

# MMR

## MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

Taking DJ Sales  
Out for a Spin



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Parrish Music  
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### The Electric Bass Market



# EVE

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# C O N T E N T S

# MMR

MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

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# Money's on the Table



by Christian Wissmuller

**V**alued at \$421.4 million in 2018 with an expected growth rate of CAGR (compound annual growth rate) 7.6 percent by 2028 (Market.us, January, 2019), the advancement of the DJ equipment market is certainly not showing signs of slowing down.

Of course, this isn't news to anyone who frequents clubs, listens to pop music – or to any MI retailer who's chosen to really lean into this cultural trend. Simply put, while some dealers and industry analysts debate, say, whether the electric guitar is "dead," or speak sadly of the "good old days," other savvy businesspeople who embrace the DJ market are making serious bank.

While this issue of *MMR's* focus is on the fretted realm – specifically electric basses and guitar & bass straps – you'd be remiss to not also check out Dan Daly's excellent article, "Taking DJ Sales Out for a Spin" (page 42), which explores this expanding segment of MI and how to make the most of it. When considering the development of DJ culture, Randy White of Chuck Levin's Washington Music notes that when he set up his region's first dedicated DJ Department within a music retail store back in 1990, "DJ equipment was [usually] being sold out of car stereo shops. In the nearly 20 years since then, everything has changed. Now the DJs are the superstars."

White isn't employing hyperbole, either. Last summer, *Forbes* summarized the net worth of today's top-earning DJs, including Teisto (\$33 million, average *nightly* gross of \$250,000), The Chainsmokers (\$45.5 million), and Calvin Harris (\$48 million). Consider that, according to a July 2018 *Billboard* report, that

would put each of those acts ahead of pop juggernauts such as Ed Sheeran (\$31.3 million), Lady Gaga (\$29.7 million), and Guns N' Roses (\$27.8 million) and you begin to appreciate the true cultural scope and reach we're talking about.

And part of the appeal for enterprising MI retailers who get on board with DJ gear is that there's both quite a lot of equipment to stock and sell – mixers, headphones, lighting, controllers, effects, et cetera – but also that, unlike an acoustic drum kit or electric bass, the technology behind these items is constantly changing and improving, meaning that the gigging DJ who buys a mixer from you this week, will likely be back to buy a newer mixer in a year. Repeat business is never a bad thing.

So, if you're one of those who still gives serious side-eye to the notion of DJs as actual mu-

**“While some dealers and industry analysts debate, say, whether the electric guitar is 'dead,' or speak sadly of the 'good old days,' other savvy businesspeople who embrace the DJ market are making serious bank.”**

sicians (I admit, I am guilty of having been that type) or if you have hidden behind any number of often-antiquated barriers to entry in the DJ retail market, maybe it's time to reconsider.

There's money on the table. Someone's going to take it if you don't.

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Note From Mary

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## What's in Store for the 116th Congress

With the 116th Congress sworn into office, the House of Representatives is one of the most diverse federal legislative bodies in history. These changes could bring a variety of outcomes for the music products industry. While only time will tell, here is a brief overview provided with thanks to our collaboration with Leo Coco, NAMM's advocacy advisor at D.C.-based firm Nelson Mullens.

### House of Representatives

Democrats now have control of the House, holding 235 seats, 41 seats higher than the 115th Congress. Republicans maintain 199 seats, having lost 42 seats. Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) was re-elected as the Speaker of the House, and notably, Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA) is the new chair of the House Education and the Workforce Committee.

Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA) was a key proponent of the bi-partisan Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which replaced the unpopular No Child Left Behind Act. Rep. Scott and the committee he chairs are important to NAMM's advocacy efforts to fully fund the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant (Title IV Part A), a key element of ESSA that seeks to advance well-rounded education opportunities for all children.

### Senate

In the Senate, Republicans hold 53 seats, increasing their majority by two seats. A significant change to the Senate's

education agenda is not anticipated. However, the long-time chair of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee and NAMM SupportMusic Champion awardee, Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN), has announced that this will be his final term in the Senate. Support for full funding of the Title IV grant program will be an ongoing request to Senate HELP Committee members along with support for music teacher training policies as they are addressed in the Higher Education Act (HEA) reauthorization.

### Priorities of the 116th Congress

Unlike the last two years, the House and Senate are politically divided in the 116th Congress. This is likely to mean more oversight of the administration by the House and deepening tensions between Congress and executive government branches leading up to the 2020 Presidential Election. It is conceivable, however,

that the divided Congress could lead to more bipartisan activities and discrete opportunities could emerge if House

**We will bring these new members of Congress into a unified chorus that celebrates and reinforces the role that music making and music education has in our communities.**

Democrats and President Trump work together on issues including infrastructure, vocational education/ apprenticeships, early childhood education or paid family leave.

### What does this mean for NAMM and its ongoing music education advocacy efforts?

There are 92 new members of the US House of Representatives, which is about 20% of the total number. This also means that there are new chiefs of staff and office directors for constituent relations, along with education and cultural liaisons. In our ongoing advocacy efforts, and at our Washington D.C. Advocacy Fly-In the last week of May, we will introduce them to NAMM and inform them of our ongoing policy and funding priorities to advance music education for every child. We will be paying special attention to the newest members of the education and appropriations committees in both the House and Senate. Along with many congressional champions for music education, we will bring these new members of Congress into a unified chorus that celebrates and reinforces the role that music making and music education has in our communities.

### There are two things every NAMM member can do now.

**1. Contact your regional office of your member of Congress**—both congressional district and Senate—and make sure they know who you are, what your business does to support the musical life in your community and region; ask to receive ongoing updates from the office, and if possible, encourage the member to visit your business. (It is also important that your state legislature, city council, mayor know you and your business!) For information on contacting elected officials, visit [www.namm.org/issues-and-advocacy](http://www.namm.org/issues-and-advocacy).

**2. Get involved at your state capital**—information is available at NAMM's Coalition on Coalitions. While the future remains uncertain, we know that NAMM and its members will continue to champion music education and ensure that all people can learn and grow with music.

**Mary Luehresen**  
**DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS**  
**AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS**



## NAMM Music Education Advocacy D.C. Fly-In

May 20–23, 2019

NAMM members and music industry leaders will meet with members of Congress to champion music education for all children.



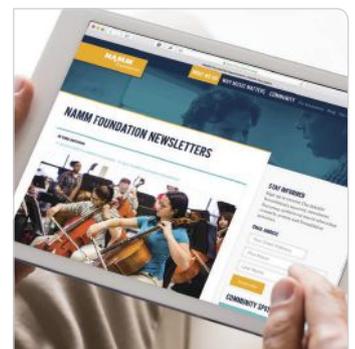
### NAMM Member California Delegation in Sacramento

The Coalition on Coalitions provides tactics, resources and best practices to support NAMM members working on state-level music and arts education advocacy efforts.

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# Industry News

## hyTech pTrumpet Wins 'Best Teaching Tool for Intermediate Students'

St. Louis Music and Warwick Music Group have announced that the hyTech pTrumpet has won NAMM's "Best Teaching Tool for Intermediate Students" in the annual *School Band & Orchestra* "Best Tools for Schools Awards" (in *SBO*, *MMR's* sister magazine).

The annual *SBO* Awards are judged by an independent panel of expert music educators who tour NAMM – which this year attracted more than 115,000 music trade visitors – secretly reviewing products in several different categories.

Chris Fower, director of creativity and innovation at Warwick Music Group, said: "It sounds like a simple idea to take the best of plastic and metal and produce an outstanding student trumpet, yet beneath that ambition lay a host of extraordinary musical, technical and manufacturing challenges. I'm so proud and delighted that the hard work of our amazing development team has not only overcome those challenges but produced a musical instrument which benefits the development of all students starting their trumpet playing journeys.

Rich Breske, director of U.S. marketing, said: "We're honored to be recognized by music educators as an exciting new entry into the band and orchestra discussion. pTrumpet hyTech provides terrific accessibility to more students as it is incredibly musical, durable and affordable. The combination of great quality sound and valve action, along with the durability of the carefully designed gold plastic body makes this trumpet preferable, and virtually indistinguishable, in the intermediate/beginner band situation."

- Industry News
- Supplier Scene
- *MMR* Global

- People on the Move
- Trade Regrets

## Reverb Named to *Fast Company's* Annual List of the World's Most Innovative Companies

Reverb.com has been named to *Fast Company's* prestigious annual list of the World's Most Innovative Companies for 2019. Reverb is recognized alongside Universal Music Group, Sofar Sounds, and Live Nation as one of the top companies making a profound impact on the music industry.

"Reverb was built for the music industry by a team of musicians, so we're uniquely positioned to impact the market in a way that large marketplaces like Amazon or eBay cannot," said CEO David Kalt, who launched Reverb in response to the pain he felt buying and selling instruments online as a guitar store owner. "By focusing on inspiring content, price transparency and low fees, musician-focused eCommerce tools, a music-savvy customer service team, and more, we've created an online destination where the global music community can connect over the perfect piece of music gear."

Since launching in 2013, Reverb has grown into the most popular music gear website in the world, with over half a billion dollars in annual sales on the platform and artists like Maroon 5, Green Day, Moby, Dave Grohl, Sonic Youth, Linkin Park, and more using Reverb to get their gear into the hands of fans. Built for musicians at every level, large retailers, brick-and-mortar shops, brands who sell direct, and more, Reverb makes it easy for anyone to buy and sell gear through tools like Reverb Sites—a "Squarespace for the musical instrument industry" that enables sellers to create a free, customized website in a matter of minutes.

"From a logistical standpoint, most small businesses don't have the staff and time to list products separately on online marketplaces and their own website. With Reverb Sites, in one fell swoop, we have our inventory displayed nationally to millions, as well as our own branded website that's helping us build a national reputation," said Evan Holmes of Music Makers,



The Reverb.com team

a brick-and-mortar guitar store whose online sales went from zero to \$100,000 in three months thanks to Reverb. "Without Reverb, I would have to invest thousands in online ads to bring in the volume of sales and eyeballs that we've been getting on the marketplace."

Within the past 18 months, Reverb has also launched Reverb LP – a marketplace for records, CDs, and more – and Reverb Gives, which turns a portion of every sale on Reverb into instruments for music programs all over the world. These additions join a host of longstanding Reverb features, such as the Reverb Price Guide, which uses real-time transactional data to help users understand the price of what they're buying and selling; the Reverb mobile app, which helps users buy and sell gear easily on-the-go; and Reverb News, which attracts musicians to the site through daily how-to articles, demo videos, and more. The company also recently expanded its Netherlands office and opened an office in Japan to accommodate the company's rapid international expansion.

Reverb joins Spotify, Instagram, Bandcamp, Atlantic Records, Fender Musical Instruments, and Moog Music, among other brands, that have ranked on *Fast Company's* Most Innovative Companies List in the "music" category. According to *Fast Company*, this year was the "most competitive field of nominees" the editors have ever seen. More than three dozen *Fast Company* editors, reporters, and contributors determined the list, which aims to provide both a snapshot and a roadmap for the future of innovation across the most dynamic sectors of the economy.



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## Antari Lighting Selects The Horizon Group as Sales Representative

Antari Lighting and Effects USA, one of the leading manufacturers of fog machines, has appointed The Horizon Group as their new sales reps for New England, New York Metro, and Eastern Territories.

The Horizon Group will be responsible for expanding sales and distribution for Antari Lighting and Effects USA using their extensive market knowledge and hands-on approach.

The new partnership comes shortly after the Taiwan-headquartered company launched operations in the U.S. in order to offer better and faster service to their customers.

"We're excited to join forces with a company who values its customers as much as Antari Lighting and Effects USA," commented André Rodriguez, The Horizon Group's sales manager. "Their values align with ours to provide the most efficient, high-quality customer service while assisting with the growth of our manufacturers."

The Horizon Group, of Long Island, New York, has more than 30 years of experience in the Pro Audio and DJ industry representing manufacturers in the Northeast and providing quality service to retailers.

"The Horizon Group came highly recommended and with a reputation for outstanding customer service and support, they are sure to be instrumental in the continued growth and success of Antari Lighting and Effects USA," said Ray Villasenor, Antari USA's general manager.

## Buffet Crampon Acquires Rigoutat Paris

Jérôme Perrod, CEO of Buffet Crampon, joins Philippe Rigoutatin announcing that Rigoutat Paris is now a part of the Buffet Crampon family. Buffet Crampon thus continues to pursue its strategy of acquiring historical woodwind instrument brands.

"It is thrilling to be able to develop the two brands, each with its own person-



ality and acoustic territory, all the while combining their strengths and know-hows to provide musicians with solutions built on a larger and stronger base," says Perrod.

Philipp Rigoutat is, "pleased to find in Buffet Crampon the ideal partner to carry on Rigoutat's history while securing its future." He will be directly responsible for this by leading the new Buffet Crampon – Rigoutat Paris Oboe Department. He will especially be in charge of R&D and quality, as well as vital relationships with musicians for both companies.

This acquisition reinforces Buffet Crampon's wish to increase its presence in the Oboe and English Horn segment, and to gain more recognition in the international market.



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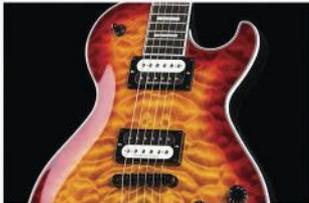
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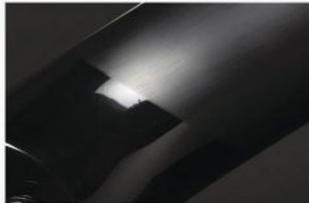
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#GETYOURWINGS

# Peavey Supports Youth Open Mic Nights

Peavey Electronics now supports TKM Youth Open Mic nights sponsored by Teach Kids Music, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that strives to help underprivileged children achieve their goals of learning how to play instruments. TKM Youth Open Mic nights are typically hosted in local community centers, and play an important role in helping children express themselves in a safe, creative atmosphere, while meeting other musicians with common interests. By donating PA equipment and instruments to these events, Peavey helps to provide the vehicle, allowing children the opportunity to develop their passion.

Teach Kids Music founder John McCarthy began his first music school at age 15. Following his life-long passion to teach music to youth, McCarthy has written more than 100 music instruction books and programs, and has sold more than 3 million worldwide. His award-winning Rock House core curriculum is the foundation of the Teach Kids Music program, and is provided at local community centers and clubs so that kids can learn the basics and

set a solid foundation for each instrument. McCarthy is a long-time friend of Peavey, and together they have collaborated on many projects in the past.

In addition to hosting TKM Youth Open Mic nights, Teach Kids Music has teamed up with internationally recognized musicians who help inspire kids to play music and bring attention to the organization's mission. Musicians Doug Wimbish (Living Colour), Paul Pesco (Hall & Oates and Madonna), and others have made appearances at TKM events. These professionals have talked with the children about following their dreams to play music and even occasionally sit in for a jam session.

"From trying new instruments and making new friends to meeting music legends and showcasing their skills, positive musical experiences can be defining moments in a child's life and help spark a lifelong passion. Peavey is honored to be part of a potentially life-changing program for these kids," says a statement from the company.



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~Jeremy Chapman, Owner, The Acoustic Shoppe

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## Fender Acquires Bigsby

Fender Musical Instruments Corp (FMIC) has announced the acquisition of the Bigsby brand and its assets from Fred Gretsch Enterprises.

The Gretsch family and FMIC have a longstanding relationship and have partnered to ensure that the transition of the business is a smooth one.

Bigsby will continue to run as a standalone business under FMIC's Specialty Brands. Orders, inquiries or questions should be directed to Jeff Krause (JKrause@fender.com), who will be leading the business out of the FMIC Scottsdale, Arizona office.

FMIC is currently working with a team in Pooler, Georgia, to integrate the business into its systems before moving it physically to a new location.

## Hoshino Partners with Bergerault

Tama B&O Percussion has announced it will join forces with the venerable Bergerault Contemporary Percussion Company.

Located in Ligueil, Centre, France, Bergerault is a family business that for over 80 years has created exceptional percussion instruments. Bergerault has developed a complete range of high-quality instruments meeting the demands of professionals around the world. The French government designates Bergerault as a "Living Heritage Company" and under the aegis of UNESCO, is now included in the "rare artwork" inventory.

Tama's Masaki Mizuno said: "Our commitment to combining groundbreaking hardware with great sounding drums has made the band & orchestra percussion industry stand up and take notice. Now, as the exclusive U.S. distributor of Bergerault B&O percussion, our partnership will make our collective products an easy choice for band directors."

## Guitar Center Opens Store in Seattle

Guitar Center has opened its latest retail location, a 15,000-square-foot facility in the Roosevelt Square shopping center in Seattle, Washington (3609 Roosevelt Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115). The grand opening took place on Thursday, February 7.

The new Roosevelt Square store features modern showrooms equipped with the latest products for musicians,

from guitars, amplifiers, percussion instruments and keyboards to live sound, DJ, lighting and recording equipment. In-store services include lessons, repairs, rentals, and workshops. Seattle shoppers are also able to enjoy Guitar Center's multi-channel "endless aisle," which gives customers the ability to combine in-store, online and phone options to purchase music equipment from anywhere.



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# ADJ Plans to Provide AV Production at Mobile Beat 2019

ADJ will once again provide the AV production for the main stage at Mobile Beat in 2019. Following the success of ADJ's involvement at last year's event, the company's lighting, video and effect products will be used to create the backdrop for all of the keynote educational presentations at the convention, as well as the Mobile Beat Signature Party, which last year featured '90s rap artist Vanilla Ice.



The ADJ lighting rig and AV system will set the stage for MBLV's main educational track. ADJ will also be adding to the educational content with a sponsored session designed to inspire attendees to take their business to the next level with lighting and video production. In an information-packed session, ADJ's Edgar Bernal will give the DJs in attendance ideas and advice for using the latest lighting technology to increase their revenue. Covering both creative ideas and technical know-how, Edgar's presentation will teach attendees to use lighting to create the right mood for any event and also show them how to sell this to their customers.

ADJ's lighting and AV rig will also be used for the Monday evening Mobile Beat Signature Party, featuring a special guest performance by Darryl "DMC" McDaniels.

The lighting rig for the show will showcase a variety of ADJ's professional caliber moving head fixtures, including the brand new 200W Focus Spot 4Z and impressive Vizi CMY300 which boasts a 300W LED light source and flexible CMY color mixing. Audience blinding effects will be provided courtesy of ADJ's new Encore Burst 200 strobe/blinder fixtures which utilize the latest high power COB LED technology. The show's beams will be highlighted by two of ADJ's heavy duty Entourage touring grade faze machines, while ADJ's new high resolution AV2 LED video panels will be deployed for video playback and graphic effects.

"ADJ has been involved with Mobile Beat throughout its 20+ year history," explains ADJ USA's national sales manager, Alfred Gonzales, "and we remain committed to helping Mobile Entertainers take their businesses to the next level. For 2019, we feel that the best way to do this is by once again showcasing our professional lighting and video products by providing the main stage production as well as offering attendees added education in the form of our sponsored seminar session."

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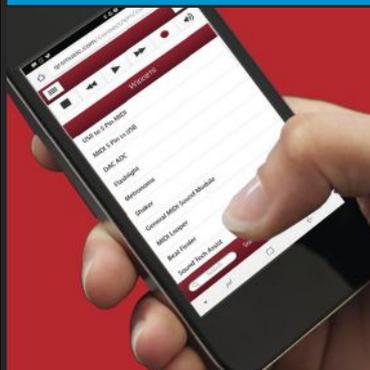
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# Adam Carolla Podcasts with Allen & Heath Mixer

The Adam Carolla Show, described by PodcastOne as “the #1 Daily Downloaded Podcast in the World,” has upgraded its studio with an Allen & Heath SQ-6 digital mixer. The show’s popularity and its ten years of audience loyalty owe much to Carolla’s background as a broadcast radio host and to executive producer Chris Laxamana who oversees every aspect of each podcast from creation to distribution.

Laxamana explained the studio’s audio requirements, “We try to keep the shows true to Adam’s radio roots, so we record everything straight to tape and we release the show in mono 64kbps, which is just crazy. But we want it to be a fast download and easy to stream for people using their cellular data. And we want to make sure that every word is clearly understood, and it sounds good even on a phone anywhere you go.”

When Laxamana began his research to replace the studio’s analog mixer, he wanted this kind of clear voice quality. And, he wanted a digital mixer that was easy to use for the studio’s frequent guest engineers who mix podcasts for Dr. Drew, Jo Koy and others. “With the SQ-6, we could record scenes for our guest engineers and call them up with the push of a button,” he said. “And, with all its compressors, gates and EQ, the SQ-6 was a no-brainer.”

The Adam Carolla Show purchased its SQ-6 from FP Logistics in Anaheim, California. Laxamana continued, “We do a lot of music cues. And, with the SQ-6, we can group all the mics in a mix, all the



Adam Carolla's Studio with Allen & Heath SQ-6 Digital Mixer

sound effects in a mix and give everyone their own headphone feed. Then, each engineer pulls up their own scene with a soft key. And, the board is so intuitive that we don't need to oversee them through their show to make sure they're doing it right. It's really easy to run.”

Laxamana commented, “We are in the business of being heard and the SQ-6’s sound is phenomenal. That helps make us the best sounding podcast in the business. And the SQ-6 is intuitive and easy to use. This is exactly what we needed.”

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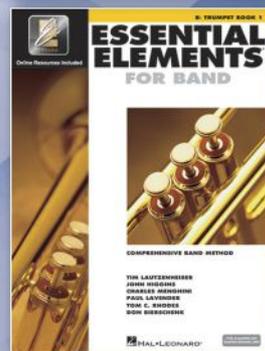
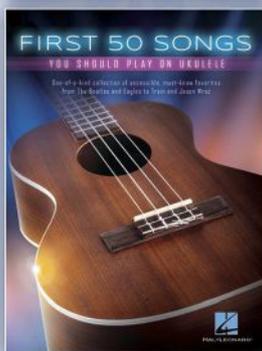
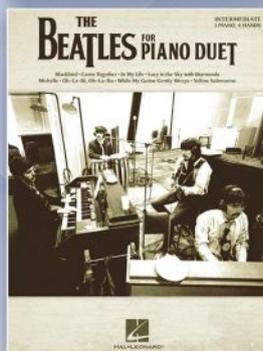
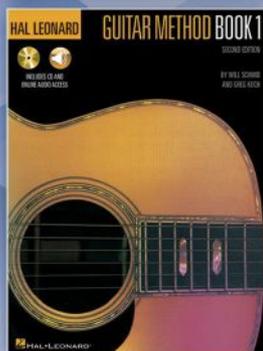
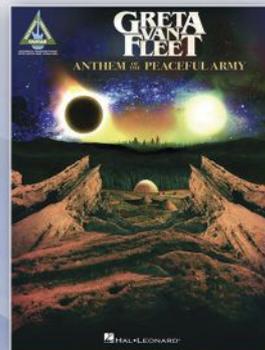
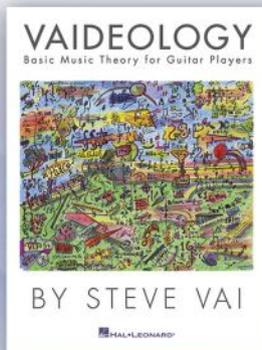
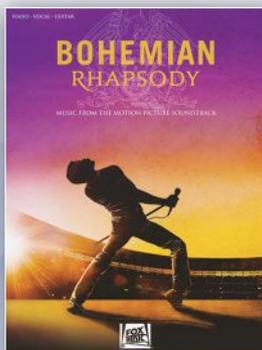
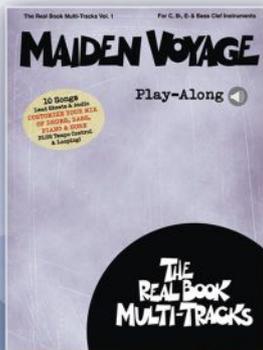
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# Supplier Scene

## Yamaha Drums Adds Brown to Artist Roster

Yamaha Drums has announced the signing of Carrington Brown, the Metro D.C.-based studio and live drummer for GRAMMY-winning artist H.E.R. and many others.

On top of traveling around the world with H.E.R. for sold-out shows, festivals, and television performances, Carrington has toured with artists such as Jordan Knight of NKOTB, K. Michelle, and Sebastian Mikael. Additionally, he has quickly carved out his path as a production manager, musical director, producer and session player for major R&B and hip-hop recording artists such as Teyana Taylor, Dej Loaf, Justine Skye, and many more.

Carrington's kit of choice is the Yamaha Absolute Hybrid Maple, which offers the playability of rich and clear tones across a full dynamic range, aesthetics and its ability to withstand the rigorous demands of touring. To enhance his live performance, he will be playing the Yamaha DTX-MULTI 12 electronic percussion pad and DTX XP-80 electronic drum pads as well as using the HEXRACKII, for his hardware.

"The consistency and quality of Yamaha acoustic drums and electronic percussion allow me to perform at the highest level," said Brown. "With my busy tour schedule, having a durable and reliable drum set and hardware is crucial; I couldn't be happier to be a part of this team."



Carrington Brown

## NafME Congratulates Redding on 2019 Music Educator Award

The National Association for Music Education (NAfME) has released a statement congratulating music educator Jeffery Redding on being honored with the prestigious 2019 Music Educator Award.

"The honor presented by The Recording Academy and the GRAMMY Museum is well-deserved. Jeffery is a member of NafME and the Florida Music Education Association (FMEA). This is the sixth year the Music Educator Award has been presented, and all six years the winners have been members of NafME: Kent Knappenberger (2014); Jared Cassedy (2015); Phillip Riggs (2016); Keith Hancock (2017); Melissa Salguero (2018); and now Jeffery Redding (2019)," says a statement from NafME.

"NAfME congratulates Jeffery Redding on this distinguished recognition," said Michael J. Blakeslee, executive director and CEO of NafME. "Under his direction, the students of West Orange High School



National Association  
for Music Education

have experienced the significant benefits of music education and the joy of making music each day. Jeffery's dedication to the difference music education can make in his students' lives is laudable, and when you listen to their testimonies, you know his impact on their education has been significant. He is an exemplary member of NafME, and we applaud his accomplishments."

## Allen & Heath USA Names Rep of the Year

Allen & Heath USA's sales force gathered at Winter NAMM to attend the company's annual sales and marketing awards ceremony, which this year bestowed the 2018 Rep of the Year distinction upon Lawrenceville, Georgia-based HWPco. In addition to its top sales honor, Allen & Heath additionally presented its annual Sales Bulldogs Awards, as well as its Marketing and Outstanding Performance Awards.

Recipients of the Sales Bulldogs Award included Shawn McLoughlin (AudioBiz, Inc.), Wes Pitzer (Highway Marketing), Casey McWilliams (CM Sales), Rich Nichols (John B. Anthony Company), Patrick Oates, Kevin Duthu, and Brooks Platts (all of HWPco), Kyle Gish (Audio Geer), Willy Seltzer (Image Marketing West), and Brandon Operchuck (Audio Geer).

"I've never seen such a tenacious group of Bulldogs," said Allen & Heath USA senior vice president Tim Schaeffer. "These guys aren't afraid to sink their teeth into anything, and their numbers prove it. Theirs will be a hard act to follow."

Taking home Allen & Heath's Outstanding Performance Award were CM Sales,



HWPco accepts the Allen & Heath USA Rep of the Year Award

Audio Geer, Brownstone, Highway Marketing, HWPco, Protech, and RDA. Now in its second year, Allen & Heath's Marketing Excellence Award went to Chet Neal of Mainline Marketing.

Commenting on the latter award, Allen & Heath USA marketing manager Jeff Hawley said, "Chet and everyone at Mainline Marketing demonstrated true marketing excellence by going above and beyond while creating new partnerships and opportunities, and supplying quality content along the way."

American Music and Sound president Lynn Martin added, "We have amazingly talented reps who really understand and support our high-level sales and marketing goals and work to exceed them out in the field. Congratulations to all of the winners on their amazing year."



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## Newly-Restored Alexandra Palace Theatre Chooses L-Acoustics Kara System

In December, after 80 years of slumber, Alexandra Palace Theatre in London, England opened again following several years of careful restoration. As part of the process, a complete technical infrastructure had to be installed, including a substantial L-Acoustics Kara PA system that brings a fitting quality of sound to the restored space.

One of the people brought in to help the project through reconstruction and on to a healthy, 900-capacity commercial theatre was Steve Brookes, now head of production and technical at the venue. His aim was to bring a full, modern production infrastructure to the space so that no company or touring production would hesitate to perform at the Palace, but at the same time to honor the heritage of the building.

"There were restrictions," he says. "Whilst the theatre itself is Grade II listed, the stage is Grade I listed, meaning it cannot be demolished, extended, or altered without special permission. However, it had to be strengthened and is now supported with a sympathetic scaf-



fold structure. Then it was a case of bringing in all the systems that we needed; PA, lighting and trussing."

The audio system was supplied and installed by HD Pro Audio under the direction of the company's Andy Huffer.

"Andy and the team at HD have been a huge help," notes Brookes. "Although audio isn't my main area of expertise I have always had a preference for L-Acoustics. Andy's input has been invaluable, and I was pleased that we have been able to install an amazing system that works so well in this room."

The PA system was designed in conjunction with L-Acoustics, settling on an optimum combination that worked both in terms of budget and coverage of the auditorium. The system comprises two hangs of nine Kara flanked by three SB18 subs, with two X15 HiQ as out fill. The system is powered by four LA4X and three LA12X amplified controllers, which are housed backstage in custom-built racks. A P1 AVB processor – an EQ station, delay and dynamics processor – takes the FOH console inputs and links to the amplifiers with AVB. Seven X12 provide stage monitoring with an SB18 as drum fill, all run from two LA4X in a custom mobile rack.

"L-Acoustics did the final tuning of the system, which is perfectly balanced for the room," Brookes continues. "There isn't the need for much EQ as we have the right placement and the right type of boxes. We have achieved complete coverage, with the main arrays pretty much doing the entire room, with six 5XT for lower SPL shows, or six X8 for louder shows, providing fill for the front few rows. This means there's no need for additional, confusing sources."

"It sounds beautiful in here," adds Huffer, who also notes the advantages of the L-Acoustics brand to a theatre when it comes to bookings: "...Any rider you get coming through, they are first or second on everything, which means no one will say they don't want to use it."

"It is having such flexibility that makes this a space people will want to hire that's the key thing for any incoming production wanting to come into these venues," Brookes concludes. "If it's nice and simple and you've got a box-ticking PA, it just makes the whole thing a lot easier."

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## TAMA Welcomes Ford as Concert Endorser and Educational Director

TAMA has welcomed Mark Ford as a concert endorser and educational director for TAMA/Bergerault.

He will be an ambassador for TAMA/Bergerault through various activities including clinics/workshops, concerts/performances, tradeshow, and social media, and will also lead a diverse group of Tama/Bergerault artists in concerts and educational clinics.

Ford is an accomplished Marimba artist and music educator, holding the position of coordinator of percussion at the University of North Texas College of Music. He has been a featured soloist performing throughout the United States as well as internationally in Europe, Japan, China, Taiwan, Australia and South America. Mark established his immense dedication to excellence in music through his more than three decades of performance, teaching, and composing.

Hoshino U.S.A. president, Shogo Hayashi, says "The recent announcement of our partnership with Bergerault is an exciting development for TAMA as we seek to expand our presence in the Band and Orchestral market. Now, we have been fortunate to acquire the talents of Mark Ford, a highly accomplished marimba artist and educator who will serve as the ideal ambassador for the TAMA & Bergerault brands. As a result, we feel a great sense of optimism for the future of TAMA/Bergerault."



Mark Ford

## Smart Women in Music Announce Summer NAMM Scholarship Opportunity for Emerging Leaders

At the "Women@NAMM presents The SWIM (Smart Women in Music) Fund" networking event in January, the chairs of the SWIM Fund announced a scholarship opportunity for six emerging female leaders to connect, support and grow in their leadership and professional capabilities at Summer NAMM in Nashville, Tennessee (July 18-20, 2019). The scholarship is designed to help aid in travel, housing, and other expenses related to attending Summer NAMM, where the selected recipients will attend a series of professional development sessions, shadow industry leaders, and be recognized at a SWIM Meet reception.

"The scholarship is a great opportunity for women who may not have the means to attend the Summer Show. This scholarship supports the mission of the SWIM Fund to connect, support, and grow, and the Summer NAMM Show provides the

network for women to connect with other leaders in the industry, receive support through the SWIM mentorship program, and grow their skills through the hundreds of educational learning sessions," offered Robin Walenta, SWIM captain, and NAMM chair.

At the SWIM reception, and inspired by the opportunity, Christie Carter of Carter Vintage Guitars offered a matching donation of up to \$15,000 to the SWIM Fund.



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# Darkglass Electronics and Cole Clark Guitars Celebrate First NAMM with KORG USA, Inc.



Cole Clark's Winter NAMM 2019 setup

KORG USA, Inc. has welcomed two additional brands to their growing family: Darkglass Electronics and Cole Clark Guitars. Both brands were prominently displayed in the heart of the distributor's NAMM booth.

"This was a memorable show for us, especially since adding Darkglass and Cole Clark to our growing roster," says director of guitar brands at KORG USA, Inc. "Both brands possess a healthy combination of quality and superior design; it's

no wonder that they were both greeted with a tremendous amount of interest at the NAMM show. We're excited to see what 2019 brings for them both," added Piccolo.

Cole Clark introduced three new models last month: a traditional Dreadnought Fat Lady in a straightforward, all-acoustic option, a striking sunburst finish available for the Fat Lady, as well as the more modern Grand Auditorium Angel body shape. After three years after the release of their first-ever bass amplifier, Darkglass Electronics kicked off NAMM with the announcement of two new models: an upgraded Microtubes and the Alpha-Omega 900.

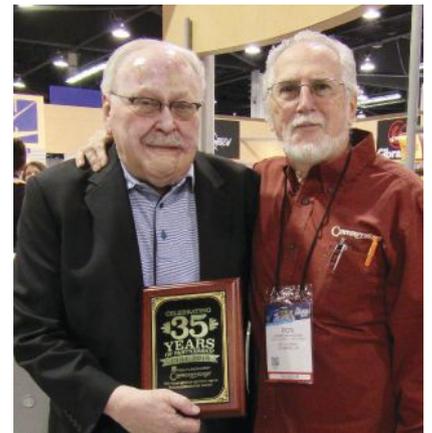
# Hal Leonard Honors Centerstream

Hal Leonard honored one of its longest-standing distribution partners at the 2019 NAMM Show. Hal Leonard chairman and CEO Keith Mardak presented Centerstream president Ron Middlebrook with a plaque commemorating 35 years of working together.

Centerstream is known for their unique publications for a variety of instruments, especially instructional titles for guitar and folk instruments, but also children's picture books about music, reference titles about instrument manufacturers, and other historical songbooks.

Keith Mardak stated, "Ron has been one of our longest-standing business partners and I'm honored to have been the one to sign the deal 35 years ago. We're proud to distribute Centerstream publications and happy that they're continuing their mission of keeping musicians of all genres well-informed."

Ron Middlebrook added, "The hard-working folks at Hal Leonard have always been good to work with, making me feel like part of the family. It's hard to believe it's been 35 years! How can that be when Keith and I are still 39?"



Hal Leonard chairman and CEO Keith Mardak with Centerstream president Ron Middlebrook



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## Manuel Rodrigues Powers San Holo Tour with ChamSys

San Holo's recent stop at New York's Terminal 5 on his current tour featured a 13-universe Manuel Rodrigues-designed show, powered by a ChamSys-MagicQ MQ80 desk and video server. For Rodrigues, who worked with the tour's Creative Director Thorwald van den Akker, this tightly-focused approach is consistent with his design philosophy.

"In my designs, I always try to go to the essence of the looks I want to create," he explained. "I'm very rigorous in applying the 'less is more' principle. I try to find the simplest lines and then line up every lighting and video element perfectly with each other. The CAD drawing I made might look boring to the untrained eye; everything is just in rows of the same fixtures, and all elements are lined up with each other. But when the light and video work in concert, their aesthetics become more apparent because of the clean design of the stage."

The video content, created by Bob Jacobs, also reflects the emotional tenor of the show, while paying homage to its retro quality.

"Bob did a beautiful job," said Rodrigues. "We evoke a sense of timelessness by shooting a lot of the video on old VHS cameras. San Holo likes to use a tape delay to give his sound extra layers of depth, and by using video cameras we tried to emulate the same feel. Often, this video content is then pixel mapped and used to drive the LED fixtures."

The ChamSys MQ80 has been instrumental in helping Rodrigues achieve his vision on the global tour.

"My console's portability, number of universes supported, and the ability to capture palettes over Art-Net have been very important to me," he said. "These three functions combined are golden for a traveling LD. I think ChamSys initiated a trend years ago of shrinking down the size of the lighting desk, and in the process has tempted other lighting desk manufacturers to release products with a similar form factor. The number of universes supported by the MQ80 is just insane for the price. I have amazed many house LDs by copying their positions from their desks using Art-Net input."



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## Talkin' 'Bout a Revolution

Making a living out of music retail is getting no easier on the UK high street, which continues to experience extreme turbulence and buffeting from many different forms of pressure.

With UK shoppers now spending one in every five pounds online and smartphone shopping continuing to add to the misery, music stores continue to feel the pinch.

Just this month Redditch Music and Music Junkie in Leicester closed down while Paul's Music in Scunthorpe, which closed at the end of last year, will be attempting to shift £100K of stock at auction soon.

Meanwhile, Foulds in Derby is realigning its business, moving its guitar business elsewhere in the city center while it situates its piano, orchestral and sheet music departments at a separate location.

Change is afoot everywhere in UK retail. The British Retail Consortium warned there could be up to 900,000 fewer jobs in retail over the next decade – an industry that's the biggest employer in the private sector.

Essentially, the old business model has been broken by technological advancement just like trains did for stagecoaches and alarm clocks for knocker-uppers.

The positive news is that demand for the product remains reasonably strong, if not as strong as it once was. Cultural shifts could reignite demand once again but the high street as it was is never coming back.

Those who have already accepted that fact, stand the greatest chance of survival. But right now, even the most experienced high street operators don't have any sort of quick fix and can only hang on in there.

## Shergold Makes Provocative Move

Barnes and Mullins unveiled new Shergold Provocateur electric guitars at the Birmingham Guitar Show last month.

The British guitar brand gave visitors to the annual event at The New Bingley Hall in Birmingham an exclusive opportunity to play the new Provocateur guitars ahead of their full release in April.

In line with the award-winning Masquerader guitars, the Shergold Provocateur models have been designed by British luthier Patrick James Eggle and are the first in the Shergold range to feature a single cut design. The initial

launch is based around two pickup configurations both available in three color finishes.

Made with a solid mahogany body, and featuring a solid torrified mahogany neck and ebony fingerboard, a custom

PJE-designed bridge, hand-inlaid aluminum fret inlays, and staggered, locking machineheads, the Shergold Provocateur is the second line to be launched since the distributor reintroduced the once defunct guitar brand to the market.

Pickup configurations come in the form of Patrick Eggle's personal choice of genuine U.S.-made Seymour Duncan P90



(neck) and "Pearly Gates" (bridge) pickups in the SP01-SD model and two '59 humbuckers loaded in the SP02-SD. All bridge humbuckers feature a push/pull coil tap for a wide array of tonal options.

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Prices are £829 for the P90/Humbucker equipped SP01-SD Provocateur and £809 for the double humbucker equipped SP02-SD.

All models will be available exclusively from Barnes & Mullins from April 2019.

## Augustine Launches Paragon Strings into UK

New York guitar string brand Augustine have announced the immediate availability of its new "Paragon" Fluorocarbon treble nylon guitar strings in the UK.

Available from UK distributors Barnes & Mullins, Augustine Paragon Fluorocarbon treble strings are paired with either Augustine Classic Red or Classic Blue bass strings to deliver a bright crisp tone with enhanced projection. They are available in Medium tension (red) and High tension (blue) sets.

By developing the first nylon guitar strings in collaboration with guitar maestro Andrés Segovia in the mid 1940's, Albert Augustine invented a new standard for classical guitarists that has stood the test of time for over seven decades.

Augustine Paragon strings epitomize Augustine's continued dedication to delivering excellence while representing a modern fusion of timelessness and authenticity.

Augustine Paragon Red Medium tension sets (gauges 0.024" – 0.0425") retail for £18.95 with Blue High tension sets (gauges 0.025" – 0.045") retailing for £19.95. Both sets are available to order now from Barnes & Mullins.

## Los Cabos Boosts Euro Distribution

Los Cabos Drumsticks, Canada's largest drumstick manufacturer, has expanded its presence in Europe and has added Finnish firm Soundstore, as distributor.

Soundstore is one of the leading distributors and dealers of musical instruments, accessories and professional audio equipment in Finland; with brick and mortar as well as online shopping options. The firm is currently accepting preorders of Los Cabos Drumsticks' products via the website at [www.soundstore.fi](http://www.soundstore.fi), with delivery expected in mid-March.

CEO of Los Cabos Drumsticks, Larry Guay said: "We are very pleased and excited to be working with Soundstore to meet the growing demand from drummers in Finland who value high-quality drumsticks and percussion tools. We look forward to welcoming new artists and customers to our incredible international team."

# Musikmesse Tees Up Vintage Guitar Exhibition

Together with No. 1 Guitar Centre Hamburg and with the support of Gibson USA, Musikmesse is hosting a special exhibition called The World of Vintage Guitars at this year's show.

At the "Les Paul Night" on Friday evening (April 5), the Thomas Blug All Star Band with, among others, Scorpions' guitarist Matthias Jabs will perform rock classics from three decades.

At last year's show, the premiere of the format proved to be a magnet for the international guitar community. Accordingly, it has been expanded this year and is set to reach its climax at Musikmesse Plaza on Saturday.

The heart of the special area is the "Gibson Les Paul – The Classic Years" exhibition where visitors can relive the history of the electric guitar landmark over the years from 1952 to 1962.

Gibson is supporting the presentation with specially made reproductions from the Gibson Custom Shop, which bring the spirit of the company's world-famous models into the present time. There will also be a Guitars of the Stars exhibition with original instruments and amps of international stars. In a sound cabin, visitors can immerse themselves in the world of vintage guitars and play Fender, Gretsch and Gibson models with expert supervision.

Under the motto "Rate your guitar," visitors who bring their guitars with them have the opportunity to have their instruments assessed and valued by experts. Additionally, guitarists can learn what they should consider when carrying musical instruments with parts made of protected woods. During Musikmesse, No. 1 Guitar Centre Hamburg will also hold a professional-development event on the subjects of "Vintage guitars as investments," "CITES Wood ID: trade with protected woods," and "Vintage amps with valve technology and their characteristics."

On Saturday, 6 April, Messe Frankfurt presents Musikmesse Plaza, a completely new event aimed specifically at music lovers where visitors can buy instruments, equipment, recordings and merchandising products directly from manufacturers and retailers. More-



over, The World of Vintage Guitars will be continued during Musikmesse Plaza and supplemented by a variety of event highlights.

Under the heading "Fender by Leo Fender: The evolution of Fender's electric guitars 1950-1964," visitors can see a documentary exhibition on the history of the U.S. company and the development of its models. At 11am, renowned German guitarist Thomas Blug will bring guitars from this epoch back to musical life during a workshop. The programme will be chaired by Marc Wilkes of No. 1 Guitar Centre Hamburg.

Gibson fans can also look forward to a workshop with celebrities when, at 2pm, musician, producer and composer Peter Weihe and vintage expert Drew Berlin will take visitors on a journey through the history of Les Paul.

The World of Vintage Guitars is supported by Reverb.com online market place and Reverb experts will be on hand to provide advice about high-grade vintage instruments and

equipment during Musikmesse Plaza.

The weekend starts at 7pm on Friday evening with a unique concert experience for classic rock fans. The Les Paul Night presents legendary songs from the late fifties, as well as the sixties and seventies, which were decisively influenced by the characteristic Les Paul sound. The set list covers the spectrum from the Rolling Stones, via Led Zeppelin and Eric Clapton, to Wishbone Ash.

Although the focus is on the instrument, the line-up is also in a class of its own. Among those rocking through three decades of music history will be Scorpions guitarist Matthias Jabs, as well as Thomas Blug, Peter Weihe and Drew Berlin. The Les Paul Night will be held in Forum.0 and is part of the Musikmesse Festival with evening concerts at the Exhibition Centre and in the city's clubs.

Visitors of Musikmesse and Musikmesse Plaza have free admission to all parts of The World of Vintage Guitars. The exhibition can be found in the foyer of Hall 4.1 during Musikmesse and in Hall 1.1 during Musikmesse Plaza.

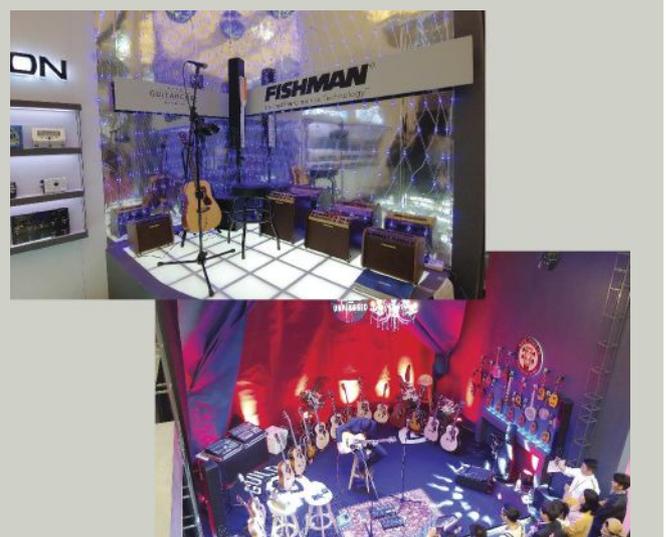
## Fishman Makes Chinese Move

Fishman has appointed Guitarcube as the company's distributor for China.

Based in Beijing, Guitarcube is considered one of the largest music product and pro audio distributors in that region.

Founded in 2006, Guitarcube distributes leading brands such as TC Electronics, Gretsch, EVH, Friedman, ENGL, Collings and Eventide, among others. Guitar Cube was chosen by Fishman based on its expertise and strong understanding of challenges and opportunities in the market.

Commenting on the appointment, Gary Lenaire, Fishman VP of International Business Development and E-commerce for China and Japan, stated: "Guitarcube's expertise in and commitment to the Chinese MI market is exceptional. Fishman is excited to be represented by this fast-growing partner."



## Shure Tweaks Business Name

Microphone specialist Shure has tweaked its official business name, Shure Distribution UK, becoming Shure UK and increasing the focus on its core brand.

The name change comes as a result of business growth, said the firm, since adopting a vertical market strategy in 2013. As part of the change the company will focus efforts away from third party brands, and instead direct sole attention towards Shure's success in the UK.

It will also increase capacity for value-added services, while also "deepening end-client engagement and developing more rewarding programs for valued channel partners."

Rob Lackey, company director, Shure UK Limited commented: "After more than 50 years as a multi-brand distributor, Shure has grown significantly globally and in the UK, allowing us to re-focus UK business activities for continued growth in the years ahead. The removal of distribution from our trading title is also necessary to accurately reflect the diverse range of business activity that is critical to our future success. We continue to invest heavily in sales and marketing across all three vertical markets while increasingly delivering best-in-class training to our clients and the broader industry."

Shure recently acquired TES Electronic Solutions in Edinburgh, extending the companies engineering capacity within the U.K. This important acquisition represents Shure's continued commitment to the UK market with a new specialist office location that will play a big role in the company's product roadmap for the foreseeable future.

## New UK Rep for Scott Dixon

Scott Dixon, specialist in custom flight cases and speaker cabinets, has appointed popular former JHS media exec. Gavin Coulson to handle U.K. sales.

The firm was founded in 1991 and over that time, and has worked with brands including Fender, The BBC and the Ministry of Defence creating protective aluminum flight cases for a selection of different items from missiles to medical equipment.

The firm's triple guitar case carries three guitars and only weighs 10kgs empty, the bass equivalent weighs 13kgs empty.

In addition, it is now manufacturing a range of lightweight and compact speaker cabinets for guitar, bass and PA. Fitted with Celestion Neodymium speakers these cabinets offer added punch and clarity, with the added bonus of easy transportation – they can carry two 600 watt bass cabs into the venue in one trip.

All products are manufactured in the UK to exhaustive, detailed specification using aircraft-grade aluminium.



## ON THE MOVE

**Reverb.com** has hired Kristen Cho to lead the company's marketing efforts and Jessica Reid to head the finance team.



Kristen Cho

As chief marketing officer and vice president of finance, respectively, Cho and Reid will help cultivate continued growth and success.

Cho joins Reverb with extensive marketplace experience, having led the marketing teams at designer consignment marketplace Luxury Garage Sale and SpotHero, the Chicago-based parking reservation platform. Prior to joining Chicago's tech startup scene, Cho spent seven years in various leadership positions at digital marketing agencies iProspect and Digitas, serving most recently as vice president/director of search engine marketing and performance media at Digitas. As CMO, Cho will lead Reverb's 25+ person global marketing team, overseeing search marketing, video and editorial content, design, social media, public relations, and more.

Reid brings with her nearly 20 years of finance and operations experience within the technology, education, and healthcare industries. Most recently, Reid was senior vice president of finance and operations at Regroup, a rapidly growing venture-backed behavioral health telemedicine company. A graduate of Harvard Business School, Reid held positions at Goldman Sachs & Company and the NYC Department of Education before spending seven years as Director of Strategy and Business Development at Apollo Education Group. As Reverb's VP of Finance, Reid will lead fundraising initiatives, investor relations, budgeting, and forecasting, as well as oversee the accounting, finance, and risk teams, among other responsibilities.



Jessica Reid

"For musical instrument sellers all over the world – from large retailers and manufacturers to brick-and-mortar shops and entrepreneurs – Reverb is an extension of their business. They rely on our marketing, finance, customer service, and tech teams to help them get their instruments into the hand of musicians all over the world," said Reverb's CEO and founder David Kalt.

"The addition of Kristen and Jessica to our leadership team is a testament to our commitment to our community. Kristen and Jessica each bring a set of skills and a level of experience that can only elevate the incredible work that our marketing and finance teams are already producing."

Midwest professional audio industry manufacturer rep firm **Ludwig Marketing** has announced the addition of industry veteran Mark Fuchs to their sales support staff.



With Ludwig Marketing covering the Midwest states, Fuchs will handle the Illinois and Wisconsin territory.

"We have formulated a line card based on representing the top manufacturers in the industry that hold the highest quality standards," says company CEO Don Ludwig. "Our goal is to connect our dealers with the best loudspeakers systems available, and provide everything they need for the installation."

That linecard includes Adamson, Danley, Deva, FBT and RCF loudspeakers; Powersoft amplifiers; Polar Focus rigging and mounts; Xilica DSP processing, and JTS microphones.

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## Trade Regrets

**William Clifton**  
**"Bill" Boyce, Jr.**, who

distinguished himself as a highly successful piano retailer throughout his remarkable 60-year career in the music products industry, passed away peacefully in his sleep on Saturday, February 2 in Bradenton, Florida. He was 78.

Boyce was best defined as a tireless entrepreneur, savvy businessman, guiding mentor, devoted husband, and wonderfully loving father. He, along with his wife Sandy, was the owner of and guiding force behind Palmetto, Florida-based Piano Distributors, one of the most successful piano store chains in the nation, with thousands of satisfied customers largely in the Southeast.

His six-decade career in the music business effectively began in 1959 when, at the age of 19, he was invited by his uncle, Edwin Poole, a band director in North Carolina, to join his Raleigh piano store, E.R. Poole Music Co.

Upon graduation from North Carolina State University in Raleigh in 1961, now earning \$10,000 a year at the music store, Boyce was approached by a recruiter for IBM, who offered him a starting salary of \$5,400/year.

From that moment, he became a lifer in the piano business, opening his first store, and eventually had a chain of full line stores in North Carolina under Bill Boyce Music. In 1962, he began selling both pianos and organs, renaming his business, Piano and Organ Distributors.

In 1982, Piano Distributors became an authorized dealer for Yamaha. To this day, the company continues to be the exclusive authorized Yamaha Piano Dealer in each of its multi-state markets.

In 1993, Boyce, semi-retired at the age of 52 and then living in Durham, turned over the management of his North Carolina stores to his son, Cliff. However, the idea of retirement was short-lived, as Boyce quickly found that he had too much love and enthusiasm for the piano business to leave it all behind.

Additionally, Yamaha was so impressed with Boyce's success in selling its pianos in North Carolina the previous 20 years, that it offered the couple the proverbial "deal you can't refuse."



He opened his first Piano Distributors store in Sarasota on April 1, 2001, and today, there are nine locations in Florida and Georgia. Yamaha has recognized Piano Distributors with a Top Dealer Award consistently since 2004. The company maintains an extensive outside promotion schedule, for which Yamaha recognized Piano Distributors as the 2018 "Promotions and Outside Events Dealer of the Year" in January 2019.

In addition to running Piano Distributors, Boyce served as president of the National Association of Young Music Merchants (NAYMM) and also enjoyed many years with the KIG group.

With his passing, Piano Distributors is now led by Sandy Boyce and Frank Harvey, who was promoted to president of the company in 2016.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the American Diabetes Association in Bill's name.

**Robert C. Shriver**

(Bob), a highly-respected music products manager, passed away unexpectedly on Sunday, February 24 in Camas, Washington. He was 63.

Defined by his exceptional music talent, creative sense of humor and outward love for family, friends and business colleagues, Shriver dedicated much of his professional and personal life to the pursuit of music, building an enviable, 38-year career working for Yamaha.

He got his start in the music business in his late teens, working at Nelson's Pianos and Organs in Merrillville, Indiana, and later joining the Everett Piano Company as a district manager. Yamaha had purchased Everett in 1973, and on June 15, 1981, Shriver was invited to join Yamaha as a district manager for Electronic Keyboard products, serving piano retailers, mostly in the northwest United States, for nearly four decades.

Shriver was named overall "District Manager of the Year" in Yamaha's Keyboard division on several occasions, most recently in 2014, and was a member of the company's President's Club, which recognizes top sales achievement, in 2010, 2014, and 2015.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that you consider a donation to the Humane Society for Southwest Washington in Bob's name.



**Vickie Volesky**, a former district manager for the band & orchestral division of Yamaha Corporation of America, passed away on Friday, February 15 after a long and courageous fight with lung cancer.

During her 35 years with Yamaha, Volesky held several different positions, but most of the time she served as district manager for the northern Midwest states, including Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

Vickie was a two-time winner of the prestigious Yamaha President's Club and won multiple awards for being the top salesperson of the year for many of the product groups she represented.

"We will greatly miss Vickie's cheerful heart, devotion to customer service and positive outlook," said Garth Gilman, corporate vice president, Yamaha Corporation of America.

On Saturday, February 23, we received the following from NAMM's Dan Del Fiorentino:

*Our friend **Ken Hyams** passed away on Tuesday. His son, Kip who followed in his father's footsteps with a career in the audio industry, told us the sad news.*

*Ken was a key franchise owner of Altec Lansing in the early days of consumer electronics. He worked for a Los Angeles retailer of this audio and consumer-electronic products in the late 1940s and 1950s. While witnessing the growth and development of the audio industry, particularly with products such as those offered by Harman Kardon and Altec Lansing, Ken decided to open his own company. Allied Communications Inc. was established in 1964 and ran as a successful business until Ken retired in 2001, when he closed the company. He was proud of the services his company provided and enjoyed the many friends he made along the way.*

*Ken was dedicated to the NAMM Oral History program and assisted us with arranging several important interviews over the years. When I asked him when I would get the chance to interview him, he would say after you get other key people. He finally agreed to his own interview just five months ago.*



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# Forget All Your Trebles

**A**long with drums & percussion, the electric bass is essential in establishing the beat, groove, and harmonic progression of songs in virtually all popular genres of music and beyond: jazz, pop, R&B, rock, funk, metal, punk... In other words, these instruments and the musicians who play them are huge drivers of contemporary culture.

However, the electric bass often takes a second-seat to its flashier, more high-profile sibling: the electric guitar. When looking over the past year-plus of *MMR*, I was dismayed to realize that even we had been giving somewhat short shrift to this instrument family of late.

To address that situation, we recently connected with representatives from five of the most popular and significant brands of electric bass on the market today to learn about trends in instrument design and build, players' buying habits, and what particularly successful bass retailers are doing in 2019 to generate profit.

## In your estimation, are sales of electric basses up, down, or level when compared to this time in 2018?

**Brian Ball:** Electric bass sales have increased significantly for Music Man in the past year, mostly due to the launch of our reimagined and redesigned Sting Ray Special basses.

**Hans-Peter Wilfer:** We expect about the same level of sales in 2019 as we did in 2018, however, we have noticed a larger interest in the higher-level instruments.

**Yoh Watanabe:** Sales of electric basses are up, especially for higher-end models.

**Allen Abbassi:** Overall, 2018 was a successful year for Fender bass

sales. As expected, sales momentum usually continues to pick up as we approach the holiday season.

**Vinnie Del Buono:** So far in 2019, electric bass sales are doing very well for us. Overall electric bass sales are trending up and we are enjoying a significant lift over 2018 sales. For Dean, basses have always been a successful division and in 2019 we launched two new styles of 4-, 5-, and 6-stringed models with our new Select Series. We have seen an overwhelmingly positive response to these new models and we expect that trend to continue.

**Yuichi Hirayama:** At least as it relates to Ibanez, we are definitely seeing an upward trend in sales as compared to this time last year.



The Electric Bass Market  
By Christian Wissmuller



“Going back to the higher-level instruments, people seem to have more refined tastes these days and are a bit more educated on what they are about to purchase.”



Hans-Peter Wilfer  
CEO/Owner/Founder  
Warwick GmbH & Co  
Music Equipment KG

**For your brand, what are currently the “hot” models of electric bass?**

**HPW:** The bass that both consumers and artists are going after right now is the Warwick Idolmaker.

**VDB:** Our main bass model is the Edge and has been for nearly 20-plus years. This year we’ve expanded the Edge lineup to include six new models from our flagship Select Series – three models will feature a gorgeous poplar burl/walnut top with mahogany body and the other three models will feature a more traditional walnut/maple top with a swamp ash body. All of them will be equipped with our custom DMT pickups and active 3-band EQ.

We have also received a lot of requests for the Hillsboro bass to make a comeback utilizing Select Series features. Other “hot” models to note include our Rhapsody and Pace basses.

**YH:** The new SR500E and SR Mezzo series have been generating a lot of interest for us. The SR500 has always been a strong performer and we’ve updated the SR500E to include adjustable string spacing, Bartolini BH2 Pickups, and a new preamp. The Mezzo series has also become quite popular. The 32” scale, active electronics, and unique finishes seem to have resonated with players.

**AA:** The new American Performer Precision, Jazz, and Mustang Basses are very hot right now. We released those at the tail-end of 2018, and they are getting a lot of interest. Our American Elite, American Professional, and Player Series Basses continue to perform very well.

**YW:** TRBX basses are always hot for us. They continue to sell very well. We upgraded our BB bass guitar line last year and they have been well received by reviewers, dealers, and players alike. They are lighter and slimmer, and the full range of models are priced to move in the bass market.

**BB:** The Sting Ray Special is red-hot, and has been a huge favorite of artists and customers. Tim Commerford (RATM, Audioslave), Stefan Lessard (Dave Matthews Band), Joe Dart (Vulfpeck), and many others have taken a huge interest in our basses and helped broaden the appeal and exposure of our newest basses.

**Have you been observing any notable trends when it comes to electric bass sales – either on the vendor or consumer side of the equation?**

**AA:** It seems like there is a renewed interest in Mustang basses, and the models we’ve released recently have all been doing better than expected. There is a general trend in popularity with the non-traditional Fender shapes (Mustang and Jaguar) that is also really nice to see.

**VDB:** Yes. The biggest trend is multiple woods with oiled or natural satin finishes and blending different types of tone woods. There will always be a small spot for the neck-through, glossy, guitar-like bass, but right now the progressive bass players are really making their own trends with tone woods, performance specifications and parts. Since guitars are expanding their presence in dynamics by man-



“Just within our own product line we now have single-cut and multiscale basses, figured top woods, and premium pickup brands. The trend is not exactly new, but continues to resonate across the bass market.”



Yuichi Hirayama, Bass Merchandiser, Ibanez Guitars

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Distributor Inquiries Welcome



“When a player can see their musical tastes reflected in the breadth of artists that use Fender, it undoubtedly influences them to want to play a Fender.”

**Allen Abbassi, Senior Product Development Manager for Electric Guitars/Basses, FMIC**

Manufacturing multiple extended range instruments, bass guitars are doing that as well. Adjusting scale lengths, nut widths, and control variations change a traditional low tone instrument to become a more versatile piece of the musical puzzle.

**YH:** Well, on the vendor side – and this actually began a few years back – more boutique styles and features are now available on production instruments. Just within our own product line we now have single-cut and multiscale basses, figured top woods, and premium pickup brands. The trend is not exactly new, but continues to resonate across the bass market.

**BB:** We’re predominantly known for our active electronics, so I can only speak to our increases in our basses with those features, but maybe the passive pendulum is swinging back the other way a little more. I think bass players are also liking options outside of traditional colors (black, white, burst).

**HPW:** Going back to the higher-level instruments, people seem to have more refined tastes these days and are a bit more educated on what they are about to purchase. Consumers are doing their research via YouTube, web blogs, and Buyer’s Guides to find exactly what they are looking for.

**YW:** Interestingly, product trends in the bass market have been fairly constant recently, and that may be a sign that bass guitars are an opportunity category.

### What are some approaches adopted and embraced by dealers who are especially successful with bass sales?

**YH:** The dealers who stock a wider range of our products and offer customers greater choices have been more successful. Overall, more options and diverse selection are what we have noticed driving success among dealers.

**VDB:** We have found that it always comes down to having the right personnel. Our most successful dealers have that special person on staff, so the bass customers coming in have an active bass player guiding their purchase to get them into the right instrument the first time.

**YW:** We have found that dealers who commit themselves to selling an especially wide selection of bass guitars have success. For example, some bass players believe that dealers who carry high-end signature models along with a full line of entry-level and



mid-range products carry extra credibility. It reinforces the impression that they are focused on the category of instrument and, by extension, on them as bass players; that impression draws them to these dealers.

**HPW:** The best dealers supply their customers with the most information on the products they are selling. Knowing the product and who you are selling it to becomes a great marriage. Knowledge and research is the key to any successful business.

**AA:** Dealers that stock more options for bass players sell more basses. Naturally, it is a challenge to keep a complete offering of Fenders basses in any one store just due to the wealth of models we offer, but there is a relationship between number of SKUs stocked and sales. With the current trend toward increased Fender bass sales, dealers that increase their percentage of basses stocked versus guitars have shown an increase in their bass sales.

**BB:** Updated web pages, rich graphics, video content, and a social strategy to promote that you have the product. Having the inventory is obviously key, and if you can offer financing to the customer that’s a cherry on the sundae.

### How significant are artist endorsement relationships when it comes to electric bass sales?

**BB:** We’ve always felt that the collaboration with artists helps significantly, not just in the development of new products with road testing, but also with launching the products and leveraging their stature as musicians that stand behind the new product.

**HPW:** Much like any business, the faces of your company are plenty important. We have such Warwick artists as Robert Trujillo, Adam Clayton, Mike Inez, Johny Chow, and we recently have signed up Shavo Odadjian. These are not only Warwick players but they are truly part of the Warwick Family. I have these people over to the factory in Markneukirchen, Germany and would have them in my home any day.

**AA:** Artist endorsements are very important for us. When a player can see their musical tastes reflected in the breadth of artists that use Fender, it undoubtedly influences them to want to play a Fender.

**YH:** Partnering with our endorsing artists is an important part of what we do on the bass side of Ibanez. Our endorsers are great ambassadors for the brand and they’re invaluable in helping to deliver our message to players.

**YW:** We have relationships with bass artists who are legends in

“Interestingly, product trends in the bass market have been fairly constant recently, and that may be a sign that bass guitars are an opportunity category.”



**Yoh Watanabe, Director of Marketing, Pro Music division, Yamaha Corporation of America**

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“We’ve always felt that the collaboration with artists helps significantly, not just in the development of new products with road testing, but also with launching the products and leveraging their stature as musicians that stand behind the new product.”

**Brian Ball, President,  
Ernie Ball Music Man**

their art form and have enormous followings, so we certainly believe that they are significant. They provide us with brilliant ideas and we strive to produce instruments that are worthy of their personal brands by working closely with them every step of the way so it’s more than just a matter of attaching their names. It’s an honor for us to be able to work with them, and the musicians who see the basses notice how involved our artists are in the development of these exceptional instruments.

**VDB:** Proper artist association really helps legitimize the brand and helps to demonstrate product quality and reliability in a professional setting.

**Expectations for this market segment in the coming months?**

**HPW:** I do not foresee any drastic changes. 2018 was a nice stable time for Warwick and I expect the same within the next quarters.

**VDB:** At Dean, we’ve always seen positive growth with our

bass division and with our new Select Series we expect that trend to continue in this ever-growing market. Those who remain innovative in their approach will reap the biggest rewards.

**YH:** We anticipate we will continue to see steady growth within the segment along with continuing innovation with new products.

**AA:** If the current trend continues, I see our bass sales growing even more in 2019. We are constantly expanding our bass options for players worldwide, which should be a factor in continued growth.

**YW:** The steady trends in bass products released recently tell me the bass guitar market segment will remain similarly steady in the coming months.

**BB:** Strong and stable. Our forecasts for all of our basses including the Sting Ray Special look really strong, because sell through from the inventory purchased last year was really a highlight for a lot of dealers. **MMM**

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**Vinnie Del Buono,  
Director of Sales,  
Dean Guitars**

“So far in 2019, electric bass sales are doing very well for us. Overall electric bass sales are trending up and we are enjoying a significant lift over 2018 sales.”



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# 'Forgotten' Add-on Sales?

## The Guitar & Bass Strap Market in 2019

By Christian Wissmuller

**W**ith nearly 90 percent (86.3) of participants in this month's retailer survey claiming that sales of bass and guitar straps are either up or level when compared to 2018, it seems safe to assert that this is one market segment that is thriving – growing, even.

The particulars of the overall trend do seem to be dependent on region, though. For every dealer saying that the days of vinyl/fabric straps are waning in favor of higher quality leather straps, there was always another dealer (at least) saying that poly straps continue to rule. Regardless, there's no argument that virtually *all* axe-slingers need at least one strap, which means it should be an easy add-on sale for any dealer.

"It's like pairing a fine wine with a delicious meal," says Ted Parrish of Parrish Music in Viroqua, Wisconsin (check out the store profile on page 50 of this issue). "Help your customer find the perfect

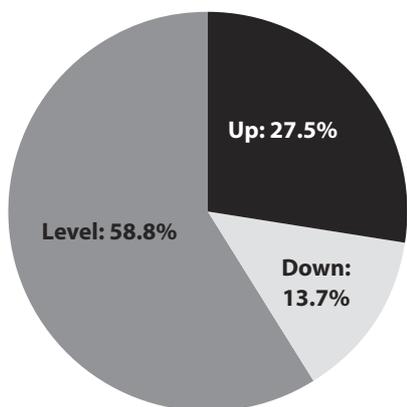
match. Unless they just want a cheap \$10 black strap, of course."

Another point made consistently throughout this monthly poll is the value of the dealer/vendor partnership for mutually beneficial results. "Last year we had a rep call on us a few times a year," says Main Street Music, Inc's (Tracy, California) Ken Cefalo. "He was good about telling us what was hot. He also helped with display suggestions and sales ideas. It made a difference."

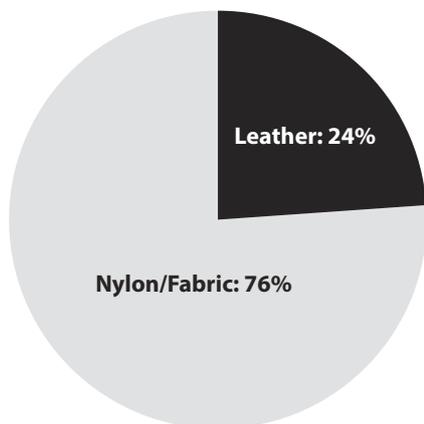
It couldn't be put any more simply or more effectively: this is a symbiotic relationship we're examining within the pages of this magazine. MI retailers need to adopt best practices and adapt to changing realities, but suppliers bear responsibility to actively satisfy their role in the partnership, as well.

Read on to learn of what brands of guitar and bass straps are selling the most, what trends are driving these purchases, and what the future may hold...

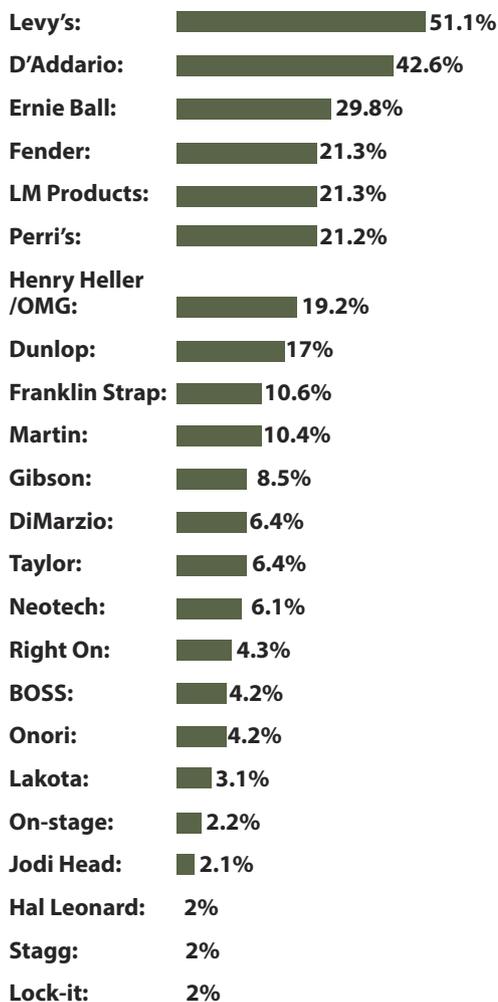
### Compared to this same time last year, sales of guitar & bass straps for your store are...



### In terms of volume, what types of straps do you sell most of?



### What brands of guitar & bass straps are best-sellers for your business?



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## Have you been noticing any significant trends when it comes to guitar & bass straps – either on the supplier or consumer side (materials/techniques being embraced by manufacturers, buying habits or preferences, et cetera)?

*"While nylon remains our bread and butter seller, we do pretty well with leather as well. A healthy percentage of those sales appear to go to the fashion conscious, discerning customer, where looks and feel trump the price-point. We also offer straps hand crafted by local leather artisans, and they bring good performance, too, especially over the holiday period."*

**Jerry Veseley**  
Veseley Music  
Parowan, Utah

*"Too often a high quality strap is completely forgotten as an add-on sale. We regularly sell straps in the \$100-plus range when selling a high-end instrument. Remember... you're a salesperson – if you don't ask, you'll never have a chance to make that sale!"*

**Tim Bascom**  
Morgan Music  
Lebanon, Missouri

*"Prices [are] trending downward with more quality strap vendors emerging on the market."*

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

*"Customers are starting to invest in a good quality, 'lifetime' strap after an initial cheap strap purchase."*

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

*"Specifically-decorated ones going best (seen as unique to area/shop, e.g. Welsh flag). Leather [is] out of favor – vegan movement, possibly?"*

**Joanne Julier**  
Cerdd Ystwyth Music  
Aberystwyth, United Kingdom



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*"Faux leather that looks just like the real thing and is only \$19.95 MAP is by far the quickest selling strap."*

**Ed Intagliata**  
Cassell's Music  
San Fernando, California

*"Retro stuff [is] coming back and you have to stock heavy."*

**Carlos Garcia**  
Ingram's Music  
Merced, California

*"Niche straps from Hal Leonard. The MLB (Cubs). NFL (Bears), NHL (Blackhawks), AND NBA (Bulls) all sell well in our market in [the] Chicago Area. We heavily promote them and display in our showroom. It is a great \$30 gift or add-on item for guitarists."*

**Tim Paul**  
Piano Trends Music & Band Company  
Crystal Lake, Illinois

*"Black Sabbath Straps with the specific cross-shape, leather straps and black leather straps."*

**Randy Young**  
Galaxy Guitar Products USA  
Las Vegas, Nevada

*"The day of the venerable, two-inch poly strap is waning, and the day of the wider, leather or woven strap is dawning."*

**Allen McBroom**  
Backstage Music  
Starkville, Missouri

*"There is no limit to how many straps the average customer will buy. Every guitar needs a strap, and every musician needs a different strap for different occasions."*

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

*"Cooler patterns copying Original Fuzz straps. Most straps are ugly, but companies seem to be fixing that issue [with] less expensive leathers that look nice and aren't tacky."*

**Justin Sims**  
Sims Music, Inc.  
Columbia, South Carolina

*"Smaller manufacturers such as Hang Over do really well here. The Stagg brand has some nice affordable straps available. Both do well here."*

**Paul Tobias**  
Tobias Music  
Downer's Grove, Illinois

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## Taking DJ Sales Out For A Spin

DJ Customers Have Gone from the Margins of MI to being High-Margin Customers, but They Want to Know You Know Them

By Dan Daley

If the ultimate drummer diss-joke is “How many people in your band? Five – four musicians and a drummer,” then where does the DJ fit in? Ignoring the endless arguments about whether they qualify for musician status, DJs have built a complex culture and market of their own, one that parallels and often competes with conventional configurations of music – wedding band or wedding DJ? (That question elicited over 1 million responses on bridal boards like The Knot and WeddingWire.com.) Then there’s the crossovers: Limp Bizkit, Linkin Park, and scores of other successful bands have integrated turntables with guitars and drums. Within the DJ universe there are dozens of subcultures that can argue digital versus vinyl for days on end.

But wherever they fall on the spectrum, DJs mean business, especially for MI retail. Market-data portal Statista shows steady growth of DJ equipment in the U.S., rising from \$114 million in 2011 to over \$164 million in 2017. That’s roughly in line with NAMM’s data, which further shows that DJ controllers – any of a number of devices used to manipulate audio tracks – account for over a quarter of that revenue. However, as NAMM’s and other market surveys note, the foundational product in the DJ arsenal is a Mac laptop computer, which largely bypasses the MI distribution channel, along with leading DJ software packages, such as Native Instruments’ Traktor Pro 2, Serato’s

Scratch Live/DJ, and Magix’s Digital DJ 2, all of which are sold directly through downloads costing \$100 or less.

Thus, it’s largely the ancillary equipment that accounts for much of the DJ sector’s considerable revenues, but it’s quite a boatload of SKUs, including interfaces, controllers, media players, mixers, headphones, video systems, lighting and effects. So how does the unique world of the DJ fit into the larger marketplace of MI retail?

### Weekend Warriors to Superstars

“The technology changes, but the market really doesn’t,” observes Randy White, senior buyer of pro audio, lighting and DJ products at Chuck Levin’s Washington Music Center, in Wheaton, Maryland. The market tiers he enumerates – entry-level and bedroom DJs; “weekend warriors” who handle the meat and potatoes of DJ gigs like weddings and parties; nightclub spinners who develop regional followings; and finally the superstar concert-touring DJs – represent a fairly solid and predictable taxonomy of the DJ universe. White stresses staying on top of the shifting and varied technology base of record spinning, which ranges from old-school turntablists who still carry vinyl in crates to controllers loaded from a thumb drive. But much



The DJ department at Chuck Levin’s Washington Music Center in Wheaton, Maryland

of the business now is centered on hardware controllers, made by companies like Pioneer and Numark, running software from Serato, the sector's biggest player, as well as Pioneer's Rekordbox, Native Instruments' Traktor DJ, and AtomMix Virtual DJ Pro. Vinyl is still a thing, but most of the "records" used by DJs are actually platters embedded with time code read by the specialized turntable's needle, the information sent through a soundcard interface/mixer to the laptop via USB, which lets the software know key information such as the velocity of the track. These let DJs do all of the usual tricks of vinyl, including scratching a track.

In fact, the common placement of DJ equipment within stores' pro audio departments reflects the complexity of DJ technology, which uses some of the same SKUs as pro audio, including headphones, wireless microphones, MIDI keyboards, and computer interfaces. White recalls that when he set up the area's first dedicated DJ department, at Veneman Music in nearby Rockville in 1990, typical MI store customers took a dim view of DJs, regarding them as something less than musicians. "Back then, DJ equipment was being sold out of car stereo shops," he remembers. "In the nearly 20 years since then, everything has changed. Now, the DJs are the superstars."

#### Crossing Departments

Dennis Shepard, Alto Music's VP of store operations and manager of its Middletown, New York location, says that the DJ's ascendance in music's hierarchy has led to crossover with many other aspects of MI retail, including pro audio and lighting, and it's not simply a



**Dennis Shepard**, Alto Music's VP of store operations and manager of its Middletown, New York location



**Randy White**, senior buyer pro audio, lighting, and DJ for Chuck Levin's Washington Music Center



**Patrick Sullivan**, former VP of merchandising at Guitar Center and recently appointed president of InMusic

matter of technology overlap. "DJs are competing with each other and they're using full-on production to differentiate themselves," he explains. "They used to just light themselves on a stage, but now they're also lighting the entire venue. Uplighting has become huge, using fixtures like Chauvet washes for the walls and moving heads to create excitement, and with that comes more trussing and lighting controllers. They're not just playing music – they're bringing an entire show now!"

Shepard points out that, as with many digital products, DJ items like controllers can scale fairly readily from entry-level to professional applications, a point he makes to parents who come to the

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store looking to accommodate their kids' interest in DJing. "There's been a lot of DJ education programs that have come up in the last 10 years, too, and that's stoking younger buyers," he says. He adds that DJ customers are not the types to be easily distracted by other departments. "The pro audio department is at the rear of the store and they tend to make a bee line for it," he says. "They're not stopping to look at guitars."

That kind of laser focus on their craft is why Shepard stresses that MI retailer who want to the DJ trade need to provide knowledgeable support for those customers. Part of that at his store is having DJ Victor Vargas on staff, at least when Vargas isn't touring on another continent. "You have to be able to know the nuances between trance and house and other genres," says Vargas, who says Milan, Mexico City and Barcelona were on his tour itinerary last year. "You have to build the relationship with them in order for them to trust you, because even if a DJ travels all over the world for work, they're still coming to the store close to home for their gear, from controllers to cables. That's the kind of loyalty you want."

### Part of Pro Audio, and Then Some

Across Guitar Center's 290-plus outlets, DJ product sales remain a steady percentage of the mega-retailer's annual sales, says Patrick Sullivan who was VP of merchandising at Guitar Center and was recently named president of InMusic, whose brand portfolios include Denon DJ. While those numbers may spike a bit in a few hot spots like Miami, Los Angeles, Chicago and New York, it suggests that the DJ has

become an integral component of MI retail in general nationally. "The DJ used to be the person playing the records and keeping the event moving along, but now they've integrated instruments and other musicians into their shows," he says, noting a show at Miami's Ultra festival in 2016 where Rage Against The Machine's Tom Morello joined DJs Knife Party and Deadmau5 on stage during a performance. "They're putting on productions now, they're part of bands, and that's brought many more products into that ecosystem."

GC groups DJ and pro audio products in the same area of its stores, but Sullivan says that's a "natural adjacency" rather than a strategy or a policy. It's also where Guitar Center, one of the very few MI retailers that's also an authorized Apple sales outlet, bases its computer sales from. "The computer is still the 'brain' of the DJ set up," he says, adding that DJ and pro audio also share a lot of other product types, including interfaces, mixers and controllers. (Washington Music Center's Randy White says that's been their experience, too. "You'll see that customer just walk straight back to pro audio and never stopping or even looking at anything else," he says.)

Like other retailers who want to target DJ customers, Guitar Center tries to keep working DJs on its sales staff as an interface with that cohort. Sullivan says they've gone further most, collaborating with manufacturers on some products – he says they worked with the reinvigorated Technics brand in 2016 to get a version of their SL-1200 turntable, a legend in DJ lore, back on the market – and

they have a presence at major trade shows catering to them, such as DJ Expo, where he says they are actively looking at new products to help develop markets for. Sullivan added that as GC's lessons program is completely rolled out to all of its stores sometime next year, DJ training, which is now available in certain locations, is planned to be on the national curriculum.

Sullivan says these steps are necessary for a market segment as dynamic as DJ is. "It's a very progressive culture, always looking for new things," he says. "It also has a very well-developed community, and it's encouraging to see the continued success of DJ music festivals, and seeing them interact with other genres and instruments, which is helping it go more mainstream. The DJ market is very robust."

### Good Product Turnover

Sam Ash Music, which has 47 outlets nationwide, doesn't deal in laptops – COO Sammy Ash says it's unreasonable to expect sales people to be fully conversant with DJ equipment, lighting technology and computers, and that margins in computers are razor thin.

"However," he says firmly, "we have everything else," enough to keep actual DJs on staff at a number of key locations. Given the peripatetic nature of the DJ trade, Ash says several of those staffers will travel regularly for gigs, but alert store managers about their schedules.

Ash says the correlation between DJ and lighting products is strong, and in-depth knowledge of both categories is critical. "We consider DJ to be part of pro audio and lighting," he

says, noting that Sam Ash Music first entered the DJ market in the late 1960s, importing products from Europe, including the now-vintage Soundout brand, a precursor to Soundcraft, from the U.K. Given the store's Greater New York area roots, he's not surprised that demand for DJ equipment has been fairly steady there over the decades without ever really peaking or even periodically spiking, such as during the Disco era of the late 1970s. "It might be that we're also a brass and woodwinds house, we have more categories than most retailers, so DJ seems like more of a steady thing over time," he speculates. "But we're definitely deep in it."

Ash says what sets the DJ category most apart is how quickly and decisively its product mixes change. They do some trade-ins on some equipment, he says, but the vast majority of sales are for new equipment. "DJs are constantly upgrading, because their shows are for other DJs, too, and they have to have the latest stuff and look cool. So there's a decent amount of turnover in DJ, which is good."

DJ has become a fully-fledged MI category in the last decade, and it's one that extends its tendrils across multiple departments. As importantly, it's now also on the radars of parents as a legitimate music-career pursuit, which will help boost product sales and encourage it becoming a lessons category of its own in more stores. But, Randy White cautions, it's not a category for dilettantes at retail. "You need to be fully onboard and all-in for DJ," he says. "They know it when someone's not." **MMA**



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## MEE audio M6 PRO 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation

**P**ackaging and promo materials for this second generation update of MEE audio's popular M6 PRO universal-fit, noise-isolating in-ear monitors promise, "upgraded sound and build quality" and, "more accurate midrange and smoother, more natural treble" (among other tweaks meant to improve the overall user experience).

Having no experience with the first iteration of the M6 PRO monitors, I can't offer much in the way of comparison between the two units, but I'll try and unpack my overall impressions of the current generation, starting with my favorite aspect...

I have owned and used some pretty expensive – as well as *many* lower-tier – in-ear monitors, both for recreational listening and for on-stage performance, and the big gripe for me (even with the pricier, custom-fit models) is invariably one of comfort. What feels fine and secure initially winds up being irritating or even downright painful eight or 10 songs in. I'm happy to say that I've repeatedly gone hours with the M6 PRO 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation jammed into my skull with essentially zero issues. The included, *extremely* extensive accessories set features over-the-ear memory wire (it does exactly what you think it does), seven differently sized ear-tips, and Comply™ memory foam ear-tips – meaning that, with a bit of fiddling around (nothing terribly time-consuming), I expect most users would have an experience similar to my own.

The next most impressive element to this package? The humble asking price of around \$50. I earlier referenced my ownership and usage of "expensive" in-ear monitors and, by that, I'm talking custom units that go for in excess of \$600. I can't comfortably wear those fancy-pants monitors for anywhere near as long as I can MEE audio's earbuds without considerable discomfort. If judged by fit and comfort alone, the



M6 PRO 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation isn't a solid hit; it's an out-of-the-park homerun.

Ah, but what about the sound? The primary purpose of in-ear monitors is, of course, to deliver accurate, quality sound and – however comfortable – if the M6 PRO can't succeed on that front, that'd be a deal-breaker. Happily, these little guys do quite nicely: accurate reproduction across the frequency spectrum and quite responsive. Additionally, the ear-tips do a fine job of blocking ambient noise (or the thrashing about of fellow-musicians), so you can hear everything you aim to without turning the volume way up and, you know... going deaf by age 40.

Appearance-wise, my review earbuds are clear (and quite handsome/discreet), though there are a number of color and customization options available and outlined on the company's site, including custom-fit silicone ear-tips if you happen to not agree with my assessment of fit and comfort and want to upgrade to a more expensive unit.

All in all, this is a great package that packs serious bang for the buck. Any MI retailer with customers serious about live performance and who appreciate an authentic recreational listening experience might do well to stock the M6 PRO 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation. (Christian Wissmuller)

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

## Hercules DG300B Tablet Holder

**T**he Hercules Tablet Holder DG300B is lightweight, compatible, and (most importantly) durable tablet holder that can attach to most mic, keyboard, or drum stands.

The ability to fold compact and fit in my gig case without having to disassemble or remove any parts is probably the biggest benefit. It is very sturdy and has enough joints to adjust into any position needed and lock tightly in place. It holds an iPad so securely that I never worry about it falling. The design choice to hold the iPad by the corners works better than others I've used before that hold tablets by the sides, because those invariably end up blocking a button or jack that you need access to.

The bright yellow accents are great to show off the Hercules brand, but for a stage performer who wants an iPad on a mic stand to be as invisible to the audience as possible, it might have been better if they either only used yellow elements on

the side of the mount that can't be seen from the crowd, or limited it to just a single iconic element. Other than that, this should be an indispensable piece of equipment for any musician who uses a tablet onstage as part of their act. (Jesse Salucci)



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

## Eventide H9 MAX Multi-Effects Pedal

I consider myself the most freelance of pedal reviewers. I'm lucky enough to have a good friend on the *MMR* staff who will occasionally offer me the opportunity to write about music gear – a welcome departure from my mundane routine. I generally look forward to these opportunities; I anticipate them like a kid on Christmas morning. I love pedals – I love to tinker with my sound. I've been playing guitar for over 30 years in various bands. I have a pedal board that I curate, a collection of classic FX – my boosts, my delays, a phase, a wah, a tricked out reverb for when I'm feeling weird.

Enter the Eventide H9 MAX. Generally, I'm able to write my reviews without consulting the owner's manual. Well, not so with this one. This pedal scared me right out of the gate – it's got two manuals: a 49 page User Guide and 36 page Algorithm Guide. There's a ton to this pedal, more than I could cover in the time I had the pedal for review. As it turns out, I didn't need to be afraid.

At its core, the H9 is a multi-FX pedal; a one-stop-shop for time and pitch based effects. It includes the full suite of presets offered by their TimeFactor, ModFactor, PitchFactor, and Space boxes as well as a few new algorithms unique to the H9. What's more, the H9 presents those presets as fully customizable (and combinable) algorithms that sound great. It's got stereo ins, stereo outs, MIDI in/out, a USB plug and a Bluetooth receiver so that you can access the parameter configuration via an iOS app on your mobile phone. I knew I'd need to consult the User Guide but, before I did, I plugged it in, just to see what would happen.

I found that the H9 is wickedly fun to play around with right out of the box. The H9 comes in an elegant white chassis with a big LED display, a black rotary knob in the center, surrounded by an LED ring (the LightRing) and five radio buttons (HOTKNOB, X, Y, Z and preset). There are also two foot switches – one that toggles the BYPASS and the other sets delay times via a tap function.



The H9 looks fantastic and is comfortably navigated with your feet. Every button and switch has a corresponding LED (or lights up itself) which makes for a stunning presentation. When you plug the H9 in you get an immediate endorphin rush: the LightRing and radio buttons all animate – the pedal looks like it's about to take flight.

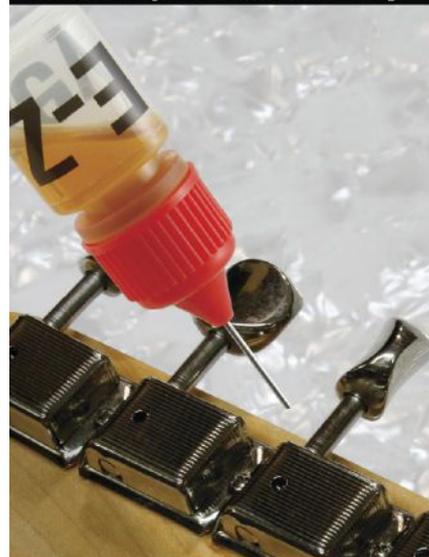
Functionally, the H9 is deep and also intuitive. The five radio buttons all change the function of the rotary knob. When you have the Preset button active, you can scroll through the 99 presets. If you want to adjust the parameters of the presets, select the X, Y, or Z buttons. Interestingly, all three of these buttons essentially do the same thing, just in parallel. So, you can use each button to control different parameters of the same effect. The HOTKNOB button essentially turns the rotary knob into an onboard expression control, capable of controlling multiple FX parameters on the fly at once.

For this review, I spent all my time exploring the different presets, a dangerously time-consuming activity for any player. Cycling through the presets is fun – really fun. The presets really showcase the breadth and depth of the H9, running the gamut from classic reverbs to super spaced out layered effects.

My take on the H9 MAX is that it's a great pedal for a home studio. It packs a ton of great sounds into a tight package. On top of that, after you get through all the manuals and take advantage of the app, you'll find that you're ready to take the H9 with you everywhere you go. (Daniel Sussman)

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# The New Old SCHOOL

Vintage Machinery and Capacitors  
are Key for CE Distribution

By Victoria **Wasylak**

Inside some of CE Distribution's 20,000 sq. feet of warehouse and office space

**I**n 2019, let's face it: new technology is one of the easiest, sure-fire ways to reel in attention no matter what market you're in. Take almost any item made in a factory, add on a handful of new touches, and consumers will line up (or, at the very least, tune into livestreams) to see the new version that's faster, bigger, more durable, and most likely, more expensive.

But for companies like CE Distribution, there's serious worth in keep things the old-fashioned way, specifically regarding the Mallory equipment they still use to make capacitors. Bought 20 years ago, the vintage machinery keeps CE Distribution surprisingly ahead of the curve.

"The music industry is full of vintage equipment with unique tone and characteristics," explains the team at CE. "We feel it is important to use as many original parts as possible to properly maintain the character and tone of the equipment, so we refurbished the machinery to produce capacitors the exact way they were produced during the heyday of vacuum tube electronics. We updated the equipment used in the aging and testing process to provide the best quality control possible, but left the entire manufacturing process alone."

Founded in July, 1999 as a wholesale parts distributor for the MI market, CE Distribution now boasts almost 10,000 SKUs across the company's immense catalogue of pedals, potentiometers, and plugs, to name just a few of their product categories. Located in Tempe, Arizona, the company houses all their goods in their ample 20,000 square-foot warehouse, production areas, and offices. Close to 40 employees keep the operation running smoothly, especially since many of them have worked with CE Distribution since its start 20 years ago. All together, the staff has more than 200 years of musical experience combined ("Our employees are the heart and soul of our

business. Without great employees, it is impossible to succeed," the CE team affirms).

To the Arizona company, the core of their business remains centered around their capacitors, Jensen speakers, and a few other vital items, although their catalog seemingly knows no bounds.

"Our primary product lines include our Jensen speakers (we are the exclusive importer), CE Manufacturing canned capacitors (almost 50 unique values), Yellow Jackets, MOD kits, and JJ vacuum tubes. We have an expansive offering of amplifier and guitar parts, accessories and supplies," they explain. "We are constantly sourcing new products to add to our offering and better serve our customers. We proudly add many new items each year."

The CE Manufacturing capacitors, however, are where those fine vintage pieces of machinery come into play. Made in batch sizes of 300 to 500 pieces, they're stamped and wound individually by one employee at a time. In between steps, CE Distribution's prized Mallory equipment comes in handy.

"We don't know the complete history of the equipment, but we know it originated with Mallory in the U.S. This is based on equipment tags that still exist on some of the machinery," the CE team adds. "Later, Aerovox produced capacitors on this equipment in the United States before moving the operation to Mexico. We purchased the equipment from the Mexican factory and brought it back to the States! The equipment had suffered from years of improper maintenance and repair, and we spent months bringing it back to proper operating form. For the most part, this equipment is still early to mid-twentieth century technology; mechanical counters, delay relays. No computers, logic control, et cetera."

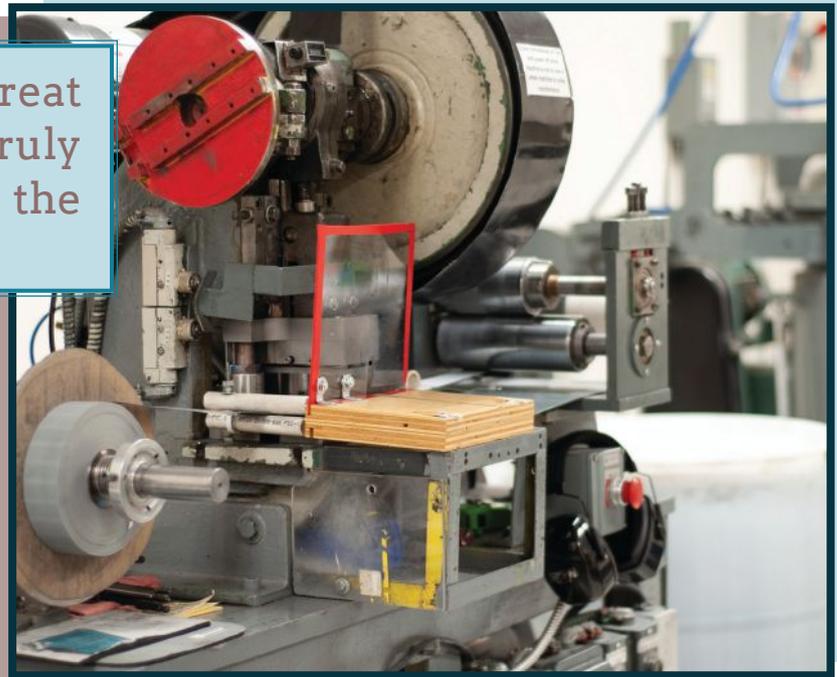
“Our customers are great technicians and we truly enjoy helping them find the parts they need!”

After fixing up the machinery, CE installed it as a fundamental step in working on their capacitors. The machinery stamps out sections of anode and cathode. From there, they are wound, swaged, and “impregnated” with electrolyte. At the end of the day, each capacitor gets tested by hand before it gets shipped out the door. A special mechanic keeps all the machinery running properly in its old age.

“However, when we reach the hand assembly step, which is very time consuming, we bring in extra people to help,” the CE team notes. “Once the capacitors are made, they still must be aged and tested. We age and test 100 capacitors at a time. The aging process is also time consuming because we bring the voltage up very slowly. Once the capacitors reach their aging voltage, we hold it there for an additional four hours! All totaled, a typical batch takes about two weeks to complete.”

CE Distribution recently made a series of videos explaining the all-important process (which can be viewed on YouTube). The company broke down the artful process in detail. Likewise, the SoZo capacitors ranked as some of CE Distribution’s most popular items of the year.

The team explains: “Vacuum tubes, speakers, SoZo capacitors and our MOD Kits are our most popular items. Players love to try new brands of tubes and change out their speakers and pickups to experiment and find a new sound. In addition, our



customers are great technicians and we truly enjoy helping them find the parts they need!”

Looking into the coming months, CE Distribution wants to expand their motto of “Service, Availability and Honesty” by adhering to the requests of customers, who they insist “know best” (and actually mean it). New MOD kits are also on the horizon, a particularly popular item across the MI spectrum of late.

“We will continue to listen closely to our customers; they know best and are our greatest resource for new ideas,” the team at CE emphasizes. “Of course, we have new, innovative MOD kits coming too. Many dealers and resellers carry MOD kits for resale, allowing the non-tech musician to make their own effects pedals and learn how to be a part of their signature tone.”

From their steadfast attention to customers and overall eagerness comes a refreshing outlook on the future of the MI market. Especially for a supplier, at the end of the day, music-makers need tools, and CE will be there to equip them, no matter how the trends shift.

“We love serving the MI market! We share our customer’s passion for music and appreciate the feedback and growth we have achieved while working with them,” they add. “The market is ever changing in the same way popular music changes. Regardless of how it changes, musicians will need tools to make their music and we will supply them with whatever they need to make this happen. We anticipate a strong 2019 for our company and the MI industry as a whole.” **MMA**

*CE Distribution is a wholesale-only company, serving music stores, repair shops, retailers and OEMs. Proper documentation is necessary, but users can start the registration process by going to [cedist.com](http://cedist.com) and clicking on “Request an Account” or calling them at (800) 840-0330 to speak to one of their sales representatives.*



# Wisconsin's Parrish Music Opens New Store

By Denyce Neilson



The Parrish Music storefront



The Harmony Shop's front window

Wisconsin's Parrish Music has opened a second location, The Harmony Shop, which features gifts, fair trade items, and home goods. Over the past year, their 2,250 square-foot space was becoming a bit cramped, with the addition of a new stage and a museum space currently featuring tamburica instruments from Croatia, Serbia, and Slovenia and traditional Indian stringed instruments. It was their ever-expanding gift department, however, that was taking up most of the space.

As owner Catherine Parrish explains, "The gift department grew so big. We wanted to give it a dedicated store to see what it can do. Our new Harmony Shop is mostly run by our daughter Jaali, who is also our partner in the new gift store. Her store, Jaali's Dollies, occupies one half and the Harmony Shop is the other half."

In 2007, husband and wife, Catherine and Ted Parrish opened Parrish Music, located on Main Street, in the small, four-block town of Viroqua, Wisconsin. Parrish is an all-acoustic shop, but that certainly doesn't mean that their inventory is limited. Parrish Music offers ukuleles, banjos, mandolins, violins, violas, cellos, basses, djembes, cajons, gongs, ethnic percussion, accessories, books, acoustic amplifi-

cation, dulcimers, ouds, bouzoukis, sitars, and much more. As Ted explains, "We both have a lifelong interest in unusual instruments. Catherine plays the dulcimer, guitar, fiddle, flute, and ukulele and uses other instruments like the hurdy-gurdy for inspiration. She studied North Indian flute with G.S. Satchdev and plays bansuri and has a harmonium and tamera." Ted is also a musician and plays guitar, mandolin, banjo, and ukulele. He says, "We both are world instrument explorers. It's very gratifying when folks come in and experience these instruments, often commenting that they had heard about them but had never seen them. Now they get to try them."

## So Long, Electrics...

When Catherine and Ted opened Parrish Music, they carried electric guitars, basses, amps, drums, and cymbals, but decided they could better use their limited space to sell the instruments they love and are most knowledgeable about. Catherine explains, "When we cleared out the electrics we were able to really expand the acoustics the way we wanted to. In fact, since we don't have a huge store, we specialize even more. We only carry smaller guitars – travel, parlor, and concert. Ukuleles are a major focus. Ted learned the ukulele 30 years ago,

long before you could even find one on the mainland. He played in a Hawaiian band in Chicago for 20 years and has since written a best-selling ukulele instruction book, *Ukulele for the Complete Ignoramus*. People appreciate our selection and knowledge."

### Going up the Country

Before the couple set up shop in Wisconsin, they lived in Chicago where Ted managed two retail stores for 15 years. In Chicago, both Ted and Catherine were working musicians and still are. Explaining the move to Wisconsin, Catherine says, "We chose to move to a small town for many reasons. We moved from Chicago to escape the pressures of the city. We have adopted a lifestyle that is based less on making lots of money and more on having a great, sustainable life. Our kids are both successful artists. Our goals are to continue to support our community just as the community supports us and enjoy living and playing with our friends and neighbors. We made the move to rural Wisconsin for a simpler life with the kids."

With a population of 5,000, Viroqua, Wisconsin really does offer a simpler life. Both Parrish Music and The Harmony Shop are situated in the middle of the town's four-block business district. It's a rural area, and on some days, you may spot Amish horse-drawn carriages riding up and down Main Street. Even with its simplicity, Catherine says, "There are all sorts of folks in Viroqua, and it has continued to change over time. Overall, it's a progressive town. In terms of their customers, Catherine says, "We plan our stock very carefully. Because this is not a wealthy area, we carry lines that are more affordable and attainable for our neighbors, but of the highest quality. Because of our varied clientele we keep our selection very interesting, somewhat eclectic. We are kind of remote, so there are no stores until you get to Lacrosse, about 40 miles away. There are several good stores up there with different specialties, and I'm glad to say that we all support each other and recommend each other."

### New Expansion

When Ted and Catherine created a gift section in the back of the Parrish Music store, they wanted to bring different types of goods to the community. They wanted to offer items that they would buy for themselves. "We wanted to sell gifts that we couldn't source in our little town," she explains. "When we travelled, we would always enjoy stores that had Buddha statues, incense, and candles. Since that type of store didn't exist in our town, we decided we would be it. Folks shopping in Viroqua appreciate having a different kind of store, and we have regular customers who enjoy our selection of reading glasses, incense, and fair-trade goods."

The Harmony Shop of course needs more time to be established and have a sales history to review, but since the opening in July of 2018 reactions have been positive. Catherine looks at the gift shop as more seasonal than the music store, so she was prepared for a busy holiday season. They haven't done any print advertising, but they do use social media to promote both stores. They also have an active Chamber of Commerce that promotes community events and supports downtown business. For example, Catherine says, "There is a wine walk in town, where we, along with most of the other storefronts on Main Street, sample wines and food during the evening. We get about 300 people through the door, have a lot of fun, and we definitely see them coming back. The Harmony Shop is right across the street from the weekly farmer's market, and we had a lot of those folks coming in and checking us out over the summer."

Having the new store has impacted the way they run the music store. They've had to balance and juggle teaching and work schedules to make it work. Ted teaches private and group classes on guitar, mandolin, banjo, and ukulele. Catherine teaches private lessons on guitar, ukulele, and vocal yoga. They also offer group lessons for beginning adult guitar, beginning kid's guitar, advanced guitar, old-time ensemble, and Celtic ensemble. As challenging as the balancing act has been, Ted and Catherine have been pleased with the change. "We were able to reconfigure the music store, and we regularly get comments on how beautiful both stores are," Catherine says. "We've had positive reactions on both ends. Folks love the retooled look of the music store and are happy to see expanded gift and household items at the new store."

### Community Engagement and the Meaning of 'Success'

The Parrishes have had a positive impact on the community in other ways too. This past summer, Wisconsin experienced historic flooding. Ted and Catherine donated goods from both stores to a fundraiser and played at the benefit concert. "We donate to a lot of benefits and support functions at our local school," Catherine says. "As for the local musicians, we of course stock what folks need and help promote shows and sell tickets when possible. We also maintain good relationships with local teachers, making sure we are supporting their programs and their students have what they need."

There are many definitions of success, and Ted and Catherine have their own. As Catherine puts it, "Those who are successful are very passionate and really into what they do. I think kids are very much into music and learning more when they have a support system in place. If you have great teachers and a strong music program, kids will get into that culture, whether it's in school, an after-school program, a music store, or at home."

As for their business model and successfully moving forward with Parrish Music and The Harmony Shop, Catherine says, "Like many small music stores, we have a three-legged stool of success: sales, rentals, and lessons, with repairs in there as well. We pay attention to and tweak all of those areas as we go along."

Last, but not least, Catherine and Ted continue to play music and perform together and have a new CD of original work coming out soon. Following his previous instruction books, one for ukulele and one for guitar, Ted is working on releasing his third. **MIMR**



# Crush Drums



The Sublime ST kit

Kicks It With *Style*  
By Demyce Neilson

Crush Drums and Percussion made a big splash when it was launched at the 2011 Winter NAMM show, where the company was awarded numerous accolades as a “Company to Watch.” This recognition, as it turned out, was a well-deserved prediction.

Back in 2005, professional drummer and Crush cofounder and CEO Terry Platt took a sales position at Florida-based ddrum, where he soon moved to the position of brand manager. However, Platt had his own ideas and designs. He wanted to put his energy toward his own endeavor. He explains, “I enjoyed my time at ddrum, but I really wanted something that was mine and that I could be proud of. The idea to start Crush was a result of seeing a space in the market for high-quality, affordable drums.” Platt was not alone in his aspirations, he says: “The other cofounders are longtime friends of mine and each of them bring their special expertise to the table – Rick Hughes as artists relations, Mike Swenson as head of marketing, Chad Huang as head of overseas production and quality control, and Gary Ingraffia as head of business development and growth.” Since Crush’s inauguration at NAMM, their collective motivation and ambition has resulted in a thriving business with continuous admiration for Crush’s line of drum kits, snare, hardware, and cajons.

Continuing with that success, in 2017, the company scored a big win – Terry Platt was thrilled to announce that Korg USA would now be the exclusive U.S. distributor of Crush Drums and Percussion products. He explains, “Korg has been essential to the survival and current growth of Crush. They are our distributor, but they are so much more than that for us. The wisdom of the management team there is extraordinary, and Jeff Shreiner, who is the inside drum specialist, has incredible ideas for product and overall market place opportunities. Couple that with a first-class marketing and sales staff and you get the best of all possible scenarios for a young company like Crush. They truly have been more than we could have ever imagined. Korg

continues to grow the brand and bring more recognition so we are thinking 2019 will be a great year for Crush and our dealer network.”

Currently, manufacturing is mostly done in Taiwan, and some of their more affordable offerings are manufactured in China. Platt explains the relationship: “The Taiwan facilities are world-class and have manufactured high-quality drums for much larger brands. As those brands moved their focus to China, we were able to build relationships with Taiwanese factories”

As for product design at Crush, Platt says, “Typically, I bring the initial ideas and concepts to the other partners, from there we rely on artists and the drummers playing the drums to tweak and fine tune things to arrive with what you see.” And there is a lot to see. There’s no doubting the visual allure of a Crush kit – transparent acrylics offered in clear or popping red finishes, or maple, birch, ash finished with bright luster, such as the Sublime AXM kit, which features a clear, satin finish of bold color while maintaining the beauty of the wood grain. There’s also the Sublime ST kit, available in blue, gold, or purple, all with a sparkle and shimmering finish.

So, what’s selling and who’s buying? Platt reports, “Sublime is our flagship, and we sell a lot of that series in each of its different iterations.

Chameleon Complete has also done very well for us. Crush has been cool because our customer base is vast. I’ve had the pleasure of interacting with seasoned players and players who are just starting out, discussing why they love Crush. Our kits offer affordability while not sacrificing the quality of the instruments, which has opened up the possibilities to drummers at any level.”

Crush recently launched its new Sublime Maple Stripe at the 2019 Winter NAMM and are currently working on some new series of kits, as well as hardware. Platt says, “I think it’s going to be a good year for us... The success of Crush is owed to the dealers and early adopters of the brand. We cannot tell you how much that support has meant to us.” **MM**



Terry Platt

# Trust: When Does Trust Actually Develop in a Business Relationship?

By Menzie Pittman

## Trust is Built One Step at a Time

**M**ost musicians would agree there is nothing more important to us than our hearing and, along those lines, I recently had my hearing checked. After all, I spent a great deal of my life sitting next to very loud sound sources and for prolonged periods of time. I also continue to be around high levels of sound exposure. Because I am a new resident in my town, I had to find a reputable professional: someone with whom I could trust my most important asset.

### Step 1: Search – If You Don't Rank, You Don't Exist

I did what everyone does when looking for professional help. First, I searched online. The doctor I chose had a strong 4.9 rating. However, I don't purely rely on these online reviews, and while I do believe the comments help clarify and tell the story, personally I dismiss the extreme comments and outlier ratings. When someone trashes a business, but others give five-star ratings, I usually let my second and third experiences (the website and the phone call) guide my trust.

### Step 2: Website Impact is Also Visual

The initial visual impact of a website doesn't drive great search results, but it certainly tells you a great deal about the creativity and style of a business. When someone is researching your business, good web visuals can be your harbinger of trust. Even a popular business can suffer from two missteps: having a lackluster website and having an employee who has poor phone skills when answering the phone. Either of these has the potential to increase the chance of losing a customer for a lifetime. However, I personally make my decision to trust a business based on Step Three!

### Step 3: A Helpful and Enjoyable Phone Demeanor Builds Customer Trust

Phone skills are an art form. If someone has a pleasant demeanor on the phone, trust-rating skyrockets. On the other hand, if someone is curt or inapproachable, that can be a deterrent for a potential customer. When a business employee answers the phone, he or she has no idea who is on the other end of the phone. One simple suggestion to safeguard phone decorum and to guarantee the potential for trust is to act as if the caller is your mom or dad checking in on you. Be respectable, affable, and compliant. The receptionist at the hearing specialist's office might as well have been a voiceover professional. She closed the deal, but when I reached Step Four, it was then that I knew I had met my match in the battle for winning trust.

### Step 4: A Pleasant Waiting Area Makes Customers Feel Welcome

The impact of a clean facility is paramount when attempting to earn a customer's trust. In my case, I walked into an immaculate waiting area and I was greeted by name. When the receptionist handed me the insurance forms to complete, they were pre-filled as much as possible, leaving me little to do but review. There was a table with chocolates, cookies, water, tea, and coffee. However, this business won the trust battle the moment the re-

ceptionist acknowledged she knew about my business. "It's nice to have a Dealer of the Year as a client." With that statement, I was sold. I believe the quote from the movie "Jerry McGuire" is, "You had me at hello."

### Step 5: Professionals That Know Their Craft Always Seal the Trust Deal

Trust is a two-way street in business. When I finally met the ear specialist and business owner, I was just as impressed with her as I was with her staff. She took her time to inquire about me. The funniest moment, though, came when she asked me to describe how I heard sounds in her room. I think what she meant was, "Do multiple sounds in a room bother you?" Nevertheless, I answered her literally and described the areas and walls in her office with slap-back problems and obnoxious sound reflections, explaining that drywall and hard surfaces are not your friend. To say the least, she knew her craft inside and out, and we shared a good laugh, which built her trust in me.

### Step 6: A Welcome Gift Bag When You Leave is a Good Thing

Courtesy builds trust and many businesses give gift bags to first-time customers. This audiologist filled her company's bag with chocolates in a coffee cup, informational pamphlets about hearing problems, pens inscribed with the business phone number, a refrigerator magnet with contact information, and another pamphlet advertising a product sold there.

### Step 7: An After-the-visit Follow-up Always Builds Trust

The day after my visit to this hearing specialist, I received a text from the practice inquiring if I had any additional questions or concerns. The text also included a link, so if I elected to give the practice a starred review, I had the opportunity. As you can imagine, I happily gave this office an honest five-star rating. This business had earned every star, and I wanted people to know I trust this business.

### Step 8: A Thank-you Card in the Mail Can Add to Trust, Too

Taking the time to write a thank you card to a first-time customer is a great close. Although the practice realizes I won't return for a year, the assumption is I will share my experience with and first impressions of the practice. Since I am in the listing business, of course, I will endorse and support this group based on the quality of service it delivered to me as a first-time client. With each step (the website, the phone call, the actual professional experience, the follow-up), I began to realize the vision and mission of this practice. The group cares for every patient with equal devotion. Their ultimate return is trust.

### In Closing

The answer to the initial question, "When does trust develop in a business relationship?" is simple. It develops as a reflection of everything you do in your organization. What you do every moment of every day is the mirror of your organization. Building trust is one step at a time, and it's "every step you take... every move you make." Kinda reminds you of a song by The Police. How fitting. After all, who doesn't trust Sting?! 



# How is Caring Measured?

By Jaimie Blackman

**W**hen my son was growing up in NYC he was obsessed with the New York Knicks and coach Pat Riley. Many say Riley is on the top-10 list of all-time best basketball coaches.

Perhaps the number one NBA coach of all time is coach Gregg Popovich, AKA “Coach Pop,” president and head coach of the San Antonio Spurs. What can MI retailers learn from Coach Pop? In one word: Caring.

Below I’m paraphrasing from *Culture Code* by Daniel Coyle who writes about coach Popovich’s ability to keep his players fully engaged by establishing trust through caring.

The first tip you’ll find about the character type coach Popovich looks for is when you look at the Spur’s scouting template. You’ll see a box, and next to the box, there are three words: “Not A Spur.” If this box is checked, no matter how technically brilliant the player is on the basketball court, this player will not be pursued, because a selfish character trait has been detected. The Spurs takes the phrase “team player” literally.

The second tip which separates Coach Pop from his peers is the engaging conversational style he uses. His conversations are longer and more personal. Coach Popovich maintains a high-trust, father/son type relationship with his players. It’s not unusual for Popovich to end a conversation with, “Love you brother.”

Gregg Popovich knows how to keep his players engaged and performing at peak level. This is important because a 2018 Gallup poll survey reported that only one-third of workers are fully engaged. A team of 30 employees only contains 10 motivated and fully engaged “A” players. That means 20 are mediocre.

The most common performance management style currently in use is over a century old. It was born during the time of the industrial revolution, when a compliance centric relationship was the rule which went something like this: Because I pay you, perform! The problem today is that workers, because of their experiences and expectations, want something more than taking orders. Employees are looking for purpose, opportunities, more frequent conversations, and a coach rather than a boss.

From an implementation perspective, it may sound too ephemeral, and void of structure to align your non-financial assets – 80 percent people and 20 percent technology – with your financial goals. After all, an owner hands his or her worker a weekly check, and expects results. The problem is, there is a person or a group of people behind every good or bad performance number. How do you better manage your human capital? Because human behavior is not a line item on your balance sheet, it’s invisible. The answer, of course, is to take your non-financial assets out of the dark and turn on the spotlight by using a measurement process, specifically designed for non-financial assets.

In my February column I offered three resources to help develop and measure your non-financial KPIs (Key Performance Indicators). Think of KPIs as your key value drivers.

Developing your non-financial KPIs can be done by asking one simple question: Is there a business question that’s so important, the answer ought to be measured?

Here are three examples with the corresponding free tools to begin measuring your non-financial assets, also called intangibles.

## Let’s say your question is: How well are we sharing our knowledge?

During my 2017 Winter NAMM talk, I showed a video interview of Alison and Eric Jay, the surviving children of Stan Jay, owner of Mandolin Brothers. Mandolin Brothers was located in Staten Island, New York, where I live. For decades, it was my go-to music store for my growing inventory. One day I visited the store and noticed there were no instruments to be found. I asked Allison what had happened. She said her dad died suddenly and their training was never completed: “We literally didn’t know how to continue the business without our Dad.” I asked what advice she would give other retailers. She said, “The owners should go on vacation more often to allow the managers to discover what they don’t know.” In this case, Stan Jay literally ran out of time to train his successors. If you visit CGMA.org, download the free white paper, “How to develop non-financial KPIs.” This short white paper offers a complete road map, with step by step instructions.

## What percentage of our customers are raving fans?

Zoho.com offers a free Customer Satisfaction survey tool which you can customize and place on your website. It offers one question: Please tell me on a scale of 0 to 10, how likely are you to recommend our music store to your friends?

0-6 are your DETRACTORS. These are your naysayers.

7 or 8 are PASSIVE. Not overly enthusiastic. Maybe they like the location.

9 or 10 are your PROMOTERS. These are your raving fans.

## What business issues keeps my key managers up at night?

I recently asked a key manager to use the *What are your pain points?* tool available on my website, [www.jaimieblackman.com](http://www.jaimieblackman.com). She told me her pain point was the long customer lines. It seems there were salespeople who would rather do unnecessary “busy” work rather than caring for the customer. Great feedback for the owner. Workers can become disengaged and act selfishly because they don’t feel cared for. Remember, your workers don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care. ☎️



*Jaimie Blackman – a former music educator & retailer– is a financial advisor and succession planner. Blackman helps music retailers accelerate business value now through team building, coaching & mentoring. Blackman is a frequent speaker at NAMM’s Idea Center and writes “The Sound of*

*Money,” a monthly column for MMR. Visit [jaimieblackman.com](http://jaimieblackman.com) to preview his value- creation tools and to subscribe to Unlocking the Wealth newsletter and webinars.*

## PIANO &amp; KEYBOARD

## Digital Pianos from Casio

The new Privia PX-S1000 and PX-S3000 digital pianos from Casio are re-imaginings of their popular Privia



line, featuring a completely new, modern design, as well as the best of Casio's digital piano technology.

The new PX-S1000 and PX-S3000 offer a sleek and slim chassis that is 42.7 percent smaller than previous models, and feature a new touch panel control surface is both easy to see and easy to use. An enhanced scaled hammer action keyboard replicates the touch of an acoustic grand piano with escapement and ebony and ivory textured keys. Casio's new proprietary Sound Source delivers authentic grand piano sound, including multiple types of resonance and mechanical sounds.

A free app allows complete control offers PDF score viewing. Other highlighted features include 192-note polyphony, integrated Bluetooth audio, optional 6xAA battery power, MIDI recorder, and more. The Privia PX-S1000's MSRP is \$899.99 and the PX-S3000's MSRP is \$1199.99.

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

## Dubreq's Stylophone GEN R-8

The Stylophone GEN R-8 is a dual VCO British made boutique synthesizer with a fully analog



signal path and a touch keyboard that you can play with your finger. The VCOs have "divide-down analog" sub-oscillators (one octave down) and subsub oscillators (two octaves down) that all can be switched on at the same time for a total of six oscillators sounding at once.

The filter is a proprietary British design 12 dB state variable filter with Low Pass, High Pass, Band Pass and Wide Notch modes. An eight waveform LFO with dual outputs can be patched to all of the GEN R-8s CV inputs or external CV inputs on other instruments. The traditional ADSR envelope has been augmented with a short hold stage at the Attack/Decay peak for a punchier sound. An analog style Delay (based on the Princeton pt2399 chip) is nice and grungy and can be modulated with the Time CV input. The GEN R-8 also works as a MIDI controller keyboard (with Local ON/OFF) where the CV/Gate outputs on the sequencer doubles as keyboard CV/Gate when the sequencer is not running.

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

## FRETTED

## Cigar Box Guitars from Lace Music

Lace Music's new Cigar Box Guitars feature their patented Matchbook Pickup, which offers a mean or clean tone. The Lace Cigar Box Guitar has a fresh sound, designed for ease of playability on both the three or four string boxes. The Matchbook is the first patented pickup designed specifically for the Cigar Box Guitar using Lace's Alunitone "Current Driven" design. The Matchbook is designed to resemble an actual Matchbook with the one magnet featured as the "striker." The bridge is a steel plate design offering 20mm of adjustability allowing for perfect intonation of each string. The Tuners are open gear type reminiscent of classic vintage instruments and sport a 14:1 gear ratio.



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

## Ibanez's ANB205 Adam Nitti Signature Electric Bass

The ANB205 Adam Nitti signature electric bass has a lightweight Swamp Ash body which produces sparkling highs and rich harmonics. The back side of the lower horn has an extra scoop, borrowed from the Ibanez SR's body shape, which enables easier access to higher fret positions without stress. The Maple neck and fretboard provide crisp, bright highs and strong upper midrange. Adam's favorite Hipshot A Style bridge has 18mm string spacing, slightly wider than the standard 16.5mm SR-5 string spacing. The extra space offers players plenty of freedom for techniques like slap, without compromising player comfort. The ANB205 comes with an optional Ash finger ramp, which allows for a more consistent attack with a quicker recovery time. Gig bag included.



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

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

**MMR**

MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

## DRUMS & PERCUSSION

### New Finishes for Pearl Congas and Bongos

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

## CASES & STANDS

### New Utility Cart from On-Stage

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

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### New Accessories from Music Nomad

Music Nomad's Premium Guitar Tech Screwdriver and Wrench Set offers unmatched versatility in one compact, rugged case that can fit in your pocket. Designed specifically for guitars, it comes with 18 screwdriver bits and 7 hex wrench sizes, plus a Premium Spanner Wrench. It is perfect for making adjustments on all your guitar hardware such as: tuners, jacks, pots, bridges, pickups, tailpieces, string guides, pickguards, tremolos and more. The large, ergonomic handle is made from strong ballistic nylon material that won't scratch or ding your hardware and is engineered for the most popular hex wrench sizes. It can even tighten nuts in sunken pots and recessed jacks such as tele-cups. \$39.99-\$44.99.



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

### ZOOM's New Pedals

Both the Zoom G1 FOUR and G1X FOUR feature over 70 effects/amp models, looper, drum machine and free ZOOM Guitar Lab software. The G1X FOUR takes things a step further with a built-in expression pedal that provides even more control over select effects. They can access a world of downloadable artist patches and effects through ZOOM's Guitar Lab. Players can also get that main stage sound anywhere with the G1 FOUR's classic amps and cabinets, and pair their playing with any of 68 rhythm patterns or loop their own lines to build a dynamic multi-part arrangement. The series is built for live performing with STOMP and PRESELECT modes that let users preemptively switch patches and turn effects on and off as needed. Equally great for desktop use, both pedals have a full control panel for precisely adjusting tones and level settings.



The Zoom G1 FOUR and G1X FOUR will be available for \$79.99 and \$99.99 respectively.

[www.zoom-na.com](http://www.zoom-na.com)

### Whirlwind's IMP 2 Direct Box

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By Dan Daley

# School Sports and MI Retail Marching Together to Help Each Other

It's March, and we've just finished up the last of football season, and the last roar and clang of the college marching bands are still swirling around the insanely huge university stadiums around the country. When I wear one of my other editorial hats, covering the broadcast audio of sports on radio and television, all of the audio mixers who have worked both NFL and NCAA games tell me that the marching band at the college games is what truly sets them apart. And as more high school athletes make the jump right into the major leagues for the NFL and NBA, the lines between academic and commercial sports get thinner and thinner. Thus, the marching band takes on even more significance.

What's less well-known is the synergy between college marching bands and local MI retailers. The University of West Florida football team, the Argos, seemed to have it all: the team, barely two years in existence, made it to the 2017 NCAA Division II Championship game. It even had a fight song, a legacy from the school's other sports teams. What they didn't have was a marching band to perform it across the gridirons during the college football season.

That's when a few local Pensacola MI retailers stepped up to help. Schmidt's Music is the area's band & orchestra-only store, and for nearly 40 years the main vendor for area schools' marching bands, as well as their main instrument-repair source and a locale for band clinics. "If it blows air, it comes here first," jokes store owner Dave Schmidt, whose store has nary a guitar or drum other than a marching snare. "We've been pushing for UWF to get a marching band for some time. It'd be good for the community and good for us. Anything we can do for them, we do."

As reported by the local newspaper, MI retailer Blues Angel Music also committed support, both in the form of evidentiary data to show what some of the ancillary costs, such as uniforms, might be; studies that show that marching bands can help schools with recruitment; and support from Blues Angel Music Foundation, the company's charitable arm,

which has in the past helped support area public schools with financial support and instruments.

## An Athletic Band

That support is helping propel the school's plans for a marching band forward. Two years ago, it established the UWF Athletic Band, an orchestra that serenades the school's teams from the grandstand, attired in polo shirts instead of military brocade. But, Dr. Sheila Dunn, the chair of UTF's music department, told *MMR* that this is an evolutionary step towards a proper marching band, which they expect to field in 2022. "We've had to navigate a lot of resources, but we started with 56 orchestra members in the first year so the passion for it is there," she says,

**“The symbiotic relationship between MI retail and education is well-documented, and how colleges and stores can help each other through their marching band programs is a great example of how that manifests itself.”**

noting that achievement despite the school's more-than-50-percent STEM-enrolled student body. "We're very grateful to the local music retailers for being here and being behind us."

Dr. Dunn says having several retailers in the area helps with bids for instruments, as costs have been one of the major hurdles that establishing a marching band has faced. But as it edges closer to achieving that goal, it also promises those shops that their support is well placed; the size of school marching bands are typically one percent of the overall student population, so UWF's 13,000 students means that the marching band, when it comes into full flower, will comprise some 130 members, each of whom needs and instrument or two, as well as accessories and maintenance services.

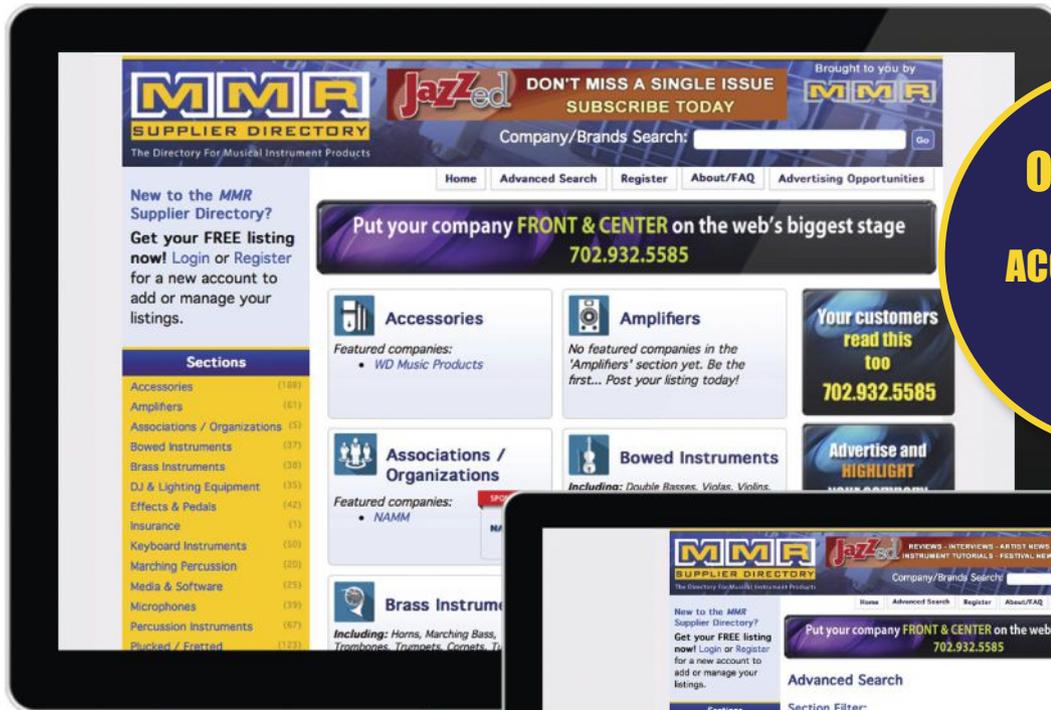
The symbiotic relationship between MI retail and education is well-documented, and how colleges and stores can help each other through their marching band programs is a great example of how that manifests itself. So use the month of March to keep those schools and their marching bands in mind. 

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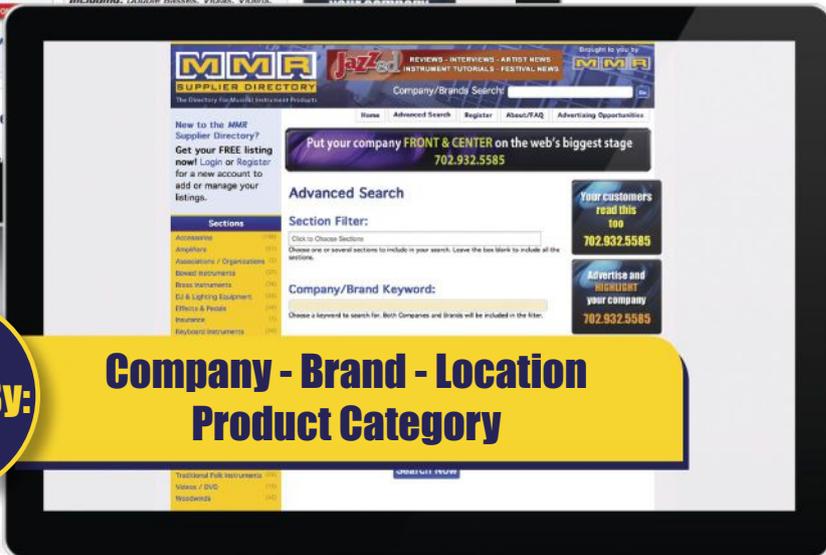
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