

The Wilmington Flute is a student flute that has key work and tolerances that are comparable to flutes costing much more. Every Wilmington Flute is play-tested, adjusted, and set-up by skilled technicians in the shop in Wilmington, North Carolina. MSRP: \$425

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

**The Dakota SDB-XR 62 Baritone Sax**  
**Booth 8933**

The SDB-XR 62 saxophone offers players a contemporary and distinctive look, plus a solid sound with optimum depth, resonance, projection and focus. Precise intonation throughout assures any player accurate timbre balance for solo and group performances. This model comes complete with balanced double arms on Low C/B/B $\flat$  keys, stainless steel hinge rods, exclusive low-profile key cups with a range from Low A to High F#. The custom raw unfinished metal alloy makes this horn visually appealing for all on-stage settings. Its double handle wood case with built-in wheels provides outstanding protection plus easy transportation.



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

**Intermediate and Professional Chimes from Yamaha**  
**Booth 100**

The Yamaha YCH-6018 Intermediate Chimes and YCH-7018 Professional Chimes were completely redesigned to deliver rich, fundamental tones and luxurious sustain. Designed with both professional orchestras and school band programs in mind, the larger YCH-7018 provides players with long sustain and a wide dynamic range – giving percussionists the power to stand out in large ensembles, while the YCH-6018 has a lower playing position by 10 centimeters, making the model ideal for players at the intermediate level.



Both models were crafted with a new silver head cap design that results in richer tones, enhanced volume, and improved pitch definition and playability, as well as a redesigned hanger to make playing fast passages much easier. Each model features professionally tuned, lacquered tubes, measuring 1-1/2" and 1-1/4" respectively, and offers a full 3-octave (C52-to-F69) range. They include a redesigned chime tube hanging system that is unique to Yamaha, oversize casters for easy transport, a chime mallet, and a cover to protect the instrument from dust and scratches. The 7000 Series features a height adjustment capability, while the 6000 Series is slightly lower in height allowing the model to be easily adjusted for players at the school band level. Also available is a six-tube chime stand, the YCHS-7006, to accommodate specialized performances and the new chime mallet, the YCHM-38P.

The YCH-6018 (MSRP: \$7,000), YCH-7018 (MSRP: \$9,486), YCHS-7006 (MSRP: \$1,864) and YCHM-38P (MSRP: \$60.00) will begin shipping in March 2020.

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

**Amplification**



**New Fryette Amplifiers**  
**Booth 5429**

The Fryette Power Station 100 Dual-Mode Reactance Tube Amplifier is an easy-to-use Power Attenuator for controlling the volume of high-powered tube amplifiers with none of the drawbacks of a conventional attenuator. The PS-100 features two sets of remote foot-switchable front panel Volume, Presence, and Depth controls for maximum live performance flexibility, and a powerful Dual KT88 100W Mono-Block for unparalleled punch and dynamic range. \$899



The Fryette LX II is the world's first one-rack-space all-tube 50-watt per channel power amp. The Fryette LX II represents the ultimate evolution of classic tube amplifier design with a Patent-

ed transformer technology that allows it to fit in a one-rack-space housing with high reliability and extremely quiet operation. It has been designed to last decades with only nominal maintenance. The LX II delivers 50 watts per channel into a 4, 8, or 16 ohm load, and provides beautiful harmonic balance, wide open-dynamic delivery and powerful bottom-end response via four Premium matched 6L6GC power tubes, and proprietary paper insulated output transformers.

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

**The Tone Master Twin Reverb Amplifier from Fender**  
**Booth 304A**

The Tone Master Twin Reverb amplifier models the circuitry and 85-watt power output of an original Fender Twin tube amp. Using a high-performance 200-watt digital power amp to achieve the headroom and dynamic range of a real vintage Twin tube amp, paired with two Jensen N-12K neodymium speakers and a resonant pine cabinet, the result is tubeless Twin Reverb tone, volume and dynamics almost indistinguishable from the all-tube original. With all these features, the Tone Master Twin Reverb about only half the weight of an all-tube Twin. \$999.99



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

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GluDry



the Others



## Traynor Amplifiers' New Models Booth 17206

Traynor Amplifiers' YBA100 100-watt bass head has been designed to be the ultimate tube head for the working musician. LED indicators on the rear of the amp show proper tube function and status. In rare cases where a tube may fail, the YBA100 will lock out the problem tube and its partner, allowing the amp to finish the show on the remaining active tubes.

The stock YBA100 ships with four hand-selected and tested 6L6 power tubes, delivering a classic smooth tube tone. For players looking for a more aggressive bass sound, the stock 6L6 tubes can be easily changed to any high quality EL34 tube set and be re-biased in the field, making the YBA100 essentially two amps in one chassis.

Smaller, portable and accessible, the YBA 100 is a lunch-box style amp, lighter than most 100 watt tube amps on the market.

Traynor Amplifiers also celebrates the 20th Anniversary of the classic YCV40 tube amp with the YCV405. Designed and built in Canada, the YCV4050 contains a 12" Celestion Creamback speaker and hand-selected 12AX7 and 6L6GC tubes. An auto-matching tube circuit maintains the bias balance as tubes age ensuring hum free performance throughout tube life.

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



## Piano & Keyboard



### Yamaha's YC61 Stage Keyboard Booth 100

The YC61 Stage Keyboard from Yamaha is a new organ-focused instrument combining the sought-after organ sounds of popular music with the sonic versatility and real-time control today's keyboardists demand. The YC61 employs a newly developed Virtual Circuitry Modeling (VCM) Organ engine. VCM models the behavior of vintage electronics at the component level. This allows realistic organ character sound along with familiar and modern controls organ players will appreciate. Two comprehensive "keys" sections offer authentic acoustic pianos, soulful electric pianos, realistic strings and brass, analog-style synths, and more. Dedicated effects like delay, chorus, distortion and more give keyboardists the ability to quickly create new, inspiring sounds. MSRP:\$2,499

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



### KORG's New Synthesizer Workstation and Professional Arranger Booth 8802

Updated and with a matte black finish, KORG has announced the new KROSS2-88MB Synthe-

sizer Workstation. Packed with all the sounds and features of the current KROSS2-88, the new model adds more PCM, including a beautifully resonant acoustic piano sample and an additional 128 cutting-edge sound programs.

The new synthesizer offers a diverse array of more than 1,000 presets, adding richer tones for a more refined sound including piano and electric piano. For a more cutting-edge style, the KROSS2-88 MB comes equipped with synth and drum sounds, including 27 drum track patterns newly added to the latest model. Like many other keyboards in the KORG family, the KROSS2-88 MB features KORG's Natural Weighted (NH4) Hammer Action keybed, offering a realistic and comfortable approach to playing. The NH4 delivers authentic piano with less overall weight, adding to KROSS2-88MB's portability.



With more power than ever before and numerous new features, KORG's Pa700 has set a new standard for arranger workstations. Now it will be available in a contemporary red color version with a black touch panel to complement the metallic body.

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

## Pro Audio

### On-Stage's New Microphones Booth 10713

On-Stage's AS800 FET Condenser Microphone captures everything from soft vocal whispers to thundering kick drums with detailed clarity. Featuring an attractive price point, the AS800 makes a perfect audio recording companion for both beginner and professional podcasters on a budget. An included shock mount isolates the mic from external vibrations to reduce unwanted rumble. The AS800 comes equipped with a carrying case for easy transportation and a storage pouch to keep the capsule free from dust.



The new AS400v2 and AS420v2 dynamic microphones are a perfect solutions for miking vocal performances or public speaking engagements. The AS400v2 Dynamic Mic is dynamic, handheld microphone and features a mute switch that can conveniently be turned on and off at the mic itself. The AS400v2 comes equipped with everything need to connect to a mixer or public address system, including a 20-foot cable and a mic clip for use with mic stands.



The AS420v2 Wide-Range Dynamic Mic features a broad frequency response to produce a well-rounded amplified sound. Similar to the AS400v2, the AS420v2 also comes with everything needed to connect to a mixer or public address system, including a 20-foot cable and a mic clip for use with mic stands.

[www.on-stage.com](http://www.on-stage.com)

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New **Lock-Wheel** with  
unique 3-Step security function



1. Screw our Lock-Wheel with patented self-locking thread tool-free by hand, you already protect your guitar sufficiently (the round shaping must be facing the pull-up ball!).



2. Use a 2 mm or 5/64" Allen key or screwdriver to tighten it for maximum security.



3. Use our micro cone-top screw to attach it permanently. You will never lose your Lock-Wheel again!

# New Schaller S-Locks!

**S** for save, **S** for silent and **S** for Schaller strap locks!

Detailed installation instructions and video at [www.schaller.info/S-Locks](http://www.schaller.info/S-Locks)

Three different strap buttons to choose from with high-grade felt washers



*protect your Love*



**Schaller**  
The Original Innovators

## Yorkville's Elite EF215P Double Cabinet Booth 7205

Yorkville Sound expands the Elite family of powered speakers by introducing the EF215P, the only double 15" cabinet in the current Elite line-up. The most bass-heavy full range cabinet in the Yorkville catalogue, Elite's EF215P consists of two 15" speakers with a 3.5" titanium



horn driver, dispersing at 60°X40°. Housed in a bass reflex cabinet, the EF215P is designed to deliver big sound just as it is, without any modifications.

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

## Print & Digital

### Hal Leonard's 'Frozen 2' Folios and The Singer's Jazz Anthology Booth 8910

Hal Leonard has shared folios for Disney's "Frozen II," the long-awaited sequel to the



blockbuster movie featuring the instant standard "Let It Go." Robert Lopez worked directly with Hal Leonard editors to personally approve all the arrangements in the songbooks. These souvenir folios also feature full-color scenes from the film. \$19.99.

Perfect for the aspiring jazz vocalist, *The Singer's Jazz Anthology* series features vocal lines with piano accompaniments. The singer's portion, matching the original sheet music, is paired with piano accompaniments arranged in an authentic yet accessible jazz style designed to enable the singer to sound like they're being backed by an accomplished jazz pianist. The accompaniments in the books can also be embellished by personalizing rhythms or dynamics, and chord labels are provided for pianists who are comfortable playing their own chord voicings.

*The Singer's Jazz Anthology* debuts with four books in the series: Classic Standards, Pop Standards, George Gershwin, and Cole Porter. Each book is arranged by Brent Edstrom and is available in both high and low voice. Each publication includes access to professionally recorded piano accompaniments online, available for download or streaming. \$19.99

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

## Lighting & DJ

### Chauvet Professional's Rogue R1 Beam Wash Booth 11138

The Rogue R1 Beam Wash features a unique lens design that allows it to deliver tight beam effects, as well as realistic and accurate color blending from its seven 40W RGBW LEDs. The fixture's six distinct dimming modes and 2800 to 10000 K color temperature range, as well as its extremely wide beam angle (4° to 37.8°) and zoom angle (5° to 58.2°), add to its impressive versatility. The fixture has an output of up to 13,939 lux measured at five meters and measures 8.42 x 6.29 x 14.52 inches (214 x 160 x 369 mm), allowing it to be well-represented even in tight rigs. Its compactness also enhances the rapid speed of its smooth pan and tilt movements.



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

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Band: Clean Bandit  
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Instrument: NS CR4 Cello

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# RPMDA IN NEW ORLEANS!

**April 30 - May 3**

The 44th annual convention of the Retail Print Music Dealers Association continues its winning combination of educational sessions, collaborative discussions, one-of-a-kind social events and the extremely popular Power Hour!

Supporting one of the most rapidly evolving segments of the music products industry, the RPMDA convention is the only forum of its kind for information sharing and non-competitive discussion.

**Register now at [RPMDA.com](http://RPMDA.com)**



The Beat of  
Ernie Ball  
Goes On

Newly-Appointed CEO Brian  
Ball Steps Up (Again)  
By Victoria Wasylak



**F**ive years ago, we at *MMR* made a rather bold statement: We proclaimed that Brian Ball, son of Sterling Ball, had stepped into the “role he was born for” as president of Ernie Ball. This past fall, Brian found an even better fit as CEO of his family’s esteemed MI company in November.

After years of following in the footsteps of Sterling – quite literally, we might add – Brian officially took on the company’s highest title and greatest portion of responsibility on November 12. The decades-old MI giant has perhaps never been in more capable hands, however: Brian has already co-spearheaded multiple patents for Ernie Ball, such as the Paradigm Guitar Strings and M-Steel Core Wire Technology, and he’s overseen an enormous, record-making period of growth for the company over the last 10 years.

Upon receiving his new title, *MMR* chatted with Brian about yet another major chapter in the Ernie Ball history books. Read on below.

**First of all - congratulations! How does it feel to be CEO now?**

Thank you! It is such an honor and one I don’t take lightly. My dad Sterling has been an incredible CEO for our family and the company for over 30 years now, I have some large shoes to fill, but fortunately there’s a tremendous foundation and team behind me.

**What are the first things you’ll do as CEO of Ernie Ball?**

Many of the day-to-day responsibilities will remain relatively constant, but I do have some goals for improving the amenities of the building and perks for the team. We’re looking at putting in an arcade, and multiple jam spaces for employees to use. There’s tons of opportunities out there for growth and we’re considering all of them from improving machine capabilities, acquisitions, and more.

**How long has this been in the works?**

**What made now the right time for you to become CEO?**

Well, for me, having the opportunity to lead the company has been something I’ve strived for since I was a young child, when I’d literally eavesdrop on my dad’s phone calls and follow him around as if I were his shadow. In some ways, it’s been 35 years or so in the making, but once I was promoted

to president in 2015, this sort of became the next step in the advancement of my career. I think the trajectory of the brand and the continued success and interest in our products played a key role.

**For folks who might not understand, what’s the difference between being president (as you were before) and being CEO?**

Being CEO comes with slightly greater responsibility in that the ultimate buck stops with you. My dad Sterling will continue with a significant leadership role with the company so really together we have big plans to continue growing the business to the best of our abilities. President certainly carries a lot of responsibilities and weight, but the CEO title adds a fair amount more.

**You said that this has been the “ultimate dream job” for you since you were a child. Can you tell us a little bit more about that?**

I’ve had so much pride and passion in what my grandfather Ernie created and my father Sterling has helped build, that I’ve always wanted to try to do my part to build and preserve their legacy. It’s really important to me, and it’s never lost on me what an incredibly fortunate opportunity it would be. So, in a lot of ways, it’s always been a big goal of mine to continue to help grow the brand and products and ultimately do my part to keep the legacy alive.

**Ernie Ball has grown significantly over the past 10 years. What was the key to that growth, and how do you plan to keep it going in the coming years?**

The key to the growth is largely tied the growth of key leadership we’ve had working with us for a long period of time. Guys like Drew Montell, Chris Harrington, Dan Stritmatter, Brian Spoeneman, Linda Nelson, Nathan Stiff, AJ Braman, Luke Noffke, Ryan McClain – the list goes deep. I think we’ve been very strategic on what the key performance metrics are and also have placed a huge emphasis on continuing to build the brand in a fun and unique way. My brother Scotty and my dad Sterling have been huge in these areas as well and looking ahead I’m excited that I’ll still get to work with them very closely.



Brian with his father Sterling Ball



Brian mid-work at Ernie Ball

### So far, what are some of your personal proudest achievements at Ernie Ball?

Working with Chris in developing intellectual property with four patents for strings are seminal moments in my career. Creating the golden pick program is another. Developing Element Shield packaging was really fun. Lately, I'm really proud of being involved in Music Man's growth and continuing to build Ernie Ball through product and sales strategy.

### Do you have any specific plans for Ernie Ball in 2020?

We're going to continue to invest significantly into both brands with new product releases. The VJPR Tuner will be shipping early 2020, as will a lot of very exciting new Music Man guitars and basses. I think you'll continue to see a lot of innovative marketing campaigns that will help continue to drive interest in what we have in the oven... Sterling By Music Man is poised for significant growth as well.

### Are there any trends in the MI world that Ernie Ball has capitalized on recently?

We're informed, but we don't pay a lot of attention to industry trends. We've always had a "windshield, not rearview mirror" mindset, focusing on addressing a

need rather than reacting to a competitor's product. Starting with my grandpa and the beginnings of Slinkys – he noticed new lessons students had trouble holding down the existing thicker strings, so he invented slinkier ones in gauges we (and all our competitors) still use today – to Ernie Ball Music Man, where we've always focused on being the odd to our competitors' evens, creating unique, high quality, functional tools for artists that buck the trend. In that case, yes, we look at trends, but leverage them to consider how to be strategically different and better.

### What's one or two new products for 2020 that you'd like to let our readers know about?

In terms of new products, we have a slew of new Slinky SKUs coming, as well as an all-new VJPR Tuner pedal (all coming in March).

### Is there a "dream" artist collaboration you'd like to make happen as CEO?

God, there's so many. We're working with Slash on some really cool new products now, and have plans to do so for Metallica, Keith Richards, and many others. I'm fortunate to be in a position to do a lot with the artist roster my family has built over many decades. 



A peek at some of the new Slinky strings coming out in March



The soon-to-be-released VJPR Tuner

# 'You Can't Save the World if You Can't Pay the Rent' Net 30 Terms Need to Go



By **Anthony Mantova**,  
Owner and  
Sales, Mantova's  
Two Street  
Music

**W**hen it comes to selling stuff locally, the retailer is worth keeping around, so can we please stop pretending that net 30 terms work?

Traditionally, retailers pay cash for big margin accessories and you pay over time for lower margin, big ticket items. The typical term is "net 30." In reality, it's more like net 22, as it can take up to eight days to receive your inventory from the vendor.

It's almost never possible to pay the invoice with the same inventory (insert the "rob Peter to pay Paul" adage here) – meaning that invoices are paid with the

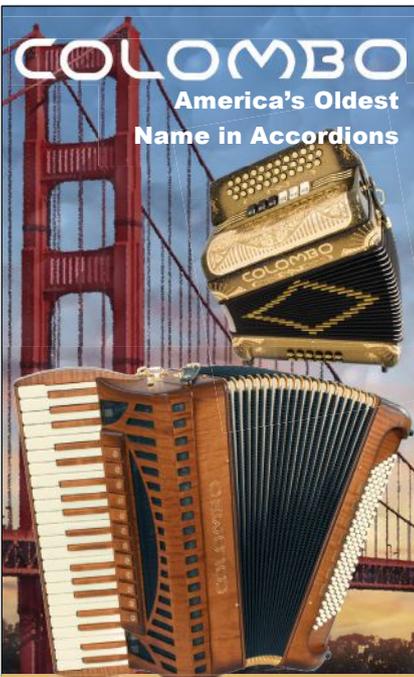
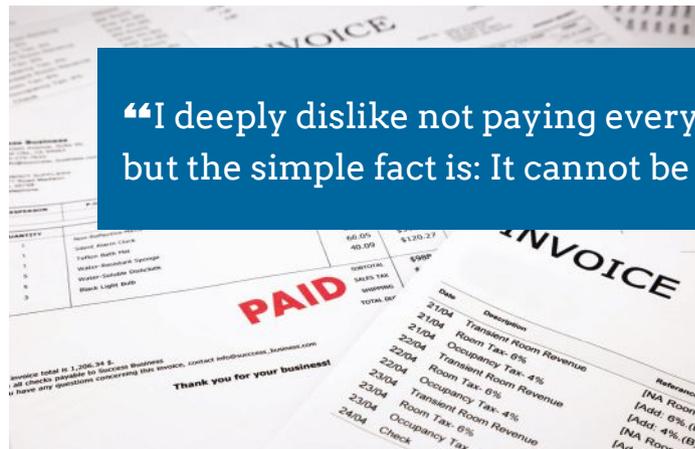
prior profits of other vendors.

This dynamic is not pretty, and is the reason why I have more grey hairs than I should! Balancing cash-flow with impossible inventory repayment schedules is a difficult circus act that keeps the heavy-inventoried businesses flourishing. Bruised egos, strained vendor relationships, and emotional scars mount up as retailers have to figure out how to fill their store whilst paying their bills on time. I deeply dislike not paying every vendor on time, but the simple fact is: It cannot be helped.

tailers are suffering the same thing, and some of their strategies to prolong bill payment are a lot rougher than mine! My brothers and I suffer tremendously to pay these bills as current as we can, often delaying our own paychecks to do so.

The solution is for vendors to re-evaluate who they want selling their product. If you are too small to handle a few months delay on payment, then maybe you shouldn't be dealing with retailers. Maybe you are better off selling direct online and dealing with the headaches that retailers

**"I deeply dislike not paying every vendor on time, but the simple fact is: It cannot be helped."**



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Of course the problem is obvious: What strategy does the retailer use to decide who gets paid first? My strategy is to create three groups.

- Critically important vendors
- Vendors who can wait 45 days without squealing
- Mature vendors who can handle 45-80 days without an issue

It might surprise you, but groups 1 and 3 get most of my business! Group 2 vendors are often run by sheltered accountants and bean-counters, who have the power to overrule their sales teams. Group 2 vendors are constantly being re-organized, experience high turnovers, and sell with mediocrity on the showroom floor. I can tell when a vendor is likely to fail when the accountants make sales decisions!

Over 10 years, I have come to learn every strategy in the book for prolonging payment in order to survive. Instead of continuing to quietly operate this way, I wanted to take a moment and share this problem because I know many other re-

tailers traditionally handle for you – customer service, returns, et cetera.

The solution for vendors that want to sell more product is to abandon net 30 in favor of an inventory cap program. Figure out how much inventory a store in a region should carry and simply sell them that amount, with expectations that payment will happen organically as the inventory sells. If your inventory actually moves, then the retailer will order more. If your inventory is hot, then watch the retailer treat you as a "critical account." I'm not talking about "flooring" with the predatory fees – I'm talking about selling large amounts of inventory to stores that can resell it and pay you over the following months. Ironically, this transition would result in more well-stocked stores, stronger vendor-retailer relationships, and a competitive advantage that the internet "pajama warriors" simply couldn't compete against.

You can't save the world if you can't pay the rent. Let's see some vendors abandon net 30 in favor of realistic terms.

# Smart Women in Music



By Menzie Pittman

Success in the music business has many integrated parts. While it is imperative to know your craft, you are also well-served to have a competent understanding of music history, excellence, and innovation. But to be ultimately successful, a firm understanding of leadership is mandatory. I am a believer that leadership is a philosophy of life and that we demonstrate it through our everyday actions.

True leaders in any industry leave subtle clues for subordinates in hopes that they may actively recognize their philosophy of leadership and learn from it. True leaders are more invested in the advancement of others than they are interested in advancement of themselves. They care more about leaving a legacy of leadership than simply selling a product.

Leaders knowingly hoist a heavy load, and they don't rest until they believe in their hearts (not their heads) that they have done everything possible to advance an issue or a cause.

A great example of this ideal would be the members of the steering committee of S.W.I.M. This team understands the meaning of passion, purpose, and leadership. S.W.I.M. is made up of Robin Walenta, the president of West Music (and the first chairwoman of NAMM); Crystal Morris, president & CEO of Gator Co.; and DeDe Heid, executive vice president of Heid Music.

## S.W.I.M.'s Mission is Timely, as Well as Focused.

S.W.I.M. stands for Smart Women in Music, and Robin and the leadership team of S.W.I.M. intend to shatter forever the glass ceiling women have historically encountered in business, so that women, like men, are measured on their abilities and leadership skills. Being the father of a daughter who is entering the music business, I champion this philosophy 100 percent.

Robin Walenta will have a chance to reinforce S.W.I.M.'s important message when she moderates an all-female panel of music retail leaders and NAMM Dealer of the Year winners. This NAMM U session focuses on the state of the music industry and the opportunities these female leaders believe are emerging trends, as they also share lessons they have learned along their collective roads to success. Gayle Beacock, Cindy Cook, Tracy Leenman, and Lori Supinie (NAMM's first Dealer of the Year winner) join Robin in sharing their wisdom. The event is Friday at 1 p.m. in the NAMM Idea Center.

History reflects that smart women have been unique leaders in the fields of music and business for a while, and there is celebration aplenty at this year's NAMM TEC awards. This year, the unparalleled Joni Mitchell will receive the coveted Les Paul Innovation Award. Few artists, male or female, have enjoyed Joni's considerable success, and fewer have been as prolific in their quality compositions.

Joni has always been bold. Not only is she a great singer-songwriter and painter, she has even tackled the role of music producer long before it was accepted as a norm for female artists. Always surrounding herself with world-class musicians, Joni has never been afraid to be thought-provoking with her lyrics or use unusual tunings to showcase a melody. Joni is not only a music legend; she is also a musical pioneer.

But what about other successful women in business? Well, few

businessmen have achieved the iconic musical success of Dolly Parton, much less own their own amusement park. If you are a subscriber to Netflix, then you are no stranger to "Heartstrings," Dolly Parton's new collection of stories based on her song lyrics. Dolly is the executive producer, and the quality of "Heartstrings" is exactly what you would expect from an iconic star. These Hallmark style episodes are fresh, captivating films, and every episode has a different top tier cast. The excellence in the film production reflects the quality for which Dolly Parton has come to be known. The scripts are well written and tackle today's tough issues.

With every episode, Dolly shows us why she is so revered as a leader. Dolly's ease in film production harkens back to the success of her "9 to 5" days. What else would you expect from a woman who in that movie says, "If you don't stop; I'm gonna get my gun and change you from a rooster to a hen – in one shot." Like Joni Mitchell, Dolly Parton is a game-changing artist and a leader in moving the cause of women forward.

“I am a believer that leadership is a philosophy of life and that we demonstrate it through our everyday actions.”

The retail music business has so many wonderful and inspiring women leaders. Of course, I'm partial to my daughter's boss, Christie Carter of Carter Vintage Guitars. Her nickname is "The Red Velvet Hammer." I have a sneaking suspicion there is probably a tale behind a nickname like that. Barbara Wight COO of Taylor Guitars is also certainly one of the more respected women in all aspects of business, including a stint with John Deere.

But since we are celebrating the respect for smart women in music, I have to mention a woman who's had a great impact on my career: Mary Luehrsen of the NAMM foundation.

I have worked with Mary since 2008 on the NAMM fly-in, and few I know represent the passionate dedication and tenacity of Mary. Well, now that I think about it, there is that fireball Susan Lipp of Full Compass, another pioneer.

## In Closing...

Today, women are the leaders in music. You need look no further than last year's Grammy Awards or this year's CMAs to see who is taking home the awards. Brandi Carlile and Kacey Musgraves are among the leaders every time. In my store, girls are the first to sign up and lead the way.

Ok boys, the message is clear: Catch up, or move over. But whatever you do, show respect. 

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



## Spotlight on High School Music Service: A Successor's Perspective

By Jaimie Blackman

In 1978 Donald Watkins purchased High School Music Service from Lloyd Reitz, who founded the company in 1946. When Watkins retired in 1997, Greg, Donald's son, already had a decade's worth of work experience as a road rep and was well-positioned to lead the organization as second-generation owner. Greg's highly personalized customer service model had enabled him to successfully build HSMS into the premier school music retailer it is today.

I first met Watkins in 2016 while co-leading Yamaha's Succession Advantage workshop, and have been working with his team ever since.

Now, like any successful leader, nothing is accomplished without help. Let's introduce HSMS managers: Darren Kuper, general manager and Adam Martinez, repair manager. Both Kuper and Martinez, already working at HSMS more than 20 years, had a strong desire to one day own the business. Knowing that Watkins had two daughters, they were curious if he had made any decision about future ownership. The problem was how best to initiate the conversation. Kuper took a deep breath and simply popped the question to Watkins: "What are you going to do with this business in the future?"

Watkins said he wasn't sure because his daughters didn't seem to have an interest in owning the business, so Kuper answered, "Well, Adam and I would be interested."

Watkins eventually offered future ownership to Kuper and Martinez and all are moving full steam ahead with a carefully orchestrated transition.

There is no training manual a motivated key manager can read to plot out the roadmap for future ownership. There are too many twists and turns. I had an opportunity to chat with Kuper and Martinez and here are eight tips from the manager's perspective.

### TIP 1: Have The Courage To Ask The Question

Kuper's advice is simple. Go to the owner and say, "I'm interested in owning the business when you are ready to exit. I care about this enough to tell you that this is what I want." He added, "the worst the owner can say is no."

In my book, any owner ought to be delighted when a manager shows interest in future ownership. This takes ambition, leadership, and courage – key skills a new owner requires.

### TIP 2: Working With Your Decision Partner(s)

Having your personal decision partner(s), which includes a spouse, family member or friend support an important financial decision like buying a business, is essential.

For example, Martinez said that his wife is certainly more risk averse than he is. As such, he has to make sure that he is sensitive to her needs, and makes decisions together.

### TIP 3: Don't Limit your Learning to Music Retailers

Kuper was really clear on this point. Based in San Antonio, he had access to great companies like Toyota. He said, "Be open-minded and take a tour." Learning first-hand how other successful companies create value is an important tip.

### TIP 4: Keep Moving

As an owner, what can be done to reduce the risk of ownership for successor in training? Moving, and pushing ahead were important to both. Martinez said, "Stagnation is damnation." Kuper said, "I'm wired to move ahead."

### TIP 5: Communicate When Passing The Baton

The exiting owner needs to legitimize the new incoming owner(s). This ought to happen during the transition period, and well before ownership is transferred.

For Kuper and Martinez, this happened during a company-wide meeting where the message was clearly delivered to the team in the presence of Greg. It's important that the future owners are given the authority in front of the team to make decisions.

### TIP 6: Qualities To Be a Successful Road Rep

While a music background is a plus, for Kuper other qualities like being self-motivated, and organization skills and a gregarious outgoing personality are more important.

“The beginning is the most important part of the work.” - Plato

### TIP 7: There Is No Place For Mediocrity

Martinez says, "We hate losing. We don't like being second to anyone."

### TIP 8: Piranhas Need Not Apply

I asked Martinez what was required to become a repair person at HSMS. He said he used to think skills were the bottom line. Through experience, he now believes it's all about character. Martinez would rather train a novice with great character, than a technical genius "The worst decision you can make is to invite a 'piranha' into your business. The team will be eaten alive."

According to a study by Royal Dutch/Shell the average lifetime of the largest industrial enterprises is less than 40 years. Under the watchful eye of Greg Watkins, his team has already beat the average. And knowing Darren and Adam as I do, they will continue the Watkins' legacy.



Jaimie Blackman – a former music educator & retailer – is a financial advisor, succession planner, and certified business advisor. Blackman helps music retailers accelerate business value through team building, coaching & mentoring. Blackman is a frequent speaker at NAMM's Idea Center. Visit [jaimieblackman.com](http://jaimieblackman.com) to subscribe to Unlocking the Wealth newsletter and webinars.

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By Dan **Daley**

# NAMM Show 2020 at the Edge of Music's Future

**G**ot milk? Probably not, these days. The classic 1990s-era advertising campaign promoting more consumption of moo juice (whose first television commercial was directed by the bombastic Michael Bay, no less) sought to further establish milk as the all-American beverage, not just for Rice Krispies anymore. Its signature white milk-mustache on celebrities from Heidi Klum to Alex Rodriguez made it one of the most memorable campaigns of the century.

However, be thankful you're not a dairy farmer today. Milk sales were down last year by over \$1 billion, knocked off by the rise of oat, nut, soy, and other alternative "milk" products. They join beef sales, being done in by "impossible" burgers and other meta-meat novelties. And let's not bring up taxi drivers – Travis Bickle is too depressed to be pissed off anymore. The future has arrived, and it looks... different.

## NAMM Looks At A Very Different Future

As we roll into the NAMM Show 2020, we see the landscape of music changing just as radically. We no longer have to seek music out – it finds us, following our data trails, which usually assess our tastes with auto playlists that are both comically wrong and disturbingly spot on. And music is increasingly being made by those same algorithms, written and performed by a growing cadre of software, such as IBM Watson Beat, Google Magenta's NSynth Super, Jukedeck, and Amper Music. If the project studio revolution put sophisticated recording technology at the fingertips of musicians, this next wave is putting it on the iPhones and iPads of a cohort for whom 10,000 hours is an abstract concept, not a career strategy.

As an organization, NAMM has excelled at focusing on the nuts and bolts of retail management. This year, it's also going deeper into financial strategies for the MI business, during Wednesday's new Retail Financial Summit. And the NAMM Show has been aggressively going after the pro-audio aspects of music production, picking up the slack left by a slow-to-change Audio Engineering Society. Finally, its education programs at the show have been well done and getting better, often making it difficult for attendees (and journalists) to hit all the panels they

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want to see and still get in enough floor time on the convention center's expanding real estate.

But how does NAMM confront the kinds of changes that are taking place now, as the creation and realization of music moves deeper into virtual territory? The things that AI, VR and mobile are already challenging our definitions of what music and musicians are, and what they can be. And it's not just the technology of music production – the business of music, the ability to derive a living wage from playing and performing it, has only become more marginalized in an economic environment of intrinsic and deepening inequality. That's also extending to music education: at a time when online tutorials abound, the conventional teaching relationship has become potentially less relevant. Given the symbiosis between lessons and retail, it's another shifting dynamic that MI has to take cautious note of.

We're on the verge of fundamental changes to music as a profession and a pursuit, one where coding and sight-reading merge, and IT becomes a necessary skill, not just to record the music, but also to simply make it.

There will always be marching bands, as long as high schools and colleges play football, and there will always be sketchy dives where shoe-gazers can play gigs for tips in a plastic beer pitchers, but will those customers continue to be market models for MI in a decade or more? The desire for music won't disappear, nor will the deep-seated need to create it, but how music comes about, and how we consume it, are changing and will continue to. Like 1984, the year 2020 has a somewhat ominous ring to it. I would not be surprised if we one day look back on this year's NAMM Show as a major inflection point. 



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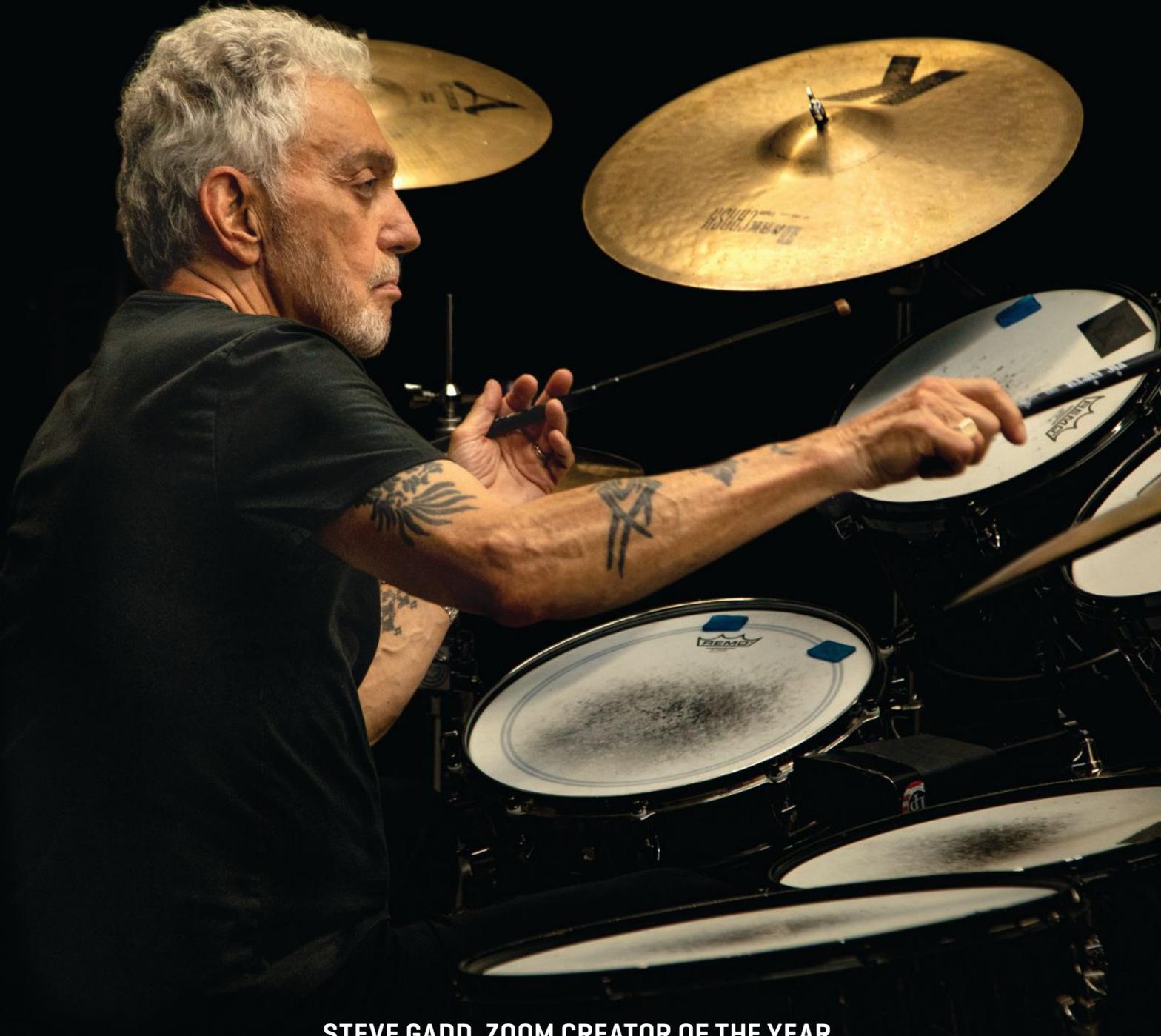
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