

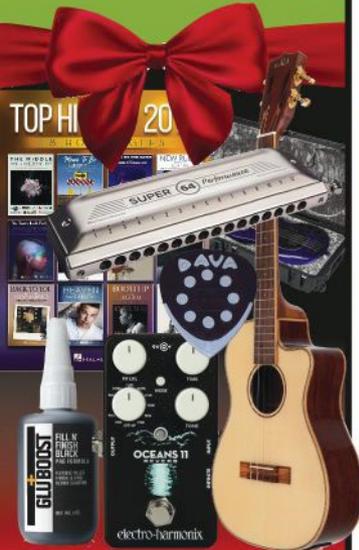
MMR

MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

TOP GEAR



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Paul Beard, Beard Guitars



David Bandrowski, Deering Banjos



Justin Grizzle, Gold Tone Music



Travis Atz, Recording King & The Loar



Tom Bedell, Weber Mandolins



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'Quality Over Quantity:' Hans-Peter Wilfer of Warwick & Framus 30

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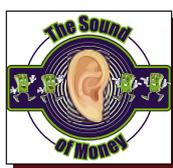


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And Now For Something Completely... Familiar



by Christian
Wissmuller

Whether the catalyst has been the now-infamous *Washington Post* article from last summer, the hopes/brought about by the (now long ago) cultural phenomenon of "Guitar Hero" and "Rock Band," or simply the observations and concerns of dealers and players, for the longest time – seemingly forever – many have been analyzing and discussing the relatively poor health of the guitar market and wondering when or if it'll rebound.

Well, I have good news. We can finally put the subject to bed: "The American Guitar Industry is Making a Serious Comeback!"

At least according to Yahoo Finance.

In late August, Yahoo's Aarthi Swaminathan penned a piece outlining how, "despite a lot of bad PR in recent years, manufacturers and sellers say demand is strong for American-made guitars 10 years after the 2008 financial crisis hammered the industry."

Swaminathan goes on to quote Fender CEO Andy Mooney and cite stats provided by NAMM supporting this assertion. People are paying for streaming services, going to concerts – "Interest in recorded music is at an all-time high," Mooney says – and (as Swaminathan adds), "That interest has translated into an impressive retail guitar market."

So, I ask you – *MMR* readers, the folks who are in the trenches, who actually know what's happening on a street-level with guitars – whether Yahoo! and Mooney and others have got it right, or if they and their kind are simply putting a positive spin on a topic that benefits them to portray in an upbeat manner. What are your experiences? My email address is right there (look to the literal right of this copy) in

our masthead and you also likely get my weekly e-newsletter every Monday.

In this issue's UpFront Q&A feature, Warwick & Framus' Hans-Peter Wilfer offers his take on the matter. "I believe the guitar market is not dead," he asserts. "It's maybe not the same quantity as with the Baby Boomers – a time which is close to over and may not be coming back – but it will still be a good market if you have quality products, give value to your customers, have innovative products, and love what you do."

I hope Yahoo Finance, Wilfer, Mooney, and others are correct. I hope it's not just "spin" that the guitar market is truly on the rebound. I know, however, that there is something real about making one's own fate and creating one's own success. Can't win if you don't play, as they say (sorry, Hap Kuffner – I stole your line!). Yes, it'd be great if a new Slash or Kurt Cobain stumbled into the zeitgeist and suddenly stores were flooded with kids who already knew they were going to buy a guitar pack before they even walked in the doors. While we're at it, I wish I had a pony.

The guitar may be on the way back for real this time. Once again, I hope so. Even if it's not, my money's on the creative and knowledgeable MI dealers who sell plenty of six-strings even when the salad days are temporarily in the rearview. I'd love to hear from any of you on this (or any!) topic. Here's to positive thinking!

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Industry News

Martin Guitars Receives Governor's Award for the Arts

C.F. Martin & Co. (Martin Guitar) was honored with the Special Recognition for Advancing the Arts at the Governor's Awards for the Arts Ceremony on August 8, in Scranton, Pennsylvania. The award honors work that exemplifies the highest standards of artistry and the significant role the arts play within the economy of the commonwealth. Martin and fellow recipients received recognition from Governor Tom Wolf and First Lady Frances Wolf. Chris and Diane Martin attended the event, which included musical performances by Martin staff Craig Thatcher, Joel Zingone, and Rameen Shayegan.



"The arts play a role in many facets of our commonwealth," said Governor Wolf. "When we talk about the arts, we often speak of their power to make us connect, feel, and think. But the arts also bolster our economy, shape our youth, and build our communities."

"I am proud to accept the award from Governor Tom Wolf for advancing the arts, on behalf of all of my coworkers here in Pennsylvania and our sister facility in Navojoa, Sonora, Mexico," said Chris Martin, chairman and CEO of Martin Guitars and Strings. "They help me carry my family's business goals of trying to make the best guitars and strings for six generations."

➤ Industry News

➤ Supplier Scene

➤ Letters

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➤ People on the Move

Hal Leonard Names iZotope and Audient as Distributors

Hal Leonard has announced that as of August 1, iZotope and Audient products have been added to the company's MI Distribution division catalog. Both companies are leaders in their respective categories and great additions to the growing line of brand-name audio products available through Hal Leonard.

iZotope is a leader in intelligent audio technology for mixing, mastering and audio repair software for audio and post production applications in the studio, at home, and in the classroom. They offer a full line of audio programs, plug-ins and an innovative portable recording device called Spire. iZotope products complement many of the digital audio workstations in Hal Leonard's catalog, including Pro Tools, Studio One, Cubase, and more. All software programs are sold exclusively as downloadable codes through Xchange Market Platform. Qualified schools and institutions will be offered special pricing on iZotope products.

Audient is a British-based company that designs and manufactures professional audio equipment, including large-format audio mixing consoles and small digital recording interfaces. All interfaces feature Audient's renowned

console mic preamps and class-leading digital converters, delivering the audio performance of an Audient console on your desktop. A strong supporter of independent music dealers, Audient is not available at several national chain stores, making their brand a valuable addition to independent dealers' audio/recording department offerings. Pete Townsend, legendary guitarist for The Who and a DIY home recording legend, is among many endorsers of Audient products.

"Our sales team is stoked to offer our dealers products from these industry leaders," says Brad Smith, vice president of MI Products at Hal Leonard. "The time is right for us to widen our selection as our software and audio sales grow. The consumers are everywhere – every channel, every space, and they understand the application of a great plug-in or hi-end interface and how it can impact your sound. It's a great time to be a music dealer selling audio."

Hal Leonard's agreement with iZotope covers the United States and Canada. Their agreement with Audient is for the United States. Interested retailers can call the Hal Leonard E-Z Order Line at (800) 554-0626 for more information.

Sabian Launches Online Custom Shop

Sabian has just launched a brand new online Custom Shop to help drummers all over the world build the cymbal of their dreams. With the power to select from over 29 million custom cymbal configurations at their fingertips, drummers can design their dream cymbal on the new site, consult with Sabian sound specialists, then order and purchase from their favorite drum shop.

A considerable technological achievement, the Sabian Custom Shop works by navigating drummers through each stage of the cymbal making process, while helpful video clips provide guidance at each step. The impressive menu of customizable options allows for a huge array of choice in size, profile, weight,

bell size, hammering, lathing, custom enhancements and many more options.

In spite of the deep level of customization built into the Custom Shop, the process is remarkably friendly. It allows drummers to sit, listen, learn and choose – before purchasing from their favorite drum shop. By including brick and mortar drum shops in the Custom Shop program, Sabian is working to ensure they remain a viable and active hub for drum communities around the country.

With the launch of their new online Custom Shop, Sabian takes the custom experience to a whole new level, making the dream of owning a custom cymbal closer to being reality.



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CELESTION

Audix Appoints LVX Marketing and Anew C.T. as Representatives

Audix has announced that they have appointed LVX Marketing as its representative for retail accounts in northern California and northern Nevada and all Audix accounts in Hawaii. Founded by industry veterans John Hernandez and Ed Ulibarri, LVX Marketing provides the finest service in the industry to manufacturers and commercial and retail clients.

"From our first conversation, we knew John and Ed were going to be a good fit," said Audix national sales manager Todd Brushwyler. "Their passion, professionalism and deep knowledge of the industry allows them to treat clients with integrity while providing a full spectrum of services from consultation and marketing to sales training."



LVX Marketing founders Ed Ulibarri and John Hernandez

"LVX Marketing is proud to represent such a great microphone line as Audix, which has a stellar reputation and a quality brand within the market place. Both John and I look forward to a productive relationship with the whole group at Audix," says Ed Ulibarri, president of LVX Marketing.

"Audix was founded in northern California and we are delighted to have LVX Marketing represent our legacy microphones for live sound and studio," said Brushwyler. "Their industry-wide, long-standing relationships are a tremendous asset. They seamlessly bridge the gap between dealers and manufacturers by adding value to both sides."

Additionally, Audix has announced that they have appointed Anew Communications Technology (Anew C.T.) as its representative for southern California, the states of



Anew C.T.'s Nelson Brugh

the Rocky Mountain Region and northern California (contractor accounts). Founded in 1999 by Nelson Brugh, who continues to lead the company, Anew C.T. has proven itself a leader in the pro audio, commercial, and music retail industry.

"Nelson has assembled an impressive team," said Audix director of sales Gene Houck. "Their philosophy of partnering with their dealers and manufacturers is in complete alignment with Audix."

"Audix has had an outstanding reputation with our integrators and retail channel. We are excited about Audix's decision to partner with Anew C.T. in our nine-state territory," says Nelson Brugh, president. "We see great opportunities with our synergies in both retail and continuing their success in the AV integration channel. Their innovation in microphones has long been accepted and used by many."

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Court Approves Next Step in Gibson Bankruptcy

On August 1, Gibson Brands announced that a Delaware bankruptcy court has approved the Company's Disclosure Statement. This allows the company to begin to solicit votes for its plan of reorganization in the wake of having filed for Chapter 11 in May of this year. The plan materials and ballots were expected to be mailed during the week of August 6, 2018. The deadline for returning completed ballots will be September 14, 2018. A hearing to confirm the plan is scheduled to begin on September 27, 2018.

"We are extremely pleased by the court's approval of our disclosure statement, which is a key step toward the company's successful emergence from Chapter 11," said Gibson Brands CEO Henry Juszkiewicz in a statement. "Our employees have worked very hard to help us stay on track to emerge from Chapter 11 as planned, and we are grateful for the continuing support from our creditors, partners, and vendors."

Additional information is available by calling Gibson's Restructuring Hotline, toll-free in the U.S. at (844) 240-1258. For calls originating outside the U.S., call 1-929-477-8085. Email inquiries can be sent to gibsoninfo@primeclerk.com. Copies of the plan and disclosure statement materials and other court filings and documents related to the court proceedings are available on a separate website administered by Gibson's claims agent, Prime Clerk, at <https://cases.primeclerk.com/gibson>.



Zoom Livetrak L-12 Added to Alliance with Avid

Zoom Corporation (Jasdaq 6694.T), Japan, has announced the addition of the Live-Trak L-12 to their collaboration with Avid Technology, Inc. (Nasdaq AVID), the maker of Pro Tools. Zoom is teaming with Avid, to offer Avid Pro Tools | First with a valuable collection of additional software. Pro Tools | First is a streamlined and free version of Pro Tools, the industry standard DAW audio professionals use in recording studios.

This offer is available when purchasing the Zoom LiveTrak L-12 Digital Mixer + Recorder or Zoom's Handy Audio Interfaces (U-44, U-24, U-22). After purchase, creators can go to avid.com/zoom and register to download the latest version of Pro Tools | First together with a valuable collection of audio software.



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Orange Amps' Cooper Breaks Ground at Strawberry Field

Cliff Cooper, CEO and founder of Orange Amplification, helped bury a time capsule to mark the start of the site construction at Strawberry Field.

Orange Amplification is supporting the Salvation Army, who owns Strawberry Field, to open the world-famous red gates to the public for the first time ever in the summer of 2019.

Visitors will be able to walk through the landscaped grounds where John Lennon played as a boy and find out more about his childhood connections with Strawberry Field. This visitor attraction will sit alongside Steps to Work, a vocational training and work placement hub for young people with learning difficulties.

Cliff Cooper was made an honorary patron along with Lady Judy Martin



Cliff Cooper holding the time capsule

OBE (wife of the late Sir George Martin) and Julia Baird (John Lennon's half-sister) as honorary president.

The time capsule placed in the ground marks 51 years since the original release of the 1967 classic Beatles song, "Strawberry Fields Forever." The roll call of "diggers" included Major

Roger Batt of The Salvation Army, Julia Baird, Lady Judy Martin OBE, Cooper and young adults amongst the first trainees to pass through the Steps to Work placement hub.

"I am delighted the plans to reopen Strawberry Field are now moving forward at a fast pace," said Cooper. "I am proud Orange has been able to support such a worthy cause and I would like to encourage others to help with donations."

Donations can be made by going

to <https://orangeamps.com/strawberry-field/>. All donations of £6 or more will be sent a limited edition picture postcard of the Strawberry Field gates with a signed printed signature of Lady Martin and Cliff Cooper as a special thank you. All donors will also be entered into a free prize draw to win one of two 50th anniversary *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* CDs signed by Giles Martin, who digitally re-mastered the album.

Fishman Expands Dealer Opportunities for SA Performance Audio System

Fishman has initiated a special dealer program to stimulate sales for its popular SA330x SA Performance Audio system.

The SA330x, alone or in conjunction with the SA Sub and SA Expand, produces 330 watts in a wide dispersion design for clean, crisp and is ideal for solo acoustic performers, small combos or a full band.

Additional features include two mic/instrument channels with six combo 1/4 inch/XLR inputs, each with its own 3-band EQ on each input channel, Reverb mix, Phase switch and Input Pad, four of which are remote mountable for ease of use and allows users to plug in any combination of mics, guitars, keyboards without additional amplifiers or mixers. Under the new program, the SA330x Performance Audio System (including tripod stand and padded carry sleeve) will remain at \$899.95 MAP.

In addition, Fishman has created the new SA+6 bundle that will include the SA330x, tripod stand, SA Expand 4-channel remote mixer (including mounting bracket for tripod and mic stand), and the SA Deluxe Carry Bag with wheels. MAP price will be \$1099.95 for the entire bundle.

Additionally, the SA Sub (with the included Sub Pole stand mount) will be available as an accessory item for \$499.95 MAP, as well as the SA Expand at \$169.95 MAP, and the Deluxe Carry Bag for \$149.95 MAP.



SA+6 Bundle with SA330x and tripod stand, SA Expand 4-channel mixer and deluxe carry bag.

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LETTERS

Christian,

Just read your editorial [June, 2018] in the aforementioned magazine with some interest as I just opened a guitar shop in Dexter, Maine.

I also decided I didn't want to compete with the other guitar shops in Maine, (there are only two I'm told, Northern Kingdom and Buckdancers Choice). We've only been open a couple of weeks offering a number of used guitars and introducing the Teton guitar to Maine. We are probably the only guitar shop with a kitchen table and a coffee pot at the front door, lol but we hope folks will come in talk guitars over a cup of coffee and maybe play a tune or two. This is my retirement gig and guitar shops should be fun!

Enjoyed your amplification,
David Iverson
Story Teller Guitars
Dexter, Maine

Christian,

I read your [editorial] in the July MMR magazine and 95% of it was right on the mark. The 5% that I believe was at issue is the fact that there aren't enough "dorky 13 year-old Christian Wissmullers" lusting after any guitar, let alone Gibson.

The big problem with the industry (aka Gibson, Fender, Yamaha, et cetera) is that they are not willing to confront (and I mean CONFRONT) the elephant in the room! Plain and simple, the dorky 13 year-old CW's are playing "Fortnight" or "Call of Duty" and having more fun! Wouldn't you? Capitalism rewards the innovative and creative and punishes those unwilling to change or innovate. Fender is not far behind the bankruptcy scene. As soon as people in their 40's and 50's stop buying their overpriced custom guitars they will not have enough buyers to sustain the company. Andy Mooney himself has said several times in print, 90% of their beginners quit. Another example, I was encouraged by Guitar Center's new commitment to lessons in their stores only to be completely baffled by their re-commitment to Hal Leonard books – paper books, published in 1970. What kid is going to sign up for that?

I know the next Eddie Van Halen is

out there. He's playing "Madden 17" right now. I've been preaching for years that if we could just have kids try the guitar, experience those first searing chords on an electric or clean chords on an acoustic, something would touch them inside and they would be hooked. I like to think that our Fretlight guitars are that shortcut to at least exposing the kids to music. But when they walk into GC and see paper

books... they turn around and go home get the instant gratification out of gaming or Instagram or whatever else they can do – fast.

Thanks,
Rusty Shaffer
CEO
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go play outside

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Supplier Scene

A.I.M. Books Now Sold Through J.W. Pepper

Solutions
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Solutions for Teachers has announced that their assessment book series entitled *Achievement in Music (A.I.M.)* is now being sold through J.W. Pepper. *A.I.M.* provides a simple and organized approach to assessing band students. Comprised of 210 short assessments for beginner through advanced high school senior, band directors will never need to “come up with” another test again. This unique assessment system was tested and hand-built in a band room with real students and real band directors, each with over 25 years’ experience with grades 4 through 12.

A.I.M. is quickly becoming an essential component in band rooms across the country, providing a solution to the issue of vertical alignment across grade levels and schools. It also helps band directors deal with the widespread abilities often found in classrooms by allowing students to move at the pace that they choose. This means that the best players and slower learners will be challenged equally, so nobody feels bored or rushed. Additionally, the etudes are all labeled with the current common anchors for music education.

Accompanying cloud-based software is also available to track progress, chair students, recognize achievement goals, and show clear growth statistics for conferences and teacher evaluations.

Yamaha Corps Wins 19th DCI World Championship

Yamaha Corporation of America celebrated 34 years of collaboration with Marching Music’s Major League with the culmination of the Drum Corps International (DCI) World Championship finals at Lucas Oil Stadium on August 11. This year marks the 19th championship won by a Yamaha corps.

Yamaha has supported DCI since 1985, and in that time, Yamaha corps have compiled an enviable record of accomplishments including 18 DCI Championships, 14 Fred Sanford High Percussion Awards, and 12 Jim Ott High Brass Awards in just 19 years since Yamaha brass entered the activity — all totals greater than any other manufacturer. Corps that rely on Yamaha instruments have won 54 gold, silver or bronze medals bestowed in DCI competition since the company’s support commenced. In addition, 29 Yamaha Performing Artists worked with 12 corps this season to prepare for the weekend championship.

The company is the official brand for 16 of the 40 drum corps in competition, including nine All-Yamaha World Class drum corps, representing an all-time high for the world’s largest musical instrument manufacturer. Additionally, 11 corps chose to use Yamaha PA speakers and/or mixers, marking an increase over last year.

“Seeing these groups reach their goals knowing they are using Yamaha instruments is rewarding in and of itself,” says Troy C. Wollwage, percussion marketing manager, Band & Orchestral division, Yamaha Corporation of America. “It’s a testament to the quality, consistency, intonation and durability of our products, which allow these corps to focus on their performance and compete at the highest level.”

This was a banner year for Yamaha brass. Seven out of the eight top scoring corps played Yamaha brass, which is unprecedented not only when compared to the company’s past successes but

also among other manufacturers in the activity. The Santa Clara Vanguard, playing all Yamaha brass instruments, took home the gold medal—the corps’ first DCI Championship in 19 years. Vanguard were awarded the Jim Ott High Brass Award and are the fourth Yamaha brass corps to win this award. The Vanguard Cadets, also playing Yamaha brass instruments, placed first in the Open Class Finals and received captions for Best Brass Performance and Best General Effect.

Yamaha supplies instruments to 16 corps including: The Blue Stars, The Bluecoats, Boston Crusaders, Carolina Crown, The Colts, The Crossmen, The Madison Scouts, Santa Clara Vanguard, Seattle Cascades, The Cadets, The Cavaliers, Troopers, The Colt Cadets, Leg-

ends, Shadow, and Vanguard Cadets.

The key elements that draw drum corps to Yamaha include: world-class quality products, which are in turn shaped

and refined through feedback received from the drum corps; exceptional product support, through in-house capabilities and a network of service partners throughout the United States; and the company’s unique position as a one-stop shop for world-class drum, brass and pro audio equipment.

“Not only are we privileged to contribute to the success of corps using Yamaha instruments, we help set the standard for music education in programs across the country,” says Brian Petterson, winds marketing manager, Band & Orchestral Division, Yamaha Corporation of America. “Thanks to our partnership with drum corps activities, tens of thousands of incredible young musicians – the majority of whom are future music educators – gain access to high-quality instruments and learning experiences at the cutting edge of the marching arts. Drum corps gives them the tools and context to shape the future success of their own teaching careers.”



The Santa Clara Vanguard Drum and Bugle Corps

MAC Names November 15 the First Performance National Day of Celebration

The Music Achievement Council (MAC) has announced November 15 will be the inaugural First Performance National Day of Celebration (FPNDoC) to celebrate, honor, and encourage the early achievements of music students across the United States. The innovative program provides a platform for budding musicians to showcase their newly-acquired musical skills in a public venue within the first 6 to 7 weeks of school to encourage continued engagement in music, as well as to rally parents, the community and the school at-large in support of the music program.

The new program underscores the importance of active music programs in schools, and more so, to encourage the students' performance of new musical skills in a positive environment.

"Just as in sports, with games starting shortly after the beginning of the school year, music students and band directors should also have the chance to honor and recognize their work in creating the skills that last a lifetime," said Doug Lady, chairman of the Music Achievement Council. "By celebrating and



FIRST PERFORMANCE NATIONAL DAY OF CELEBRATION

honoring the early achievements of music students, we're able to encourage continued development in music and the arts."

To support the effort for music teachers, band leaders and school administration, MAC has produced a First Performance National Day of Celebration Tool Kit, which includes links to scripts, letters to teachers,

invitations to parents, and certificates of achievement for the students. Also included are links to an optional repertoire, otherwise the teacher can use their own selected pieces. The publications are available in physical form from local school music retailers or online. School music retailers may order physical copies from Hal Leonard. Download the Tool Kit here: www.nammfoundation.org/educator-resources/firstperformance

In the future, the organization will annually designate a date of celebration to be held in the third week of November, a time in which students can learn and practice their instrument, alongside working with their band, and for parents, to witness the progress made.

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Sabian Sponsors Scholarships at Third Annual Billy Cobham Art of the Rhythm Section Retreat



Sabian and the Sabian Education Network (SEN) sponsored two scholarships to the third annual Billy Cobham Art of the Rhythm Section Retreat in Mesa, Arizona. The scholarship winners were Felipe Drago from the U.K. and Rodrigo Villanueva-Conroy of the U.S. These two professional drummer/educators were able to attend the retreat thanks to Sabian's industry-leading educational scholarships.

The third annual Billy Cobham Art of the Rhythm Section Retreat welcomed 30 musicians to classes and performance coaching with legendary musicians Billy Cobham, Dom Famularo, Ron Carter, Kenny Barron, and Lee Oskar. In addition, 14 local students were also given access to the classes. This annual retreat offers a unique educational experience for guitar, bass, drums, keyboards and wind instruments. The attendees represent a wide range of musicians, including music educators, advanced students (high school, university and post-graduate-level), semi-pros, working professionals and lifetime learners from all over the USA, UK, and South America.

The Sabian Education Network is the music industry's leading support network for drum educators. SEN offers exclusive webinars, local events, discussion panels, education resources, and a robust website offering guidance and answers to the challenges most frequently encountered by drum teachers. Webinar presenters for SEN have included Dave Weckl, Stanton Moore, Mark Guiliana, Gregg Bissonette, and many others.

All drum educators are invited to www.sabianed.com to sign up for a SEN membership.

The WiMN Announces Aiza Ntibarikure as Winner of Scholarship to Neverland Retreats

The Women's International Music Network (The WiMN) has announced that Aiza Ntibarikure from Montreal, Canada



Aiza Ntibarikure

is the winner of a scholarship to attend Neverland Retreats in Costa Rica from November 12 to 17, 2018. The WiMN teamed up with Neverland Retreats to create the scholarship, which will allow her to participate in this prestigious, in-depth event.

The WiMN founder Laura B. Whitmore says, "We are so excited to award this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to Aiza. We are confident she'll gain some valuable skills and insights that will propel her career to the next level. We can't wait to see what the future has in store for her."

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Lynyrd Skynyrd Uses Chauvet Professional Fixtures on Farewell Tour

Lynyrd Skynyrd has been using a collection of 28 Chauvet Professional Rogue R2 Wash fixtures, supplied by Premier Global Productions, on their current farewell tour. Lighting designer and director, Jonny "Tosar" Tosarello put together the light show.

"When you think of who Lynyrd Skynyrd is and what all the band has done over the years, you want to have a 'big look,' especially for their 'farewell tour,'" said Tosarello. "We wanted something that stood out and was unique, but was also clean and simple. We have 180' of silver truss spread out into six fingers that run up to downstage, and another 60' for the downstage truss. Upstage there is a 40' half circle truss that surrounds the video wall as an arch. Having rich, vibrant colors play off against the truss, using washes and toners, is definitely part of the look. Glowing set pieces."

Flying most of the RGBW movers on

downstage truss, he has them fill a dual role in his design, using them as front washes and key lights.

"I was looking for a small wash light that had the punch and speed most LDs want in an LED wash fixture, but could also work well as a special or key light," he said. "With their output, color quality and wide zoom range, the Rogues are perfect for both applications, and when you can count on a fixture to cover both roles, it makes life easier for everyone – especially the vendor and crew!"

The high output of the Rogue R2 Washes also allowed them to stand up to the profile, beam and blinder fixtures Tosarello had in his rig.

"With Lynyrd Skynyrd you've got to



have some punch in your rig for those big key moments!" he said. "I never have to worry about the Rogues being bright enough next to the other fixtures. They definitely hold their own!"

Again, Tosarello appreciates the versatility of the Rogue R2 Wash fixtures, as during this "farewell tour" Lynyrd Skynyrd is being joined on stage by various artists, many of whom they had influenced, such as Kid Rock, Jason Aldean and 38 Special. Although guest appearances can often bring different design plans, Tosarello feels he's put plenty of options in the rig that work for all guest artists and their LDs, especially with the front truss carrying 24 Rogue R2s.

Tosarello also designed his rig to be flexible.

"Most of our shows are in 'A' market venues, but even still there are those 'more challenging' places that could be a bit bigger or wider or whatever, but we know this, so best to be ready!" he said. "Prior to 2007 I'd spent many years as a lighting crew chief and learned it's really nice when a rig is designed with flexibility so – this one is! I made it a point to insure EVERYTHING will fit into any reasonable size venue despite most limitations!"

"The rig consists of six mid-stage 'fingers' that spread offstage and rake up and downstage, and a 60' downstage truss that's broken into three sections, all of which are easily moved to accommodate any possible venue limitations. Basically, we can move a bunch of stuff around and still maintain 'the look,'" continued Tosarello. "No matter where we play, Lynyrd Skynyrd has every light, every night!"



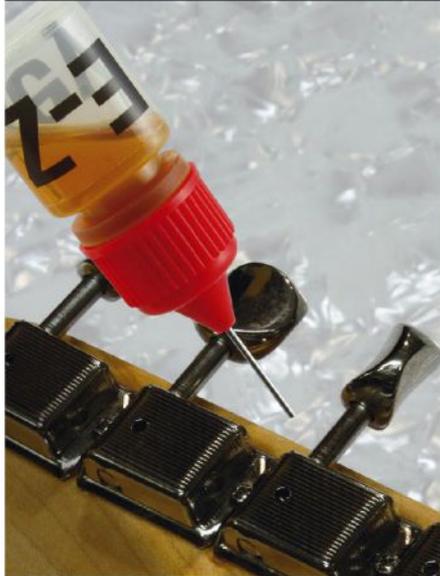
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Madisonville High School Installs Danley Sound Labs Loudspeakers

Madisonville High School of Madisonville, Texas recently had new Danley Sound Labs high-fidelity OS12CX fully-weatherproof loudspeakers installed to their baseball and softball fields. Dallas-based Romeo Music, who has been serving educational institutions for well over a decade, designed and installed the new sound reinforcement system layout.

"The original sound system for the fields used several small, 'honky' horns, which were okay for pages but didn't do so well with music," explained Kevin Deal, regional sales manager with Romeo Music. "And that system quit two years ago. Madisonville played two seasons without a sound system! Romeo Music provides a lot of equipment for the school, and we've developed a good relationship over the years. When the school officials lost confidence in the A/V integration firm that had originally been hired to install a new sound system, they asked us if we could provide that same service. We walked the facility, met with the administration, and evaluated the possibilities. The budget was tight, but Danley has bailed me out of other budget situations because I need so many fewer Danley boxes compared to designs with conventional boxes and because Danley boxes are, in my opinion, underpriced relative to their performance."

The two fields meet along their sides, with enough space for dugouts and spectators on both sides. A single large press box behind home plate allows two games to be called at the same time. Madisonville CISD wanted a sound system that could give clear, intelligible pages to each field with minimal crosstalk and that could capably play music before games and between innings. Covering the fields themselves was not a priority, but the school hoped there would be some spill for the teams during warm-up.

"We've had a lot of success with our Danley systems in the past," Deal said. "We can design Danley systems with fewer boxes, which saves a lot of money, and we're happy that they are American-made and fully supported by some of the best engineers and technicians in the industry. And of course, their patented Synergy Horn technology sounds great. I reached out to Kim Comeaux [Anderson Sales & Marketing, area Danley rep] and told him about the requirements and budget constraints. He recommended the new Danley OS12CX, which is a shorter-throw box with a wide coverage pattern.



The Madisonville High School baseball park

Importantly, it is completely weatherized, which would be important for any outdoor system, but especially so in the humid rain belt between Dallas and Houston. Although I had never heard the OS12CX, I trusted that, like every other Danley box I've ever heard, it would be great. As soon as we fired them up, I was like, 'yep, made the right decision!'"

Four Danley OS12CXs mounted on the press box cover both fields (two to a field), with angles and positioning so as to maximize coverage and minimize overlap. A four-channel QSC PLD4.5 provides abundant power to the system, with integrated DSP to allow modest equalization and overload protection. Two new microphones and an Allen & Heath two-zone mixer complete the tidy system. Deal noted that it rained for fully half the time they were installing the system, a poetic foreshadowing of the conditions the loudspeakers would endure in the days, months, and years to come. In addition, strong winds accompanied the rains, and Deal was impressed with the strength and weather-readiness of the mounting brackets and hardware.

"I find that most people assume that a weatherized loudspeaker will always sound 'honky,'" Deal said. "Not so with this system! I tuned it with a collection of songs I'm really used to hearing in a variety of circumstances – different songs that indicate different kinds of problems if they don't sound right. The OS12CXs required very few and only minor adjustments; we're running the system almost flat. And even if it's not 'chest-thumping,' the system has plenty of bass even without a subwoofer. When we first turned it on, we really opened it up, and it was a good deal louder than it needed to be. That's great, because it means they have plenty of headroom, which will prolong the life of every component and ensure their investment pays dividends long into the future."

Audio-Technica Honors Ark Productions & Marketing with President's Award

Audio-Technica has announced that Pine City, New York-based firm Ark Productions & Marketing has been presented with A-T's prestigious President's Award for their work representing Audio-Technica professional audio products during the 2017/2018 fiscal year.

Ark principal Tim Chamberlain accepted the award, which recognizes a leading manufacturer's representative for outstanding commitment and dedication.

Phil Cajka, Audio-Technica U.S. president and C.E.O., presented the A-T President's Award at a ceremony during the 2018 InfoComm Expo on June 5 in Las Vegas.

Cajka commented, "We have a long association with Ark Productions & Marketing, and they have been awarded this honor for their outstanding results in marketing, customer service and sales performance over the past year. We thank them for their hard work and dedication and look forward to their continued service for the A-T brand."



Reid Peterson (Audio-Technica U.S. director of sales), Jeff Beck (Audio-Technica U.S. Eastern Territory sales manager) Tim Chamberlain (principal, Ark Productions) and Phil Cajka (Audio-Technica U.S. president and chief executive officer)

Korg Partners with Midwest Dealers for Exclusive Clinics

Korg USA, Inc.'s lead product specialist recently hosted a variety of product clinics throughout the Midwest region. Many eager customers gathered at MC Audio in Madison, Wisconsin and Cascio Interstate Music in Milwaukee, Wisconsin to better understand the mechanisms and futuristic sounds of Korg's award-winning prologue and Waldorf's Quantum synthesizer. Attendees also had an opportunity to get hands-on with the gear, participate in a Q&A, and enter giveaways.

"It was a lot of fun to host these clinics and get to know the Korg fan base," says lead product specialist, Nick Kwas. "There's been a lot of positive reaction to both the Korg prologue and Waldorf Quantum, so providing customers with live demos and one-on-one product support encourages musicians to dive deeper into the world of synthesizers."

These clinics are created to provide additional support to dealers nationwide by granting retailers the opportunity for hands-on product training and a deeper understanding of the gear.



 A large, colorful collage featuring the Henry's Feller logo in a stylized script. The collage includes various musical instruments like guitars, a harmonica, and a mandolin, along with a "USA MADE" badge, a "MOOSTR" vinyl record, and two "Bags" of guitar strings. The background is blue with decorative patterns.

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MMR GLOBAL



by **Ronnie Dungan**

Let's Go Aldi Way

German supermarket, Aldi, which specializes in offering very cheap grocery and household ranges, has launched a line of musical instruments in its U.K. stores.

It's certainly nothing new to find supermarkets dabbling with the lower end of the market, but in the U.K. at least, Aldi's image is very bargain basement. It's about the cheapest place you can go to get your shopping, and you don't go there if quality rather than price is your main criteria.

It offers an Electric Guitar Starter Pack which costs £89.99, but is only available online.

The pack comes with amp and accessories, including a carry bag, lead, spare strings, and plectrums. You can also buy an adult's full-sized keyboard for £69.99 which comes with light-up keys and detachable music stand.

The range also includes guitars for £34.99 each which come in three different sizes – the 36" student guitar, the 39" classical guitar or the 41" acoustic guitar. And there's also two wooden percussion sets for £9.99.

Cheap instruments are to be found in the most unlikely of places. But you have to wonder what it says about the lower end of our market, that instruments have become so commoditized as to be viable for what is probably the U.K.'s cheapest supermarket.

Mind you, the way the U.K. is going, there will be a hell of a lot more people out there busking pretty soon. On that basis, maybe cheap and cheerful is the way to go.

Musikmesse Goes for Therapy

U.K. MI and audio distributor Studio-master, has signed a major MI and pro audio retail distribution agreement with EMD Music for Austria, Belgium, France, Messe Frankfurt and the German Music Therapy Society (DMtG) will hold the "New Therapy Instruments" competition at Musikmesse 2019.

Instrument makers, artists, and music therapists are invited to develop and implement ideas for new instruments and sounds. The awards ceremony will be held during Musikmesse in April 2019. The award is worth €2,000.

The competition will honor not only hand-crafted therapy instruments but also new digital applications, such as music apps. The condition for inclusion is that the products are suitable for use and helpful in one or more of the many areas of music therapy. They can be developments that are easy to employ, that have a special simulative nature, trigger impressive experiences, or offer easier access to music for people with impairments.

Michael Biber, group show director of the Entertainment, Media & Creative Industries Business Unit of Messe Frankfurt Exhibition GmbH: "Musikmesse is always open to new topics and product groups. In recent years, we have provided a platform for music therapy and its methods, and we want to expand this commitment in the future. The 'New Therapy Instrument' competition is an important step in this direction and we are particularly pleased that the renowned German Mu-



sic Therapy Society has agreed to partner us in organizing it and thus position the subject prominently at the fair."

Volker Bernius of the DMtG Board of Management: "From inclusion work to neurology: the use of music-therapy instruments is multifarious and new products, from which music therapists can profit, are continuously being developed. Our aim is to draw attention to this broad spectrum at Musikmesse. With the new competition, we also aim to boost innovation in the sector and make a contribution to the promotion of future-oriented projects."

An expert jury of music therapists, musicians and instrument makers will select the most successful works from the entries. Decisive for the judging are criteria such as originality, design, ease of use, and potential for therapeutic use.

The deadline for receipt of prototypes, including product information, is January 31, 2019. Full details about entries can be found at www.musiktherapie.de/verband/instrumentenwettbewerb.

Australian Exclusive for Faith Guitars



The Faith Guitars team

Barnes & Mullins, Faith Guitars' parent company, has struck a new national distribution agreement with CMC Music as exclusive distributors of the brand in Australia.

CMC Music took the opportunity to debut Faith Guitars at the recent Melbourne Guitar Show on August 4-5.

Established in 1991, CMC Music has successfully developed a profile of international brand distribution agreements as well as establishing a widespread dealer network throughout Australia.

Alex Mew, B&M's marketing director, said, "Australia is a blossoming and exciting market for Faith Guitars, and I am delighted to be working alongside Carole Johnston and the CMC Music team to maximize the potential in this area."

The latest distribution agreement with CMC Music in Australia further cements Faith Guitars' presence throughout influential global markets including the U.K., U.S., China, India, South Africa, and throughout much of Europe.

Supro Conjures up Black Magic

Supro's latest launch, the Black Magick Reverb amplifier, adds artist-requested features to the recreation of the vintage Supro amp loaned by Jimmy Page to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Museum.

Developed in collaboration with Lenny Kravitz, the Black Magick Reverb captures the mid-range grind and signature sound of the original model – while adding all-tube reverb, 2-band EQ, and a master volume knob for extra flexibility. The amp is available as an all-tube head or in a 1x12 combo format.

"All the tones I need in one amp. Now with classic spring reverb," says Lenny Kravitz.

Much like the original Black Magick, the Reverb version features two independent preamp channels that can be linked together using the 1&2 input jack to obtain the fattest possible tone. Additional gain has been added to both preamp channels in the Black Magick Reverb, while the dual-gang, single-knob tone control from the non-reverb model has been reconfigured with separate treble and bass knobs for a wider range of possible sounds.

The amp's six-spring reverb pan is driven by both channels and then summed with the dry signal just before the master volume control.

An updated, tube-based LFO circuit provides bias-modulated output tube tremolo with double the speed range of the original Black Magick. The output stage of the Black Magick Reverb is based on the same Class-A power amp as the non-Reverb model, utilizing a matched pair of 6973 tubes and a custom-made Supro output transformer with 16-ohm, 8-ohm and 4-ohm output options.

The combo version of the Black Magick Reverb features the same, custom-designed 12" BD12 speaker found in the original Black Magick combo. Standalone 1x12 and 1x15 extension cabinets can be used with both the head and combo

versions for a huge stage sound and the undeniable rock & roll flair of Supro's Black Rhino Hide tolex.

Features:

All-tube Supro circuit

Wattage: 25 Watts Class A

Channels: 2 channels with parallel link and shared 2-band EQ

Tremolo: Output-tube bias-modulated tremolo, footswitchable

Reverb: 6-spring all-tube reverb

Preamp Tubes: 4x 12AX7, 1x 12AT7

Power Tubes: 2x 6973

Speaker: 1 x 12" Supro BD12

Cabinet Dimensions: 20 1/2" x 18 3/4" x 8 3/4" – 52 x 47.6 x 22.2 cm

Weight: 39.5 lbs / 18 kg

Tolex: Black Rhino Hide

Assembled in New York, USA

Supro amplifiers are distributed in the U.K., ROI and Europe by JHS. The Black Magick Reverb head retails for £1,299 and the combo version is £1,529. Both are shipping now to Supro dealers.



Ovation Readies Relaunch Plan



Ovation owner Drum Workshop is readying a relaunch of the bowl-back acoustic brand with new specs and new price points for existing models as it moves to new production facilities.

The owner of the 50-plus year, storied brand recently announced plans to update most of its current models. Much of the comprehensive strategy is said to focus on a review of existing models and

price points with the long-term goal of laying groundwork for a future that offers diehard Ovation fans a value proposition consistent with past models, while delivering stand-out instruments to a new generation of guitar enthusiasts.

"Ovation has always been predicated on innovation, advancement, sound quality, ease of use, and playability. Although the market segment has changed quite a bit since Ovation launched in the '70s, that still holds true today. It's parallel to the DW Drums philosophy and we need to make sure we are abiding by the legacy that Charlie Kaman created over 50 years ago," said newly-appointed Ovation brand coordinator, William Robinson. The brand will launch a revised website and pricing and has plans to step-up specifications and features on import and U.S.-made product in the coming year. Meanwhile, Ovation's New Hartford, Connecticut facility will cease operations to clear the way for the brand's new direction. Existing U.S. inventory will continue to be sold during the transition process.

Drum Workshop president and C.E.O., Chris Lombardi added: "We really want these guitars to be embraced by a new audience, while in keeping with what Ovation means to so many people around the world. We hear from guitarists that tell us Ovation was their first guitar and they still play it today. That means it made a substantial impact on the industry and we want to keep that feeling alive. It's what makes Ovation so special."

Korg Ties up Soundbrenner Deal

Korg U.K. has added the Soundbrenner accessories line to its portfolio of brands.

Soundbrenner's Pulse vibration metronome was launched in 2016, with over one million musicians already using the companion app, and the number of Pulse wearers growing daily.

The company has seen rapid sales growth, boosted by endorsements from the likes of JR Robinson, Jordan Rudess, and Peter Erskine.

Managing director of Korg U.K., Ricci Hodgson, said, "We're really excited to welcome Soundbrenner on board. Their high standards and innovative design ideas are perfectly matched with our company ethos, and in the Pulse we have a product that is ideally suited to customers in every area of our business."

The Soundbrenner Pulse will be officially launched under its new distribution arrangement at the Korg U.K. Housefair on Tuesday, September 4 and Wednesday, September 5, along with other announcements.



Rush Legend Geddy Lee Backs Rotosound

Rotosound has received a ringing endorsement from Geddy Lee, iconic bass player with Canadian rocksmiths Rush, who has made a special video extolling the virtues of the manufacturer's Swing Bass strings.



Geddy Lee

Lee has always used Rotosound strings and proclaimed: "I've never found another string to replace them."

The Swing Bass strings he uses were developed in 1966 by Rotosound founder James How and Who bassist John Entwistle, and perfected into what became the industry standard. The bright punchy high energy sound the string offers is so much a big part of early rock music as we know it, and quickly grew in popularity to all four corners of the globe. It remains the leading contender to this present day.

"I've used these strings for my entire career," said Lee. "So all you bass players out there, if you use them, right on, and if you don't use them you should consider them because they're an amazing

string.

"They've always given me that top end I need and the bottom end I need and I've relied on them in recording situations and live as well. I always use the Swing Bass strings. I've never found another string to replace them. So, honestly, from one bass player to another out there, you won't be disappointed, they really rock."

Rotosound Swing Bass 66 strings are available in both four and five string (and even eight string) sets in a range of gauges and scale lengths.

Porter and Davies Introduces Super Mini BC-X



Porter & Davies, specialist in tactile monitoring systems, has launched the BC-X, a super-mini version of its BC2 and BC Gigster.

The new, smaller version comes with simplified professional standard features and a price as streamlined as its size.

Four years in the making, the BC-X has the same quality build, identical response time, and many of the same superior components as the BC2 and BC Gigster and features the company's brand new, unique TT1 Precision Devices Transducer built into the top of the patented throne.

All this has enabled the company to significantly reduce the stage footprint of the unit and reduce the price to £479 plus VAT. The BC-X is available now, exclusively from www.porterand-davies.co.U.K./shop.

Trade Regrets



Paul Christian Morris, the president and founder of well-known MI and pro audio rep firm PCM Marketing, passed away July 13, 2018 from injuries sustained in an automobile accident. He was 65.

Paul was born on November 30, 1952 in Alameda County, on the east side of San Francisco Bay, and developed a love of music from an early age – something that stayed with him for his entire life.

Like other kids growing up in the mid-1960's, Paul played guitar in cool local bands with groovy names such as "Jupiter Aerial Steame Carriage." He once scored a "dream job" of working behind the retail counter at Skatzenbag Music Company in Berkeley, where he enjoyed demoing and selling guitars to musicians in the burgeoning SF Bay Area rock scene.

While musical fame wasn't in the cards, Paul did learn that there

were careers in music other than being on stage. Eventually he combined his passion for music and audio with his friendly, outgoing personality, and in January 1989, Paul formed PCM Marketing, which would go on to become one of the country's most successful manufacturers' rep firms.

Paul was perhaps best known for his smile, caring attitude and genuine concern, putting out extra effort to help, educate and mentor customers, clients and co-workers. One of the nicest guys in the business, Paul had many, many friends throughout the M.I. and pro audio industries, and was respected and loved by all. His passing sent shockwaves through the pro audio community and accolades quickly poured in over social media, as associates and friends expressed their grief. Farewell, old friend and rest well – you were one of the good ones.

Morris is survived by his wife, Constance "Connie" Morris and sons Michael and Steven.

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ON THE MOVE

Chauvet has named **Alain Minet** marketing manager of Chauvet Europe. Alain, who comes to Chauvet after successful tenures as a marketing executive at Serge Ferrari and Philips, will work out of the company's recently opened Paris office.



Prior to joining Chauvet, Alain Minet directed corporate communications and marketing at Serge Ferrari. Before that, he was segment manager at Philips Office, Industrial and Healthcare Lighting. Minet will be heading the European marketing of the entire family of Chauvet brands, which includes Chauvet Professional, Chauvet DJ, Iluminarc, and Trusst. He will report directly to John Castelino, global vice president of marketing at Chauvet.

Full Compass announced that **Susan Butera** has joined the company as vice president of marketing. In her role, she will lead the marketing team and help drive continued growth of the business.



Butera comes to Full Compass with deep experience in brand strategy, digital, and catalog marketing. Her focus at the company will be on acquiring new customers, retaining existing customers, communicating the brand value proposition, and creating an outstanding experience for all customers. Butera will report to the company's CEO, Craig Johnson, and will partner with Full Compass' leadership and management teams.

Reverb.com, has added **Crystal Morris**, CEO and co-founder of leading case manufacturer Gator Cases, to its board of directors. The long-time musical instrument industry executive and music education advocate will support Reverb – which recently surpassed \$1 billion in total sales on the platform – as it continues to expand.



"Reverb is dedicated to not only supporting the musical instrument industry,

but also to growing the entire musician community through its platform, service, and nonprofit efforts," said Morris. "Having spent nearly my entire career selling music gear, I know that the industry is constantly evolving to meet the needs of musicians, and I'm excited to align myself with a like-minded company that is dedicated to helping the entire ecosystem continue to thrive."

A new addition to the Korg USA, Inc. sales team has been hired for the Southwest Territory. **Rob Caniglia** has been appointed the new district sales manager, effective immediately. Caniglia, a California resident, will be handling sales for the Golden State, developing and sustaining relationships with dealers in the industry. Prior to his hire at KORG USA, Inc., Caniglia worked for D'Addario & Company, Inc. in a variety of roles including inside sales, percussion specialist and regional sales manager. After leaving D'Addario in 2017, Caniglia worked for EMG pickups and most recently at Keith McMillon Instruments where he was the vice president of sales.



With the success Soundtree has seen over the last few years, Korg USA, Inc. has also hired a new sales rep to focus and grow business in the southeast territory. **Greg Spiess** has been hired as the education technology specialist where he will oversee schools in his territory, providing educators new and innovative ways to teach music in schools and universities. Prior to his new role, Spiess worked as a sales and selection consultant for Steinway. He is also a dedicated organist having worked for Riverside Park United Methodist Church and Arlington Presbyterian Church, respectively. Spiess was appointed choirmaster at Arlington Presbyterian Church, directing and choosing anthems for a variety of the choirs and programs during his seven-year span.



Sweetwater has announced the hiring of **Bob "Shep" Shepherd** to fill the newly-created position of vice president of merchandis-



ing. He brings a wealth of knowledge to Sweetwater, having spent the last 18 years in the music retail industry. Shepherd will help oversee a team of more than 20 people focused on focused on continuous improvement in category performance and inventory.

Coinciding with the recent grand opening of its new Nashville Artist Relations Center, Roland has appointed **James Hatem** to serve as artist relations (A/R) representative, to be based in Nashville and serve the city's growing A/R needs on behalf of the Roland and BOSS brands. The announcement was made by Brian Alli, Roland's vice president of Global Influencer Relations, to whom Hatem will directly report, and is part of Roland's updated corporate artist relations strategy, which has seen the company's A/R footprint expand to include dedicated centers in Los Angeles, Nashville, London (at Metropolis Studios), Vancouver, Toronto, Berlin, and Tokyo.



Hatem will spend much of his time based at Roland's new Nashville Artist Relations Center, located within Love Shack Studios in Nashville's Music Row neighborhood. Founded to serve the needs of current and prospective Roland and BOSS artists, the new center will be a hub for a variety of activities, including product support, social media initiatives, interviews, sessions, and unique streaming events, photo shoots, gear demos, and much more.

Guitar Center has announced that **Anne Buchanan** has been appointed as senior vice president of Human Resources and chief human resources officer. In her role, Buchanan will assume responsibility for leading the human resources strategy and enabling Guitar Center to attract, motivate, develop and retain a diverse and inclusive workforce. Buchanan joins Guitar Center from Global Brands Group, where she led the human resources strategy for the fashion and retail business, including a retail store fleet of over 350 stores and corporate operations for multiple apparel brands.



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Hans-Peter Wilfer of Warwick & Framus

Hans-Peter Wilfer: Our milestones for 2018 were: the new RockBoard Line, with the unique pedalboards which are so advanced in the market from the ideas and the design; all our Flat Patch cables and accessories and we are working so hard with our team on the new innovations for 2019 like Solderless Cables, Safermates, and Quickmounts, which will be huge innovations in the pedal market. Another milestone is our new Framus D Series, which will be launched into the market in the third quarter of 2018.

Late May saw the partnership with High Tech Distribution. While the relationship is still relatively new, how has that development impacted the Framus and Warwick brands in both the U.K. and France so far?

We are very happy about our partnership with Patrice Vigier and his family [owners of Vigier Guitars, of which High Tech Distribution is a division – Ed.], as we have similar roots and we are close with our working ethics and how we see the market. As Vigier is a custom shop guitar maker, as well, we fit very well together. Our collective brands do not compete against one another and it will make us both stronger in France and the U.K. It is a perfect match of two great families!

Framus is a storied guitar line that first existed from the mid-'40s through to the mid-'70s, attracting some fairly well-known players along the way (Paul McCartney, Bill Wyman, John Lennon – you may have heard of them...), and which was revived in 1995 by Hans-Peter Wilfer (son of Framus founder, Fred Wilfer). Warwick produces well-regarded basses, including signature models for the likes of Robert Trujillo (Metallica), Adam Clayton (U2), and Jonas Hellborg. Today, the two fretted brands are components of a larger company – which also fields RockBoard pedalboards, Warwick Amps, strings, and cases & bags.

MMR recently spoke with Hans-Peter Wilfer about the recent anniversaries for both Warwick and Framus, the company's distribution model in the U.S. and abroad, and developments of note on the horizon.

2018 has been a busy year for both Framus and Warwick. You began the year with a video celebrating the 70th anniversary of Framus and the 35th for Warwick – what events, promotions, special edition instruments, et cetera have you already done or release to further mark the milestones? What else might we expect in the coming months?

How about the U.S.? What's the current distribution model for your instruments in America? How would interested dealers go about becoming Framus/Warwick retailers?

The U.S. is a great market to be in! We are working very hard to bring our brands to the U.S. market and have a great team there to do so. Dealers that are interested in RockBoard pedalboards and accessories should contact Framus & Warwick Music USA in Nashville, Tennessee at (629) 202-6790 or email Laurie Abshire at l.abshire@framuswarwickusa.com. I advise all dealers to get in on this, as the margins are great for everyone and it would just be insane not to get involved. You can use the same contact for all Framus instruments. That includes all Legacy Acoustics, German Pro Series, and Masterbuilt Custom Shop instruments. The Warwick brand basses and amps are still being distributed by KMC.

Currently, what's the top selling Framus model in the U.S.? How about for Warwick?

Just as anything, the popularity of all models wax and wane through the ages. With Framus, one of the top sellers is the Pan-

“We have our niche in the market, and through our quality and really well-made products, we still see potential to grow, but more important to us is the quality over the quantities.”

“I advise all dealers to get in on this, as the margins are great for everyone and it would just be insane not to get involved.”

thera II Supreme. It is requested in almost every color and wood variation you can think of. For Warwick, the Streamer has been a great seller with both artists and consumers.

Recently, Framus introduced the Pro Series Teambuilt Stormbender Devin Model. Are there any other significant product introductions for either Warwick or Framus that you'd like to share with our readers?

Yes, we are working very close with some of our great artists for some new models in 2019, which we will present at Anaheim this coming January. We are in the middle of development... but can't say more. These will be the new models for 2019 at NAMM!

RockBoard seems to really be connecting with end-users. What's the relation of RockBoard to Warwick, exactly, and what's next for the brand?

Actually, the relationship is very strong because RockBoard is by Warwick and distributed by W-Distribution in the E.U. and U.K. along with distribution in the U.S. by Framus & Warwick Music USA in Nashville. That is a good question, though, just in case someone was thinking the same. So many new products are on the slab for RockBoard. We have very exciting and innovative products we are working on. I encourage my team to let myself or the RockBoard designers know about any ideas to contribute, as they have been using pedalboards for years and have the knowledge as to what should be suggested.

What's your general take on the "health" of the guitar and bass markets – both globally and in the U.S. – and what are your expectations for the remainder of 2018?

Well, we are a small workshop that produces our Custom Shop and Pro Series instruments in Germany. We also have our Warwick RockBass and Framus DS Series that come in from China. We are not a huge manufacturer which produces 500,000 guitars and basses. We never overload the market with our instruments. We have our niche in the market, and through our quality and really well-made products, we still see potential to grow, but more important to us is the quality over the quantities. We do not have a sale for every price-point and we do not give any discounts because this doesn't increase the market. We have a totally different philosophy than so many other companies, which sell with specials and discounts to fill more and more products to the dealers.

I believe the guitar market is not dead. When I see what we sell on ukuleles, these [players are] all potential future customers. Not all, of course, but some see how much fun it is to play an instrument and become a customer for the next 50 years. It's maybe not the same quantity as with the Baby Boomers – a time which is close to over and may not be coming back – but it will still be a good market if you have

- quality products
- give value to your customers
- have innovative products
- love what you do

It is not just a business. What we do is a passion and love, and if you do it only for money... well, you will fail in our business.

Any further developments or final thoughts you'd like to share with our readers?

Believe in our market and practice good skills to keep the industry alive – not just for your own business, but for the entire industry. A strong industry will help us all. Stick with the quality. Diluting your products by flash sales only dilutes your company and yourself.

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'Non-guitar' Fretted Instruments Making Waves in 2018 By Christian Wissmuller

Many point to country music (and “pop country,” as purists refer to some artists) and bluegrass as two main drivers of the recent resurgence in acoustic (and, to a lesser extent, electric) guitar sales. Folks see Casey James, Punch Brothers, Kenny Chesney, Old Crow Medicine Show, Taylor Swift (I know, I know – she *used* to be country-ish, though) playing guitar and that inspires them to pick up a six-string.

Makes sense.

But what about those “other” fretted instruments associated with these styles of music. Are dobros, mandolins, resophonic guitars, banjos, and the like also seeing increased interest from players and MI customers?

MMR recently chatted with representatives from five key suppliers of these types of instruments to get their take on the state of this market segment and expectations for the coming months.

Other than hip-hop, R&B, and dance music, country has been the genre most consistently on the charts for the past many years. How has this been impacting interest in, and sales of, other fretted instruments related to country music, aside from the guitar?

Justin Grizzle: Gold Tone has been the “go-to” for country musicians for the past 20 years. Particularly in the past four-to-five years we’ve seen an increase in our “folkternative” instruments in this new age of country music. Bands like Kenny Chesney and The Band Perry are using our Bouzouki, Octave Mandolin, and 6-string Manditar (guitar neck on mandolin body) to add texture to their music. Bands like Keith Urban, Florida Georgia Line, Luke Bryan, and Jake Owen are using our 6-string banjos for creating unique and/or traditional sounds. The song “Neon Light” by Blake Shelton really highlights how they are using our BT-14 (14” banjo pot with a 6-string guitar neck) to get a real “plunky” sound that creates a melodic lead line throughout the entire song. We are seeing more country artist looking for ways to make their music stand out by adding more instrumental dimensions. When other musicians see these artists with unique instruments or hear different sounds on the radio they seek out those instruments.

On the more traditional side of country music we are still seeing a good variety of Gold Tone Banjos and Paul Beard/Gold Tone resophonic guitars being sold and played in the industry/marketplace.

Players from bands like Alan Jackson, Luke Combs, Josh Turner, Rascal Flatts, and several others really rely on Gold Tone as “road worthy” instruments. This impacts our sales directly because word travels quickly among the musician circuit and within retail stores about which instruments will get you the most “Pluck for your Buck.”

Travis Atz: Both banjo and mandolin have been hugely affected by this. Recording King banjos and The Loar mandolins have found their way onto all kinds of country cuts.

For example, if you see Darius Rucker on tour, you’ll see a Recording King banjo come out for “Wagon Wheel.” Things like that have driven increased interest in other traditional instruments besides guitar. The crossover potential is huge also – and this is in both directions. Current country chart hits share a lot sonically with rock and R&B, so now you’re hearing banjo and mandolin slide over into these other styles as well, and even into lounge and electronic music.

The listening public at large is getting more accustomed to hearing banjo trebles, mandolin courses, or slide guitar playing, in large part thanks to the chart popularity of modern country. This has increased sales of all of these “auxiliary” instruments, for sure.

Country music as a genre has also fragmented considerably. In addition to pop-country and traditional artists, we work with a growing group of younger players who combine all sorts of “traditional” country and bluegrass instruments for a new Americana/folk/rock/country mishmash that’s totally awesome.

Check out bands like Banditos, Shovels and Rope, Whiskey Shivers, Sammy Brue, or Old Crow Medicine Show for a taste of how diversely these traditional instruments are being used.

Paul Beard: Country music continues to morph, borrowing from other genres of music and non-traditional country instrumentation. This is also true of bluegrass and Americana music in general. Because of this



Paul Beard, Beard Guitars

The R Model from Beard Guitars

diversity, more people are drawn to genres of music that they may not been interested in by label only. Resonator guitar is now being used in bluegrass more than ever, as well as in country music. I feel that we are living in an incredible time of growth and creativity in the music world.

David Bandrowski: We have a number of high profile country artists who use our banjos – artists such as Keith Urban, Taylor Swift, Eric Church, Zac Brown, and more. These artists using our banjos have definitely impacted our sales in a positive way and the popularity of country music has definitely helped drive our sales up.

The popularity of folk rock bands such as Mumford & Sons and the Avett Brothers has also played a huge role in driving sales of banjos. What is interesting is that a lot of these players are not necessarily trying to sound like Earl or Bela. They are just finding a way to play the banjo in a way that works for them and the song.

Tom Bedell: The mandolin has certainly benefitted from continued growth in country music, Americana, and bluegrass. Weber is unique in that we also specialize in the entire mandolin family of larger instruments such as the mandola, octave mandolin, and mandocello. While we certainly see growth in mandolin use within the country genre, we're also seeing additional growth in these larger body shapes which open new doors for performers looking for additional sound and tone options. These larger body shapes are actually opening doors in many additional genres such as classical, blues, punk, rock, et cetera. These are not just country and bluegrass instruments anymore.

Bluegrass is also a force to be reckoned with. To what extent is bluegrass culture and its steady popularity contributing to today's market for these instruments?

PB: Bluegrass has been embraced by a young generation, as witnessed by the number of college-aged folks who play. These young super pickers are unencumbered by traditional roots or expectations. Experimentation is not a concept, it's the new expectation.

TB: Bluegrass is certainly growing and in some instances segmenting and changing depending on which part of the country you are talking about. As some newer groups take bluegrass more mainstream, we see the influence of the genre on potential mandolin buyers. At Weber, we're focused on "perfecting tradition." As the

phrase implies, staying traditional and building the best playing and sounding traditional instruments is really central to our core. Naturally, this resonates with the bluegrass genre and players as they are largely a traditional instrument-focused demographic.

DB: Without a doubt, the 5-string banjo has always been a core instrument in the bluegrass genre, and so, makes up the lion's share of the banjo market. When someone

decides that they want to try banjo for the first time, they are normally faced with a couple of options as far as styles. Bluegrass is one of those styles and since it is the most well-known banjo music, most will gravitate to this style first. This is also backed up by the impressive selection of learning material available in this style. So the growing popularity of bluegrass definitely helps drive our sales.

TA: We've always seen bluegrass as a

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musician's genre as much as a listener's. There's a strong family tradition in bluegrass, so many bluegrass artists grew up playing music with their families almost since birth. The result of weaving music so closely into life at such a young age is that many of the players grow up to be absolutely jaw-dropping musicians.

Musicians gravitate toward great players, and bluegrass is full of them. With the new generation of players, though, young'uns are changing some of the traditions. We see a lot of younger banjo and mandolin players who are leveraging the internet to draw attention to the traditional (and non-traditional) music they're making. It's the perfect marriage of vintage and modern, and a solid case study on how to keep classic genres vital and fresh.

JG: Bluegrass music is *awesome!* The bluegrass culture has really opened its arms to Gold Tone and allowed our banjos to become a household name within the community. We are forever thankful for that! Wayne and Robyn Rogers (Gold Tone founder/owners) are Bluegrass musicians and took that "players aspect" into creating instruments with the player (and their pocketbook) in mind.

I think the question sort of answers itself. The reasons these instruments are still selling is because of the "culture and its steady popularity." The steady popularity is due to the culture of musicians that stay true to the instruments that make bluegrass music. Like they say: "How many bluegrass musicians does it take to change a light bulb? Four – one to change the bulb and the other three to complain because its electric."

With that being said, there are other bands that are transitioning bluegrass music and making it appealing to different genres that may not have listened otherwise. Bands like GreenSky BlueGrass and Leftover Salmon are introducing and peaking the interest of millennials to a type of music that has bluegrass roots. It is important to keep these instruments in the forefront of music no matter the style in which they are being played.

Of these country- or bluegrass-related, "non-guitar" fretted instruments offered by your brand, what are your top sellers at the moment?

DB: Our Goodtime 5-string banjo is always our highest seller due to the fact that it is our most inexpensive banjo. Even though this is our most inexpensive banjo, it is still made in the same shop as our upper-line banjos which is located in Spring Valley, California. Hence the quality, tone, and playability is of the same standard as our more expensive instruments. The Goodtime 5-string openback is also the core model for the rest of the Goodtime line, which can include adding a resonator, a tone ring, or even a 12" rim if that is what the customer prefers.

Our 6-string banjos are also very popular with the country crowd, as these banjos are tuned and played just like a guitar but feature a banjo tone. The new Goodtime Six R banjo is going over very well. A lot of our country artists have been playing our Boston 6-string banjo, which is very popular. However, the \$2600 price tag is not always within everyone's reach,

so the Goodtime Six R is a great alternative for anyone looking to stay under the \$900 mark.

JG: The AC-1 Banjo, M-Bass (this has been our top-selling instrument for the last five years), F-6 Guitar (tuned E-E just like a regular guitar), CC-100R – Gold Tone staple 5-string banjo, Little Gem Banjo ukulele, AC-6+ Banjitar w/pick-up, Paul Beard Signature Dobro, Mandocello with pickup, Bouzouki, and the OB-150 Professional Bluegrass Banjo.

PB: The Beard Deco Phonic line is very popular as it offers a variety of American made models starting at \$1,600, and Jerry Douglas signature models with the Fishman Nashville pickup starting at \$3,900. It's interesting to note that these best-selling models represent two different price points in the market. This is proof that there is continued growth for non-guitar fretted instruments as we see customers upgrade to higher priced models.

TB: The ultimate country or bluegrass instrument series we are building would be the Yellowstone Series. Within, the F14-F (F style) mandolin is hands-down the most sought after. From there, and within the series, we see quite a bit of interest in the Octave with many musicians. In fact, Keb Mo just picked up a Yellowstone Octave to incorporate in his performances.

TA: The Loar Honey Creek Mandolins have been selling like crazy, and the road-ready Recording King Madison Banjo line has been doing really well for us also. The Recording King Rattlesnake Resonator Guitar is relatively new, but has been a great success right out of the gate. We're selling every single one we build. The top line Recording King Elite banjos have been selling really well, too. Their longer scale length gives them extra punch to cut through the mix in modern country or pop.

Have you noticed any "best practices" being enacted by dealers who are particularly successful selling these types of instruments?

PB: Yes. I have dealers that recognize many consumers want the flexibility of an on-board pickup system, even as a beginner player. Those dealers will order resonator guitars with pickups as a stock item. This works well for resonator guitars, as it creates a different, sonic pallet when amplified. Also, dealers do well when they can demonstrate how "guitar like" a cross-over or alternative instrument can be when played. Showing a guitar player a familiar tuning on an unfamiliar instrument can give the customer that instant feeling of success. Getting the customer to realize their potential on that instrument is key.

TA: Where we've really seen the most success is when we partner with a dealer to create a dedicated space in their store. Recording King and The Loar can create a great 5-hook destination on your wall that covers the breadth of our lines and delivers great sell-through. Dealers who show our \$200 flat top, \$179 lap steel, \$300 resonator, \$250 banjo, and \$300 killer F-style mandolin can easily qualify their customer, then quickly connect them with the right instrument. Our research shows this setup delivers an optimal combo of small footprint and high profit.

We've recently added RK and The Loar accessories – straps, steels,



Justin Grizzle, Gold Tone Music Group



The BZ-500 Irish Bouzouki Mandolin from Gold Tone Music



The Boston 6-String Acoustic/Electric Banjo from Deering Banjos



David Bandrowski, Deering Banjos

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bags, thumbpicks, et cetera – that have become great money-makers for our dealers. We make sure all our accessory offerings are aligned with our products to help keep brand identity consistent.

Many of our dealers have taken advantage of our Pickup Install Program, too. We install high-quality Fishman and LR Baggs pickups into many of our banjos and mandolins in our U.S. workshops, to order. The unboxing experience when you open that case and the customer sees their instrument with custom-installed pickup directly from the workshop is awesome. It makes the customer happy, the dealer look good, and allows the player to head right from the store to the stage. More and more artists are using our instruments to add texture in the live format, so the ability to offer our products with professional level pickups is giving us a tremendous sales lift.

TB: Over the last year, we have worked very hard to refine the color work of our instruments. The Yellowstone finish was updated and released at Summer NAMM in 2018. This new finish is very traditional, and as a result, the instrument has been very well received by the mandolin community, artists, and dealers. The point is dealers carrying very traditional and well-built mandolins are going to see higher turnover than instruments that don't fit the traditional needs.

JG: Yes, we have had several dealers adopt our Folkternative marketing concept and implement it in their stores and on their websites. For example, we have dealers that are stocking the 6-strings mandolins and 6-string banjos, but display them in the guitar departments (not the folk or bluegrass) so they get exposed to guitar players.

The concept is to stock these alternative instruments, but display them with the same style of its native instrument. So, you would show the Bouzouki and Octave Mandolin as a Folkternative instrument for mandolin players. We offer 20 Folkternative instruments for guitar player, and 10 for banjo players. We offer a Display Stand which only takes up four square feet of floor space (or can wrap around a pole) and holds 8-12 instruments. This give Gold Tone's Folkternative instruments their own department or Gold Tone's Bluegrass/Folk instrument their own department.

DB: Our best performing dealers are usually banjo specialists. They know the ins and outs of our product. They are active in promoting and talking to the banjo community. They know and understand how banjos work, the different types of banjos, and can really direct a customer towards the perfect banjo for them. They also tend to have a broader selection of banjos to back up their claim, allowing the customer to try a few different options.

The other side of this coin is we look a lot at the dealers who do not perform well. Occasionally, they genuinely struggle to develop a banjo market in their region. That does happen. However, more often than not, it is the expectation that they will just sell. We had a dealer call us just last week, dismayed

at the fact that nothing had sold. [The banjos] were not listed on their website. They had not posted about the banjos on social media. No demo videos created. We then come to find out that they were hung way out of reach of most customers, so there was no incentive

for them to even try them. This is an important point for any dealer looking to take on a niche product line like a banjo.

Are there any recent or emerging trends in this market segment that you've noticed of late? What are your expectations for sales of these fretted instruments in the coming months?

TB: As noted prior, we are seeing trending in traditional instruments and emerging interest in the larger body shapes. Players are looking for ways to distinguish themselves and create new sound and tone, and these larger shapes give them the ability to develop new twists on traditional sound and tone.

JG: Yes! Banjo ukes, metal body ukes, resonator ukes, and Folkternative ukuleles!

Folkternative ukuleles have been popular for many years mainly because all the players that started on ukulele are looking for other ways to showcase their skills or stand out within their ukulele groups. I do not see this trend slowing down since ukulele is still one of the most trending instruments in the market.

Gold Tone offers 15 Folkternative ukulele models in various body types and scale lengths.

Our most popular banjo ukulele is the Little Gem banjo uke. They were a huge hit at NAMM this year. They are very affordable and come with a gig bag, tools, and point of purchase box.

DB: One definite trend in the banjo market is the explosion of growth for old time music/clawhammer banjo style playing. This would be the second style that newcomers are presented with when picking up the 5 string banjo for the first time. These type of players use openback 5-string banjos as oppose to bluegrass style players who use resonator 5-string banjos.

Clawhammer is a great style to get into for a number of reasons. It is a fantastic style to play on your own. Bluegrass, on the other hand really comes to life in a band setting. Clawhammer banjo is also very rhythmical and very relaxing to play. I think there is an overall trend for people to look for more simplicity in their lives. To get away from gadgets, to be a little freer and more independent from the ties of everyday life. Clawhammer lends itself very nicely to this lifestyle, so we expect this segment to grow more and more

TA: Resonators are hot! We've seen a 150% sales lift in resonators over the past 12 months. We brought in a special run of metal body resonators that sold out in days. We also have four new wood body resonators for 2018, including a signature model from the legendary Phil Leadbetter. The Rattlesnake wood body resonator is one of our top 10 Recording King SKUs.

On the sales side, the trend toward mainstreaming classic "auxiliary" instruments seems to be ongoing. We expect banjo, mandolin, and resonator sales to all continue to be strong. The increasing number of electrified folk instruments requested by artists has made our pickup install program an added bonus that keeps our sales strong and our dealers excited.

PB: I see that more people are willing to experiment with new voices of instruments. Baritone and bass resonator guitars are gaining in popularity, adding to the continued growth of resonator instruments in general.



Travis Atz, Recording King & The Loar



The Loar LM-310F Honey Creek F-Style Mandolin



The Yellowstone A14-F Mandolin from Weber Mandolins



Tom Bedell, Weber Mandolins

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MI Dealers are On the Case, but for Some it's a Mixed Bag

Trends in the Sales of Cases & Bags in 2018

By Christian Wissmuller

Nearly 40 percent of the participants in this month's retailer survey (sent out to over 300 MI dealers) report level sales in 2018 when it comes to the Cases & Bags category, with roughly the same number of those we heard from saying more units were moving than at this same time last year (32.7%) as those who claimed sales were down (28.5%).

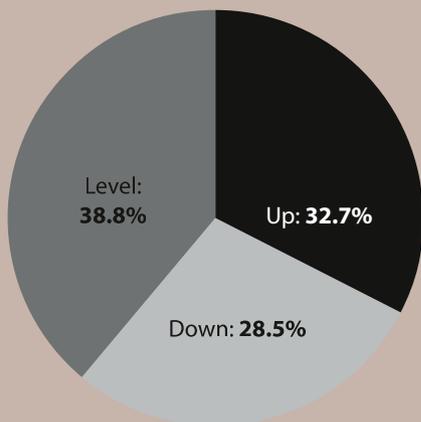
So... yeah, not a lot to report on that front. Although at least one dealer speculates that this category might represent a bigger portion of a business' overall profits if folks made more of an effort and took chances. "Too many stores don't go for it' when it comes to selling cases," claims Morgan Music Service's (Lebanon, Missouri) Tim Bascom. "Show them a \$300 case or a \$950 case... they just might buy it! I think a lot of people are getting tired of the cheap 'down and dirty' solution case-wise. If you build it they

will come and remember, you're a *salesman*, so *sell* something!"

Unsurprisingly, bags easily trump cases when it comes to what's winding up in the hands of end-users. Of course, the comparatively lower price of bags is the main factor here, but many also noted that the quality of modern bags makes for a more reliable means of transporting and protecting instruments and gear than in years past.

One trend that was interesting to note was the number of respondents in this poll who noted that their own, privately-branded bags are selling quite well. "It's way cool to see my logo in schools, churches, and bandstands throughout the city," said Jerry Vesely of Vesely Music in Parowan, Utah. "You can't buy that kind of exposure. Profit well spent."

So far in 2018, sales of cases & bags in for your store are...

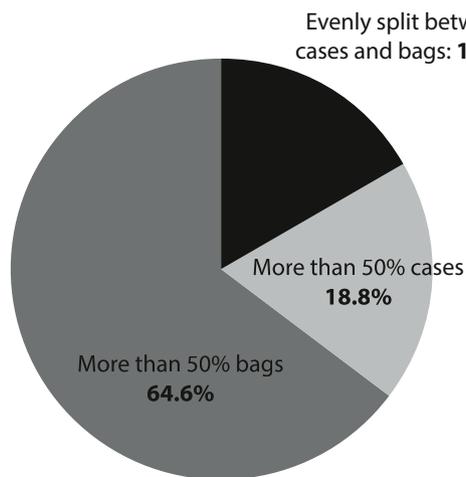


"We, of course, encourage our customers to purchase as much protection as they can afford, and carry a healthy inventory ranging from cheapo vinyl bags to a few of the more common ATA configurations, as well. While we do stock a selection of brand-name gig bags, we are extremely pleased with our budget-priced private label offered in several sizes and grade levels. We do A/B comparisons at the point of sale and offer ours at a little less margin than the national brand. It's way cool to see my logo in schools, churches, and bandstands throughout the city.

You can't buy that kind of exposure. Profit well spent."

Jerry Vesely
Vesely Music
Parowan, Utah

Within the larger cases & bags category, what's the breakdown for your operation, in terms of sales?



"Sadly, the purchase of a new case is rare with only a couple of exceptions. The saddest part is that most people – directors and parents – think that cases last forever."

Brad Dickerson
Midwest Music
Enid, Oklahoma

"Customers almost always look for the lower cost advantage and portability of bags."

Paul Lewis
Lewis Music Store
Kissimmee, Florida

Trending Since 1977

SKB has been supporting musicians worldwide for more than 40 years. With cases for every piece of gear you need to put on a great show—from instruments to racks, lighting equipment, cameras, and more—it's not hard to see why our fans choose #SKBCases.

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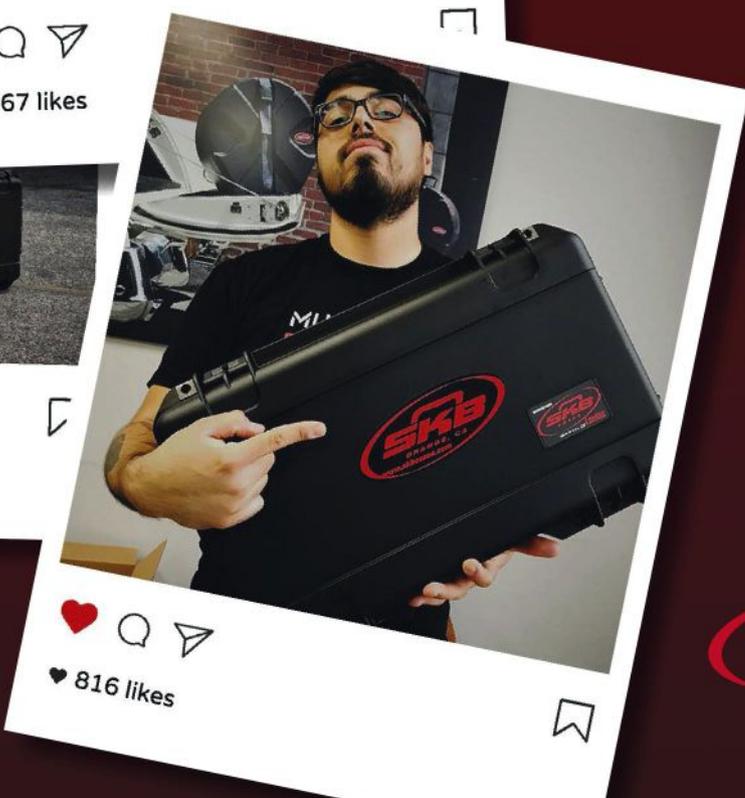
♥ Q ▼
♥ 942 likes



♥ Q ▼
♥ 1,267 likes



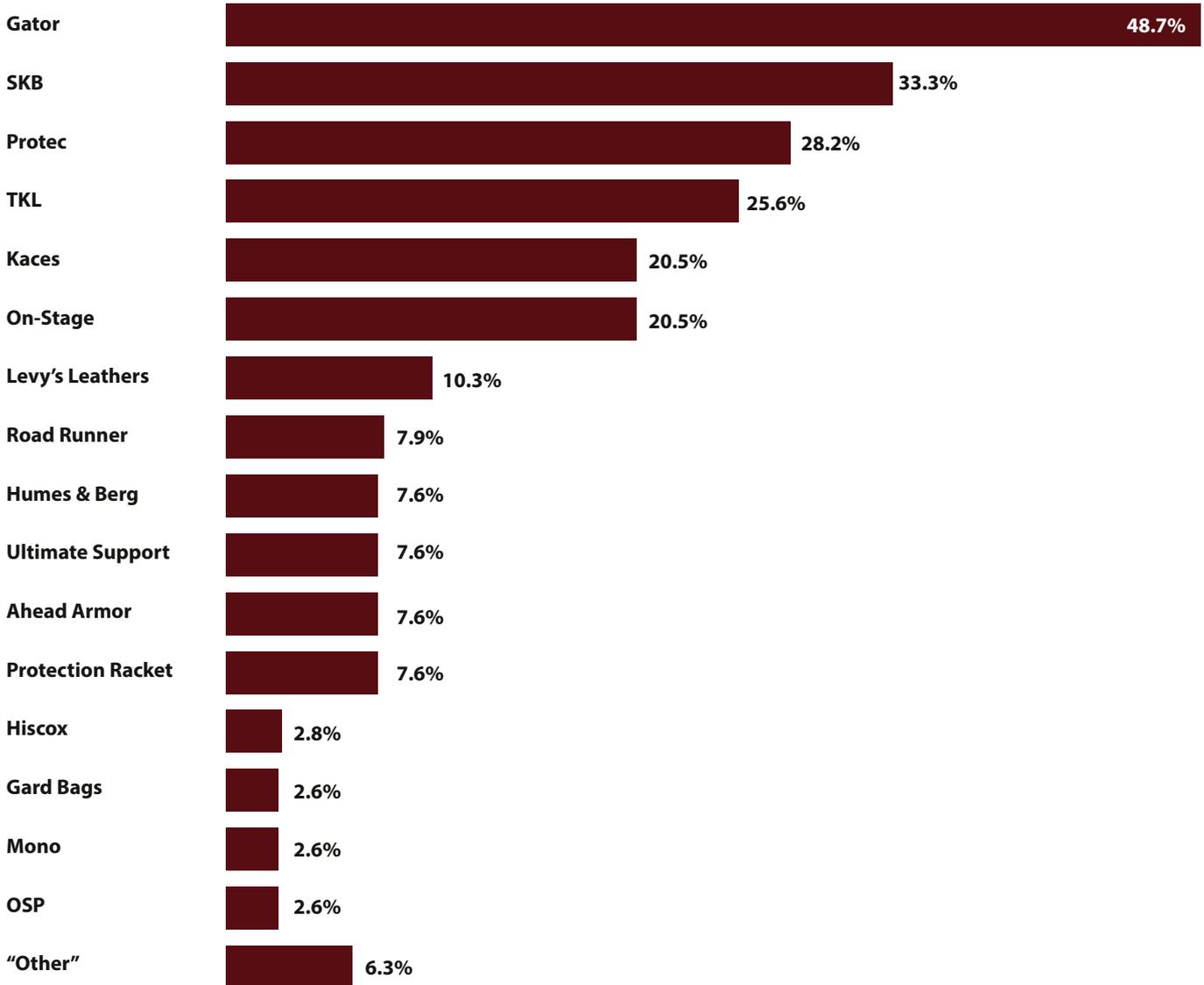
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♥ Q ▼
♥ 816 likes



What brands of cases & bags are selling best for your store? *For the purposes of this survey, we're not including branded cases or bags from instrument suppliers (e.g. Fender, TAMA, Yamaha, et cetera).*



(for those choosing this option, the most commonly cited brands were, in order: Guardian, privately-branded, OMG, Golden Gate, Calton, and Superior)

"We have been selling a lot of 'upper end' cases as of late, especially by Calton and Hiscox. The Hiscox cases represent a very good value in an extremely rugged case. The Calton cases are legendary for their toughness. They cost in the neighborhood of \$1,000, but when you have a \$7,500 Brazilian Rosewood dreadnought guitar you can justify the cost to properly protect your fine instrument. Gig bag-wise, we've done a lot lately with the upper-end Gator guitar and bass bags. I even bought one of the Gator Pro Go series bass bags for myself – good bag. I can store my laptop/iPad and plenty of other goodies in it. \$149 is a lot for a non-leather bass bag but I'm a believer."

Tim Bascom
Morgan Music Service, Inc.
Lebanon, Missouri

Have you been noticing any significant trends when it comes to this market segment – either on the supplier or consumer side?

"Younger customers seem to prefer bags, while older customers lean toward hard cases."

Ronn Marriott
Long and McQuade Musical Instruments
Windsor, Ontario, Canada

"The more features that are added bring a greater response and more sales – i.e. pockets, more straps, et cetera."

Roger Friend
Music Mart
Solana Beach, California

"More new instruments come with gig bags, which eliminates the need for one with the instrument."

Dennis Meredith
The Bass Place
Peoria, Arizona

"People appreciate the pricing and protection of a 20mm foam gig bag. We cater toward a lot of beginners at our store/studio and parents never want to invest \$100 on just the case."

Karen Janiszewski
Music Room
Buffalo, New York

"Worst supply chain in all of my categories. There's tremendous opportunity for a hungry manufacturer/distributor. Bag sales seem to be where it's at these days, but margins are diminished by freight costs or poor customer service. There's only one supplier that I can think of that has a 'good, better, best' model for drum bags, but the MOQ for freight rules it out. Distributors are hot to get dealers to change over, but they don't realize that changing case lines is a very long, expensive process."

Shane Kinney
Drum Center of Portsmouth
North Hampton, New Hampshire

"We have identified a trend toward the use of quality gig bags for performing musicians. We are supportive of this move and try to offer products that properly meet this need."

Grant Baldwin
California Guitars
Belmont, California

"The quality of bags has improved markedly and margins are excellent."

John Barton
Friendly River Music
Cornish, Maine

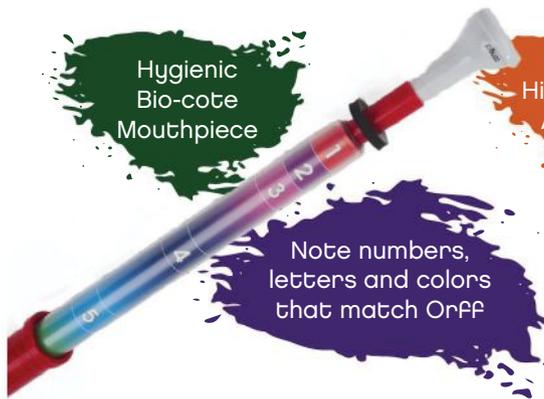
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Holiday Buying Guide

By Victoria Wasylak

Before the holiday madness of November and December sets in, it's always a good idea to start thinking ahead when it comes to the essentials: getting the right gifts for your family and stocking your store with the MI goods your customers need and want. That's where *MMR* has you covered. Check out our annual holiday buying guide of new products for prepping your store for the winter, all sorted by price point. No excuses for procrastinating this year!

Under \$25

Hal Leonard's New Releases

Los Angeles-based DJ, vocalist, and record producer Charlie Sputnik has written *DJ Techniques – Vinyl and Digital* to help today's developing DJs become familiar with the main methods of DJing while also teaching the important historical and technological landmarks that have molded this art form. Not only does it present the traditional methods using vinyl records, but it also shares modern methods of performance, including both digital media players (Pioneer CDJ/XDJs), and the industry-leading software, Serato DJ. A chapter on business provides insightful advice gathered along years of experience, as well as useful tips and tricks for onstage performance. It also includes over 80 minutes of online video demonstrations of the concepts addressed in the book. Upon completing this study, the reader will be able to perform a convincing DJ set on a variety of DJ setups. Price: \$19.99.



Top Hits of 2018 features over a dozen hits from Taylor Swift ("Delicate"), Shawn Mendes ("In My Blood"), Bebe Rexha featuring Florida Georgia Line ("Meant to Be"), Camila Cabello ("Never Be the Same"), Arianna Grande ("No Tears Left to Cry"), Zed, Maren Morris & Grey ("The Middle"), "A Million Dreams" from *The Greatest Showman*, and more. Editions are available for piano/vocal/guitar, easy piano, big-note piano, ukulele, and easy guitar. Prices range from \$12.99 to \$17.99 depending on the instrumentation.



www.halleonard.com

Bourns Lower Profile Motorized Slide Potentiometers

Slim, sleek, lower profile audio, broadcast and lighting console designs are enabled by Bourns Model PSL motorized slide potentiometers. Specifically designed to meet small space constraints, longer product life and repeated automated console adjustment requirements, the innovatively designed Model PSL measures just

25 mm high. Model PSL also meets increased power efficiency demands while maintaining high performance characteristics. Bourns' latest motorized slide potentiometer features a power-saving 5 VDC Mabuchi motor so it can be used with more energy-efficient circuits. It also utilizes a highly durable contacting carbon resistive ink element that provides extended wear characteristics of up to 500,000 cycles. The element design produces very low noise output delivering an optimal signal-to-noise ratio that allows improved audio quality. Bourns Model PSL motorized slide potentiometers are offered in 100 mm and 60 mm versions and are available in a variety of resistance values and standard taper options. As a pricing reference, the 100 mm version of the Model PSL is \$24 in quantities of 1,000 pieces, and the 60 mm version is \$23 in quantities of 1,000 pieces.



www.bourns.com

New from GluBoost

GluBoost has released Fill 'n Finish Black. It enjoys the same great flexibility and resilience that all the Fill 'n Finish formulas enjoy and as always, is guaranteed fresh. With zero to minimal witness lines every time this game changing product is ideal for all of your wood builds, repairs, inlay work and marquetry. Fill 'n Finish Black reliably fills pores and gaps and vanquishes cracks, dings and dents. Perfect for your quick repairs and restorations. GluBoost also releases MasterGel Ultra Gel Adhesive, a high performance gel adhesive. MasterGel Ultra is so sticky it clings to vertical surfaces with absolutely no run off and has superior gap filling capability up to .01". Price: \$18 each.



www.gluboost.com

Dava's Power Grips

Dava Power Grips are thicker and stiffer than Dava's Grip Tip model, and have Dava's proprietary rubber grip and distinctive look but now provide extra bite and attack for musicians who need a rock solid feel. Power Grips come in a choice of materials, including delrin, nylon, and poly-gels. A 6-pack retails for \$7.50.

www.davapick.com



Kyser's New Hawaiian Capos

Kyser's three new Hawaiian-themed Quick-Change capos for ukuleles include red hibiscus, pastel hibiscus, and Hawaiian lei. These Kyser Quick-Change capos are specifically made for the small neck and flat fretboard of ukuleles. With a much smaller body, no



curved radius, and lighter spring tension than the original Kyser Quick-Change capo, it's the perfect fit for ukes. Ukulele players can now use a beautiful, island-themed capo to quickly and easily change the pitch of their instrument without changing their chord fingerings. MSRP: \$24.95.

www.kysermusical.com

Henry Heller Sublimation Ukulele Straps

The success of the Henry Heller Sublimation Guitar Strap series has led to the release of seven new ukulele designs. With fun designs inspired by Hawaiian surf culture, these new ukulele straps are 1.5" wide and extendable to 58". They feature buttery soft nubuck top grain leather ends and are made in Sheridan, Indiana. Price: \$19.95.

www.omgmusic.com



Under \$50

Loog's 3W Guitar Amplifier

Loog's 3W guitar amplifier is built with premium materials and bundled with an instrument cable. The mini amp is designed to sound and look as good on stage as in your kid's bedroom. The 3" speaker is battery operated, and features aux in and headphones out. MAP: \$49.

www.loogguitars.com



Whirlwind's Leader Standard Series Cable

The Leader is Whirlwind's lifetime guaranteed cable that started an industry. Premium, rugged, and practically indestructible, the Leader plug's patented cable grip absorbs any typical straining in the field, and its flexible boot extension has virtually eliminated breakage at the cable exit. Combined with Accusonic+1 cable, the Leader is the highest quality instrument cable manufactured today. Available in 1, 3, 6, 10, 15, 18, 25, 30 and 50-ft. lengths. Also available with a right-angle classic style plug on one end. Price: \$28.

www.whirlwindusa.com



D'Addario's Auto Lock Guitar Strap

Designed in partnership with Ned Steinberger, the Auto Lock guitar strap is designed to work with most standard electric guitar and bass strap buttons. Awarded "Best in Show" at the 2018 Summer NAMM Show, simply slide the strap end over the guitar strap buttons, and you are locked in - it's that easy. The grey clamp is spring-loaded so it automatically clamps down on the strap button, and it will not release until you unlock it. \$42.90 MSRP.

www.daddario.com



New Harmonicas from Lee Oskar

The Natural Minor (Green Label), with its five altered notes, is a natural choice for playing minor music in 2nd position (cross harp): reggae, ska, Latin, funk, R&B, and hip-hop. This altered tuning harmonica is available in 12 keys (Listed low to high): Dm, E \flat m, Em, Fm, F#m, Gm, A \flat m, Am, B \flat m, Bm, Cm, D \flat m.

The Harmonic Minor (Yellow Label) with its five altered notes, is ideal for playing world music. Typically played in 1st position (straight harp): Eastern European, gypsy, Yiddish, Asian, tango, reggae. This altered tuning harmonica is available in 12 keys (Listed low to high): Gm, A \flat m, Am, B \flat m, Bm, Cm, D \flat m, Dm, E \flat m, Em, Fm, F#m. MAP: \$43.99 each.

www.leeoskar.com



New Hercules 'Plus' Stands

The GS414B Plus and the GSP38WB Plus from Hercules Stands feature a wider mounting area to better accommodate extended range instruments (up to 2.05" nut width), an upgraded height adjustment clutch, and upgraded rubber feet for increased stability. Included with this stand and hanger is the new Hercules accessory, Narrow Instrument Neck Adjustment, which is designed to increase the thickness of the AGS yoke so that it can accommodate instruments such as ukulele, mandolin and banjo (as small as 1.1"). Price: \$49.99.

www.herculesstands.com



Under \$100

New Jupiter Sax Gig Strap

KHS America announces the release of the new Jupiter Sax Gig Strap JCM-SXNS01. This over-the-shoulders strap is constructed of leather and suede giving it the durability and comfort necessary for those long gigs or for players on the marching field. Multiple adjustment points allow the perfect fit every time. The convenient design also allows the player to put it on and remove with ease. By distributing the weight of the instrument away from the neck and equally over both shoulders, saxophone players will experience fewer neck and back problems. The simple construction is light-weight and fits easily in a case or gig bag without getting tangled. MSRP is \$89.99.



www.jupitermusic.com

Kohala's New Ukuleles

Continuing to inspire musicians of all ages and sizes, Kohala Ukuleles announces a new series of sized guitars in nylon and steel string versions. The four Nylon string guitars – KG50N 1/2 size nylon, KG75N 3/4 size nylon, KG100N full size and KG100NE full size acoustic electric with on-board tuner. The four steel string guitars are KG50S 1/2 size nylon, KG75S 3/4 size nylon,



KG100S full size and KG100SE full size acoustic electric with on-board tuner. More than just an entry level guitar, all of the new Kohala guitars include features such as: adjustable truss rod; properly cured woods and bracing; special fret installation and pressurized gluing methods for enhanced performance. Each Kohala guitar comes complete with a padded gig bag and a limited lifetime warranty. All models have a MAP range of \$99 to \$149.

www.kohalaukuleles.com

AirTurn's New Footswitch Controllers

AirTurn's new line of wireless footswitch controllers allow users to perform actions from simple page turning to audio, lighting, MIDI performance, switching controls, and more. Its proprietary, keyboard, and MIDI interface options work with most Bluetooth 4 enabled computers, tablets, and specialty equipment. Using Bluetooth technology and Over-the-Air services, each device can be programmed to send any type of keyboard signal, MIDI, or proprietary commands the user needs to operate their apps. The option of open pairing and closed pairing offers the user the ability to store pairing for multiple hosts or lock their device to a single host. Currently available are the 2-switch and the 4-switch versions for \$69 and \$99. A 6-switch version will be available in Q4 2018.



www.airturn.com

Under \$250

New Grand Piano Clamp from House of Troy

The House of Troy GPLED19-7 LED grand piano clamp lamp in black with polished brass accents will illuminate your music with great efficiency. The 3000K LED uses 4.7 watts and gives off 200 Lumens. A felt lined clamp will rest easy on your music desk, and the sleek shade adjusts with a swivel at the shade giving great flexibility and adjustment options. The model is offered in three finish choices: black and brass, black and satin nickel and all polished brass. Retail price: \$250.



www.houseoftroy.com

phonic Reverbs create ambient soundscapes that will fill any sonic space. The Mode button lets the user select up to three variations of many of its reverbs for greater variety. The pedal also features powerful, yet intuitive "hidden" parameters accessible thru its Secondary Knob Mode that enable the player to take greater control of its effects. An internal Tails switch provides a choice of whether the reverb effect fades out naturally or stops immediately when the pedal is switched to bypass. Price: \$147.80.

www.ehx.com

Oceans 11 Pedal from Electro-Harmonix

The Oceans 11 is a powerful and versatile reverb pedal that can add everything from subtle depth to lose yourself ambience to your playing. With basic effects like Hall, Plate, and Spring, the Oceans 11 will cover any standard reverb workload. The surprises hidden in the special effects make this pedal unbelievably functional and inspiring. Dynamic and Modulated Reverbs add interactive movement while the Shimmer and Poly-



New Rovner Platinum Gold Ligature

Rovner's newest ligature option takes an already outstanding model and kicks it up a notch, making it a superb holiday gift idea for the discerning sax or clarinet player. The Platinum Gold maintains all of the original Platinum's benefits: a pure, ringing, bell-like tone, incredible evenness of scale, superior control for a centered tone and flawless intonation, and enhanced facility and response. Twenty-four karat gold plating adds a warmer, darker tone that makes even synthetic reeds sound more like cane. Available in 11 sizes to fit most clarinet and saxophone mouthpieces. MSRP: \$159.



www.rovnerproducts.com



ehx.com/9series

Under \$500

Kala's Solid Spruce Top Hawaiian Koa Gloss Line

A cousin of the Hawaiian Koa Gloss line, the Solid Spruce Top Hawaiian Koa Gloss line pairs a solid Engelmann Spruce top with Hawaiian Koa back and sides, all sealed in a gloss finish to bring out the grain of the wood. Providing a complex, open sound with loud projection, the Engelmann Spruce top pairs with the bright, midrange tone of the Hawaiian Koa back and sides. Available in concert, tenor, and baritone models with electronics and a cutaway—concert and tenor also available in standard acoustic models without electronics or cutaway. Prices range from \$279.99 to \$459.99.

www.kalabrand.com



Other features that highlight this series include chrome open back tuners, Nubone XB nuts and saddles for increased tone and projection, a walnut fingerboard and bridge, and D'Addario strings are standard. Each Flame Maple ukulele ships with a deluxe Lanikai 10mm padded gig bag and a limited lifetime warranty. MSRP range: \$269 to \$449.

www.anikaiukuleles.com

New Flame Maple Series Ukuleles from Lanikai

The new Flame Maple series from Lanikai features a satin Flame maple top, back and sides with rich bloodwood rosette, and binding on the fingerboard and body.

Lanikai Flame Maple series includes an acoustic concert and tenor sizes and as acoustic/electrics with a cutaway. The electric models are equipped with a Fishman Kula pickup with a convenient onboard tuner. Like all Lanikai ukuleles, the easy playing neck profiles are accented by a wider nut for added player comfort.



New iSeries Waterproof StingRay Bass Case from SKB

This case is waterproof, military-grade, USA-made, and has been designed specifically to fit Music Man StingRay 4 and 5-string bass guitars, featuring a deluxe platinum plush-covered rigid foam interior that provides total neck support and protection on all sides for both left and right-handed StingRay basses. Two TSA-accessible locking latches, quiet glide wheels, and a pull handle also help to make this case an ideal choice for musicians on the go. The 3i-5014-SRB iSeries Waterproof StingRay Bass Case is available now with a street price of \$289.99.



www.skbcases.com

Under \$1,000

P-125 Digital Piano from Yamaha

The P-125 digital piano is a compact and stylish instrument featuring legendary Yamaha touch and tone, and ideal for a wide variety of beginner pianists. Immediately noticeable in the new model is its striking design, featuring a beautiful curve to the front panel that was inspired by the company's flagship CFX concert grand piano. Using the P-125 with the Yamaha Smart Pianist app for iOS devices, users gain a touch screen graphic interface to select Voices, and to configure settings quickly and easily.

The Smart Pianist app also takes advantage of the instrument's built-in USB audio and MIDI interface and on-board speaker system. This not only enables the user to play along with their favorite artists, but it also allows them to record audio and/or MIDI performances into a computer. Other key features of the P-125 include 24 instrument voices (pianos, electric pianos, organs, strings, bass and more), 20 simple drums and bass styles, and 50 classical music masterpieces. MSRP: \$999.

www.yamaha.com



New Veneers from Mapex Drums

Using beautiful Olive Exotic veneers, Mapex is releasing the colors desert dune and black dawn. These new finishes are being applied to the best-selling Armory Series Hybrid shell which is constructed of birch/maple/birch, in a 6-ply, 7.2MM thickness. The finishes are stunningly beautiful, breaking the appearance quality barrier of a drum set in this price-point. Nothing in the price-point looks this good. With this latest finish addition, all current Armory finishes now feature this Exotic Olive veneer. The Mapex SONIClear bearing edges allow for a direct transmission of sound, reducing unwanted frequencies and provides a strong fundamental pitch and effortless tuning experience, especially at lower tunings. Price: \$699-\$899 depending on configuration.

www.usa.mapexdrums.com



The Most **BANG** for Your Buck

Maximizing Your Facebook Ad Potential

By Victoria Wasylak

Almost no one can deny that in 2018, having your store represented on social media is essential. And with the ever-changing algorithms on Facebook, regular posts just don't get the same traction that sponsored posts do. Ryan N. Sargent of Make Music, Inc. and Tech Music Ed (TI:ME) hosted a NAMM U session last January on how to make the most out of your precious dollars when it comes to making sure that your Facebook ads are doing what they're supposed to. From keywords to the right imagery (and videos), here are a few tips we gleaned from Sargent's informative chat that you can put into action at your own store ASAP.

Build a custom audience: Much like there's no sense in running a TV ad for your store in a state across the country, make sure that your Facebook ad is focused on the area near your store specifically. Similarly, filter out people who aren't your ideal "audience" on the settings to make sure that you aren't spending money for the wrong demographics to see your posts. Without narrowing down your audience, a good portion of the people who do see your ad might not even be in your industry or general area.

Use 20 to 30 keywords per ad: Make sure to hit the length sweet spot for what you choose to write in your post. No one wants to read anything that's overbearingly long, but only a handful of words might not grab anyone's attention. Balance attention span and substance with 20 to 30 keywords to make sure that your post is the optimal size.

Re-use images (within reason): Here's some unexpected advice – it's perfectly okay to recycle some images in your ads. The repeated photos will help to build your brand with Facebook users who are exposed to your ads over time and will associate that image with your company. That being said, don't overuse any one piece of your content.

Don't boost a post that's doing well: This one is fairly easy to follow. If you have a post on your Facebook page that's already getting a fair amount of attention on its own, don't pour more dough into it – it probably won't help matters much. Save your ad budget for other things that might need a boost.

Put a question in your post: Having customers comment on your posts will help to boost how many people see

it, and putting a question in your ad encourages readers to comment. Make sure it's not something that can be answered with "yes" or "no" – pose a question like "Why do you support Small Business Saturday?" and watch the comments pile on. Since social media was made for sharing opinions, capitalize on how much people love giving input.

Use the CTA button to your advantage: The CTA button, which you might recognize as the "shop now" or "learn more" buttons on posts will help improve the click-through and engagement rates of your post. Make sure you enable one for your ad so interested viewers can be taken directly to your site.

Post videos: With the way that Facebook's algorithms work, videos in general gain more traction and are more likely to get placed higher up on reader's timelines, meaning there's

a better chance of people seeing it. In this way, a store walkthrough or product demo can gain a lot more traction than a standard text post or image.

Kill ads that are getting bad results: Even Facebook ads don't come with guarantees. If you've pumped money into an ad that still isn't getting traction after a few days, pull the plug and use the money elsewhere. They can't all be winners.

Use the Facebook ads manager app: Yes, there's an app for that. Available for both iOS and Android, this

mobile app allows users to track ad performance, edit existing ads, edit ad budgets and schedules, receive push notifications, and, of course, create ads, all from your phone.

Find a graphic designer to work with: Again, hone in on branding and your company's image. If photography isn't your bag, get a graphic designer on board to help with logos and other fonts and illustrations for your business. It doesn't have to be anything over the top – colorful and simple images draw attention without being overbearing. Craft an aesthetic that will set you apart from other area stores and make your business easily recognizable. 





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Note From Causby Paying It Forward

“The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members.” —Coretta Scott King

As Director of Membership, I have the honor of meeting members from across the world, hearing their unique stories and learning how we can support their success. At each NAMM Show and Summer NAMM, the Member Center serves as a central location where association members can stop by, connect with our team and learn more about how to maximize their membership. All members that visit are also given the chance to win a free renewal for the coming year. When we contacted Tristann Rieck of Brass Bell Music Store in Glendale, Wisconsin, to tell her she had won, her immediate response was, “Can I donate it to a music store that is not a member but needs to be?” And just like that we welcomed a brand-new member to the NAMM community: Pacetti’s Music in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Thank you, Tristann, for your commitment to this industry and paying it forward.

I am frequently asked, “What is the biggest benefit of belonging to NAMM?” Members receive a substantial financial return, with access to two world-class trade shows, advanced professional education opportunities, business service discounts and music education advocacy resources.

But in my opinion, hands down, without a doubt, the biggest benefit of being a NAMM member is the sense of community. Membership bridges and connects communities within the music products industry. Some even say the NAMM shows are like coming home. There’s a reason why members refer to it as an annual family reunion.

There are many close-knit communities within NAMM. In fact, if you haven’t attended the D.C. Fly-In, then put it on your calendar now! This is truly a “paying-it-forward opportunity” to advocate for the right of every child to learn and grow with music. It’s also a great bonding experience for staff and members alike and epitomizes the saying, “doing well by doing good.”

In addition, the NAMM Young Professionals recently launched a mentoring program that is a rich development opportunity for both mentees and mentors. Are you under 40? The Young Professionals program is a great way to gain advice on a goal that you want to achieve but aren’t sure how to get there. If you’re an experienced retailer, how did you get to where you are today? Sign up today to be a mentee or pay it forward and volunteer to be a YP mentor.

Another community within NAMM that’s just getting started, but is already making a big splash is SWIM (Smart Women in Music). The SWIM fund aims to support women in the industry in three key areas: mentoring, learning and professional development.

Other very active communities are the Top 100 Dealers, NAMM U, our NAMM Show exhibitors and the SupportMusic Coalition on Coalitions.

If you would like to become more active in any of the communities mentioned above please email us at membership@namm.org. And, if you aren’t a member of NAMM, let’s talk! We want to hear from you as well.

Planning to attend The 2019 NAMM Show? Be sure to stop by the Member Center. This is your home during The NAMM Show, and a comfortable place to meet with other members, grab some water or just take a break. The Membership team and I will be there to answer any questions you may have—not to mention, you may just win a free membership renewal!

NAMM Membership: “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” —Helen Keller

Causby Challacombe, CAE
NAMM Director, Membership



The NAMM Global Music Community

There are many challenges you face as you grow your business, but you don't have to figure it out alone. NAMM Membership opens the door to a global community of passionate music industry professionals and endless opportunities for growth and inspiration. The NAMM community exists to support you unlike any other industry organization.

As a NAMM member, you have year-round access to the following benefits and resources:



Tradeshow

- Free badges
- Free breakfast each show day
- Hundreds of education sessions
- Concerts & Live music
- Member Center events and resources
- Access to the latest products



Education

- Tailored learning tracks at both tradeshows
- NAMM U Breakfast sessions
- Retail Training Summit
- 24/7 access to NAMM U Online
- NAMM U e-newsletter
- Policy forums and roundtables



Opportunity

Business resources and solutions:

- Shipping discounts
- Business insurance
- Consumer financing
- Credit card processing
- International payment solutions



Community

- NAMM Young Professionals
- Smart Women in Music
- Online member directory
- Networking receptions
- Roundtable discussions
- Industry awards
- Make Music Day



Advocacy

- Free toolkits and brochures
- Annual D.C. Fly-In
- SupportMusic Coalition
- Legislative alerts
- Best Communities for Music Education
- Talking Up Music Education Podcast

Believe in Music.
Belong to NAMM.

“NAMM is like a family reunion in a way—the relationships that we build up over our entire career are renewed here.” —Kevin Cranley, Willis Music

For more information on the benefits of NAMM Membership visit:
namm.org/membership

Fender Player Series Jaguar

Days before this year's Summer NAMM Show, Fender caught the attention of players and retailers with the announcement that the brand's long-running Mexican Standard Series was being discontinued. The "replacement" line was dubbed the Fender Player Series.

It's nothing new for a supplier to rebrand a line or "sub-line" and, as often as not, actual *change* boils down to just the name, itself, and maybe a few minor cosmetic tweaks.

So what's different with this new line, compared to the old MIM models, you ask?

To start with, each instrument in the Player Series features updated body radii, upgraded bridges, new Alnico pickups, 22-fret necks, brand-new finishes, and a return of the old, "classic" Fender logo.

To wit: it's not just a simple name-change. Additionally, some of these guitars are equipped with unusual, "non-standard" features. For example, the Jaguar that I was sent for review features a humbucker in the bridge position, with a single-coil at the neck.

I was more than a little curious about these new Player Series Fenders, since I've long been a fan of the Mexican Series – quality guitars from a legit brand, sold at a reasonable price. Why mess with success?

Happily, I can say that the changes are all either legitimate improvements, or not especially noticeable. The neck is smooth and fast, the humbucker has plenty of growl, the single-coil plenty of bite. The alder body isn't heavy, but it does avoid my sometimes-critique of certain Fenders, in that it's substantial enough to not feel like a toy. The coil-split option on the bridge pickup was a useful fea-

ture (and one I realize somehow *none* of my own guitars have – the numerical odds of which are pretty staggering), that I found myself taking advantage of often.

I tend to go for vintage gear, so the return to the old-school logo is an improvement, in my opinion (though it certainly won't improve your playing ability or how the guitar sounds) and (with one exception) I very much like the new finishes.

In fact the only thing I didn't particularly like about the review guitar I was sent was the "Sonic Red" color choice. *Very* loud, very... uh... red! It's, of course, a subjective thing and this shade of crimson would no doubt make a lasting impression, so if that's your style then this is the option for you. Personally, I'd go for the "Tidepool" color – sort of a bluer take on Seafoam Green. Very pretty. The other two finish options – black and sunburst – are at least a little more subtle than Sonic Red. It's not like I'm keeping this little lady, though, so the color is not an issue!

All in all, this Player Jaguar is very aptly named: it's a very solid "player's guitar" – more than sufficient for performing live, recording, and practicing, but not so expensive or tricked out that you need to be all precious with it, worried that someone might scuff the guitar or spill something on it. A job well done by the folks over at Fender. (Christian Wissmuller)



Breedlove Frontier Concertina E (All-Mahogany)

I'm not usually an "acoustic guitar guy." Sure, I have a couple and I of course see how acoustics are great for songwriting and travelling and all of that, but I am not the type of person to book myself an acoustic gig. I

like electric guitars plugged into loud, distorted amps.

So it says something that I am genuinely reluctant to return this gorgeous little Breedlove Frontier Concertina E.

And, being a Concertina, this truly *is* "little" when compared, say, to a Dreadnaught. However, *man* can this thing sing! I'm talking serious, powerful volume – and that's without plugging it in and taking advantage of the very responsive and fine LR Baggs EAS VTC pickup installed in this model. The Concertina E features a solid top, solid back, and sides made of Honduran Mahogany which is both stunningly beautiful, and also helps this Frontier Series guitar achieve a balanced, rich tone full of deep lows, rich mids, and angelic high end. The fretboard is made of African Ebony and this model also includes subtle (but quite pretty) Ivoroid binding. Oh, and the fancy hardshell case is both sturdy and attractive (and it has that fantastic "new guitar case" smell when you open it!).

Have I mentioned this guitar is a looker?

While this isn't a "cheap" instrument by any means, the appointments and features would be expected on a guitar at a much higher price-point. You're getting more than you'd expect with the Concertina E, trust me. Typical Breedlove.

Also, in typical Breedlove fashion, you can rest easy that all efforts have been made to ensure that this guitar is about as "green" as you can get. Tom Bedell and crew are standard-setters when it comes to environmentally responsible practices.

For the past three-plus months, whenever I've gotten the itch to play for a while, or work on a song idea (in other words: often), I've usually found myself opting to *not* plug into the old (very old) practice amp or pick up one of my beater acoustics. I head down the hall, take the Concertina E out of the case (ever so gently...) and set to work on one of the easiest to play, loudest, best-sounding, most aesthetically satisfying steel-string acoustics I've ever been able to spend this much time with.

Breedlove has a fine reputation and with this Mahogany Frontier Concertina E, they've one-upped themselves. If you sell acoustics in this price range (just around \$2,000), you need to look into stocking this – I'm positive it'll be flying off the walls in no time.

Ah, well – it may be for the best that I have to return this guitar. I'd be at risk of losing my "rocker" credentials if I kept it much longer. Although, things sometimes do get lost in the mail... (Christian Wissmuller)

Fender Level Set Buffer & Marine Layer Reverb



What a time to be alive. Between the vintage gear market, the consumer-to-consumer Internet market (eBay, craigslist, et cetera) and the phenomenal assortment of new pedals, guitar players have more options than ever to build out their sound. If you want to get noticed, you better do your homework to really understand what guitarists want, and then apply technical ingenuity to your manufacturing process, bringing high quality, great sounding pedals to market. This is precisely what Fender has done with their most recent lineup of pedals. I had the great pleasure to test out the Level Set Buffer, a utility pedal designed for complex pedal boards and/or professional musicians, and the Marine Layer Reverb, a wonderfully complex, rich, and mildly quirky reverb.

First the Level Set Buffer: the most practical application of this pedal is as a buffer to help maintain sound quality across your pedal board. Think of it as a master volume pedal. It's super transparent – it doesn't do anything to your sound. Rather, it affords you flexibility as you approach the relationship between your different pedals, your amp and your guitars. If you use your amp's FX loop, you can use this pedal to switch out to a tuner, allowing you to full mute while you tune. It also has an on-board EQ designed to compensate for guitar switching mid-set. This is a utilitarian pedal for a professional musician. As with all of the pedals in this line, it's very well built and easy on the eyes.

“When thinking about what you want to offer to your customers, this seems like a bet worth making. All guitarists covet versatile, affordable, beautiful, and great sounding products. The Marine Layer Reverb is all those things.”

In stark contrast, the Marine Layer Reverb *does* change your sound. While some reverbs are subtle, this one can dial up a tapestry of ambience (not to say it can't do subtle – it can). This is one of the more unique reverb pedals I've ever played with.

Aesthetically, this is a beautiful pedal. The light green brushed aluminum case, the bright jewel LED and the glamorous blue LED indicators all highlight the attention to detail that comes with this reverb.

The Marine Layer Reverb has four knobs: Pre-Delay, Reverb Time, Damping and Level and 3 switches: Type, Variation and filter. This affords the player a wide assortment of reverb sounds, with the Type switching the algorithm between a hall, a room, and “special.” The Variation switch is a 2-position switch that changes the basic algorithm. For example, the Variation 1 of the Hall Type is your basic pad style reverb. Variation 2 emulates a plate reverb. The filter switch is an on/off toggle that activates a Lo-Pass Filter, pulling high frequencies out of the reverb signal to add some warmth.

Reverb is all about simulating space – it's one of the more complex algorithms out there and is, in my experience, very hard to get right. This pedal gets it right, adding a variety of different types of ambience that help transport the player to wherever it is they want to go.

I had the most fun with the Variation 2 of the Special setting, with a nice long Reverb time, and a moderate amount of Pre Delay (which adds a bit of delay before the Reverb actually kicks in, separating it from the dry signal). The Special algorithm adds a pitch-shifted higher octave along with a rich sense of space. It not only affected my sound, it transported *me*, as a player, to another space. Guitarists are constantly searching for anything that will trigger some bit of creative energy – I believe that it's one reason that they collect so much stuff. This pedal did that for me – in a world where I apply a workmanlike approach to product reviews (play the thing, type the article...), I played with this pedal for an hour straight – it was evocative, mysterious, and really fun. Now, there's no promise that everyone will have the same reaction that I had to this reverb pedal. However, when thinking about what you want to offer to your customers, this seems like a bet worth making. All guitarists covet versatile, affordable, beautiful, and great sounding products. The Marine Layer Reverb is all those things. Doesn't that sound like an easy sell? (Daniel Sussman)



Could a Jazz Piano Major from Berklee Re-energize the Music Business?

By Menzie Pittman

At last year's NAMM show I spoke on a panel for Guitar & Accessories Marketing Association (GAMA) about ways of reviving and creating fresh interest in guitar. That moment afforded me the opportunity to write an *MMR* column on the contribution and amazing work being done by female bassists in our industry. It is my stand that we not only need fresh interest in guitar, but the music industry needs new leaders with good old-fashioned skills, energy, charisma, and artists who can reach across all boundaries and make people feel something. And I think I found just the guy to watch: Charlie Puth.

To understand my take on why I think Puth may be a game-changing artist, and someone who could single handedly wake up a stale industry, you have to go back to fundamentals. Say what you will, but for an artist to have longevity in the music business, he or she must actually have strong musical skills. Puth checks that box with ease. As a jazz piano major, Puth attended the Manhattan School of Music and Berklee College of Music for production and engineering. He also has the gift of perfect pitch.

On his recordings he has an alluring Marvin Gaye styled voice that draws the listener in with a high, almost Eddie Kendricks (Temptations)-like falsetto, but in concert, his voice has a power and depth you simply don't expect; and as good of a singer as he is live, that's just the tip of the iceberg. Puth can flat-out play, and his band is absolutely world class, but here's the strange plot twist — Puth is a teen and adult favorite. The audience at the show was loaded with youth from age 12 to 20, yet about 40 percent of the people in attendance were adults. That's a huge demographic.

Unusual Puth Truths

Fun Fact #1

Puth's concert was held at an outdoor theater (Wolf Trap) with a large lawn area, and although it was raining cats and dogs, the lawn was packed with fans gladly willing to sit in the rain to watch the show.

Fun Fact #2

Any time a musician in the band played an extended solo, the audience cheered in delight and rewarded the players with verbal adoration. When was the last time you heard a young audience cheer for "fusion style instrumental solos?"

Fun Fact #3

Wolf Trap is considered a tame arena, so screaming is not the normal protocol, but it was a night for exceptions, so continuing with the bizarre, screaming by all age groups was normal behavior for the evening.

Puth embraced a time-honored tradition — he entertained. Halfway through the show, he hurled his overshirt into a mass of screaming girls. Then, two songs later, Puth lobbed his sleeveless T-shirt into the crowd. At this point he had completely embraced his inner "Mick Jagger" and so had the audience.

So my question to you is a simple one: when was the last time you saw a 20 year old, a 40 year old, and a 60 year old all dancing and screaming at a shirtless Berklee jazz major?

Go ahead and call me crazy, but I can think of a few examples when this type of phenomenon has happened before; again, you will say I'm crazy. These would be Elvis, Little Richard, The Beatles, Freddie Mercury, David Bowie, and Mick Jagger, to name just a few. We are not in that space anymore because everything is downloadable, right? Rarely does anyone sit in the rain for a rising artist, right? After all, you can YouTube the experience at home, and most kids think jazz is a music that is no longer relevant anyway, right? So what if he takes off his shirt; so what if he's sexy to all age groups; so what if it the first time ever that I have heard an audience scream at this venue. How big of a deal can he be?

Well, I Think Charlie Puth is Right

I think we have been selling ourselves a false bill of goods. Granted, I once thought Blood, Sweat and Tears and Earth, Wind & Fire were great for our industry because the music was smart. But I also think Brass Against has a great new twist on punk covers with stellar horn musicians that execute like a swat team. Puth gets all this and he will drag us kicking and screaming back into a high entertainment standard, and he will become this generation's Elton John because he's that good in concert. It is my bet that along the way, many will be awakened to the simple truth: you can't fake good. You can't fake it in your business, and you can't fake it as an industry.

In Closing

Music is a craft, and business is a skill; you can't box that, and you can't loop it. You should, however, marry the two concepts. I used to think maybe we had forgotten our fundamentals, but that was before Puth wiped the stage with my false fear. Now I am starting to see the oddest trend: musicianship blended with performance skills, sexy marketing, and charisma. That is why I believe Charlie Puth is an industry-changing artist. So before you call me crazy, remember Earth, Wind & Fire and Stevie Wonder both covered a Beatles tune, and, by the way, what exactly is a "Snarky Puppy?" © 2018 MMR



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



By Jaimie Blackman

MI Retailers Working with Nonprofits & Government: A Win-Win

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go further, go together." – African Proverb

Brick and mortar MI retailers understand all too well the need to dig into their community relationships to fight off the impact of big-box stores who continue to invade their turf. As a result, more and more music retailers and MI manufacturers are relying on partnerships with nonprofits, government, and educational organizations. This business model is called cross-sector partnerships.

For the partnerships to be successful, all entities need to understand how each organization ticks, and how collaborating with each other results in a better outcome than going it alone.

A common belief is that cross-sector partnerships are all about philanthropy through cash donations. This is a misunderstanding. A cross-sector partnership is about creating joint value and mutual benefits to each organization, through long-term relationships. The MI community would do well by studying how different sectors from nonprofit and for-profit come together.

One example of a high-profile cross-sector partnership is between ESPN Inc. and Make-A-Wish. ESPN is a U.S.-based global pay television sports channel, a joint venture owned by The Walt Disney Company and Hearst Communications. ESPN benefits from the partnership with Make-A-Wish by improved employee morale and loyalty, the broadcast of exclusive content through its "My Wish" Series and annual "Wish Night," along with a warm connection to the tens of thousands of volunteers, donors, and supporters who help grant the wish of children diagnosed with a critical illness through the foundation.

Make-A-Wish foundation benefits from priceless media attention, additional sponsorship, and large donors to help fuel its \$343 million annual revenue. Both partners are collaborating for the greater good.

Although cross-sector partnerships are not new, the trend from federal and local governments to promote partnerships as a means to achieve societal needs has been steadily increasing over the last decade. The more sectors involved in a partnership, the better, as each partner brings a unique perspective.

Here are three MI owners who have successfully used the cross-sector partnership for the greater good:

Sweetwater

Take a look at the way Chuck and Lisa Surack, owners of Sweetwater Sound, partnered with community agencies to help fund their \$9 million renovation of the Clyde Theater, which includes a 21,000 square-foot main performance hall plus and event center.

1) Funding included a \$1 million loan from the Fort Wayne Legacy Fund through the Community Development Corporation for the City of Fort Wayne, Indiana. 2) Another \$1 million came from the state's Regional Cities Initiative, Northeast Indiana Regional Development Authority. 3) The City of Fort Wayne also gave a \$40,000 facade grant. 4) The balance was funded by Sweetwater founder Chuck Surack and his wife, Lisa.

The Candyman Strings and Things

Owners Rand & Cindy Cook partnered with Soldier Songs and Voices, a nationwide 501(c)3 nonprofit program. The Cooks work

with the non-profit as part of their community-based outreach program. The program provides veterans and their families with free instruments and songwriting workshops as a form of post-conflict care. Their goal is to improve the quality of life for veterans and their families through songwriting and music. Rand tells me, "We can do well by doing good. The more veterans we host, the more retail we sell."

Wentworth Music

Noel Wentworth, co-owner of Wentworth Music with three locations in Canada, routinely collaborates with local governments and other corporate sponsors.

Wentworth uses a four-part sector model which includes the following partners:

1) Interior Savings; 2) Wentworth Music; 3) Kelowna's Classic Rock K96.3; 4) Kelowna General Hospital.

For Wentworth Music, the media attention promotes student enrollment, and fills seats for his concerts. Wentworth puts on the largest student rock productions in Canada. Through these shows Wentworth has helped raised over \$212,000 to benefit the sick children at Kelowna General Hospital.

Noel Wentworth closed our conversation saying, "Students win by providing a great venue to perform. Wentworth wins through strong student retention. The bank wins by deepening community relationships. The radio station wins by developing a more loyal listening audience. The Hospital wins by receiving on average \$20,000 a year during the last decade. This is a win-win for all."

I actually can offer a first-hand example on how these partnerships create value across different sectors for-profits and nonprofits. As board president of a nonprofit my grandparents helped to establish (ARCNY.org), I'm currently exploring cross-sector partnerships to create a Creative Arts Center for our special needs clients.

Here's who we (Jaimie Blackman & Company) hope to be partnering with:

1) MI retailers; 2) Foundations who to support performing arts for the special needs community; 3) NYC and Brooklyn Community Development Corporation; 4) National Endowment for the Arts; 5) Financial institutions; 6) Music Therapy Groups; 7) The NAMM Foundation; 8) Individual donors; 9) Local Universities; 10) Health & Wellness organizations.

If an MI owner is looking for economic benefit as well as social benefit, there is nothing in business today which provides as much value creation opportunities than a strategic partnership between nonprofit and for-profit organizations. Remember, when entering into a partnership, it's best to under-promise and over-deliver.



Jaimie Blackman, a former music educator and retailer, is a licensed financial advisor and succession planner. Blackman helps music retailers accelerate business value now and maximize value when it's time to exit. Blackman is a frequent speaker at NAMM's Idea Center and writes The Sound of Money, a monthly column for MMR. Visit jaimieblackman.com to preview

his value-creation tools and to subscribe to the Unlocking the Wealth newsletter and webinars.

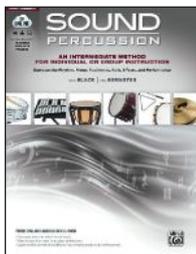
PRINT & DIGITAL

Alfred Music's Sound Percussion for Individual or Group Instruction

Alfred Music's much-anticipated addition to the Sound Innovations series, *Sound Percussion for Individual or Group Instruction* is now available.

Sound Percussion is comprised of four books: snare drum & bass drum, mallet percussion, timpani, and accessory percussion, all which focus on developing skills of intermediate to advanced percussion students. Each book can be used independently to focus on a particular instrument or in any combination with each other as a full percussion ensemble. With a clear and consistent approach, students will learn the fundamentals necessary to become well-rounded percussionists. Lessons are presented in a fun and interesting way so that all members of the percussion section are engaged. Every student has a meaningful and thoughtful part for every exercise. A teacher's score is also available.

Sound Percussion is perfect for the director who is a non-percussion specialist with a clear progression of notes, rhythms, and skills. Sound Advice tips are offered for many pages in the books to support student learning, as well as provide teaching goals. Price: \$14.99 (teacher's handbook: \$49.99)



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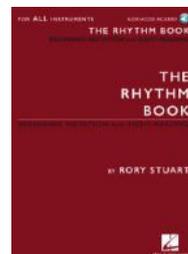
Hal Leonard's The Rhythm Book

The Rhythm Book - Beginning Notation and Sight-Reading starts students off with an easy-to-follow, step-by-step method, starting from the very basics. It introduces students to the quarter note, eighth note, and triplet eighth rhythms, including syncopations.

The Rhythm Book - Intermediate Notation and Sight-Reading continues off of the work featured in the first book, with Stuart teaching students all they need to know about 16th notes through triplets of all rates, syncopations, triple meters, odd meters, 32nd notes, and beyond to prepare students to read and correctly write nearly every rhythm they'll encounter.

Each book features exercises, worksheets, and recordings of the exercises to help practice the material featured throughout each book. The recordings in each book are available online for download or streaming, using a unique code on the first page of the book. The audio files include Playback+, a multi-functional audio player that allows you to slow down audio without changing pitch, set loop points, change keys, and pan left or right.

Whether you're an experienced musician who has never learned notation, a total beginner, a vocalist, or someone who is looking to increase their notation and sight-reading knowledge, *The Rhythm Book* is a perfect place to start perfecting your rhythm. Both books are available for \$19.99 each.



www.halleonard.com

ACCESSORIES

Resound Reverb Pedal from Cusack Music

Cusack Music has unveiled their newest original design, the Resound Reverb pedal. The Resound has eight reverb programs, and eight user programmable presets arranged in four banks of two.



The pedal offers a large 10mm four color center LED to indicate bank, and Left and Right footswitch LEDs to indicate the preset selected within the bank, and dual presets allow for no loss transitions between two variants of the same program. Other features include controls for Program, Mix, Level, Cascade, and Trails; stereo outputs, with wet/dry choice for second output; "extend" footswitch to instantly maximize decay knob setting during use; two parameter plus decay controls specific for each program; and 9V power supply only. \$279 street price.

www.cusackmusic.com

New Soaker Cups from Jones Double Reed Products

The new A210 Jones Soaker Cup offers a clip to hold the cup that is small enough to use with the small shaft folding music stand. This product is perfect for students attending camps, music festivals, private lessons as well as at home where many students utilize the folding stands. MSRP: \$14.49.



www.jonesdoublereed.com

WP Organ Pedal Holster

The WP Organ Pedal Holster helps to mount a keyboard's sustain pedal next to an organ's bass pedals for players who use both during one performance. The pedal is ideal for gospel, pop, rock, blues, jazz and R&B players.



www.wporganpedalholster.com

BAND & ORCHESTRA

Knilling's Performance Bass Models

Knilling is excited to be shipping its Performance Bass Models from their popular Bucharest line of string instruments. The Bucharest Performance models feature an arched and flat back option. Both instruments had their debut at Winter NAMM 2018 in Anaheim California. Made in Romania, the Knilling Bucharest Performance models feature well-seasoned, solid carved, select European spruce and figured maple, with Tyropean machine heads, ebony nut, fingerboard, tailpiece and saddle, German height adjustable maple bridge and Helicore strings. Outfits includes deluxe padded cover and Glasser bow with horsehair.



www.knilling.com

Phaeton Trumpet's Las Vegas Model

The Las Vegas model, designed by famed trumpeter David Perrico, has an exclusive conical bore .460 at valve cluster to .470 beyond main tuning slide. The trumpet comes standard in Brush Brass, Amado type water keys, large heavy finger rings, advance taper lead pipe, monel pistons and heavy brass receiver. A custom saddle leather designer case is included. Price: \$3,250.



www.phaetontrumpet.com

E.K. Blessing's New Trumpet

E.K. Blessing's new BTR-1460M trumpet features a new Matte finish, a unique feature for instruments of this price point. The BTR-1460M stands out with its unique, distressed finish, achieved by hand to give each instrument a distinct look. The trumpet features a 460" ML bore, 5" bell diameter, rose brass lead pipe, yellow brass body and two-piece bell, nickel silver outer slides and monel valves. It's a perfect companion to the 1541 Flugelhorn in both look and completing a player's spectrum of tones.



www.blessingbrass.com

PMT-75 Custom Trumpet

P. Mauriat's PMT-75 Custom trumpet is the latest in its ever-expanding line of musical instruments.

The PMT-75 Custom series is on the cutting edge of today's manufacturing capability by its use of a titanium copper alloy. This alloy produces a lush, complex harmonic sound and is incredibly responsive to tone production, yielding a vibrant and efficient player experience. These trumpets are also customizable based on the needs of the player. The bell is detachable and is available in both yellow brass or titanium copper. These trumpets are also available by either an attached yellow brass leadpipe or titanium copper leadpipe.



www.pmauriatmusic.com

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MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

ACCESSORIES

Clarity Spectrum Rosin New Packaging

Clarity Spectrum adds fun and color to the original Clarity rosin. Clarity is a hypo-allergenic professional rosin. It is a synthetic hydrocarbon resin compound that substantially improves the properties of rosin, producing a clear string response. The hydrophobic material resists absorption of moisture making it unaffected by humidity, keeping its tack and effectiveness over time. Clarity is non-corrosive to instrument varnish. Available for violin, viola, cello. Colors available: green, purple, pink, red, and blue.



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The new Arthur Prime mixers are compact professional mixers that have been specially designed to offer amazing sound quality on a more economical scale.



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Prime mixers also feature: balanced XLR microphone and unbalanced yellow line/instrument inputs, stereo line channel(s) with balanced inputs (pan controls also enable input configuration as 2 x mono), 3-band EQ, 48V and 10V phantom power, 2 x post-/prefade aux sends per input channel, Master section with L/R faders and VU meters, 2 main XLR and 2 aux outs, stereo digital reverb with independent controls for volume and decay regulation.

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DC 12-String from D'Angelico Guitars

The DC 12-string is driven by a pair of Seymour Duncan Designed humbuckers. Its mid-range is rich and full, while its high-end cuts through the mix, making strummed chords sound remarkably balanced. Perfect for the player who has always wanted an electric 12-string but never come across the ideal balance of exceptional playability and accessible price.



www.dangelicoguitars.com

Ortega's KT-Walker-V2 Acoustic Bass

Ortega Guitar's updated and upgraded version of the KT-Walker Acoustic Bass is the KT-WALKER-V2. Due to its "distressed" finish, every instrument is slightly different, and each has its own unique vibe. A percentage of each KT-Walker-V2 bass sold will be donated to a charity chosen by Ken Taylor.



www.ortegaguitars.com

Jammy Digital Guitar

Jammy is a super-portable digital guitar by RnD64. Main Jammy features are increased playability due to detachable neck, steel strings and on-board generated sound, and direct audio output to stream music straight into your earphones or am. Adjustable string tension and the precision sensors allow for hi-end emulation of technics like bending, sliding and even two-hand tapping. It complies with many airlines' carry-on regulations.



www.rnd64.com

Warwick RockBass Infinity

The stylish Warwick RockBass Infinity is available as a 4 or 5 string fretted or fretless bass. A combination of passive MEC J and MEC MM pickups is used, whereby the humbucker can be used in series, in parallel or as a single coil pickup via an additional switch. Other features of the RockBass Infinity include: red alder body



with AAA flamed maple veneer top, bolt-on maple neck with ekanga veneer stripes, wenge fretboard on fretless versions, tigerstripe ebony fretboard on fretless versions, Warwick Just a Nut III tedur nut, active 2-way electronics, controls for volume, balance, treble & bass, two-piece Warwick bridge, Warwick security locks and chrome hardware. The RockBass Infinity is only available as a right-handed model in nirvana black transparent high polish finish or natural high polish finish. A RockBag is included.

www.warwickbass.com

CR300 Electric Guitar from Cort

Cort's new CR300 electric guitar has a set neck, solid body and retroactive humbuckers to evoke the timeless sounds of the '50s and '60s. One of the CR300's most prominent time-tested features is the thick 15 mm (0.6") carved premium maple top on a mahogany body with ivory binding. This classic wood combination enables a tone that's thick, warm, rich, and full, but with an edge to the sweetness. This quality is further enhanced by set-neck construction, which produces a sound and feel distinctly different from bolt-on, with enhanced sustain and a more focused midrange that cuts through the mix like a knife through hot butter. The mahogany neck has a jatoba fingerboard with retro block inlays and a 12" radius on a 24.75" scale.



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By Dan Daley

Fix This

During the late and most decidedly unlamented Great Recession, automobile dealers found themselves taking it especially hard on the chin. Over the course of what is now semi-officially known the Automotive Industry Crisis of 2008–2010 (yep, you can look it up), the Big Three U.S. car makers and Japan's Toyota and Nissan experienced sizable double-digit dips in sales at a time when most sedans were returning a margin of ~3 percent in good times. The ROI was better on SUVs, but what was the point when no one had any money to buy them anyway?

Auto dealerships make their vig on three pillars: the sales of the cars themselves, which as seen, wasn't all that much anyway and only occurred once or twice a decade for most customers; the financing of those cars, which had been a sweet deal until interest rates came crashing down after 2009; and fixing those same cars. That last proved to be the best solution for recurring revenue, and it got quite a few dealers through the roughest of rough patches since the 1929 Dodge hit the showrooms. Know who else made out well during that stretch? AutoZone, which grew at nearly 10 percent as consumers decided to start doing their own repairs.

With discussion around the next recession already getting lively – and the consensus among economists is that we're way overdue for the next one – it's a good time to look at how instrument repair and maintenance can help a retailer's bottom line, certainly in the good times but especially when things start going south.

By The Numbers

It's a difficult category to get a handle on. Some MI retailers have repair personnel on staff, but most seem to have varying degrees of relationships with freelancers, some of whom might work from the store or else from their own homes, itinerantly visiting shops in their areas. Not surprisingly, the Bureau of Labor Statistics has included a category for them in its employment surveys (it also tracks hippotherapists – the practice of riding horses as a form of therapy for children and adults who experience disabilities – and professional bridesmaids. Go figure), although it's limited to those who are W-2 employees, which likely reveals only a fraction of the actual market. The numbers are muddled a bit more by the fact that the category (#49-9063 in BLS parlance) also includes instrument tuners, presumably inclusive

of members of the Piano Technician's Guild. Still, even that limited look indicates there are 8,240 musical-instrument repairpersons on the books, either at stores or on staff at dedicated repair facilities (including, presumably, those run by manufacturers) and luthiers and others who have incorporated and pay themselves a salary. The number suggests a robust market for repairs, making it all the more important that retailers take notice.

Word of mouth is the single biggest marketing resource for instrument repairs, but as the category becomes more competitive, certifications can help boost business, especially in sectors like band instruments, where school boards like to see diplomas on walls. Those certifications are available through the National Association of Professional Band Instrument Repair Technicians, the Guild of American Luthiers, and the International Double Reed Society. It's also a possible interesting left

turn for some of your music students, just like audio engineering has been.

It takes a particular personality to pursue repairs. CareersinMusic.com offers a look into a typical day of a semi-anonymous repairer named "John," who actually does provide some interesting insights: "I think there's probably a good portion of



“It's a good time to look at how instrument repair and maintenance can help a retailer's bottom line.”

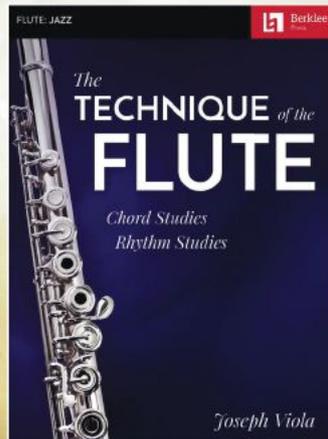
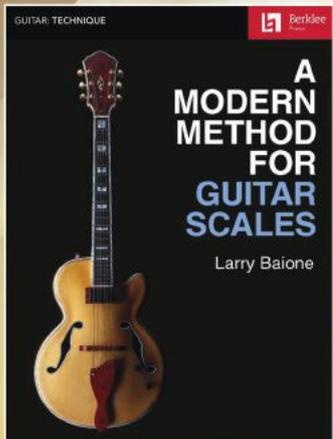
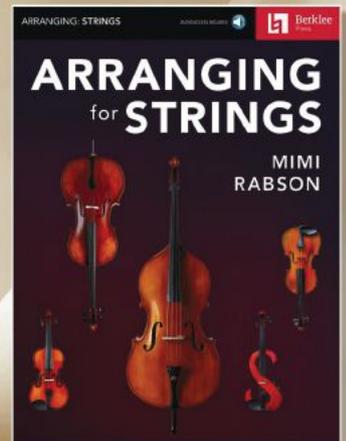
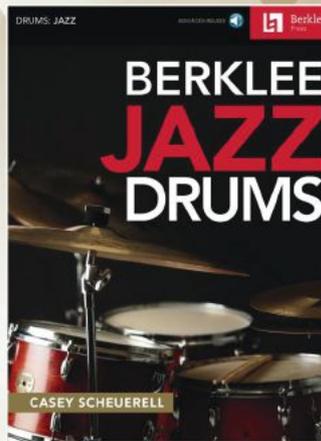
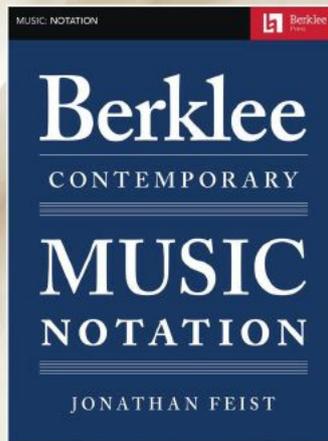
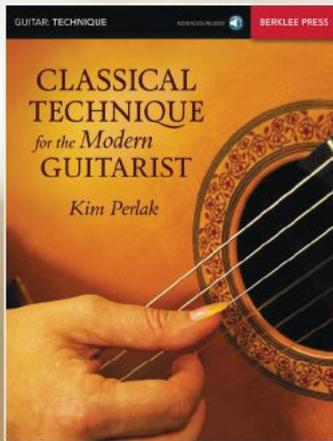
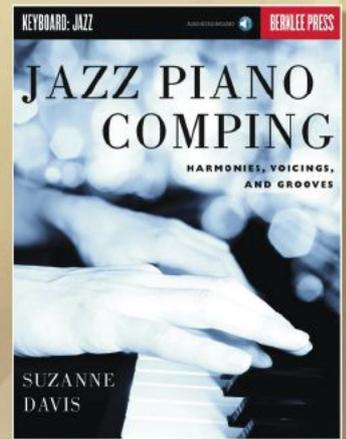
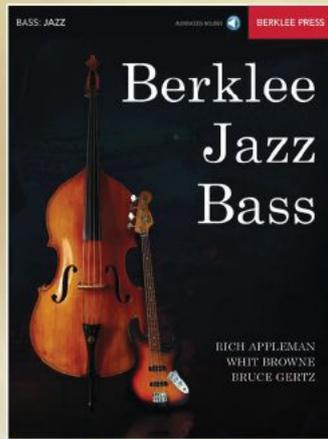
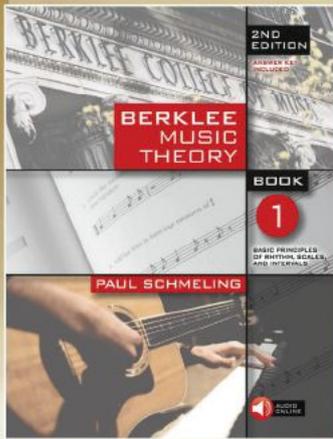
[repair specialists] who are probably kind of loners or curmudgeons as they get older," he says. I wouldn't let that deter the mechanically minded, however.

Instrument repair is also enough of a twist on music to attract the attention of local general-interest press and business journals. For instance, the *New York Times* ran a great piece on Perry Ritter's midtown Manhattan saxophone repair clinic, doting on its jazzy clientele, intricate, precision repair work, and Ritter's penchant for sax-themed Calderesque mobiles (And what in the photo looks like a Sparrow air-to-air missile – Ritter is apparently a model rocketeer).

The bottom line is, instrument repair is a recurring-revenue center when it's done correctly, and it's the sort of add on that gets a business noticed. Because unlike the car dealership's repair shop, which can't wait to hit you up for \$150 for an oil change, customers do find comfort in knowing that if they take a chance on tweaking their instrument this way or that and going just a fret or two too far, they can bring it back to someone who can not only fix it but empathize with that need to "make it mine." BY DAN DALEY

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