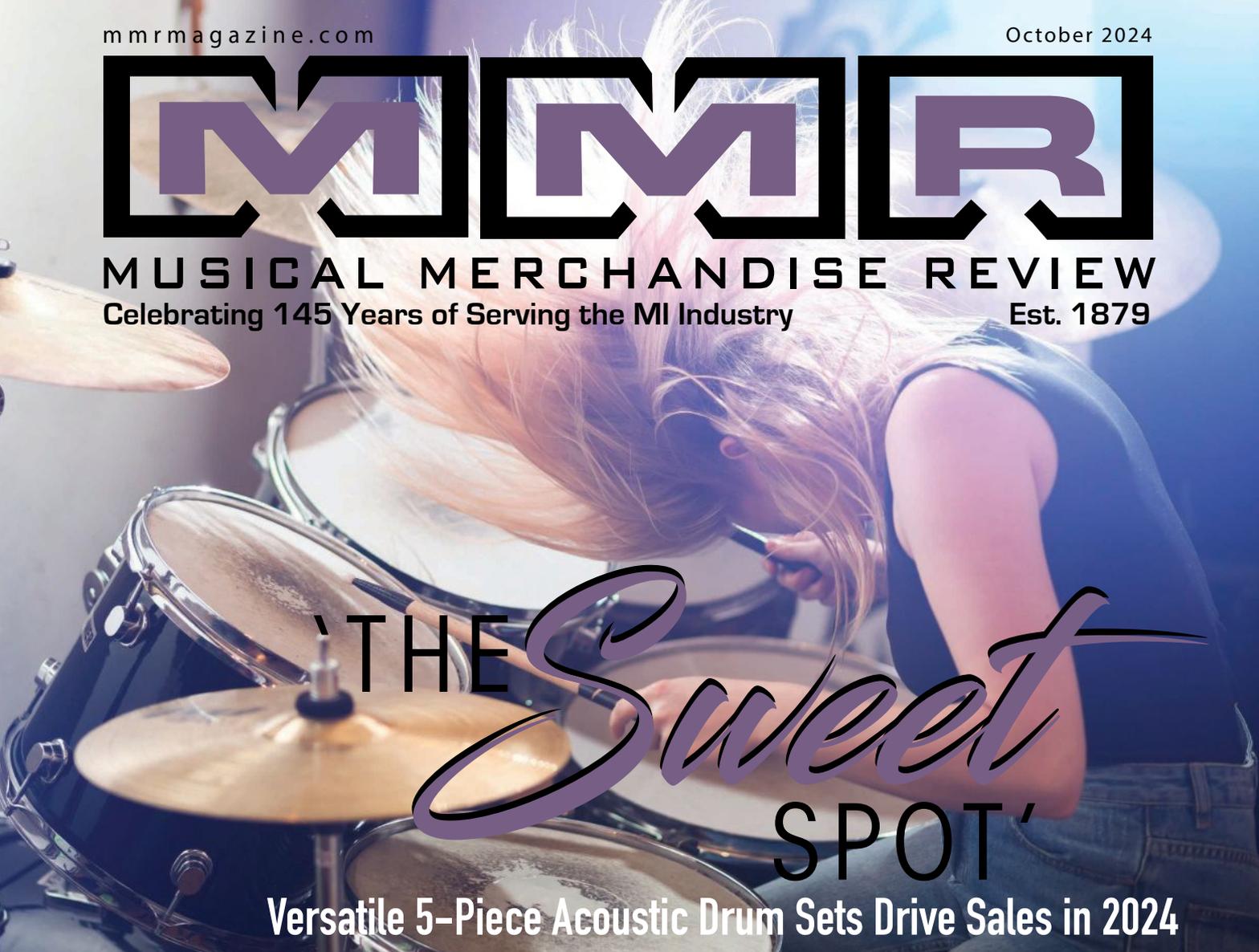


M M R

MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

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'THE Sweet SPOT'

Versatile 5-Piece Acoustic Drum Sets Drive Sales in 2024



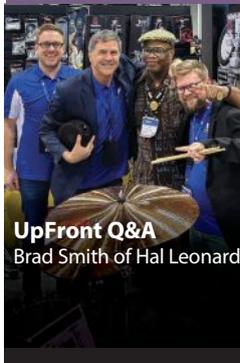
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INSIDE



UpFront Q&A
Brad Smith of Hal Leonard



32nd Annual MMR Dealers' Choice Awards Finalists



Dealer Survey
Sticking Around – Sales of Drum Sticks & Mallets in 2024

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MMR

MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

FEATURES Vol. 183 OCTOBER 2024 No. 10

Upfront Q&A

'I Have Been Honored to be a Part of the Story' – Hal Leonard's Brad Smith on the Company's Growing MI Distribution Business 12

MMR recently touched base with Hal Leonard VP of MI Products, Brad Smith, who filled us in on the expansion of HL's distribution business, the recent partnership with SJC Drums, and also an unexpected announcement regarding Smith's own celebrated professional career.

Roundtable

'The Sweet Spot' – Versatile 5-Piece Acoustic Drums Drive Sales in 2024 14

From stripped down cocktail kits to gargantuan prog-metal drum sets overstuffed with toms (and roto-toms!) and cymbals of every variety, there are plenty of configurations available out there to satisfy players of every ability and genre. The 5-piece acoustic drum set, however, consistently finds a home within every style of music and can be put to excellent, impactful use by musicians of all skill levels.

32nd Annual MMR Dealers' Choice Awards Finalists 20

The people have spoken! These are the finalists in all 18 Dealers' Choice Awards categories, ranging from "Product of the Year" to "Education Print Music Publisher of the Year," "Electric Guitar of the Year" to "Home Digital Keyboard of the Year," and more. Voting is now open to all current MMR subscribers!

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Dealer Survey

Sticking Around: Sales of Drum Sticks & Mallets in 2024 23

With a vast majority (95.9%) of participating dealers reporting upwards-trending or level sales of drum sticks and mallets, these accessories would seem to be a consistently solid source of income for MI retailers.



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Silly Rabbit, 'Pay-to-Play' is for Tricks!

By
Christian
Wissmuller

“We are constantly inventing subjective rankings across society, culture, and the economy that deem certain people, projects, and companies ‘best,” observed Emily Stewart in her “Money” column in *Vox* from February, 2023, entitled, ‘Awards Are Meaningless.’ “We do it in entertainment, in business, in art, and across a variety of professions, from journalism to law and beyond.

At the flashiest level, this looks like the Oscars or the Grammys: award shows that perpetually make audiences mad. At a more mundane level, it’s the supposed ‘best businesses’ in Dayton, Ohio, or an arbitrary list of ‘rising stars’ in advertising, or a ranking of the ‘best places to work’ where nobody’s asked a single employee how they feel about anything.”

To be sure, institutional gratification in the form of an endless stream of trophies handed out to all manners of folks in every conceivable role from all possible disciplines and pursuits (I have a few, myself – as well as my crowning achievement: Hampton Beach Dart Champ, 2000!) have sort of watered down whatever meaning such accolades once held.

But Stewart digs deeper, exposing a well-known, but oft-relegated to “Let’s just pretend we’re all oblivious to this” status within many industries: pay-to-play. “Much of the time, when a business or person applies for an award, they have to pay a fee,” she reveals. “The entities giving out that award need to keep the lights on, and hosting awards can be lucrative. (There’s a reason media, which is rife with economic troubles, gives out so many awards.) Awards entities squeeze money out of applicants and winners beyond entry fees, by getting them to pay for tables at ceremonies, or buy booths, sponsorships, and tickets for festivals and events. You can start to see the issue here: The awards game is one you have to pay to play, and not everybody can.”

Indeed, whether overt (and there are *lots* of examples in this category), or implied/causal (there are even more of these), many – nay *most* – industry certificates, medals, trophies, plaques, et cetera are given out to clients and/or advertisers who, directly or indirectly, pay for the honor.

Not so the *MMR* Dealers’ Choice Awards (DCAs). A quick review of the finalists for the 2024 DCAs (pages 20-22) in this issue reveals to even the most casual reader of this magazine that many of the companies represented are either infrequent advertisers with this publication, or entities who have *never* (or, at least, not in many years) partnered with us on a business level.

This is what makes the DCAs unique and, to my mind, truly special. I, personally, had no say in determining who’s up for one of these pointy, heavy crystal trophies come NAMM-time this January (when I say “heavy,” I know of what I speak – I lug these monsters around from winner’s booth to winner’s booth throughout the NAMM Show. Good for trapezius muscles, Hell on knee-joints. But I digress...), the sales staff didn’t sway the selection, even owner/publisher Mike Lawson had no influence. These awards, as the name suggests, are determined by folks in MI – and that’s it. If you occasionally find yourself confused when certain brands and products win other, seemingly similar MI-related “prizes,” well...

Online voting is live *right now* and if you’re a current *MMR* subscriber, you are welcome – and encouraged – to vote for your choices in the 2024 Dealers’ Choice Awards by visiting mmrmagazine.com and clicking on “Awards!”

Take a few moments and share your honest thoughts with your colleagues in MI. It costs you nothing – and the ultimate victors of these, the 32nd Annual *MMR* Dealers’ Choice Awards, won’t be buying their places atop the winner’s podium!

Christian Wissmuller
christian@mmrmagazine.com



Hampton Beach (NH) Dart Champ, 2000!
Don't pretend you're not jealous.

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Annual NAMM Dealer Awards Celebrates the Best of Music Product Retail

NAMM has announced its list of the Top 100 retail finalists to be honored at the annual NAMM Dealer Awards, taking place Friday, January 24 at The 2025 NAMM Show. NAMM honors retailers from around the globe who demonstrate exceptional commitment to their stores, communities and customers, and share in the vision of creating a more musical world.

Now in its 14th year, the NAMM Dealer Awards spotlights the industry's best music product retailers and their strategies for success. An independent panel of judges chooses the Top 100 Dealer finalists from retailers that submit applications for the awards. Judges also select winners in the seven "Best of" categories, from which the prestigious "Dealer of the Year" is chosen. Maxwell's House of Music was selected as the NAMM 2024 Dealer of the Year.

For the 2025 awards submissions and finalists, NAMM had the highest global representation in history, with 14 companies from 12 countries and regions outside the U.S, including Brazil, Canada, China, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, Singapore, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey, UAE, and the U.K.

The following NAMM Dealer Awards "Best of" category winners will be announced during The 2025 NAMM Show:

Innovation Award

Highlighting a retail member's commitment to reimagining the retail experience and focusing on the consumer. This award celebrates retail stores who go beyond price and service to create an immersive shopping experience, both in person and online.

Keith Mardak, Mary Vandenberg Commit \$5.25M to Fuller Academy

Former Hal Leonard CEO Keith Mardak and his wife Mary Vandenberg recently donated a \$5.25 million gift to Dr. Howard Fuller Collegiate Academy, which will allow the school to complete its middle school project as well as bring recording studios to both its middle school and high school buildings.



Keith Mardak and Mary Vandenberg

With this contribution, the couple becomes the largest single donor to the school's capital campaign, helping it reach its goal of \$35 million. In recognition of their donation, the academy named its middle school the Mardak – Vandenberg Campus.

The recording studios are in partnership with Nashville-based Notes for Notes, a nonprofit that builds, equips and



Best Store Design

Awarding the most effective merchandising that defines purchasing decisions. Store design enhances brands and sets the stage for a positive customer experience, creating opportunities for repeat customers and referrals.

Best Online Engagement

Awarding the most effective online presence that encourages customer engagement. Having a well-developed website, online marketing strategy, and presence on social media, is vital to building a successful following.

Best Community Retail Store

This category celebrates our industry's independent stores — single-location businesses that have made their mark on their local community. Consumers want to support the business that gives back and supports their community.

For additional information about the annual NAMM Dealer Awards on January 24, 2025, please visit NAMM Dealer Awards | NAMM.org.

Registration for The 2025 NAMM Show is now open with additional information available at www.namm.org/attend.

staffs after-school recording studios inside Boys & Girls Clubs and after-school facilities. The couple had already brought a recording studio to the Milwaukee area through the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee and felt the school would be the next logical fit.

The couple has a particular interest in helping youth in their artistic journeys, as shown through their donations to the Milwaukee Youth Arts Center campus expansion, now named the Mardak|Vandenberg building, as well as significant support for Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee. Their goal is to improve Milwaukee through improving the resources area children have.

Mapex and Majestic Marching Percussion Welcome Kevin Kenney as New Artist

Mapex and Majestic Marching Percussion are thrilled to announce the addition of Kevin Kenney to their esteemed roster



of artists. As a dynamic performer, clinician, arranger, and educator, Kevin brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the Mapex/Majestic family.

Kenney has held numerous roles with high-profile ensembles in the world of marching and concert percussion. Kenney has worked and performed with renowned groups including The Cadets, The Cavaliers, Music City Mystique, and Atlanta Quest. His leadership and commitment to excellence continue to leave a lasting impact on students and fellow educators nationwide.

Acclaimed Trombonist Sam Keedy Joins XO Brass Artist Roster

Accomplished trombonist Sam Keedy, recognized for his contributions as both a performer and arranger, has joined the



distinguished artist roster of XO Brass. Keedy, who began playing the trombone at the age of eleven under the tutelage of Paul McKee, has appeared at notable venues such as Abbey Road, Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola, and Tokyo TUC Jazz Club, as well as major festivals including the Monterey, Vail, and Telluride Jazz Festivals.



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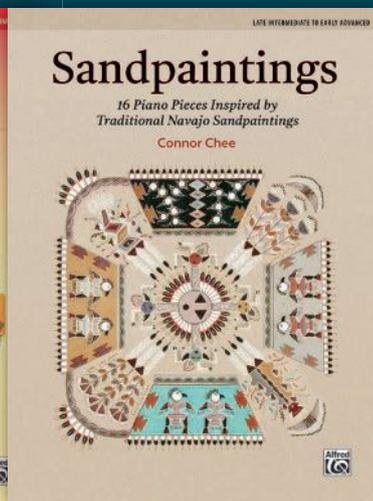
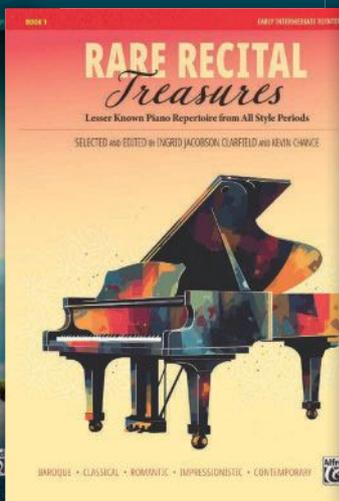
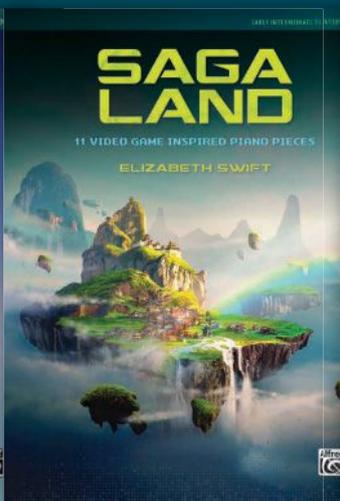
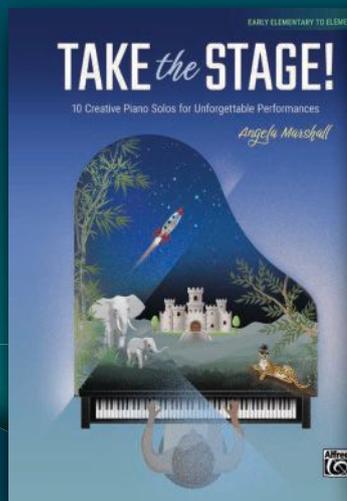
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by Connor Chee

Welcome to the Alfred Music family, Davis!

Meet our new piano editor—Davis Dorrrough is a pianist, teacher, and author with a deep commitment to music education. He has served in various roles within MTNA and has received numerous awards, including the MTNA MarySue Harris Studio Teacher Fellowship Award, the Piano Technicians Guild Foundation Award, and the MTNA Foundation Fellow Award. He will continue to influence music education through his editorial work here at Alfred Music.

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Allen & Heath Partners with Jetbuilt to Streamline AV Project Design and Proposals

Allen & Heath has announced a partnership with Jetbuilt, a global leader in AV project sales and management software. This collaboration integrates Allen & Heath's comprehensive product catalog into Jetbuilt's database, streamlining the workflow for end users, integrators, and consultants, and providing seamless access to the latest Allen & Heath product information.

This partnership ensures end users, integrators, and consultants benefit from the most up-to-date information on Allen & Heath's wide range of audio solutions. By having direct access to Allen & Heath's detailed product specifications, pricing information, product availability and warranty details, integrators can now accelerate various stages of their projects, from powerful proposal generation to comprehensive 360-degree project management. Additionally, Allen & Heath's products can be customized within the Jetbuilt platform to reflect the integrator's specific pricing, shipping, labor and tax details. Once customized, these items are saved to the company's product database, ensuring that future projects are even more efficient.

Additionally, Jetbuilt empowers Allen & Heath to engage directly with integrators during the planning stages of a project. This interaction allows Allen & Heath to validate product fit, discuss specialized project requirements and offer potential incentives, ensuring that integrators have the best tools and support for successful installations. By integrating its product line into Jetbuilt, Allen & Heath can provide timely updates on product availability, pricing and new product launches. This enhanced communication fosters a stronger relationship between Allen & Heath and its customers, leading to more informed decisions and, ultimately, more successful projects.



Brian Higgins (GM, Bill's Music), Rick Edwards (Winner of Taylor Guitar Give Away), Don Rodrigues "Donny Rod" (Taylor Southeast District Sales Manager)

Bill's Music Celebrates 50 Years of Taylor Guitars

To commemorate 50 years of Taylor Guitars, Bill's Music in Catonsville, "Music City" Maryland hosted a special Showcase Event with Taylor district sales manager, Don Rodrigues (pictured, right) presenting.

Dozens of excited attendees got to check out the new Limited Edition Taylor Guitars, win Giveaways, share in a Q&A session and listen to demos of each guitar performed by Bill's Music resident guitar instructor Jack Mandley. A big draw to the event was that Bill's Music was giving away a Taylor 50th Anniversary GS Mini-e Guitar valued at \$899.

Rick Edwards (pictured, center) who has been a loyal Bill's Music customer since the late 1960s was the lucky winner of the guitar give away. "Events like these are so fun and informative for our music community and Taylor Guitars is unrivaled in its professionalism as well as the quality and sound of their instruments. Happy 50th to Taylor Guitars!" – Brian Higgins, GM of Bill's Music

letters

Hi Christian,

Fantastic column [September, 2024 Editorial]! Well-written and the logic is presented with great supporting facts. Change is normal.

Cheers,
Ara Kazanjian
Arlo Music Machines

Hi Christian,

Thanks for your clear-eyed editorial in the Sept. issue of *MMR* (Post-Covid 'Normal...').

As an independent designer, I'm in my 37th year in this industry working as the "man behind the curtain" for a bunch of MI name brands - designing everything from the products, ads, brochures, branding, marketing, packaging, copywriting, etc., etc.

Working this side of the biz, it's also been quite journey of perpetual adaptation. Starting in '87 from hand-drawing product graphics and year-long product R&D/campaigns, printed materials, in-store promotions, etc. - to today's rapid fire content across multiple social/ web platforms hoping to make lasting impressions. Ch-ch-ch-ch changes.

Understandably, some of us 'old schoolers' may not have been able to totally see this world coming. Today's online market is so visually-driven, that compelling design, innovation and a strong brand identity are probably more critical than ever for brands to get attention.

At least for the moment... ;-)

Sincerely,
Bob Crelin
BobCrelinDesign.com

Casio Celebrates 20th Anniversary of Privia with Sophisticated Evening in Brooklyn

Casio hosted a celebratory event honoring the 20th anniversary of Privia – its well-known line of digital pianos – on Wednesday, September 25th, 2024, at Hana House in Brooklyn, New York. With its sophisticated design, uncompromised sound, authentic touch, and innovative functions, Privia has redefined the value of the modern piano into an instrument that seamlessly harmonizes with a diverse range of lifestyles.

The event kicked off with a presentation on Casio's Privia lineup, with an emphasis on the latest model, the PX-S7000. The PX-S7000 seamlessly integrates aesthetics, superior sound, and innovative features like Bluetooth audio, creating a piano that enhances both the musical and everyday experiences of its users, allowing them to embrace a "piano-infused lifestyle." Each element of Privia is designed to complement and enhance each other, culminating in a unique digital piano.

Following the presentation was a performance by Japanese pianist and composer Hayato Sumino, who entered the classical music scene with his Grand Prix win at the 2018 PTNA Piano Competition. Known for his vibrant stage presence and technical brilliance, Sumino wowed attendees by demonstrating the capabilities of the PX-S7000. Sumino signed an exclusive recording contract with Sony Classical earlier this year, and his debut album with the label is scheduled for release on November 1, 2024.

In addition to Sumino, artists Jon Regen and Laura Clapp also performed, showing attendees firsthand the power of Privia.



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people on the move

KHS America is proud to announce the appointment of **Craig Denny** as vice president of sales and marketing. With an impressive thirteen and a half years at St. Louis Music, where he most recently served as senior vice president for marketing and business development, Denny brings a wealth of industry experience and a deep passion for music education to KHS America.



Prior to his previous tenure at St. Louis Music, Denny also held the position of director of marketing – saxophones at Conn-Selmer. As a highly accomplished woodwind instrumentalist, he performed across the country before transitioning to the music products industry. He holds a degree in music performance from DePaul University.

traderegrets

Industry veteran **Dennis Houlihan** passed away at his home in Long Beach, CA on September 5. He was 74.

Born March 28, 1950 in Davenport, OH, Houlihan grew up in a musical environment and took up playing the organ at age nine, after his family relocated to Fresno, CA. While in high school, Houlihan worked part-time at Don Smith's Gospel Music & Supply Company in Fresno (then one of the largest music retailers in California), becoming quite proficient at demonstrating and selling Lowrey organs.

His income from music retailing financed his college studies at California State University, Fresno, where he earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees in marketing and business administration.

Houlihan is perhaps best known for his long 19-year association with Roland Corporation U.S., where he held a variety of executive roles, eventually

becoming CEO / president of the U.S. division and was the first American on the board of directors of Roland Japan. Prior to working at Roland, he was the general manager of Technics Musical Instruments. In the 1990s, he also served on the NAMM Board for a decade, and was the first manufacturer representative to also be elected as chairman and CEO of NAMM.



Beloved by all who knew him, Houlihan will be remembered for his decades-long impact in the music products industry and perhaps, more importantly, for the deep friendships he developed around the world.

Houlihan's family has asked that those interested in honoring his memory please consider a gift to The NAMM Foundation, (www.nammfoundation.org) whose mission he passionately continued to champion.

MMR Publisher Lawson Collaborates with Pearl River on His Signature Guitars

To some, Mike Lawson is a noted publisher, journalist, editor, and author. As a publisher of music education publications, he produced over 200 books and videos on audio/music production, signing Quincy Jones and Ken Scott to publish their musical memoirs. Lawson owns the periodicals *Musical Merchandise Review (MMR)* magazine and *School Band and Orchestra Plus (SBO+)* magazine. He is a voting member of The Recording Academy for over two decades and a former trustee for the Grammy Awards. Additionally, Lawson is the executive director of the nonprofit TI:ME (Technology in Music Education), producing professional development training for thousands of U.S. music educators each year.

But to many, Lawson is simply known as a professional guitarist, owning what some call an, "excessive number of guitars." Lawson has played thousands of shows, recording and performing with many amazing friends over the last 40 years, such as Merl Saunders, Phil Keaggy, Vassar Clements, Vince Welnick, Michael Cleveland, John McEuen, Bob Welch, Jorma Kaukonen, and Jack Casady. He has released nine albums as Mike Lawson & Friends and collaborated with many other artists on recordings.

Because of his reputation as a six-string expert, Pearl River sent Lawson two prototype guitars in 2023 for a per-



sonal evaluation before the company entered the U.S. market. After over half a century of designing and producing the world's best-selling pianos, Pearl River challenged its luthiers to create a series of acoustic guitars comparable to the best.

Lawson told Pearl River that while the sound, build quality, and playability were nearly on par with some of his Martin and Gibson guitars, he still offered suggestions for improving the instruments to compete in the U.S. market.

Pearl River embraced his advice and proposed an alliance. As a result, Lawson found himself flying over 8,000 miles from his home in Nashville, Tennessee, to Guangzhou, China, to collaborate with Pearl River on the new top-of-the-line, handcrafted Mike Lawson Signature Model guitars. His vision for these namesake guitars is to make extremely high-

end instruments affordable for lifetime working musicians like him.

"Pearl River is uniquely situated right now to do this because of their vast manufacturing experience and incredible craftsmen I met on my visit to Guangzhou. Pearl River insisted on giving me every feature I asked for. These models feature all solid rosewood backs/sides, nitro-cellulose lacquer finishes, solid spruce tops, one-piece mahogany necks, bone saddles/nuts, Grover locking tuners, Fishman electronics, and hardshell cases," Lawson offered. "The ML-8000GCD grand auditorium model has an ebony fretboard and bridge. The ML-800D dreadnaught has a rosewood fretboard and bridge. Pearl River even owns their massive wood mill; the woods are exquisite!"

According to Leng Tshua, Pearl River's global director of sales & marketing, the Mike Lawson Signature Model guitars, launching at the 2025 NAMM Show in January, mark a new chapter for the company. "Much like when we introduced our line of string instruments that follow the centuries-old Cremona School construction tradition, this complimentary partnership between Mike and our master luthiers symbolizes our ongoing pursuit of musical instrument excellence."

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HEADPHONE HANGER / HH7000

‘I Have Been Honored to be a Part of the Story’ Hal Leonard’s Brad Smith on the Company’s Growing MI Distribution Business

By Christian **Wissmuller**

Long one of the most formidable names in print music publishing, in recent years Hal Leonard has been claiming an ever-growing stake in the realm of MI distribution. Starting in earnest roughly 15 years ago, this branch of the company has advanced to now represent a significant portion of the overall business model, with brands such as Apogee, Beyerdynamic, Avid, Gator Cases, Line 6, Pioneer DJ, and many (many!) others under the Hal Leonard MI distribution umbrella.

MMR recently touched base with Hal Leonard’s VP of MI Products, Brad Smith, who filled us in on the expansion of HL’s distribution business, the recent partnership with SJC Drums, and also an unexpected announcement regarding Smith’s own celebrated professional career.

Hal Leonard is, of course, known primarily as the biggest name in print music publishing, but a while back the company began distributing other lines and brands of musical instruments and gear. What was behind those very first steps into MI distribution for the company?

We started in 2009 distributing composition software, offering both Finale and Sibelius. When Sibelius was purchased by Avid, that brought us into selling Pro Tools and M-Audio hardware. That set us off on the gear side of distribution. Hal Leonard’s distribution and fulfillment center is an award-winning, state-of-the-art facility, so we knew that if the package had a barcode on it, we could efficiently deliver it. Then we polled our sales team and we had a great pool of current sales people who were familiar with the hardware side of MI, so we organically developed a new division. Initially they cross-sold print and gear. Although we still sell all product to all accounts, we eventually created a dedicated MI sales force.

As I recall it, right around a decade ago, it seemed like Hal Leonard really began to ramp up this side of the business. Every month it seemed like, “Now they’re distributing IK Multimedia... and now Tycoon ... and now Morley,” and so on. What do you think was behind how quickly Hal Leonard emerged as a major player in the distribution game for MI? From the outside looking in, it really did feel like it all went from zero to 200 mph, with every conceivable brand suddenly entering into distribution deals with Hal Leonard. What does the company offer that’s so appealing to brands and suppliers looking for a distribution partner?

Since we are part of the Hal Leonard machine, we had a great platform to message and support music retailers. We immediately had the brand name products and the legacy of a service-oriented company. We are so grateful for our dealers to accept our expansion, but ultimately they embraced it because we offer value. We call it the “distribution advantage.” Dealers can buy many products from one source – one call, one invoice, one shipment. We have no minimums. We offer freight programs and have award-winning service. HL can also reach a large network of smaller indie accounts that is harder for a supplier to do. We have built-in regular marketing to this group, so we give instant access to that vast network. Also because of Hal Leonard’s broad offering as a publisher, we have reaches outside of the NAMM dealer market with after-school programs, mass market, fan websites, houses of worship, and other atypical customers who still buy a lot of gear.

Internally, how does the company go about juggling the traditional print publishing business vs. the distribution side of the company? Is it a hard “division of church and state” type situation where the two aspects of the overall business are kept quite separate, or are there ways in which both sides of the company sort of “work together,” or exist as supporting players for one another?

Because we reach so many different types of resellers, that is always the challenge and the opportunity. We try our best to have the right rep call on the right buyer. The majority of accounts fit in either the print camp or the gear camp, but we do have a large “middle ground” where they buy both. In those situations, we take a collaborative approach where the main rep brings in a product specialist to either advise the rep on the right product, or talks directly to the buyer. Accounts can sniff out folks who are just selling line items in a catalog. Music stores want to know they are



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MI PRODUCTS
DISTRIBUTION**



The Hal Leonard team (Brad Smith second from left) in the drum area of the company’s 2024 NAMM booth with Jack White’s drummer Daru Jones

“Because of Hal Leonard’s broad offering as a publisher, we have reaches outside of the NAMM dealer market with after-school programs, mass market, fan websites, houses of worship, and other atypical customers who still buy a lot of gear.”

buying from a knowledgeable rep. We continue to have training in our office to be sure we all know to how to start and then know where to go to get more info. Accounts appreciate that effort to get it right.

Recently, the big news was that SJC Drums had joined the fold and is now distributed by Hal Leonard, but it’s been a busy year on the distribution side of the business aside from that, with recent additions of Kali Audio, Beyerdynamic, Royer, and others. How did these recent partnerships come into being? Presumably the merger with Muse has played a role?

Muse is super supportive and excited to see how we can leverage their reach to end users and promote the lines we distribute. On the recent additions, we are constantly adding new lines, with the plan that they complement our existing lines and our dealers want them. Often our dealers advise us to bring in a line that they feel is under-served. All the recent additions were results of that direction, except SJC. Until the beginning of 2024 we had distributed the Gretsch import drum line. When that was moved, we discussed what our options were to fit our catalog the best. We knew SJC from working with School of Rock and realized they sold directly as well as with only two resellers. The timing was right for them. With their amazing endorsers and die-hard loyal fanbase, after 25 years they deserve a wider audience. They wanted to reach more resellers but did not have the sales team. Step in HL! Instant experienced drum sales team and hungry dealer network. With SJC we have exclusive finishes as well as a USA made series. Our industry thrives on new gear, as well as reaching the new players. SJC appeals to that market and we are in a great position to reach every level of player.

Any other surprising distribution developments or new lines that are noteworthy?

DJ and lighting! Post-pandemic the level of interest to DJ and using lighting to support any creative space has blossomed. We distribute Pioneer DJ and Chauvet DJ in those categories, as well as the other related products like powered speakers, cables, headphones, stands, and instruction. Good way to cross-sell many

products. Since 2023, our Start to DJ classroom lesson program has been adopted by over 50 schools and school districts. Stores who sell to schools should know about that as well as any store with lesson programs. Consider adding DJ to your lessons. Students learn song structure and other music disciplines by DJing and they have more places to perform than the beginning traditional instrumentalist. DJ is the new gateway to creating more musicians.

Obviously, Hal Leonard already has a very robust and wide-reaching dealer network, but how would an interested MI retailer who may not already be in business with the company go about setting those wheels in motion?

Until a customer can download a physical music product, distribution from manufacturer to reseller will always serve a purpose. By us distributing brand name gear, through a process that is trusted and known, HL MI is a reliable partner to work with. Contact us at sales@halleonard.com or call 800-544-0626. Hal Leonard is in our 78th year serving the market. We are excited about the future.

Expectations for this arm of the larger Hal Leonard business model in the coming months?

The expectations are to manage this growth and find more ways to leverage our opportunities with Muse. With Muse, platforms like Ultimate Guitar, Audacity, MuseScore, and MuseClass (to name a few) it opens up the need for distribution to grow and expand into other product categories. The Hal Leonard Family is in place, and we’ll continue to build a bigger engine. Playing, rehearsing, performing, and recording music will always be in demand.

Any other recent or upcoming distribution announcements you’d like to make sure MMR readers are aware of?

Thanks for this final question. With Over 40 years working in the music products industry, I am retiring at the end of this year. We have a killer team. Many who have been with me since the MI Distribution division started. They will continue the plan with some extra support from Muse. Muse/HL sees distribution as a gateway to connect. I have been honored to be a part of the story. Thank you. 🎸🎧



DJ Training day at Hal Leonard with author DJ Hapa Perdue (Brad Smith in the back row, third from right)

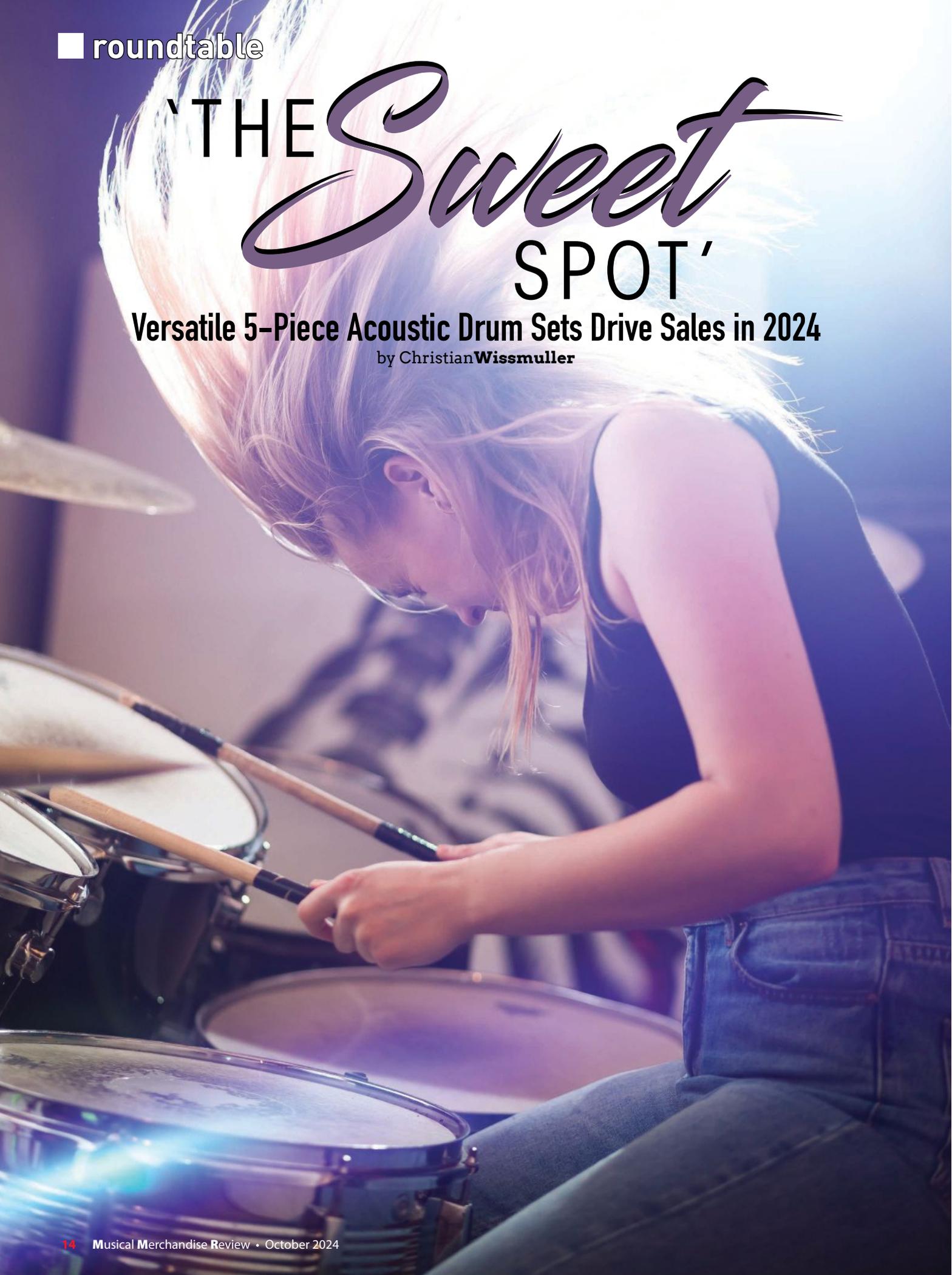


■ roundtable

'THE Sweet SPOT'

Versatile 5-Piece Acoustic Drum Sets Drive Sales in 2024

by ChristianWissmuller



From stripped down cocktail kits to gargantuan prog-metal drum sets overstuffed with toms (and roto-toms!) and cymbals of every variety, there are plenty of configurations available out there to satisfy players of every ability and genre. The 5-piece acoustic drum set, however, consistently finds a home within pretty much every style of music and can be put to excellent, impactful use by musicians of all skill levels.

We recently connected with reps from five (appropriate, no?) of the biggest brands that design and sell 5-piece kits to learn more about the enduring appeal of this particular setup, what specific sets are drawing drummers into stores in 2024, and what's on the horizon for this segment of MI.

For your brand, what's currently the best-selling 5-piece professional acoustic drum set?

Bill Ludwig: Starclassic Walnut/Birch.

Mike Petrak: The ddrum Dominion Birch in Brushed Olive Metallic is currently a popular choice among drummers seeking a high-quality acoustic drum set. We offer it in four configurations, including a 5-piece setup. This set delivers a warm, resonant sound, thanks to its well-crafted birch shells. The 5-piece configuration includes a 22" bass drum, 10" and 12" rack toms, a 16" floor tom, and a 14" snare drum. Known for its versatility, this set suits a variety of musical styles, from rock to jazz. The hardware is also robust, ensuring durability during performances.

Jeff Mulvihill: For Mapex, the Saturn Evolution Series. [For Sonor] SQ2 custom drums are the best-selling segment in the catalog, but as for pre-packaged kits the Sonor Vintage Series is really the winner.

Matt Rudin: Our number one best-selling drum set continues to be the Stage Custom Birch. Because of its incredible value, durability and wide assortment of color options, many students and schools purchase it. Yet because of its versatility and the great-sounding 100 percent birch shells, many gigging and professional drummers also use that as their go-to kit.

In terms of growth, we have seen an almost 200 percent increase in sales of our Rydeen line this fiscal year. This is in part due to the introduction of some great new colors and increased marketing to build awareness of this great-sounding entry-level drum set.

Kevin Packard: In our post-pandemic musical landscape, I feel like our definition of "professional" has shifted in recent years. "Professional" used to merely mean "expensive," but as today's drummer is much more aware of every element of the instrument, they expect a much more "tailored" experience. The brand identity, the process of the build, the general aesthetic of the kit; these things all matter to a player who's considering that kind of investment. With that in mind, Pearl reimagined its high-end drum set offering last year -with our legendary Masters series in three shell flavors, and our marquee Reference One series kits- all featuring Pearl's first L-Arm tom holder. Thus far, the 6-ply Masters Maple drums have been a best-seller.

There was a stretch of time where, particularly in certain genres, drum kits seemed to get bigger and bigger and ever more elaborate; Then there seemed to be the inevitable backlash where many players were embracing stripped-down, minimal kits. 5-piece sets never seem to go out of fashion or favor, though. What about this configuration makes 5-piece drum sets so "evergreen" for players of all styles?

MP: I think it comes down to a few factors. A 5-piece kit is very versatile; it offers a balanced mix of sounds without being too overwhelming. When "big kit" trends come and go, many players may revert to the 5-piece configuration for its compactness and ease of transport. The standard 5-piece setup also makes it easy to adapt. Players can easily customize a 5-piece kit by adding or removing components based on their needs for different genres or gigs. Lastly, the 5-piece configuration is a traditional setup that everyone recognizes and feels comfortable with, not to mention that it is usually the foundation for all beginner drummers.

JM: In terms of the drum kit, it really is simply the "sweet spot" between simple and elaborate. Bass drum, snare drum, with three toms simply can be the vehicle to authentically produce music from nearly any genre.

MR: As much as I love a large kit to explore sounds and really let loose, anyone who's ever had to set one up will tell you it's only practical if you have a drum tech/road crew on hand or if you plan on keeping it in one place in your studio/rehearsal space. If you have multiple gigs in one week (or even one day), chances are you will need something practical.

The 5-piece will give you an ample range of high and low tones and provide you with plenty to work with when adding texture and fills when playing almost any genre of music.



**"In many cases, in order to give the high-end buyer what they looking for, the best promotional technique is just having the product ready for them to experience."
— Kevin Packard
Combo Marketing Manager, Pearl Corporation**



roundtable

You may find going with a 22" bass and 10", 12", and 16" toms/floor toms will work for most rock, metal and country situations, while a 20" bass with 10", 12", 14" toms/floor toms are great with jazz, funk, R&B and Latin music. Of course, there are no hard and heavy rules to what configuration to use when playing any genre of music... it all depends on what sound the drummer feels will work best with the style they are playing.

KP: I think it all comes down to options and value. 5-pc. Drum outfits came into favor as music was getting more aggressive in the late '70s, and more visual in the early '80s. But just in terms of "Bang-for-your-Buck", 5-pc. All-In-One kits meant more drums for the money to the beginning player, and I think that translated forward as drummers progressed. If you have the standard "two-up/one-down" configuration you have the option of a larger voice, or scaling it back depending on the gig or vibe. I know plenty of drummers that purchase a 5-pc. Kit and never use the second rack tom; but there's the knowledge that you COULD use it if the gig required it, and the security of knowing that it's there if you need it. As Nigel Tufnel would say: "Well, it's one-more, in'nit?"

BL: I think it has a pretty wide appeal for different players. Having two rack toms and two floor toms gives much more variety in sound, which many people utilize and enjoy incorporating into their playing style. For others that more frequently use a smaller setup, it gives them the extra option to have that second floor tom or second rack tom and configure the kit in more ways to suit their needs or specific gig. Even with the trends moving from monstrous drum kits to minimal, many people still see value in a bigger drum kit, and I think the five-piece kit is a great solution that falls "in between" both worlds.

What endorsing artists for your brand have you found to be particularly effective in terms of marketing your product?

MR: We have a fantastic roster of artists, and I would hate to call out anyone in particular as they all contribute in various ways. Some of our artists are strong on social media, posting frequently and are great advocates in various social threads, answering questions or simply sharing why they love Yamaha products. Other artists are active teachers and/or clinicians and get out in front of drummers in live and online settings, sharing their knowledge and passion for drumming, which not only helps introduce drummers to our brand but also helps enforce existing fans' passion for the Yamaha brand. And then we have a wide roster of drummers that are out on tour. Not only is having the logo out in front of audiences a great way to build brand awareness, but it also gives audiences a memorable and positive interaction with our brand and product. Many touring artists, even with their rigorous schedules, still find the time to shoot videos, work with various publications on rig rundowns, or share stories from the road, which once again creates more opportunities for drummers to learn about our products and have positive experiences with our drums.

KP: Our endorsing artists have been exceptional at helping other drummers understand the benefits of playing Pearl. Though that is a landscape that is constantly evolving, our hope is that drummers will draw just as much inspiration from the instruments themselves as they do from the drummers who play them. When we kicked off our High-End Reimagined program last year, we hosted an event here in Nashville where we brought in distributors, key dealers, and the playing public to experience these new drums first-hand. To demonstrate, we set up kits throughout the venue for everyone to test, and featured drumming legends Dennis Chambers, Omar Hakim, and Mike Mangini to showcase each shell recipe in the Masters and Reference One line-up. It was truly an environment where the community inspired each other, and we were able to capture that feeling in a series of videos that were released through our social media channels. Then you have players like Greyson Nekrutman and Matt Halpern who incorporate the gear in their social media content to influence a whole new generation of legends.

JM: The Mapex Artist Roster is eclectic and international in scope including influential seasoned players like Rashid Williams, Jeff Hamilton, Aquiles Priester, Russ Miller, Claus Hessler, and Craig Blundell as well as exciting young guns like Kareem Thompson, Sal Giancarelli, Maestro Robinson, Tyler Ritter and Carlin White.

The Sonor Artist roster hosts many of the most heroic drummers of several generations. There truly are too many to name here, but let's recognize Jack DeJohnette as simply an iconic musical treasure and Steve Smith as being a decades-long Sonor Advocate.

BL: At TAMA, we try to work with artists from a wide range of genres and styles. By spotlighting each artist's unique qualities, we are able to explore and uncover new sounds to play a part in the evolution of drumming and music. Fostering this innovation and evolution greatly help TAMA understand and create the tools to help the entire industry grow.

MP: We believe that in today's world, drummers with a significant online presence or following go a long way in promoting a product. Don't get us wrong – having big-name artists on the biggest stages in the world also helps with brand aware-



"A 5-piece kit is very versatile; it offers a balanced mix of sounds without being too overwhelming."
— Mike Petrak, Brand Director, ddrum



“Bass drum, snare drum, with three toms simply can be the vehicle to authentically produce music from nearly any genre.”
 – Jeff Mulvihill, Combo Drum Brand Manager, Sonor & Mapex Drums



ness. Artists like Chris Dovas of Testament and Chris Kontos of Forbidden really help bring street cred to the line. However, when it comes to online influencers, the direct connection they have with drummers and their fanbase really helps get the product noticed in the marketplace.

Have you noticed any display or promotion techniques employed by MI retailers that are especially effective at attracting customers – and sales?

KP: The professional drummer has so many investment options when it comes to high-end drums. In many cases, in order to give the high-end buyer what they looking for, the best promotional technique is just having the product ready for them to experience. But players at this level don't want the run-of-the-mill sizes, finishes, and materials. They want to know they are making an investment in their sonic and visual identity. So we have invested deeply in assuring that a wide range of Masters and Reference One component drums are in-stock and available so the drummer can have the freedom of selecting the right combination for their own playing style. Our Music City Custom program also includes the option of over 30 different wrapped finishes that can be applied to our Masters Maple/Gum and Reference One shells, so the player can get what is

right for them without the long wait. For partner promotion, we have made an extensive media library of our photo and video content available to our Dealer Network through a fully comprehensive content management system, so it can be incorporated into their ecommerce presence. These steps have resulted in one of the best sales years for high end drums in Pearl's long and storied history.

MP: We believe that the best promotion technique is a tried-and-true concept: providing a space in retail stores for customers to test the product. Today, many products – not just musical instruments – are purchased online, often accompanied by vid-

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“Having a playable drum kit on display and tuned does a lot for the customer.”
— Bill Ludwig, Sales Strategist Drums/
Strategic Accounts and B&O Manager, TAMA
Drums

eo demos or testimonials. However, nothing beats trying the product in person. Currently, our ddrum NIO percussion pads are set up in the electronics section of the drum department at many Guitar Centers across the country. This boosts sales because not only does the product gain visibility, but customers can also try it out and compare it to the competition, helping them make the right choice.

BL: Having a playable drum kit on display and tuned does a lot for the customer. It sounds like a no-brainer, but having the experience of actually playing a kit (along with knowledgeable sales staff), gives the player the information, sound, and feel to form a solid opinion/impression and hopefully make them want to bring it home.

JM: The most effective retailers are those who have a well balanced mix of tactics in both the traditional and modern formats. An attractive show room floor, active and user-friendly e-commerce, creative product content on web and socials and a wide multi-brand offering.

MR: We have seen a big uptick in dealers sharing social posts with the latest products available, and I love seeing this. It is a great way to let customers know what you have in stock when you have it. Drum set comparisons and product overviews have always been great ways to attract attention. In general, we seem to see higher sales in retailers that are able to show their product knowledge, answer customer questions, or offer a unique approach to developing content or experiences for customers.

This product knowledge is also valuable in shops. Retailers that advertise having a staff well versed in drums and able to answer questions about various lines seem to have greater sell-through.

We also see stronger sales in retail shops that offer their customers a unique experience. So, having a space that showcases drums creatively and excitingly while allowing customers to explore a wide variety of products seems to do well in attracting customers. How that translates to retailers doing sales online, having great product shots, 360 views and product videos seems to make a big difference in bringing customers to product pages.

Do you have any recent or upcoming 5-piece drum set introductions you'd like to draw readers' attention to?

BL: Being TAMA's 50th anniversary, I have to mention the special drums and kits we released this year, including the Superstar Reissue kits. That said, TAMA is always working on new products and more often than not, it includes many 5 piece drum sets.

JM: YES! We are planning to release a Saturn Evolution Special Edition featuring a limited new finish. We are also launching a new addition to the Mapex Black Panther Design Lab series called the "Equinox" kit along with a total re-release of the series with a more focused set of specs based on the Mapex "Sonic Flow" philosophy.

Recently Sonor introduced a new finish in the Vintage series called "Teak Semi Gloss" taking us back to something close to the look of 1979's Phonic Natural or Rustic Oak.



MR: Last year, we announced the new lineup of colors, such as for the Rydeen, which I mentioned has brought a lot of excitement to this line of drums. Not only are the new colors, such as the Turquoise or Champagne Glitter and Gloss Pale Blue, stunning, but the hardware is interchangeable with our system hardware, making it very versatile. The Rydeen, a one-box kit 5-piece kit, is available in 22" and 20" bass drum options.

We have also recently introduced new components to our Tour Custom line, which has also resulted in an increase in sales of this 6-ply all Maple kit. This gives the drummer more options to add to their existing 5-piece Tour Custom kit.

MP: We currently do not have any new 5-piece drum sets for 2024, but as mentioned before, our 5-piece configuration within the Dominion Birch series remains our best seller, with the Brushed Olive Metallic finish being the most popular. We also offer finishes in Satin Bubinga and Paper White Birch. All can be found at ddrum.com.

KP: Our Professional Series Drums were introduced last year as a call back to the MLX drums from Pearl's mid-80's line-up. They offer an exceptional value to the touring player by giving a more refined assortment of sizes and finishes in a tried-and-true All Maple format. These drums come in pre-configured shell packs in a more accessible price range, but have all the elements the pro needs for the studio and stage. Professional series has already found a home with a wide range of drummers and the response has been excellent!

Expectations for this market segment as we close out 2024 and look to the new year?

JM: This market segment has been flat all summer long and we are looking forward to our new product launches and Q4 Holiday business both igniting some excitement for pro drummers everywhere to upgrade and uplift their drumkit experience.

The year 2025 marks the 150th anniversary of Sonor and there will be a whole host of exciting things to celebrate this extraordinary milestone.

MP: It's hard to say for sure right now, but the current feeling is that sales may trend slightly downward. This is mainly because, over the last few years – due to factors like COVID – sales for many products, not just musical instruments, sky-



“We seem to see higher sales in retailers that are able to show their product knowledge, answer customer questions, or offer a unique approach to developing content or experiences for customers.”

— Matt Rudin, Product Marketing Manager
Drums, Yamaha Corporation of America



rocketed. Now, with prices rising across the board, many people or players may not have the funds to purchase brand-new products. We'll see!

KP: The ways we experience media –and the personalities that deliver it – are constantly evolving. I feel that drummers are going to continue to want a more individualized experience in buying a high-end product; as well as a stronger connection to the companies that make the tools of their trade. Pearl offers more options for the fully customized high-end drums than any other drum manufacturer, and we want to show our ongoing dedication to the drummer by backing their purchase for the life of the product with the best product warranty in the industry. We also want to help the segment grow by strengthening partnerships with our Authorized Dealer network, continuing outreach to the playing community, and heightened dialogue with drummers of all levels to assure we are giving them an instrument and brand promise they can have genuine faith in.

BL: As the holiday season approaches, we expect an uptick in beginner and intermediate kits, but the market as a whole seems to be trending towards the next step up to professional level kits. Specifically for five-piece kits, we are looking forward to stronger sales in the last part of the year from beginner five-piece kits, up to the professional level.

MR: Sales of 5-piece kits and acoustic drums in all price points and configurations have been great this year, and we expect them to stay strong through the holidays. ©2024

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CQ Series

BUFFET CRAMPON PARIS
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Montage M

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MMR
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Popular Print Music Publisher of the Year

Alfred

CARL FISCHER MUSIC

BOOSEY & HAWKES

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MMR
MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW
DEALERS' CHOICE AWARD
Accessory Line of the Year

BUFFET CRAMPON PARIS

Fender

ICON accessories

D'Addario

On-Stage

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DEALERS' CHOICE AWARD
Acoustic Guitar of the Year

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YAMAHA
FS9

Fender **Martin & Co.** EST. 1833
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DEALERS' CHOICE AWARD
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Alfred

Excelcia
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nord
Electro 6D

CASIO
PX-S7000

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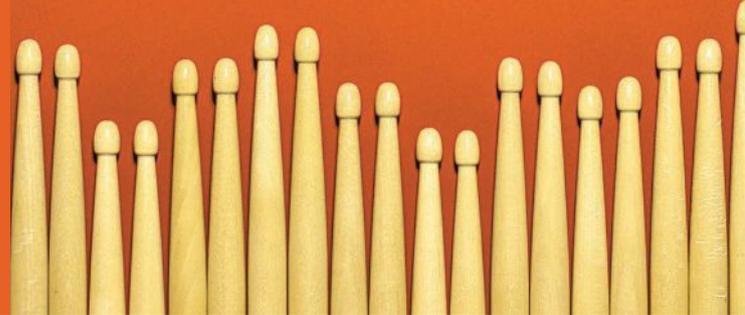
Sticking Around

Sales of Drum Sticks & Mallets in 2024

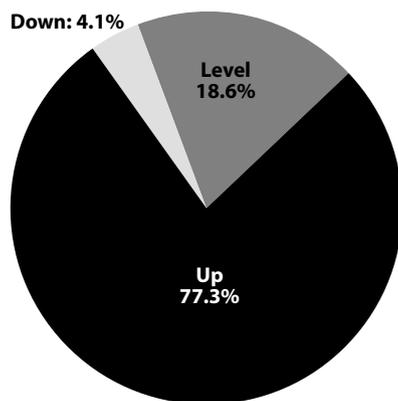
By Christian **Wissmuller**

With a vast majority (95.9%) of participating dealers reporting upwards-trending or level sales of drum sticks and mallets, these accessories would seem to be a consistently solid source of income for MI retailers (a similar survey in 2021 found 90.9% of those polled observing “up” or “level” sales trends).

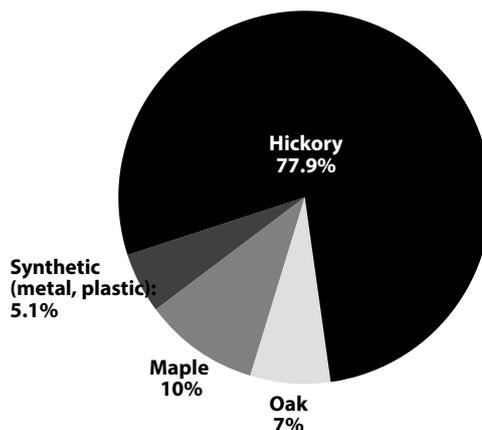
Read on to learn more about what types, materials, and brands of sticks are connecting with players in 2024.



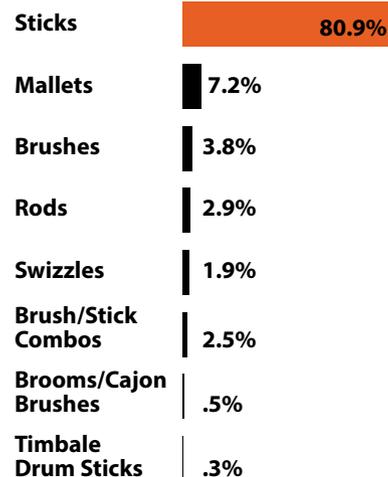
When compared to last fall, sales of drum sticks & mallets for your retail business, are...



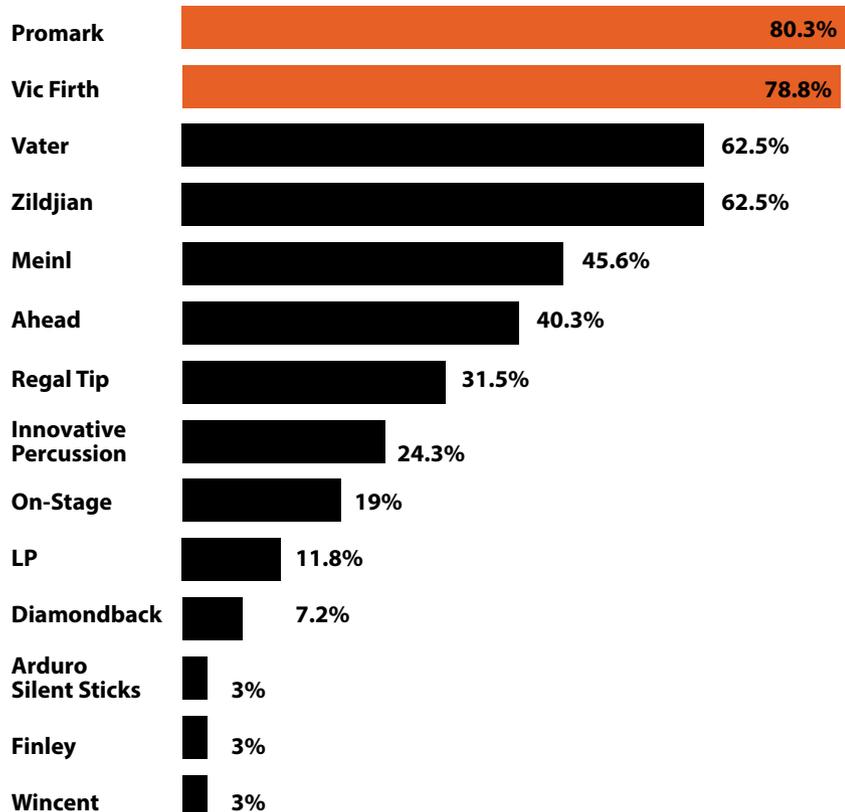
What's the most popular drumstick or mallet material at your store?



What specific types of drum sticks or mallets are selling best for your business?



Which brands are generating the most profit for your operation?



With respect to sales of drum sticks & mallets, what trends have you been noticing?

“Nylon tips continue to decline. There’s still demand and room for innovation in the ‘rod style,’ quieter sticks.”

Shane Kinney

**Drum Center of Portsmouth
New Hampton, New Hampshire**

“Drummers want less loud drums. Low volume solutions for both drums and e-drums are sought after.”

Stefan Korth

**Custom Drum Shop
Hamburg, Germany**

“We have two school districts that have significantly increased their mallet percussion for students, so our mallet sales have increased accordingly. Drummers are always experimental and will try new models of sticks as they come out, but most go back to the model they were using.”

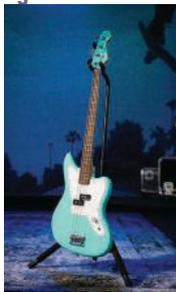
David St. John

**Music & Arts
Glendora, California**

FRETTED

Fender Announces Limited Edition Mark Hoppus Jaguar Bass

Fender Musical Instruments Corporation (FMIC) announces the Limited Edition Mark Hoppus Jaguar® Bass. This signature bass, featuring the same specs as the model Hoppus is currently playing on stages with blink-182, will allow players to replicate his tone precisely. Fusing Hoppus's favorite parts of Fender® basses, a Jaguar body with a custom Jazz Bass®-style "C" shape neck, complemented with high output, reverse mounted Seymour Duncan® Quarter Pound™ split-coil P Bass® pickups will enable players to produce the blink-182 bass tone they crave.



Mark Hoppus is a founding member of blink-182, a band that spearheaded the breakthrough fusion genre of pop and punk in the 1990s. Their unique sound and style were heavily influenced by '80s punk, skateboarding culture, and the vibrant backdrop of their home state, California. Starting as straight-up skate punk, the shape of their songs moved and changed with them as they navigated life, but it was their early years that galvanized Hoppus's style of bass playing, an approach to technique and tone that reflected the band's sense of fun and irreverence. And today, Fender honors this with a signature release.

The Mark Hoppus Jaguar Bass is a tone machine featuring a rock-solid, shapely body that sports a maple neck with a custom "C" profile neck, beautiful slab rosewood fingerboard with elegant white pearl dots, topped off with a set of lightweight vintage-style tuners. The 4-ply white pearloid pickguard is fitted with a Seymour Duncan Quarter Pound split-coil P Bass pickup custom mounted in reversed position, the final piece of Hoppus regaled pop-punk tone. A limited number of these bases will be produced, and they are offered in a traditional 3-Color Sunburst or Sea Foam Green.

Fender first worked with Hoppus in 2002, bringing to life a Mark Hoppus Signature Jazz Bass. This instrument played with the elements and electronics of a traditional Jazz Bass, essentially creating a hybrid of a jazz and precision bass, giving him the best of both worlds. This bass is still sought after today, and fans will be happy to see Hoppus continue the legacy of that model with his new Jaguar Bass, which combines his preferred Jazz Bass neck, reverse-mounted P Bass pickup with a comfortable and stylish offset Jaguar Bass body.

In addition to all its elevated specs, this one-of-a-kind bass is topped off with a custom neck plate and gig bag with the "Hi, My Name is Mark" octopus logo. An ode to his company that realizes, in apparel, the cool things in life that cannot be captured in anything other than art. Hoppus taught himself bass, and this new signature release from Fender hopes to encourage new players and established "blink" fans alike to pick up this instrument and start playing bass.

www.fender.com

H. Jimenez Unveils the New LV2M Vihuela — Handcrafted in Mexico

H.Jimenez announces the launch of the LV2M Vihuela, a finely crafted traditional instrument designed for advancing mariachi players. The LV2M Vihuela is ideal for advancing players who are ready to elevate their musical experience with a high-quality, hand-built instrument. Handcrafted in Mexico, the LV2M Vihuela combines classic materials with expert craftsmanship to deliver an exceptional musical experience.



At the heart of this new vihuela is a light yet resonant traditional solid Tacote wood top, paired with a deeply vaulted cedar back that amplifies its warm, rich tones. The elegant Mexican Ebony glossy fingerboard is fitted with seven traditional tie-on frets, while the individual open tuners are stylishly accented with black buttons, combining aesthetics with functionality.

For players seeking quality and durability, the LV2M is a standout choice. To ensure the instrument is protected during transport and storage, the vihuela comes with a hardshell wood case, also made in Mexico, offering robust protection.

hjimenezinstruments.com

C.F. Martin & Co. Launches Martin O'ahu HG-28 Guitar

Martin Guitar introduces the Martin O'ahu HG-28, a fresh take on a classic design with Hawaiian roots. Joining the Custom K-1 Major Kealakai in the new Martin O'ahu family of instruments, it's a tribute to the Hawaiian music craze of the 1920s and early '30s — a pivotal era that helped shape the modern steel-string acoustic guitar.



The HG-28 introduces a new approachable body size to the Martin line, best described as a smaller 14-fret sloped-shoulder Dreadnought with the depth of a 000. Anyone who picks up this guitar will instantly notice how comfortable it is. Like a new, old friend. It's ideal for players who cherish the robust Dreadnought sound in a more comfortable size.

At the heart of the HG-28 is its construction from solid flamed Hawaiian koa back and sides paired with a solid spruce top. This choice of tonewoods not only delivers a stunning aesthetic but also ensures a rich, balanced tone with articulate highs and warm lows.

Whether you're strumming chords or picking intricate island melodies, its shorter 24.9" scale length offers a more relaxed string feel and excellent response. The HG-28 plays easily with low action and feels right at home in standard tuning or any one of several slack key open tunings such as open G, which is widely used in Hawaiian-style guitar music.

Adding to its vintage appeal, the HG-28 boasts bold herringbone trim and antique white binding, reminiscent of Martin's early Hawaiian-style guitars. This guitar is not just a tribute to the past but a testament to Martin's ongoing commitment to musical innovation.

www.martinguitar.com

Breedlove Announces Limited Edition Oregon Concert Sable Limited Edition Guitar

Breedlove Guitars is proud to introduce the Oregon Concert Sable CE Myrtlewood, a limited-edition release set for October 3rd, 2024. With only 50 pieces available, this guitar exemplifies Breedlove's commitment to sustainable craftsmanship and sonic excellence.



Crafted from premium, locally sourced sustainable myrtlewood from the Pacific Northwest, this stunning instrument boasts a myrtlewood top, back, and sides with a sleek sable gloss finish. Known for its tonal balance and richness, myrtlewood offers a full, resonant sound with exceptional clarity, perfectly complemented by Breedlove's signature Sound Optimized and hand tuned bracing.

The guitar is built in Breedlove's acclaimed concert body shape and features a comfortable 25.5" scale length and 1.75" nut width for effortless playability. Equipped with the highly regarded LR Baggs Anthem TRU-MIC pickup system, it's engineered to

capture the guitar's true acoustic sound in live and studio settings.

With its combination of high-performance craftsmanship and limited availability, the Oregon Concert Sable CE Myrtlewood LTD is expected to generate significant interest among collectors and professional players alike. The guitar comes complete with a deluxe hardshell case and will be available for \$3,299.

www.breedloveguitars.com

Joe Bonamassa Epiphone 1955 Les Paul Standard

Epiphone is proud to expand its partnership with world-famous blues guitarist Joe Bonamassa with the launch of the Joe Bonamassa 1955 Les Paul Standard. The Epiphone Joe Bonamassa 1955 Les Paul Standard is now available worldwide at authorized Epiphone dealers, and on www.epiphone.com.



Joe Bonamassa has one of the world's most enviable guitar collections. One of his prized acquisitions is a 1955 Les Paul Standard with a very rare Copper Iridescent finish that was originally created for display at the 1955 NAMM Show.

"From a distance, it looks brown, but in direct light, it has gold metal flake in the finish," says Joe Bonamassa.

Epiphone's Joe Bonamassa 1955 Les Paul Standard faithfully recreates this special guitar. It features the same Copper Iridescent color, a pair of Epiphone P-90 PRO pickups wired to CTS® potentiometers and Mallory™ capacitors, a Custom '59 Rounded C neck profile, a long neck tenon, and a "Nerdville" graphic hardshell case. This Epiphone 1955 Les Paul Standard is a passionate testament to Bonamassa's unwavering commitment to the blues and its profound influence on his music.

The Epiphone Joe Bonamassa 1955 Les Paul Standard release is a nod to a pivotal period in the evolution of the Gibson Les Paul, in a finish guaranteed to turn heads. Whether you're a Joe Bonamassa fan, a Les Paul enthusiast, or a musician seeking an instrument that stands out in both tone and appearance, the Joe Bonamassa 1955 Les Paul Standard is the perfect addition to your collection.

www.epiphone.com



ACCESSORIES
Aguilar Amplification Announces Limited Edition Breast Cancer Awareness AG Preamp/DI Pedal

Aguilar Amplification announces the third in its series of limited-edition pedals created specifically for breast cancer awareness. The Aguilar Breast Cancer Awareness AG Preamp/DI Pedal is available now for Breast Cancer Awareness Month and is only available while supplies last. Aguilar has long been inspired by the breast cancer survivors of its team and the public at large and wanted to do its part in raising awareness and funding for breast cancer research. With every sale of the Aguilar Breast Cancer Awareness AG Preamp/DI Pedal, a part

of the proceeds will be donated to The Breast Cancer Research Foundation – a non-profit organization committed to achieving prevention and finding a cure for breast cancer. The specially designed ribbon and rose graphics on this rose gold pedal symbolizes the strength of those struggling with this terrible disease.

The Aguilar Breast Cancer Awareness AG Preamp/DI Pedal is an incredibly flexible tool for shaping tone both on stage and in the studio. Taking its cues from Aguilar's beloved AG series, the Aguilar Breast Cancer Awareness AG Preamp/DI Pedal features a 4-band EQ with foot switchable "Deep/Bright", and "Engage" controls to boost and expand that tone. Gain, Treble, High Mid, Low Mid, Bass, and Volume controls dial in that perfect tone time after time. Its 18-volt operation allows for clean and transparent tone. This unit also features built-in headphone out and aux in with an XLR balanced DI out with pre/post and ground lift controls.

MSRP: \$299.99

www.aguilaramp.com

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PRO AUDIO

Applied Research and Technology Unveils the Pro Channel III Channel Strip

Applied Research and Technology, a division of Yorkville Sound, announces the release of Pro Channel III, as the company continues to celebrate its 40th anniversary in 2024.

Designed for recording musicians seeking an affordable character preamp, the Pro Channel III offers extensive tone shaping and real tube warmth. It combines a Class A microphone preamp, instrument DI, multi-voice compressor, and 4-band semi-parametric EQ.

New to this version, the Compressor can be switched between Tube/Opto and FET modes for smooth or punchy dynamic control. The Compressor and EQ sections can now be reordered in the signal chain at the touch of a button for greater flexibility. The front panel has also been streamlined with larger controls and fewer buttons for a faster, simpler workflow.

“Pro Channel users love it because it’s one of the few channel strips on the market that combines a preamp, compressor, and EQ,” says Ray Wilson, Yorkville Sound’s national sales manager and recording product specialist. “It offers versatile tonal control in a 2U enclosure.”

“The Pro Channel II has been one of our most popular studio products for over a decade,” Wilson continues. “Version III adds even more professional features while remaining accessible to users of all experience levels.”

www.artproaudio.com

DRUMS & PERCUSSION

Roland Announces V-Drums Quiet Design

Born of decades of Roland testing and development, the V-Drums Quiet Design pads, stand, and pedal bases work together to keep in-home playing sounds and vibration transfer in check without sacrificing feel and response. The VQD106 kit comes ready to play with the TD-07 module, while the VQD106PADS kit allows users to add the V-Drums module of their choice. V-Drums Quiet Design components are also available separately for pad expansion and upgrading other V-Drums kits.



Roland V-Drums are already some of the quietest electronic drums available, thanks to years of research and development, precision engineering, and the ability to monitor with headphones. Yet even standard V-Drums can sometimes be too loud to enjoy.

Purposely engineered for maximum noise reduction, V-Drums Quiet Design allows drummers to play without restraint at any time, day or night. Newly developed pads and hardware dramatically lower the in-room volume, while sound-absorbing materials isolate drumming energy to prevent its escape into adjoining spaces. Detailed testing in special facilities has revealed that V-Drums Quiet Design kits reduce noise by an astonishing 75 percent compared with conventional V-Drums. The kick and hi-hat are incredibly smooth and quiet, and stick hits on the pads produce in-room sound levels similar to an average conversation.

The V-Drums Quiet Design snare and toms deliver the great stick feel and natural rebound that V-Drums pads are famous for. The PDQ-8Snare and three PDQ-8tom pads are built with a

noise-absorbing honeycomb rubber insert covered with a mesh head. Specially placed vents on the underside of the playing surface allow air pressure to dissipate, further reducing noise. The PDQ-8S snare provides independent head and rim triggering, plus a soft rubber covering on the rim for quiet rimshots.

Each V-Drums Quiet Design kit includes three versatile CYQ-12 cymbal pads built with honeycomb rubber, mesh covering, and venting like the snare and tom pads. In the crash and ride positions, the CYQ-12 provides independent bow and edge triggers, natural swinging motion, and support for cymbal chokes. In the hi-hat position, the pad is paired with the FD-9 control pedal for detailed response and ultra-quiet operation.

The KDQ-8 kick pad delivers the satisfying “thud” every drummer wants, while keeping the sound confined within the headphones. The eight-inch playing surface supports single and double kick pedals and features a dense triple-layer cushion covered in a double-ply mesh material. This is housed in a floating frame to reduce vibration and noise transfer. Four rubber feet provide stability and further isolation, while the included KDB-Q quiet beater has a special round head that minimizes contact noise.

An innovative stand and two pedal bases complete the V-Drums Quiet Design experience, keeping the remaining clicks, thumps, and vibrations from transferring to the floor and other rooms. Special hemispherical rubber feet on the stand isolate pad noise, while the dedicated NEQ-K and NEQ-H bases for kick and hi-hat pedals also have special rubber foot designs to keep foot stomps contained.

The TD-07 module included with the VQD106 kit features high-quality acoustic and electronic drum sounds captured in pro studios and powered by advanced V-Drums technology. Users can personalize kits by swapping drums, adjusting tunings, adding dampening, and using EQ. Built-in Bluetooth supports audio streaming from a mobile device for jamming and following video lessons. USB connectivity is also available to record audio and MIDI in a DAW, trigger computer-based instruments, and integrate with Melodics™ coaching software for V-Drums.

The Roland V-Drums Quiet Design is available in the U.S. now for \$1,799.99 (VQD106 kit) and \$1,599.99 (VQD106PADS).

www.roland.com/us

CASES & STANDS

On-Stage SXS7201B Double Sax Stand Keeps 4 Woodwinds at the Ready

On-Stage has released the SX-S7201B Double Sax Stand, a reliable storage and performance solution for up to four woodwind instruments that safely keeps the instruments out of their cases, assembled and ready to play.



This versatile stand holds, and provides ease of access to, two alto or tenor saxophones as well as two flutes or clarinets, making it quick and simple to switch between instruments. All four instruments are supported at once and are oriented so that they don’t lie on their keys or other delicate parts.

Two pairs of saxophone yokes keep instruments properly cradled and balanced. Padding on the yokes ensures a nonslip hold while also protecting the instrument finishes against scratches. Two pegs, which can be added or removed as needed, hold flutes or clarinets without touching the outside of the instruments.

The steel base delivers outstanding strength and stability to ensure reliable instrument support while rubber feet prevent skids to keep the stand safely in place. For compact storage and ease of transportation, the yokes detach and the base folds down.

www.on-stage.com

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