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MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

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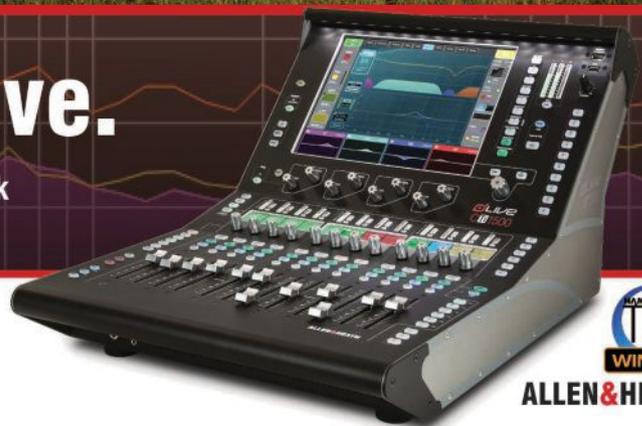
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MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

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In a relatively short time, Victory Musical Instruments (VMI) has made an outsized impact on the band & orchestra market. Founder Melvin Quinones walks us through the company's origins through to the present-day.

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Today's Top Hits Brought to You by Cyberdyne, or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love AI

By
Christian
Wissmuller

"Artificial Intelligence is not just a crescendo, it is a paradigm shift," began a recent *Forbes* article by contributor David Henkin. "AI possesses the potential to transform the music industry into a dynamic and technologically driven ecosystem, presenting both extraordinary opportunities as well as challenges."

Fair enough, and elegantly put, but a concern of mine – and one of many I've spoken with – pertains to that latter aspect: the "challenges."

Useful tools that allow listeners to better target music likely to resonate with their personal tastes seems like a net win, I suppose. For me, such methodology wouldn't replace the respected suggestions of a cool older neighbor or a thoughtfully curated mix tape or playlist from a friend, but I'll be the first to admit that, in many respects, I tend to skew "old school" in my tastes. Similarly, easy (or at least easier) access to sounds via AI-driven replication of traditional instruments and sound-generation tools unquestionably democratizes the music-making process, affording access to artists across a wider range of income levels. That's a *great* thing!

When we get to music *creation*, however... that's where things get a little murky for me. Popular culture has long accepted recordings that lean heavily into pitch-correction, quantizing, and all types of manipulation, enhancement, and "studio trickery" (although, again, some – like yours truly – can usually both spot such artifacts a mile away and generally prefer "warts and all" performances), so the question becomes: at what point, if any, does a phenomenon such as Artificial Intelligence cross the proverbial line into... what – cheating? Deception? Inauthenticity?

Last November, a brand-new track credited as "the final Beatles record" was released. When the most popular musical act of all time, which officially called it quits over half-century ago, announces "new" material, there's bound to be considerable interest and excitement. Was this a heretofore un-shared late '60s gem from the vaults? The result of a clandestine session between the Fab Four in the '70s prior to John Lennon's assassination in 1980? Nope. "Now and Then" was instead a mélange of a 45-year old cassette demo recording, present-day performances, a now-decades-old part played by guitarist George Harrison, and loads of AI-assisted "trickery."

Not surprisingly, when that latter detail came to light, there was push-back and protest. "We've seen some confusion and speculation about it," shared Paul McCartney in response to the outcry. "Seems to be a lot of guess work out there. Can't say too much at this stage but to be clear, nothing has been artificially or synthetically created. It's all real and we all play on it. We cleaned up some existing recordings – a process which has gone on for years. We hope you love it as much as we do."

The song made it to #1 in the UK and was instantly one of the most-streamed current tracks online.

I guess folks loved it.

But the song *was* written by an actual human, Lennon.

If we're ok with AI helping to "clean up" recordings and "help" with music creation, are we similarly sanguine about AI outright *composing* material – material that any "artist" can lay claim to and promote as their own?

Can most folks tell the difference? Does it matter?

If you're reading *MMR*, you probably already know that this isn't some "what if?" future scenario. If you *don't* know where we stand with the evolution of this technology, Google "AI generator music" and behold.

Who truly owns the music produced by AI algorithms – the programmer who developed the code, the company that deployed the technology, or the AI system itself? This ambiguity undermines the rights of human composers and musicians, whose livelihoods depend on the recognition and protection of their creative endeavors. Moreover, the commodification of AI-generated music commodifies creativity itself, devaluing the labor and artistry inherent in the musical process.

I didn't write the above paragraph; ChatGPT did.

Could you tell the difference? Does it matter?

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MMR

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NAMM Announces Eight New Board Members

The annual meeting of members convened on the first day of The NAMM Show, the largest global gathering of the music industry, and officially NAMM welcomed eight new board members to its Board of Directors.

Each director is elected to serve a three-year term through January 2027 and will provide oversight and support of NAMM's ambitious goals for the immediate future. NAMM's board of directors consists of 24 directors elected by the NAMM membership. These 24 NAMM members are elected in slates of eight, rotating on and off every January.

"NAMM is especially grateful to have such a talented collection of leaders and enthusiastic partners as we march forward for growth into many new areas of opportunity for our diverse membership," said John Mlynczak, NAMM president and CEO.



NAMM's President & CEO John Mlynczak (far left) and Tom Sumner, President of Yamaha Corporation of America and NAMM Chair (far right) welcome (from left to right) Mike Risko of Risko Music, David Angress of QSC Pro Audio, Nick Averwater of Amro Music Stores, Inc., Jamie Deering of Deering Banjo Company, Inc., Jerry Goldenson of K.H.S. America Co., Ltd., Steve Long of Long & McQuade, Ltd., Lillian Werbin of Elderly Instruments, Inc. (Not pictured: New Board Member Albert Chauvet of Chauvet & Sons)

A Snapshot of the New Board Members:

Angress, David – SVP and general manager of QSC Pro Audio

QSC Pro Audio is a designer and manufacturer of high-performance loudspeakers, digital mixers, power amplifiers, software and accessories, and based in Costa Mesa, California. David is a seasoned veteran of the music and pro audio products industry. QSC Pro Audio has been a NAMM Member since 1977.

Averwater, Nick – Vice president of Amro Music Stores, Inc.

Averwater is part of the fourth generation of the family working at the piano, band and orchestra store in Memphis, Tennessee. You can hear Averwater as podcast host of "After Hours: Conversations for Music Educators." Amro Music Stores has been a NAMM member since 1945.

Chauvet, Albert – CEO of Chauvet & Sons

An innovator, developer and manufacturer of lighting and control systems with locations in the U.S., Europe and Mexico. Albert and Berenice Chauvet were featured in *Live Design Magazine's* "50 Powerful People in Entertainment Technology." Chauvet & Sons has been a NAMM Member for 25 years.

Deering, Jamie – CEO of Deering Banjo Company, Inc.

A family-owned factory that has handcrafted instruments for 48 years and known as the Great American Banjo Company. Jamie has served on the NAMM Young Professionals Board and in 2016 the company was inducted to the American Banjo Museum Hall of Fame. Deering Banjo Company has been a NAMM member since 1978.

Goldenson, Jerry – President and CEO of K.H.S. America Co., Ltd.

A family of over 20 brands providing high-quality musical instruments and services to support musicians, educators, and retail partners. Goldenson has been honored with the Little Kids Rock Caring Neighbor Award, among other awards. Goldenson has been a NAMM Member for 20 years.

Long, Steve – President of Long & McQuade, Ltd.

Long is responsible for running the day-to-day operations at his family-owned business. Under his direction, Long & McQuade has expanded to over 103 stores and has also become the largest chain of musical instrument retailers in Canada. Long & McQuade has been a NAMM Member since 1984.

Risko, Mike – Co-owner of Mike Risko Music

Is a professional guitar player and author with a store that of-

fers music lessons, group classes, and camps, retail, rental and instrument repair. The music store also donates educational programs, live music and instruments, impacting hundreds of musicians in the local community. Mike Risko Music has been a NAMM Member since 2013.

Werbin, Lillian – CEO and president of Elderly Instruments, Inc.

The fretted and stringed musical instrument retailer in Lansing, Michigan is a roots and traditional music destination specializing in used and vintage instruments and accessories. Elderly Instruments was named Top Small Business of 2023 by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Elderly Instruments has been a NAMM Member since 1983.

Tom Sumner, NAMM chair, thanked the outgoing Board members during the annual meeting of members and lauded their ideas and expertise, which have benefited the organization and its members as whole. They are Abby Kaplan (Shure Incorporated), Chris Tso (Chauvet Lighting), David Via (LOUD Audio, LLC), Helen Culleton (DiGiCo UK Limited), John Hopkins (Sweetwater), Saul Friedgood (Eastman Music Company), Shawna Rood (Antonio Violins and Ukles), and Tim Spicer (Spicer's Music).

For a full list of current NAMM Board of Directors and Executive Committee members, visit www.namm.org/about/board-members

traderegrets

Radial Engineering has announced the passing of **Steve McKay**, a veteran industry professional who spent 20 years with the company. In his role as International Sales manager, McKay was pivotal in developing Radial's distribution network and helped establish the company as a major global brand.

"The outpouring of condolences from our distributors around the world is testament to how Steve always put relationships and integrity first," said Roc Bubel, director of sales and marketing for Radial. "Steve will be dearly missed, but never forgotten."





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AP-550



AP-S450

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upfront

people on the move

C. F. Martin & Co. has announced that **Robert Goetzl** has been elected to the company's board of directors. With an illustrious career spanning over four decades, Goetzl brings a wealth of artistic expertise and a deep-rooted connection to the Martin brand, having worked with the company on various guitar and museum-related projects since 2008.



"I'm pleased to announce the appointment of my cousin Robert to the Martin board," says executive chairman Chris Martin IV. "Yes, Robert is my cousin. Yes, it is often the case that family members serve on the boards of closely held family businesses. Robert and I grew up together. I eventually went off to college to study business and he went to art school. We reconnected over 15 years ago.

"Robert has been working on Martin Guitar art projects and our museum ever since. He brings a unique and passionate perspective that I know will help me and the rest of the board continue to help guide my family's business successfully into the future."

A distinguished freelance artist and illustrator for over 40 years, Goetzl has left an indelible mark on the world of art and illustration. Notably, his work as an award-winning children's book illustrator has garnered widespread acclaim, including the prestigious Teacher's Choice Award for the illustrated book, *Many Nations: An Alphabet of Native America* in 1997.

Give A Note Foundation, a national non-profit created to bring awareness to the importance of music and arts education through the music and arts educator, has announced the appointment of **Dendy Jarrett** as their new chief executive officer. Jarrett joins Give A Note from Gibson Brands, Inc., where he served the last eight years as executive director of Gibson's philanthropic arm, Gibson Gives, and their employee assistance non-profit, GoldTop Foundation, as well as creating a unique program he founded at Gibson Gives known as TEMPO (Training and Empowering Musicians to Prevent Overdose).



Music & Arts announces the appointment of **Laura Lawrence** to the position director of marketing, effective immediately. The announcement was made by Music & Arts president Jeff Gottlieb and

underscores the organization's emphasis on assembling a strong leadership team while pursuing ongoing growth. Lawrence will report directly to Gottlieb and work closely with the rest of the company's executive team as well as merchandising, retail operations and school services. In her new position, Lawrence will leverage her expertise in driving sales growth, customer engagement and brand visibility to develop and implement an overall marketing strategy. She will lead the marketing group to support branding, creative strategies and content creation, and she will work cross-departmentally to align Marketing's vision with merchandising and sales strategies and roadmaps.



ACT Entertainment has announced that **Miles Dudgeon** has come aboard as New York City Metro regional salesperson. Dudgeon brings extensive industry experience and knowledge of the eastern U.S. sales market to his new post. Dudgeon has a BFA in lighting design from Purchase College and is an ETCP-certified entertainment electrician. Recently, he served as a marketing consultant for Show and Design Group (SDG), an event lighting production



company and owner of the MA Lounge in Las Vegas. His rich background in the field is supported by sales and marketing roles at notable industry companies, including Altman, GLP German Light Products and Rosco Laboratories. He was also a lecturer at Syracuse University while on the electrics team at Syracuse Stage. In addition to regional theatre, his production experience includes clubs, concerts and events.

Experienced lighting and sales professional **Dean Faciana** has joined **ADJ USA's** internal sales team. His new role will involve supporting the company's dealer network in the Northern Central States, providing sales support, product demos and technical advice. With extensive experience in every facet of the lighting world, including as a touring LD and running a sales rep firm, Dean is uniquely placed to offer ADJ's dealers in his region expert technical sales support. Having also once owned a mid-sized event lighting company, Dean is uniquely qualified to relate to ADJ's dealer network and customer base. His sales resume is equally impressive, having worked as a manufacturer's rep for many A/V industry brands. He ran his own firm representing a competing lighting brand in the past and has most recently worked as an ADJ rep for the past two years.



Play Drums Honors Industry Leaders and Launches International Drum Month Giveaway at NAMM Open House

The Percussion Marketing Council (PMC)/PlayDrums.com Open House, celebrated the many positive impacts of PlayDrums.com programs. This year's event, open to all members and percussion industry professionals, formally announced that the organization will now be known as Play Drums. The new name aligns with the website, reflects the mission of promoting drumming to everyone, and clearly resonates with all.

This year, Play Drums honored Karl Dustman, former PMC executive director, who led the PMC for 19 years and also recognized Jim Peterscak, recently retired professor of percussion at SUNY Potsdam's Crane School of Music.

To officially launch International Drum Month, special guest and professional instructor and performer Jason Gianni drummed up excitement for the "Drum Lesson with a Pro" giveaway to be celebrated in May 2024.



Karl Dustman, Jennifer Paisley (Alfred Music); Antonio Ferranti (Proel North America/Tamburo Drums), Play Drums Executive Director Antoinette Follett, Stacey Montgomery-Clark (Sabian), David Cywinski (RBI Music), and David Stanoch (artist/educator representative). Not pictured: David Jewell (Yamaha, retired), Dendy Jarrett (Gibson Gives Foundation), and Shane Kinney (Drum Center of Portsmouth/retailer representative)

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The MI World Discovers

VICTORY MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Victory Musical Instruments (VMI) has made quite an impact on the B&O market in only a few short years. Since 2017, the company has drawn upon founder Melvin Quinones' decades of professional music experience and engineering background to field an impressive lineup of saxophones, trumpets, trombones, flutes, and many more band instruments.

MMR recently connected with Quinones to learn more about VMI's evolution, his own background, and what the future holds for the organization.

Can you talk a little about the genesis of Victory Musical Instruments – specifically, how did the concept of The Growling Sax evolve from an MI retail operation to a separate endeavor where you decided to create your own brand?

As a lifelong saxophonist and an engineer by profession, my journey with Victory Musical Instruments and the creation of The Growling Sax brand is deeply personal and rooted in my passion for music.

Back in 2008, I embarked on an ambitious project to create a social network for saxophonists. This platform connected players from over 100 countries and became a treasure trove of insights into the music industry. It provided me with access to big data, vital contacts, and significant collaborative opportunities with some of our sponsors. Unfortunately, due to health issues related to coronary heart disease, I had to shut down this network in 2017. This was a challenging time for me, but it set the stage for what was to come next.

As I regained my health and neared retirement from my engineering career, I contemplated entering the music retail space with an online saxophone shop, initially planning to name it TheGrowlingSax.com. However, reflecting on the insights gained from my social network and understanding the needs of thousands of saxophonists across various regions, I realized that I had the opportunity to do something more impactful. Leveraging my knowledge of instrument manufacturing processes and the diverse requirements of players, I decided to create a saxophone that wasn't just another instrument on the market. I wanted to develop a saxophone that stood out in terms of quality and affordability. This led to the birth of The Growling Sax brand – a symbol of excellence, accessibility, and my dedication to the craft of saxophone music.

This endeavor was more than just a business venture; it was a culmination of my experiences as a musician and an engineer, driven by a desire to contribute something truly valuable to the saxophone community. The Growling Sax is not just a brand; it's a testament to the power of resilience, innovation, and a deep-seated love for music.



Melvin Quinones of Victory Musical Instruments

by Christian **Wissmuller**

What about your own prior professional and personal background made you feel you were up to such a substantial undertaking?

My journey towards establishing The Growling Sax brand was undoubtedly ambitious, but several key aspects of my professional and personal background instilled in me the confidence to take on such a significant challenge. First and foremost, my unwavering faith has always been the cornerstone of my resolve and determination. It's this deep-seated belief system that has guided me through both triumphs and trials, providing a steady source of strength and inspiration. Additionally, my professional experiences have played a crucial role in building my confidence. Having worked with top-tier companies like Alienware, Microsoft, Dell, Hewlett Packard, and serving for 9 years in the U.S. Army, I've been exposed to environments of excel-

lence and high standards. These experiences, especially my time at Alienware during its acquisition by Dell, were instrumental in shaping my understanding of business, innovation, and success. Witnessing and being part of these companies' growth trajectories taught me valuable lessons in resilience, strategic planning, and the importance of a customer-centric approach. The story of Alienware's acquisition by Dell particularly resonated with me. It was a clear demonstration that with the right vision, dedication, and team, a company can achieve remarkable heights. This experience was a turning point, reinforcing my belief that I, too, could accomplish anything I set my mind to.

So, when I contemplated creating The Growling Sax, it wasn't just a leap of faith. It was a calculated decision backed by years of diverse experiences and the confidence that I could bring something unique and valuable to the world of saxophones. My background provided me with a solid foundation, not just in technical and business acumen, but also in the belief that with hard work, determination, and faith, one can turn visions into reality.

What were some of the first Victory Musical Instruments models that were released? Which models/instruments do you credit with putting the VMI brand "on the map"?

The initial breakthrough for my company came with the development of The Growling Sax instruments. The very first model we released was the H-1110, a name inspired by the biblical verse

Hosea 11:10, symbolizing the “roar of the Lion” – indicative of a big and powerful sound. However, we later renamed it to the Origin Series saxophone. This model was particularly special because it embodied our commitment to quality, innovation, and a sound that was both unique and commanding. It set a high standard for what musicians could expect from our brand and paved the way for future developments.

After the success of the Origin Series saxophone, I received encouragement from many musician friends to expand into brass instruments. Taking their advice and working closely with them, I ventured into developing a professional trumpet under the Victory Musical Instruments brand. This led to the creation of the Revelation Series trumpet, a model that quickly gained popularity among trumpeters, especially in South Florida, where the company originated. Its growing reputation soon spread, leading to an expanded presence in Latin America.

The Revelation Series trumpet was more than just an instrument; it was a testament to our dedication to quality and the specific needs of musicians. Its popularity among trumpeters was a significant milestone for Victory Musical Instruments, helping to establish the brand as a serious contender in the world of musical instruments. This expansion into brass instruments marked a crucial phase in the company's growth, demonstrating our ability to innovate across different categories of musical instruments and solidifying the VMI brand's position “on the map” in the music industry. These early models, the Origin Series saxophone and the Revelation Series trumpet, were instrumental in defining the Victory Musical Instruments brand. They showcased our commitment to excellence and our capacity to understand and meet the needs of musicians, qualities that continue to drive the brand today.

VMI has the distinction of being embraced by a number of significant, high-profile artists: Can you talk about the nature of such artist-endorser relationships? How important are such relationships in terms of elevating brand recognition?

At Victory Musical Instruments (VMI), our artist-endorser relationships are vital to our brand recognition and growth. My background as a professional saxophonist for 38 years and the creation of a saxophonists' social network provided me with an extensive network of musicians. This meant that even before VMI's products were fully developed, we already

had potential customers and endorsers.

While we receive a significant number of endorsement applications, many of our artist relationships are formed through personal contacts and referrals from other musicians. These connections are essential in building genuine and mutually beneficial relationships with artists. The impact of these endorsements on brand recognition is profound. High-profile artists playing and recommending our instruments serve as powerful endorsements, enhancing our market visibility and credibility. However, the cornerstone of these relationships is the quality of our instruments. It's their craftsmanship, sound, and playability that attract and retain these top artists, solidifying VMI's reputation as a top-tier provider in the musical instrument industry.

When you look back on the evolution of the company and the brand, what significant product introductions, developments, partnerships, etc. stand out as being particularly meaningful in VMI's growth?

Reflecting on the evolution of Victory Musical Instruments, several key moments and partnerships stand out as particularly meaningful in the company's growth.

From the beginning, the support of early adopters and endorsing artists has been invaluable. Individuals like Fofi Gomez, Evan Taylor, Roilan Vazquez, Nelson Garcia, Nick Cedillo, Osvaldo Fleites, and Candido Abeyta have been instrumental in our journey. Their belief in our products and their continued support have played a significant role in shaping the brand.

A pivotal endorsement that contributed significantly to our scaling up was from the virtuoso trumpeter, Gerardo Rodriguez. His endorsement not only brought immense credibility to our brand but also

solidified our presence in the professional music scene. I am proud to count him as both an artist and a friend. However, one of the most impactful endorsements came from Reverend Rudy Rodriguez. Though he might have been less known in the American market, he was the most recorded Christian music saxophonist in Latin America. His joining our artist roster in our first year of business had a profound influence. Hundreds of his followers purchased saxophones influenced by his endorsement. Sadly, COVID-19 took Rudy from us, but his legacy and memory remain a significant and cherished part of Victory Musical Instruments. In more recent times, endorsements from

“My background provided me with a solid foundation, not just in technical and business acumen, but also in the belief that with hard work, determination, and faith, one can turn visions into reality.”



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VMI's Tam Trutwin (Educational Consultant), Mateo Restrepo (Warehouse Supervisor), and Melvin Quinones

renowned musicians like Dr. Ed Calle have further elevated our brand. These partnerships with exceptional musicians not only validate the quality of our instruments but also broaden our reach and impact in the music community.

Each of these partnerships, endorsements, and contributions has been a cornerstone in the growth of Victory Musical Instruments, helping us to build a brand that is synonymous with quality, trust, and excellence in the music industry.

Present-day, how many employees are there at Victory Musical Instruments?

Presently, Victory Musical Instruments has a dedicated team comprising 10 employees, spread across various parts of the world. We have seven employees based in the United States and South America, and an additional three team members located in Asia. This diverse and talented group plays a crucial role in maintaining the quality, innovation, and customer service that our brand is known for, contributing significantly to our global presence in the musical instrument industry.

Where is the HQ and other facilities and how large are they?

Victory Musical Instruments is headquartered in Port Saint Lucie, Florida, where we have our main office and warehouse. This facility encompasses just under 2,000 square feet, efficiently divided between office space and warehouse area to handle our operations. Additionally, we maintain a small warehouse in Tianjin, which serves as a strategic storage location for merchandise destined for direct export to our dealers in South America. This setup allows us to effectively manage our supply chain and distribution, supporting our business both domestically and internationally.

Any current or upcoming models or instruments that you'd like to draw MMR readers' attention to? Upcoming or recent "news" of note?

Firstly, we have been focusing extensively on our educational program and high-quality band instruments over the past two years. Our Triumph Series is a testament to this effort. These instruments are specifically designed with students in mind. They are built to be durable, priced accessibly, and, importantly, do not compromise on sound and intonation. The series includes a range of instruments such as clarinets, oboes, flutes, French horns, trumpets, trombones, and several low-brass instruments. This makes the Triumph Series an ideal choice for budding musicians and educational institutions looking for reliable and high-quality instruments.

Additionally, we are in the process of developing an Advantage or VIP program. This program is aimed at offering incentives and additional benefits to band programs that use Victory instruments. The goal is to

provide more value and support to educational institutions and students, ensuring they have the best possible experience with our instruments. This initiative reflects our commitment to supporting music education and fostering the next generation of musicians. Keep an eye out for more details on this program, as we believe it will be a significant addition to our offerings and a great opportunity for music educators and students alike.

How would interested MI retailers best go about partnering with VMI?

For MI retailers interested in exploring partnership opportunities with Victory Musical Instruments, we are enthusiastic about collaborating with both small and large retailers globally. The best approach to initiate this partnership is to get in touch with us directly. Retailers can contact our main office in Port Saint Lucie, Florida, by calling (772) 888-1869 or sending an email to sales@victorymusical.com.

Our team is dedicated to building strong and mutually beneficial relationships with our retail partners. We offer comprehensive support, ranging from detailed product information to marketing assistance, ensuring that our partners are well-equipped to successfully showcase and sell our products. Whether you are a small boutique store or a large retail chain, we are committed to providing the necessary support and building a strong, lasting partnership. We value the opportunity to expand our presence and make our high-quality instruments accessible to more musicians through these partnerships. Our goal is to work closely with retailers to meet their specific needs and contribute to their success in the competitive MI market.

Expectations, for both Victory Musical Instruments and the B&O market, overall, in the coming months?

In the coming months, Victory Musical Instruments is excited about the prospect of expanding our educational initiatives. A significant part of this expansion involves strengthening our partnerships with band directors and dealers to enhance our educational reach. We are incredibly proud that hundreds of schools across Latin America have trusted our instruments, and we are committed to helping more students achieve musical excellence. We are also actively sponsoring important organizations in the music education sector, such as the National Association of School Music Dealers (NASMD) and the Florida Music Educators Association (FMEA). These sponsorships reflect our dedication to supporting institutions that promote music education. Moving forward, we are looking to sponsor more such institutions, furthering our commitment to fostering music education at all levels.

In terms of the broader band & orchestra (B&O) market, we remain optimistic about its continued growth and innovation. The resilience and adaptability shown by this market, particularly in recent times, are encouraging. Victory Musical Instruments aspires to be at the forefront of this evolving market, offering high-quality, accessible instruments that align with the needs of educators and students alike.



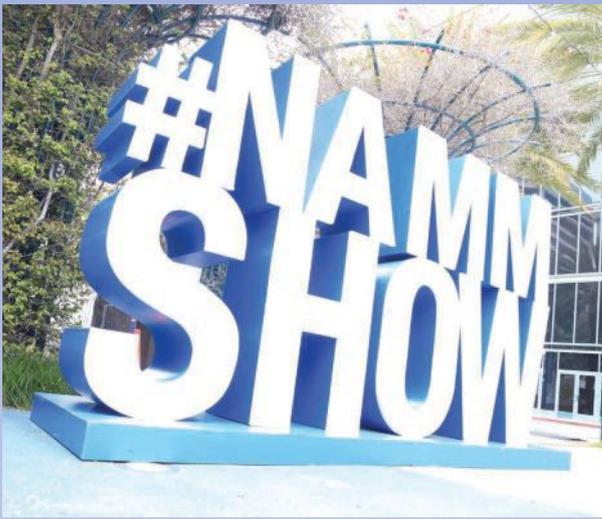
Crown Series Grenadilla Wood Clarinet with gold-plated keys



Crown Series Jazz trombone with detachable bell and F attachment



Special Edition Trumpet of Jesus



2024 NAMM Show

'We're on the Right Path' by Christian Wissmuller

"I felt like this Show, more than probably any Show I've ever attended, set the tone for the industry," says NAMM president and CEO John Mlynczak of the recent NAMM Show held from January 25-28 in Anaheim, California. "Coming out of four years of disruption, if there was ever a year where NAMM had to set a tone it was this one," he continues. "We stayed laser-focused on bringing together the right mix of companies, buyers, international attendees, influencers, media, and artists from across our global industry to empower the relationships that have built and will continue to grow our industry."

This year's gathering saw over 62,000 attendees (up from 46,711 in 2023) and over 1,600 exhibitors (compared to last year's 1,200-plus), with a robust

international presence and increased participation and attendance from the realm of music education. Aside from the metrics, there was a palpable enthusiasm for the return to the NAMM Show's "traditional" calendar-dates of mid/late January (see "Voices from the Show Floor" below). The NAMM Show showcased innovative technologies, products, and trends that shape the future of the music industry while creating a week-long platform for personal connections and meetings that are a necessity for the growth of the music industry.

As Mlynczak says, by way of summarizing the 2024 event: "This Show showed us that we're on the right path – and now we're going to run faster down that path."

The NAMM Show returns to the Anaheim Convention Center January 21-25 (events) and January 23-25 (exhibits) NAMM NeXT, a summer education and networking conference catered specifically to the music industry and featuring expert presenters leading discussions on marketing, thought leadership, customer experience and entrepreneurship, takes place July 17-18, 2024 in Nashville, Tennessee. NAMM NeXT registration opens March 1.

Voices from the Show Floor

"The really diverse subjects in the panels and level of speakers that NAMM curated for the conference were fantastic this year. You can see how NAMM is branching out to create a valuable 'wow' event for every level and type of attendee. I thought the sessions that focused on bigger issues impacting the industry had massive attendance, and that is maybe not a surprise given that the industry is continuing to change at all levels.

"Attendance definitely seemed to be up, and there certainly was more of a buzz and energy. For Martin Guitars, it was a very successful show. The opportunity to network and meet in-person with a range of important stakeholders that really matter to us was fantastic. I personally set out to meet a few leaders I had never met before and was able to do so without having to fly to different places. Where else can you meet Chris Martin, Bob Taylor, Lloyd Baggs, Larry Fishman, and Paul Reed Smith in the same afternoon? If you are not at NAMM, you are missing out!"

"There is certainly an opportunity to grow NAMM to bigger than it has ever been, but making it happen depends a lot on how the show will further evolve. There needs to be an even stronger pull for diverse and important audiences and industry participants – consumers, artists, influencers, educational institutions, retailers, distributors, manufacturers, suppliers, technology companies, media, members, and non-members need to be enticed to attend NAMM in person. I am certain that with a broader and clearer audience focus, and by continuing to improve the value proposition, NAMM could definitely be able to grow beyond pre-pandemic levels. The need to further evolve probably holds true for a lot of other conventions as well, and I think it will take a bit of time."

– **Thomas Ripsam, President & CEO, C.F. Martin & Co.**

"With respect to the NAMM show, while I truly believe it will never return to its pre-pandemic magnitude, the attendance and energy was a marked improvement over the previous two years. It definitely exceeded our expectations as we had a healthy amount of meetings with customers, whether they be U.S. retailers, OEM, private label and international distributors. So much so that we are contemplating a slightly bigger presence next year."

– **John D'Addario III, CEO, D'Addario & Company, Inc.**

"This year's NAMM gathering marked a notable shift from recent post-COVID events, and the change was overwhelmingly positive. Despite a smaller footprint, we strategically honed in on the Latin music segment of our market, allowing us to spotlight our strengths as a supplier with a unique position. Our deliberate focus fostered deeper engagement with dealers, press, and musicians, making our interactions incredibly meaningful. By concentrating our efforts, we were able to cultivate more impactful connections and showcase our offerings with greater clarity and resonance. This year's NAMM gathering exemplified the power of a tight focus and emphasized the quality of engagement over sheer quantity, setting a new standard for our participation in industry events.

"Looking back on this year's NAMM show, a few things stand out as being particularly impactful. On the positive side, having more opportunities to connect with press – both local and national publications – was really helpful. Being able to share our brand's story more widely is so valuable. At the same time, this is an area where we can continue to evolve as an industry. There's room to get better at presenting the 'why' behind our products in compelling ways, instead of just rattling off specs.

"What musicians and music lovers really want to hear are the inspiring stories of why we create the tools we do. If we can convey more of that creative passion, it will lead to much more interesting coverage from big media outlets. It's about showing them great narratives that will resonate with their audiences. That's an important lesson we can take forward – focus on the heart behind the hardware. Of course no show is perfect, and there are always aspects that could go smoother. But overall, I'm excited by the connections made at this year's NAMM. It's given us a lot of momentum for the rest of 2024 and beyond. By continuing to improve how we tell our story, I believe the future is bright.

"As we look back on events like the NAMM Show in the aftermath of the pandemic, it's important that we rethink how we measure their success. It's only natural to wonder if attendance will bounce back to what it was before COVID. But for us, it was never just about the numbers.

"The NAMM Show has always been valuable because of the meaningful connections we make there – with dealers, artists,

customers, and press. It's about forging relationships and having an impact during our time together. More than how many people show up, what matters is the quality of those interactions. Moving forward, our focus stays the same. We want to maximize the meaningful moments from the Show, even if overall attendance is down. Because at the end of the day, it's the authenticity and depth of our engagements that gives these events their value in our industry. The landscape may be changing, but the essence of NAMM endures. As long as we keep making real connections, the Show will adapt and carry on, whatever the numbers may be. The relationships are what count most to us."

– **Kevin Philbin, Director of Sales and Marketing, KHS America**

"This year's NAMM was totally different than the last. The attendance of both exhibitors and attendees was higher, and the hope of the last show was replaced by enthusiasm. It was great. It was a great show for us but mostly as a barometer of how well our new product, the HiFi Duet, will do. But can NAMM please reinstate the noise police or move all electric guitars out of the acoustic area? Even this was one of the loudest shows ever."

– **Lloyd Baggs, President, LR Baggs**

"NAMM's return to January was a plus. The reason the winter NAMM show worked so well in the past is that it was held right after the Christmas selling season in a location with pleasant weather. NAMM did an excellent job of offering plenty of opportunities for members to learn more about the music industry and how to be a more successful retailer. Fans of music and music-making also had a great time along with our traditional retail and commercial members.

Let's not worry about comparing post-COVID NAMM to pre-COVID NAMM. Those of us who attended had a great show. And those that didn't – didn't."

– **Chris Martin, Executive Chairman, C.F. Martin & Co.**

"NS2024 felt decidedly different than the 2022 or 2023 shows. It felt like NAMM was back. The exhibit halls felt fuller, and there were more attendees. For Yamaha, we saw visitors to our booth increase by over 60%. We had an extra day this year, but that's still strong growth.

"For Yamaha, the Prince piano we displayed in the lobby of our display generated a lot of interest around the show and a lot of love at the show and from folks who couldn't attend the show – that was really successful. I also thought the Grand Rally for Music Education on Saturday morning was a great event that focused on a topic – music education – that's near and dear to a lot of us. Victor Wooten's segment was really moving and thought-inspiring.

"We've seen some shows come all the way back – Midwest Band and a lot of state MEAs. The really big shows like CES and NAMM haven't gotten back to the pre-pandemic attendance levels yet, but seem to be viable at their most recent show attendance. I see the NAMM Show growing in attendance over the next couple of years after the success of NS24. I don't know that it needs to get back to the NS20 level of attendance. The show can probably provide more value to attendees with slightly lower attendance than in 2020."

– **Tom Sumner, President of Yamaha Corporation of America and NAMM Chairman**

"I don't think I'd find many folks who would disagree with the assessment that this NAMM was definitely back on the right track. Booth attendance was insane for the first few days and the energy and vibe was up. The combination of being back in the usual January slot and having travel mostly back to normal was just what the doctor ordered. Oh, and speaking of doctors... luckily we came out unscathed as far as staff picking up COVID this time around! All clear. Great show all around in my view.

"I presented two TEC Tracks and both were amazingly well attended. The NAMM education team did a great job. The Allen & Heath Live Sound Console Training had well over 100 pre-registrants for many sessions and all slots were packed. Other than the cost from Freeman to order all of the extra chairs we needed for overflow, it was amazing. The AM&S demo areas for BASSBOSS and AeroWave were similarly

well-attended. Sorry we broke the ceiling tiles in the BASSBOSS 'DEM-Olition' event with all of the bass vibrations. Put that on my tab. Lastly, I didn't do a scientific study, but I think the AM&S and Allen & Heath booths would have been in the running for most visited at the show – traffic was totally insane. I guess the short version is that what really worked at the show for us was the sheer number of folks who made the trek out to Anaheim and brought such wonderful energy.

"I think that we will start to see a reshuffling of the 'top dogs' at these shows since a few of our industry top-10 brands have decided to invest in other areas and skip mega-show efforts like NAMM. I'm totally fine with taking up the slack."

– **Jeff Hawley, Marketing Director, Allen & Heath USA**

"The 2024 NAMM Show was truly special. It was reminiscent of the high-energy gatherings that the industry was accustomed to prior to the 2021-2023 COVID Era shows; but it was also a very important step forward into an all-new NAMM Show era that involves artists and creators, manufacturers, and retailers. All of us who attended and exhibited got the confirmation of what we suspected; that the industry is alive, vibrant, and thriving. All the excuses for the COVID Era shows are now gone. All international COVID restrictions are lifted, the show returned to its familiar timeslot; but this show was anything but a re-run. So, we all got a chance, without excuses of any kind, to take the temperature of our industry and we're happy to report that it's red hot.

"The 2024 NAMM Show was successful from a 360-degree point of view. And it seemed to have the perfect blend of artists and creators, manufacturers, and retailers – and with valuable opportunities for all these groups to showcase and test their brands. The breakout sessions were of high value for today's music brands and professionals, the exhibitor halls were packed with many established and even more emerging brands who will be the leading brands of the next generation of music making. I spoke with hundreds of colleagues from every walk of the music industry, and unanimously everyone was glowing from the energy of this NAMM Show. Bravo to the NAMM Executives and Board for a truly successful show.

"Yes, I do [expect attendee and exhibitor numbers to return to pre-pandemic levels]. But even more important than just attendee-numbers are attendee-opportunities. Whether an attendee is an artist, a creator, an influencer, a manufacturer, or a retailer – we all come to the NAMM Show hoping to expand the possibilities of what our involvement in the music industry can be, and what our brand can achieve. Whether you are an established brand or an emerging brand, we all want to expand our reach, our influence, and our relationship with the industry. The all-new NAMM Show offers every opportunity to provide expansive value to you and your brand – particularly if you show up, stay engaged, and get involved.

– **Antonio Ferranti, President, Proel North America**

"Hal Leonard was excited to be at a January NAMM again, and we're happy to say the show exceeded our expectations. We had a lot of really good booth traffic that resulted in important and positive meetings that bode well for business in 2024!"

– **David Jahnke, Senior Vice President, North America, Hal Leonard**

"The first metric that sets the comparison stage, is attendance. I looked it up and here are the actual numbers I found. Attendance for 2023 was identical to 2022, with this year 46,711 people attending, up marginally on last year's total of 46,627. So attendance has stabilized somewhat, though this year they allowed individual memberships, which is a new policy for NAMM. I don't know if the NAMM Show will ever return to the days of 100,000 plus attendees. If inflation eases, maybe it will, but there are a lot of changes in the industry as a whole, so time will tell.

"As far as the energy of the show, what I noticed was a very positive feeling that folks were done with the old comparisons, and ready to embrace some fresh inspired thinking. Music education was a hotter topic and received more attention than it has at past shows. NAMM

announced the retirement of Mary Luehrsen with the Grand Rally for Music Education on Saturday morning, so again big changes in NAMM's leadership. Mary was an extraordinary leader and did an outstanding job with fighting for the right to have music education protected in schools. But with all the changes NAMM is undergoing, there may be a revitalized focused energy developing around music education going forward; I see that as a good thing!

"NAMM's new president John Mlynczak was excellent in his leadership role at this year's show. His energy was strong and focused. There is a new sheriff in town, and with all the shifts and gyrations around NAMM's redefining itself, Mlynczak is most definitely up for the task. It's important for the industry to remember, Mlynczak is a top-shelf musician.

"If it weren't for inflation, I believe we would have had a more vibrant recovery. Coming out of the pandemic we were frail at best, so to be hit with the second whammy of inflation, simply took its toll on trust and enthusiasm in the market place. At first, everyone embraced the idea that zoom meetings would offer us the same quality as being together in person, but that proved to be erroneous. In my opinion the two different experiences "live vs on-line" are not comparable, and the market place is slowly realizing they have been sold a kettle of fish.

"I think over time that corrects to a more normal balance. However, retail might be a different matter. It's expensive for the big boys to showcase at NAMM, and many big named manufacturers have not returned to NAMM. So it's a 'who goes first' moment for the industry. What I did notice was that smart, innovative, new manufactures were at the NAMM show in droves, and I see that as a good sign, but it's

everybody's job to revitalize our industry. I was glad to see NAMM announce they would hold a summer event in Nashville. It's a different format than Anaheim, but our industry should always have a major presence in Nashville, I have always believed that. They call it Music City for a reason!"

– Menzie Pittman, Owner/Director of Education, Contemporary Music Center

"We felt the show had more energy and provided that much-needed 'NAMM Vibe' as we kick off 2024. It remains a great vehicle to launch new products into the market.

Overall, we were pleased with the results of the show, despite a lower dealer turnout.

"Our primary concern is the number of dealers attending, as that is what primarily drives our decision to display. Having the traditional January dates back on the calendar should help the entire industry to reconnect with NAMM and allow NAMM to re-energize their marketing initiatives to drive both manufacturer and dealer attendance.

"We certainly hope [numbers return to pre-pandemic levels]! We pay a lot of attention to other trade groups and the news on their respective trade shows, looking for any trends and information we can glean. It is fair to say there are other industries with the same business model as musical instruments that are growing and hitting record numbers at trade shows. We rely on the leadership at NAMM to drive the innovation forward, promoting this show as an essential part of the MI landscape. We welcome the opportunity to engage with them towards that end."

– Patrick Schuleit, President, Armadillo Enterprises

2023

MMR
MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW
DEALERS CHOICE
AWARD

Winner

MMR presented 2023 Dealers' Choice Award trophies to the winners* at the 2024 NAMM Show in Anaheim this January.



The **Alfred Music** team is presented with the 2023 "Print Music Publisher of the Year" Dealers' Choice Award trophy by **MMR** publisher Mike Lawson.



Allen & Heath's Jeff Hawley and Markus Sinses collecting two Dealers' Choice Award (DCA) trophies – "Product of the Year" and "Sound Reinforcement Line of the Year" – from Mike Lawson of **MMR**



SBO+ editor Tom Palmatier presents Gary Boss of **Audio-Technica U.S., Inc.** with the DCA hardware for Microphone Line of the Year



Buffet Crampon's Francois Kloc, Jérôme Perrod, and AI Maniscalco with the trophy for "Band & Orchestra Line of the Year."



MMR publisher Mike Lawson presents the trophy for "Home Digital Keyboard of the Year" to **Casio's** Shigenori Itoh, Mike Martin, and Stephen Schmidt.



Mike Lawson, publisher of **MMR**, with **Drum Workshop's (DW)** Chris Lombardi (holding the DCA trophy for "Percussion Line of the Year") and Andrew Meskin



MMR's Mike Lawson presents the DCA hardware for "Recording Equipment Line of the Year" to **Focusrite's** Laura Camacho



Kala founder and owner Mike Upton, holding the trophy for "Ukulele of the Year" (Kala's "The Revelator"), and **MMR's** Matt King.



Cory Callies and Kentaro Kawai receive **Kawai America's** 2023 Dealers' Choice Award trophy for "Acoustic Piano Line of the Year" from **MMR's** Mike Lawson.



C.F. Martin & Co. president & CEO Thomas Ripsam and executive chairman Christian Frederick Martin IV receive the trophy for "Acoustic Guitar of the Year."



Magnus Kjellander and Bjorn Leander of **Nord** with **MMR's** Mike Lawson



The **On-Stage** team with the 2023 **MMR** Dealers' Choice Award for "Accessory Line of the Year."

* DCA hardware was presented in January to winning companies with a presence at the 2024 NAMM Show.

NAMMshowreport



Kristi Jacobsen and Vicki Meador of **Alfred Music**



Jackie Schear and Autumn Lembert of **Amati's/Amahi Ukuleles**



Trace Rorie, Mike Smith and Steve Rorie of **J.J. Babbitt**



Ron Van Ostenbridge and Gary Spears of **Bari Woodwinds**



Tom Palmatier of **SBO+** and **Roland** VP Jay Wanamaker. The two were classmates at the Crane School of Music



Chris & Ashlee Mitchell of **ClerkHound**



Bob O'Brien and Austin Pearson of **Drillmasters**



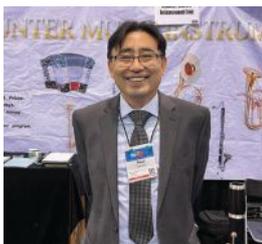
Jeff Klopmeier of **ESP**



Jon Doyle and Steve Crisafulli of **Gatchell Violins**



Michelle Lorge of **KIT Plugins** and Tom Palmatier of **SBO+**



Paul Chu of **Hunter Musical Instruments**



Rachel Woods, Mark Kondrat and Dan Boatman of **IK Multimedia**



The Yamaha Grand Plaza Stage kept the excitement going well into the night during the NAMM Show



Brianna Totino and Morgan Walker of **Korg**



Pearl River's Leng Shua and musician, songwriter, (and **MMR** publisher) Mike Lawson with the newly introduced Mike Lawson Signature Acoustic from Pearl River Guitars.



Chris Kortschot and Sean King of **Légère Reeds**



Rand Rognlien and Lauren Padilla of **MusicNomad**



Frank Simpson of **Frank Simpson of Neotech**



George & Lynn Reeder of **Rovner MC**



Pete LaPlaca (left) and David Benedetto (right) of **F.E. Olds and Son**



Nadim Nahas, Bill Peterson, Robin Eig, Brett Marcus, Tom Golbuff, Ben Myron, Mark Blasko, Jason How, and Jack Dunwoody of **OMG Music**



Anthony Perri of **Perri's Leathers**



Leslie Buttonow and Jonathan Reed of **Positive Grid**



Tyler Harris, Danielle Walker, Jody Espina, Greg Balut, Colin Schofield of **JodyJazz**



Leire Agirreazkenaga and David Neptune of **Takeda Drum**



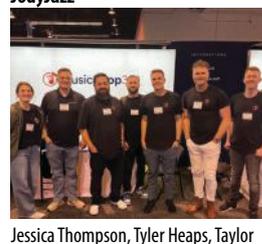
Alman Nusrat of **The Music People, Inc.**



Rob Troke and Greg Dollmont of **Veritas Instrument Rental**



Melvin Quiñones of **Victory Musical Instruments**



Jessica Thompson, Tyler Heaps, Taylor Harnois, Clinton Brady, Riley Memmott, Matt Lau, and Cayden Fox of **Music Shop 360**

MARCHING DRUMMERS



Suppliers Chime in on Drumming Up Marching Snare Sales in 2024

by Christian **Wissmuller**

Many schools begin to prepare for purchases in advance of the fall semester during the summer months. With that in mind, we figured now might be a good time to touch base with some key suppliers of marching snare drums – one of the more popular, essential, and in need of “refresh” marching band instruments – to learn about what particular models are selling best, what trends are guiding the market, and how savvy dealers position themselves to connect with the greatest number of buyers.



“Economic trends could be a potential issues, but school sales seem to be consistent.”

— David Nelson, Director of Product and Engineering,
Ludwig Drums and Musser Mallets



Compared to previous years, how would you evaluate the state of the marching snare drum market segment? Are sales up, level, down?

Joel Tetzlaff: In the last few years, we’ve seen strong demand for marching percussion. Many band directors have been using ESSER funds to purchase percussion instruments.

David Nelson: We believe the marching snare drum market is continuing to grow. School sales seem to not be effected by the economic trends.

Bill Ludwig: Sales have been up, at least from my perspective. Marching drums in general have been increasing for TAMA and 2023 was our best year yet!

Nic Milliner: Marching snare drum sales in the past were primarily driven by large institutional purchases. This is still the case but there has been an increase in younger players that use social media as a performance outlet. Many of these musicians have started to purchase their own instruments outside of whatever ensembles they are currently in or may have been associated with in the past. Snare drums are the most common purchase in these situations.

For your brand, what model, or models, of marching snare drum is(are) the most popular?

BL: The Fieldstar Marching Snare Drum is TAMA’s best-selling marching snare.

NM: The Quantum series snare drum in the standard 14” x 12” size (QCX1412S) is our most popular model.

DN: LUMS14PB: Ludwig Ultimate Snare Drum in Black Cortex

JT: The Yamaha SFZ Marching Snare is one of the best-selling marching drums. This drum was designed for top DCI and WGI performing groups with a band director focus. The SFZ is easy to work with and quick to tune, allowing Instructors and directors to spend more time teaching and less time maintaining drums. The SFZ design is also durable, making this a great long-term investment.

What features are end-users and band directors looking for in 2024 when shopping for a marching snare drum?

JT: Band directors are always looking for a good value and a drum that holds up. The sound quality and projection, durability, and ease of tuning are the key features that keep this drum at the top of the bid list. We ship the SFZ with competition-ready Remo heads. This saves the band time and money as they have

a great set of heads right out of the box.

BL: Sound, affordability and durability are definitely high on the priority list for most. The connection between snare and carrier/stand are important and TAMA’s unique features for easy interfacing and quicker head changes help make playing and using the drums easy and intuitive. Weight has also been a consideration. Especially for high school students, a lighter weight makes for an easier time acclimating to marching and carrying the drums

DN: Sound quality, durability, and weight.

NM: I think educators and players are looking for a snare drum that is user friendly, durable, aesthetically attractive, and most importantly has a wide range of sonic options.

What are some best practices embraced by MI retailers who do especially well in terms of marketing, promoting, and displaying marching snare drums?

DN: The items that have demonstration videos. Social media features with Artists/WGI/DCI.

JT: Dealers that do well in marching percussion are typically service-orientated. Helping the band unpack the drums, get them ready, and set up with carriers allows the dealer to be a part of the experience. Making sure the new line has the neces-



“Dealers that do well in marching percussion are typically service-orientated. Helping the band unpack the drums, get them ready, and set up with carriers allows the dealer to be a part of the experience.”

— Joel Tetzlaff, Product Marketing Manager,
Percussion, Yamaha Corporation of America





“Especially for high school students, a lighter weight makes for an easier time acclimating to marching and carrying the drums.”

— Bill Ludwig, Band & Orchestra Percussion Merchandiser, TAMA Drums



sary accessories such as covers, rim savers, and tom guards is a

great way to help the director protect their investment.

NM: I think retailers that are willing to stock basic finishes and sizes is helpful to schools needing to complete a bid within a limited period. Also because of the nature of marching percussion the necessary accessories (stands, carriers, and heads) often need replacing on short notice so trusted retailers that have these items in stock or well represented on their website tend to be the first call when educators are in need.

What concerns or challenges do you foresee for the production and sale of these instruments this year (supply chain, price, economic trends, trade issues, et cetera)?

NM: Demand has been very high the past couple of years and having the ability to fulfil orders quickly is one of our main goals each year. We continue to look for ways to offer our customers more options with more manageable lead times and as a result Mapex launched its Drums on Demand program in 2022. With this program we can stock more raw materials in Nashville and utilize our onsite drum shop team to fulfill orders for a variety of finishes on a made to order basis.

JT: We continue to work on ensuring our products meet the demands of the top performers and are accessible to a wide range of educators and performers. The value of a good instrument is not just the product but the opportunity it creates for young musicians in our community. The continued work to make music programs accessible throughout the country is always a priority.

BL: Post-COVID, many schools received an influx of funding, especially for music programs. Moving into 2024, we hope to see a continuation of support for music/arts education, but the path ahead it isn't clear. Ultimately, it could mean more schools will be working to try and stretch their budget dollars as far as possible when considering what equipment they can purchase.

DN: Economic trends could be a potential issues, but school sales seem to be consistent.

Does your brand have any upcoming or recent models of marching snare drums that you'd like to draw our readers' attention to?

DN: Not at this time.



“Demand has been very high the past couple of years and having the ability to fulfil orders quickly is one of our main goals each year.”

— Nic Milliner, Marching and Concert Percussion Brand Manager, KHS America



BL: TAMA's Fieldstar Marching Snare has many unique features that make it a high contender in the market. TAMA takes pride in innovation and has applied their expertise in engineering to make their marching drums reliable and intuitive to adjust, set up, and play.

JT: We Introduced the 4th generation SFZ a few years ago, the MS-9414. This drum is lighter with improved the sound quality and durability. This new model has won 3 championships between DCI and WGI in the last three years. We are introducing an additional standard color natural forest. This will be part of our five standard finishes - Blue Forest, Black Forest, Red Forest, Natural Forest, and White Wrap. The natural golden maple color is an excellent addition for any ensemble looking to augment the brass of the horns and winds or gold accents in the uniform.

NM: The next iteration of the Quantum series snare drum is launching this year. This drum will be offered in the same sizes as the previous Quantum options (14" x 12" or 14" x 10") and features lightweight aluminum throw off and butt side assemblies, an all-maple shell w/ maple reinforcement ring and a removeable snare module to facilitate quick bottom head changes without needing to readjust the snare tension. The snare module also allows precise fine-tuning of individual snare strands using a standard drum key. Additionally, the flexibility to effortlessly remove or replace snare strands with alternate materials allows for the creation of a tailored sound.

Do you expect this segment of MI to remain level, decline, or experience growth in the coming months?

JT: We don't expect to see a significant shift in demand, but with the influx of business, we expect some leveling off. There's strong demand in many areas for marching arts programs and many positive indicators of participation in competitive marching arts programs.

NM: Despite the numerous challenges associated with arts in education, the persistent advocacy and ongoing enthusiasm for marching arts activities are evolving in a manner that, in my opinion, will contribute to consistent growth.

DN: I would expect this segment to have growth in the latter half of the year.

BL: I expect growth for marching drums going into the summer months as schools will start planning purchases for their fall season.

History of



Jay's Music



Georgia MI Retail Mainstay is a Family Affair

by Roger Bellow

The 76-year story of Jay's Music begins with a Ma and Pa jewelry and luggage shop at 311 8th Street in Augusta. When Jake and Betty Roseman opened their storefront business in 1947, they never imagined it would transform into a super music store with many full and part time employees. Today, Jay's is operated by Jake and Betty's daughter, Vera and her husband, Doug Frohman at the store's fifth location since beginning on 8th Street.

The growth and transformation of Jay's reflects the changes in the American business model since 1947. From a small storefront, to a larger downtown location with an expanded, diversified stock, to a converted bank building with an immense inventory of instruments, sound systems, and accessories, to a downsized store tenaciously competing against mega chain stores and internet sales, Jay's has endured.

How it All Began

In 1949 or 1950, a salesman for Fender electric guitars of California called on Jake and convinced him to take a solidbody Broadcaster guitar and tube amplifier on consignment. Jake promptly sold them and began a lifetime friendship with the salesman, who came to dinner at the Roseman home whenever he was in Augusta. At the 8th Street location, music sales were only a fraction of Jay's business. It wasn't until 1954 when Jay's moved to 967 Broad that the business was listed in the Augusta directory as Jay's Jewelers and Music.

Mary Tabor, who worked at Jay's for 52 years, first became a customer in the mid 1950s. Her husband purchased her wedding ring there in 1956, making bi-monthly payments. Mary remembers Vera in a baby buggy on the sidewalk outside the store. Mary was working at JB White department store across the street. Betty Roseman and Mary became friends and Betty

Jake and Betty Roseman in 1948



convinced Jake to offer Mary a job beginning in 1959.

During the 1950s, jewelry was still the major part of Jay's business. In addition to new and used musical instruments, the inventory included: phonographs, 45 rpm records, and dishware. In 1954 and 1955, radio station WRDW set up remote broadcasts from Jay's that featured country musician, Peanut Faircloth and 9- or 10-year-old singer, Brenda Lee. Soon afterward, Brenda got her big break when Peanut introduced her to recording artist, Red Foley and she sang "Jambalaya" at his concert at the Bell Auditorium.

Every workday, Jake Roseman parked his car at the Baptist church past 13th Street and briskly walked through the bustling downtown business community. Jay's business neighbors were the Strauss Delicatessen and Savilowsky Shoe Repair. Betty rode the bus to Jay's later in the morning. Her knowledge of all aspects of the business and her personable demeanor were vital to Jay's success.

All purchases were made with cash or personal checks. For many years, a cigar box in a drawer at Jay's served as the cash register. Jay's did offer credit to many customers who paid for their purchases by making payments in person or by mail. Customer service and salesmanship were often essential to closing a deal. Mary Tabor received a commission on the sales she made in addition to a base salary. Her duties also included collecting past due payments. On one memorable occasion, she had to extract a payment from under a mattress while the immobile customer lay in the bed.

Born Into the Business

Vera truly did grow up working in the store. She remembers stocking and organizing the 45 rpm records as a child. James Brown and his band members were regular customers. Vera remembers James dancing in the store to demonstrate that Michael Jackson stole the Moonwalk from him.



Jay's Music founder Jake Roseman on Broad Street, downtown Augusta

The annual music merchant's convention in Chicago [NAMM – Ed.] was an exciting trip that Vera made with her father. The musical instrument manufacturers set up displays in hotel suites at the Palmer House and Conrad Hilton. Vera learned about new products and made important connections with company representatives. Over the years Jay's acquired dealerships from many companies at the convention.

An accomplished guitarist and performer from North Augusta, Henry Wynn, has been a Jay's customer for over 50 years. His first purchase was a long neck Vega banjo in 1963. As a teenager, his interest turned to rock. He purchased Rickenbacker and Fender electric guitars. At that time, Henry was in a band with 17 year old Steve Morse who was also a Jay's customer. Steve would gain acclaim as guitarist for The Dixie Dregs. Henry fondly and longingly describes the clutter of now vintage guitars that filled the walls and floor at Jay's.

In the early 1980s, Jay's moved to a larger space at 927 Broad. Vera and Doug were married in 1979. Initially, Doug was a school teacher and would work at the store on Saturdays. Eventually in 1983, he began working at Jay's full time. When the James Brown band would schedule rehearsals at the Imperial Theatre, Doug would transport and set up the sound system, amplifiers and drum set. Over the years he has sold and installed the sound systems of many churches in the Augusta area.

Locations Change, but the Mission Remains Consistent

During the 1980s, many businesses left Broad Street and downtown Augusta was no longer the center of commerce. Although sales were strong, Vera recognized the decline of downtown and made the bold decision to relocate Jay's Music to a space where it had room to expand. The First Federal branch bank at 2702 Washington Road, located across from the main entrance to Augusta National golf course, had closed. It would require massive renovation but Jake and Vera had a vision and the will to make it happen. Artist, Brian Sullivent was commissioned to paint an expansive mural with portraits of famous musicians. The new store opened in June 1994 with an inventory that would rival any store in Chicago. Masters Week was an especially busy and festive time. Jay's rented spaces outside where vendors set up tents selling food and merchandise to the thousands of fans coming to the golf course.

Because of Jay's very desirable location, the Master's Tournament persistently tried to buy the building. For years Vera refused to sell, but finally relented. The building

was immediately bulldozed by the Masters in December 2016. The Piccadilly Cafeteria at 3110 Washington had closed in September 2016 and Jay's relocated at that address, where it remains to this day.

The current location still offers a full inventory of instruments and accessories. Sales are moderately good, but the hectic pace of the old store is gone. Vera simply loves the music business and is passionate about keeping the family tradition alive. Lifelong friend, Mary Tabor, says Vera would sell guitars door to door if she didn't have a storefront. So, if you see Vera com-

ing up your pathway with Doug hauling a guitar and amplifier, be prepared to start pickin' and grinnin': Jay's Music has come to call. ☎️



Roger Bellow is a musician and teacher. He has written articles for the Journal of Country Music and Bluegrass Unlimited. For 30 years, he operated Town and Country Music in Mt. Pleasant, SC.

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'A Reed Before the Wind...'

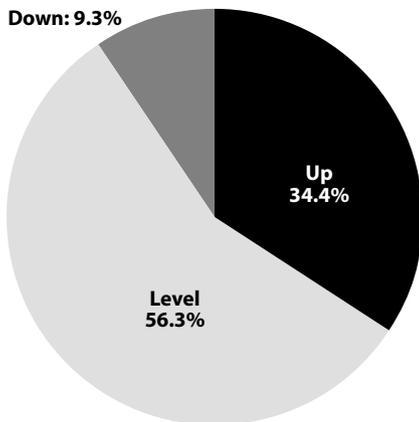


Clarinet & Saxophone Reed Sales By Christian Wissmuller

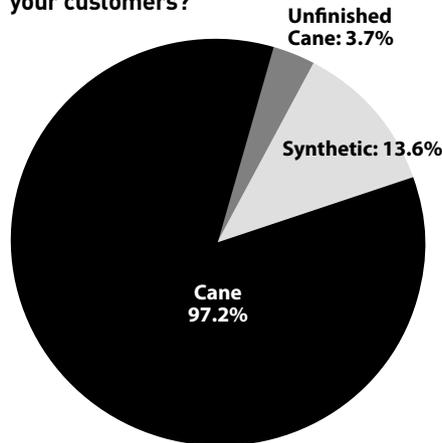
Vitally important to the overall sound of both clarinets and saxophones, reeds can elevate even the most entry-level instrument, or make the most finely crafted one sound like a defective, cheap product. These paper-thin pieces of cane truly punch above their weight in terms of overall impact and players develop

fierce preferences for material, cut style, and – significantly – brand. Read on to learn more about what suppliers are delivering the product that customers seek, as well as other trends in this market segment for 2024.

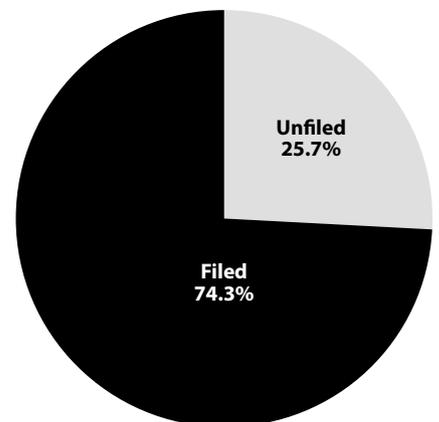
When compared to this time in 2023, sales of clarinet & saxophone reeds are...



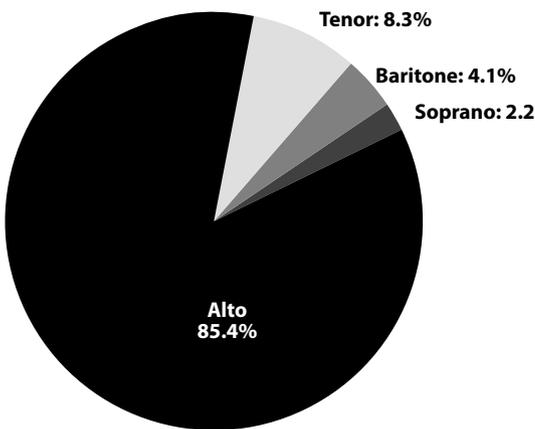
What types of materials are favored by your customers?



What reed cut style is most popular?



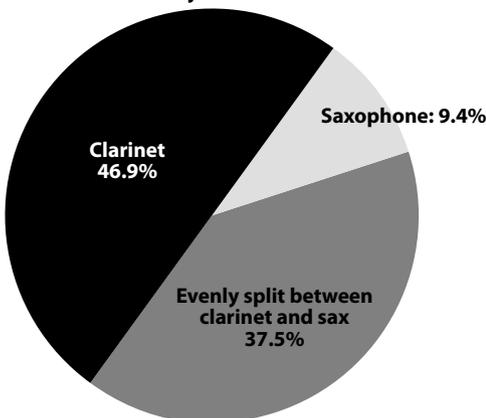
On balance, for the larger saxophone reeds category, most sales are for which type of instrument?



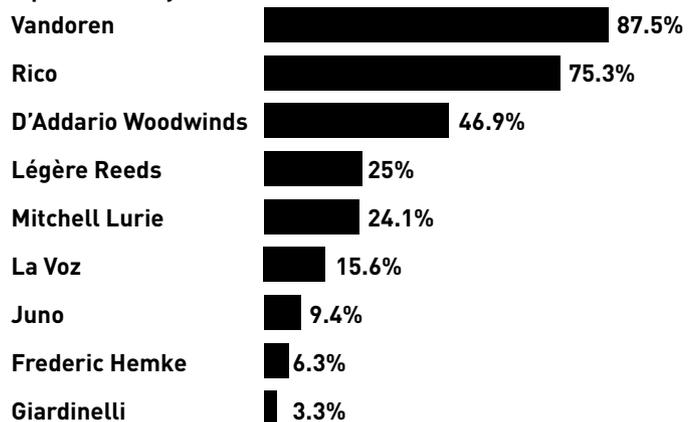
"Synthetic reeds are going [up] in popularity as the price of traditional cane reeds skyrockets. Especially the larger sax and clarinet categories."

Roy Noguera
Laconia Music Center, New Hyde Park, New York

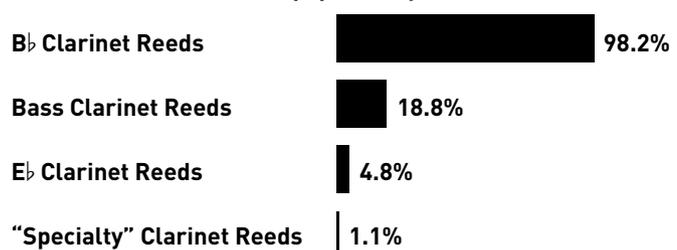
Between clarinet and saxophone, most sales of reeds at your store are for...



For clarinet & saxophone reeds, which brands are the top sellers for your store?



There are 11 types of clarinet, but generally speaking, which category of clarinet reeds are most popular at your store?





Have you been observing any significant trends in this market segment?

"The Légère Signature synthetic reeds are steadily becoming more popular with our professional woodwind players. It is the preferred reed for live performance."

Joni Dey
Herter Music Center
Bay City, Michigan

"Being in a heavily populated Hispanic area, the reeds of choice are Vandoren Blue Box."

Ed Intagliata
Cassell's Music
San Fernando, California

"With the continuing evolution of the reed market, we train our staff to be able to have informative conversations with our customers on the wide variety of available reed options for all woodwind instruments. We encourage our student customers to experiment with different brands and reed types to enhance their performance capabilities and technics. Additionally, we discuss proper reed care and maintenance, and suggest a reed guard if applicable."

Jerry Hamilton Vesely
Vesely Music
Parowan, Utah

"Band teachers have a huge amount of power when students are choosing what reeds to buy."

Karen Copeland
SM Hanson Music, Inc.
Salina, Kansas

"I'm going to be interested to see trends going forward, especially with school sales, now that Vandoren has introduced MAP pricing which has greatly reduced margins."

Al Stephens
Moore Music Company
Greensboro, North Carolina

"Synthetic reeds are going [up] in popularity as the price of traditional cane reeds skyrockets. Especially the larger sax and clarinet categories."

Roy Noguera
Laconia Music Center
New Hyde Park, New York

"Because of the manufacturer's generous exchange policy, customers are more likely to try a Légère over other synthetic reed brands."

Miles DeCastro
North County Winds
Potsdam, New York

"Since my store's overall sales are up 30% over last year and reed sales are almost identical with last year, I have to assume that those sales are going online."

Drew Parker
Separk Music Co.
Lewisville, North Carolina

"Lack of music programs in the schools."

George Copeland
North Channel Music
Elliot Lake, Ontario, Canada

"With various reed product introductions recently, most of our pro clientele will try them but generally go back to their original tried and true."

David St. John
Music & Arts
Gendora, California

"Slow decline in any brass and woodwind related sales"

Jacob Rendell
Case's Music
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada

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Re-Awakening Your Originality!



By
**Menzie
Pittman**

When a customer first walks into your business, what inspires them?

What senses are you trying to awaken in your customers to keep them engaged?

As leaders in the music business, these are questions we must ask ourselves repeatedly, because, as we all know, the retail landscape is ever-changing, so to keep a customer's loyalty in today's market we must connect to their emotions, as well as offer product

choices and competitive pricing.

Some music stores are able to incorporate a "wow factor," by displaying massive amounts of gear, but not all music businesses have the financial resources or the retail space to be able to do that. So, if you're not knee-deep in financial resources how then do you create your business's "wow factor"? The answer is: one customer at a time!

A small box retailer can generate "wow moments" for their customers, but it takes a slightly different approach than you might think. The small box trick is customer engagement! If you can keep customers engaged with you, you will win their trust and that's the biggest wow factor there is.

Besides having your gear displays looking as mighty as you can, a great way to win consistent customer engagement that's not expensive is called: "Imagination"! When you prioritize imagination, your business stays fresh. Creatives understand this maxim intuitively; they intentionally fan the flames of imagination, fully embracing it and understanding that it is a gift and the secret code that opens the doors to unique expression.

Big shops don't always incorporate a depth of imagination, mostly because they function from a pre-planned efficiency model – both out of necessity, and as their priority. Please understand that I truly respect the massive gear "wow factor" in any music store. In fact, I may be a tad jealous; but generally speaking, smaller shops have been established on the spirited idea of providing unique services, based mostly on the creative skills of the founders. So, we don't want to abandon that quality.

Imagination in your displays, and your overall store design, is the gateway to the most important moment: how you interact with your customers and families that support your business.

Within every small business, there was an original "niche" on which the business was founded. And in the beginning there was a creative vision, incorporating lots of imagination. But as time passes, businesses grow stale, imagination wanes,

and sometimes the luster dulls. Now the fire needs stoking, so we must find ways to rekindle our original passion. We must maintain a fresh, intriguing business model that repeatedly invites customer loyalty.

The hardest part is finding ways of accomplishing this agenda that are affordable. The good news is, out of imagination springs the one tool smaller retailers keep close at hand: Originality! But doubt is never too far behind. Usually, the discussion on originality centers around one question: How do I let go of fear, and embrace my highest level of originality? Many would tell you that you either are an original, or you're not. But I don't think it's quite that black and white. I think you need to simply let originality out of its box.

Merely pursuing the idea of being an original retailer takes time to mature. When investigating the idea, you will notice that the greatest success stories have all gone through a continual maturation process. The superstars in our business continually evolved along their journeys. But there is a stage of development where they learned to trust and just let go and got out of their own way, and their originality simply flowed. This takes belief in your vision, it takes lots of imagination, along with the courage to try things that may seem foreign or bold to you at first.

One door allowing us access to the house of originality is striving to be as good at your craft as possible. It is a natural cadence for craft to precede originality, so the trick becomes developing your craft to your highest level first, then allowing originality to develop as the natural aftermath of that process. I am using the word "craft" to be all encompassing. For example: your store's design and presentation, sales, repairs, education, relationships, rentals, and so on.

A great tool that may keep you motivated is taking a page right out of the musician's handbook. Think about it, when we all first attempted to learn a musical instrument, or first attempted to sing, we were inspired by someone else doing it. We weren't great at it, but we wanted to be, so we mimicked those who inspired us, as we imagined our own creative personalities. So let that understanding make its way into the look and style of your business. Re-awaken through imagination. 

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

“If you can keep customers engaged with you, you will win their trust, and that's the biggest wow factor there is.”

SOUND REINFORCEMENT

Proel DIVA Loudspeaker Series



Proel is proud to unveil its latest breakthrough in sound technology: the DIVA active loudspeaker series. Launching in 12" (DIVA 12A) and 15" (DIVA15A) active powered models, the DIVA loudspeaker series is designed for unparalleled performance and adaptability, these digitally processed loudspeakers feature advanced connectivity options and a host of intuitive features to meet the demands of modern audio professionals.

The DIVA12A and DIVA15A boast a remarkable combination of power and precision, housed within lightweight yet incredibly durable polypropylene cabinets. Powered by a robust 1000W CLASS-D amplifier with SMPS, these systems deliver high headroom and accurate dynamic control for maximum undistorted output power.

Equipped with a sophisticated pre-amp section featuring a high-performance DSP engine and linear phase FIR filters, the DIVA12A and DIVA15A ensure a smooth response and high-definition sound reproduction. With an intuitive user interface featuring an LCD color display and single-knob control, users can effortlessly select from five available EQ presets (music, live, DJ, monitor, speech), allowing for seamless adaptation to any application.

These groundbreaking loudspeakers offer unparalleled flexibility with multiple inputs and Bluetooth connectivity. With a built-in 3-channel mixer and two wireless USB inputs compatible with PROEL U24 microphone systems, the DIVA12A and DIVA15A can be utilized in various applications without the need for external equipment. The Bluetooth interface enables mono or stereo streaming, providing added convenience and versatility.

Key Features:

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- Long-excursion woofer for deep bass response
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- Bluetooth Audio Interface With Stereo Link
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- Four M10 flying points for versatile mounting options

The PROEL DIVA12A and DIVA15A active loudspeaker systems were unveiled at the NAMM Show on January 25, 2024, and are available now through authorized Proel North America dealers throughout the USA and Canada.

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PRINT & DIGITAL

Hal Leonard Releases Helpful Guitar Manuals

Millions of guitars are sold each year in the U.S. and an estimated 72 million Americans play guitar. That means there's a lot of gear out there that needs attention! Hal Leonard has released two new titles that will help guitarists get the most out of their investments.

How to Get Great Guitar Tones, by Stephen Davis, helps players to understand the sometimes overwhelming world of pedals, amps, speakers, cabinets, and everything else that can contribute to getting great tone in playing. The book is filled with pictures and diagrams to help players visually put together the options for building their dream rig. It also includes over 100 demonstration audio tracks that showcase the tones described in the book, mixing and matching different guitars with a variety of amps and effects. Book and online audio retails for \$24.99.

Do-It-Yourself Guitar Setup & Maintenance helps guitar owners get started on doing their own maintenance. With over four hours of video instruction, author and luthier Denny Rauen provides real-life scenarios using a variety of guitars. Guitar owners will learn what tools they need for every job and how to replace strings, adjust truss rods, basic electronic modifications, and much more. This book with online video retails for \$22.99.

www.halleonard.com



Excelcia Music Publishing Releases New Brass & Piano Duo by Beloved Composer, Yukiko Nishimura

Daylight Rhapsody, a new release from Excelcia Music Publishing, is an emotive new duo work from treasured composer and pianist Yukiko Nishimura. Originally written for the euphonium and piano, *Daylight Rhapsody* is also available as a duo between trumpet and piano, each version expressing the atmospheric nature of the piece while showcasing each instrument's unique sound. This collaborative Grade 4 work is perfect for chamber performances, recitals and collegiate auditions.

"In writing this piece, I wanted to incorporate modal scales and harmonies related to modern jazz. I was driven to the Euphonium because I love its melty, colorful sound and flexibility. *Daylight Rhapsody* brings together these two different worlds in a unique and beautiful way, taking the audience on a ride through different atmospheres and emotions," explains composer Yukiko Nishimura.

With the first of four sections of the piece, "Foggy," *Daylight Rhapsody* begins with a darker mood with a mute being used for the trumpet to sing long phrases with changing colors and dynamics. In the second and third sections "Breezy-1" and "Breezy-2," the notes sparkle with liveliness, showing off the collaboration between duo partners. The piece slows down in the last section, "Airy," where the music transitions from jazz-inspired to closing with a calmer feeling. Throughout, *Daylight Rhapsody*



is a musically-collaborative experience with the pianist as a true duo partner, rather than a traditional accompanist.

Daylight Rhapsody is the newest addition to the Excelcia Solo Series. Both versions are available for \$25 each from music retailers, as well as the publisher.

www.excelciamusic.com

FRETTED

Gretsch Guitars Releases Limited Edition John Gourley Electromatic Broadcaster



Gretsch unveils the latest model in their artist signature series, the Limited Edition John Gourley Electromatic Broadcaster, a signature guitar model paying homage to John Gourley, the lead vocalist and guitarist for the experimental, indie rock and Grammy-winning band, Portugal. The Man. Gourley joins a roster of iconic Gretsch signature artists including legends like AC/DC's Malcolm Young, George Harrison, Billy Duffy, and more recently, indie group boygenius. The Alaska native and Gretsch have a shared commitment to inspiring musicians of all levels and styles and hope this launch will inspire new creative forces within the music industry.

As the founding member, lead singer and songwriter of Portugal. The Man, Gourley has captivated audiences with his distinctive vocals and innovative musical style. With a dynamic and eclectic approach to his craft, Gourley continues to leave an indelible mark on music through his genre-agnostic contributions and his commitment to driving meaningful transformations through activism. Gourley has been influenced by his affinity for hip-hop and his exploration of different music genres that have shaped his unique style and approach. His positive impact goes beyond music, first by helping create the PTM Foundation – hich focuses on building community resilience, empathy and awareness through music, stories, art, education and connectivity – and through the Frances Changed My Life initiative, which honors his daughter Frances and aims to provide support for other families dealing with rare disease diagnoses. Now, boasting a signature guitar bearing his name, Gourley aspires for his Broadcaster to become a go-to choice for musicians of all levels, providing an accessible entry point for players seeking to attain their desired sound.

It was built for musicians from every genre in mind. The guitar boasts a double-cutaway maple body featuring a chambered spruce center block for enhanced resonance and tonal richness. Its thin "U"-shaped maple neck features a 12"-radius laurel fingerboard, hosts 22 medium jumbo frets and pearloid "cloud" inlays for a touch of style. Equipped with USA Full Tron humbucking pickups, the guitar delivers a powerful and versatile sonic range. The control layout includes a master volume with treble bleed circuit, master tone, individual pickup volume controls and a three-position pickup selector switch, offering precise tonal shaping. The Anchored Adjusto-Matic bridge ensures stable tuning while the Bigsby B70 vibrato tailpiece adds expressive pitch modulation. Additional features include a Graph Tech NuBone nut, silver sparkle binding, locking tuners, strap locks and nickel hardware. Take a closer dive into the array of features included in the signature guitar.

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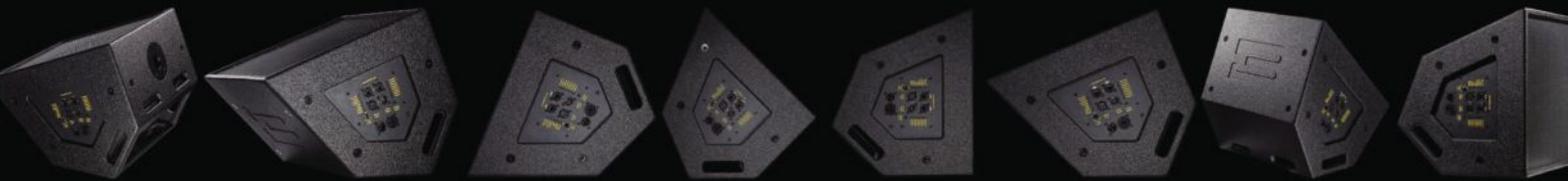


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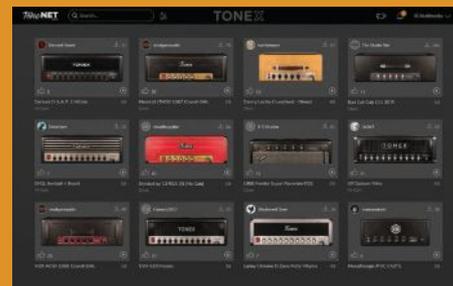
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- The most authentic tone ever • Capture your own rig with AI Machine Modeling • Includes 1,000 Premium Tone Models • Thousands of free community rigs • Includes TONEX MAX software • High-end 24-bit audio • Whisper-quiet 123 dB noise floor • Designed and made in Italy



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