

M M R

MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

Corner Music's
New Corner in
Nashville



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Jeff Hawley

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Laiacina Leads with
Innovation



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The Saxophone
Market in 2019



Jerry and Sammy Ash

of Sam Ash Music Corp.



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42

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OM-28

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Carbon Fiber Bridge Plate

Modern Deluxe

Gold Open-Gear Tuners

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Gold Frets

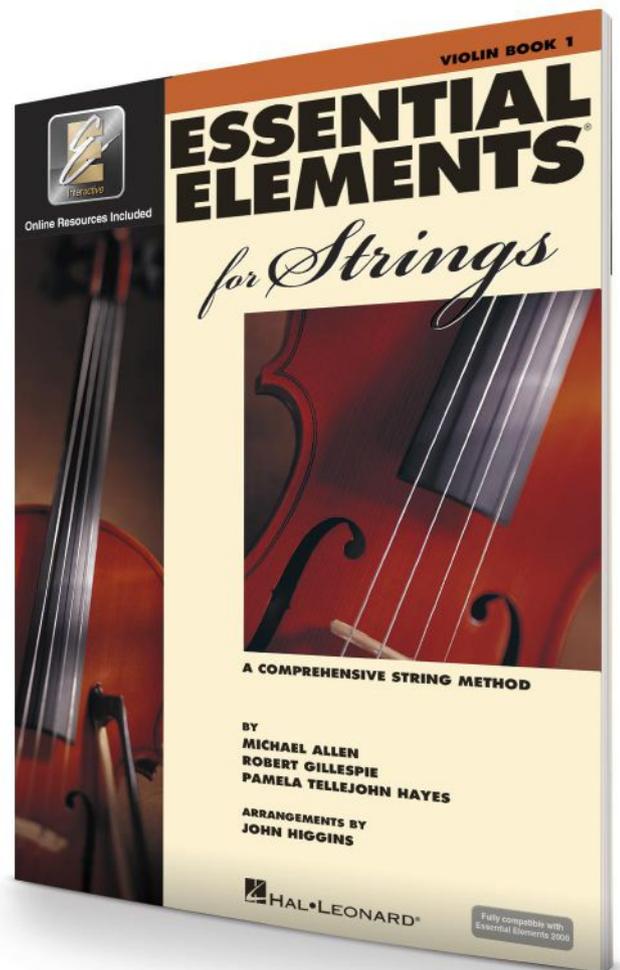
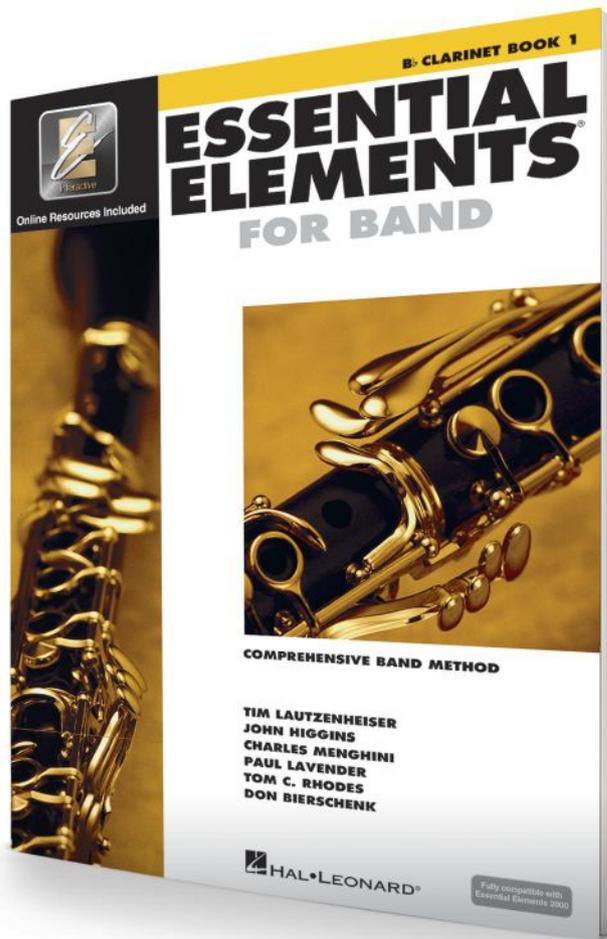
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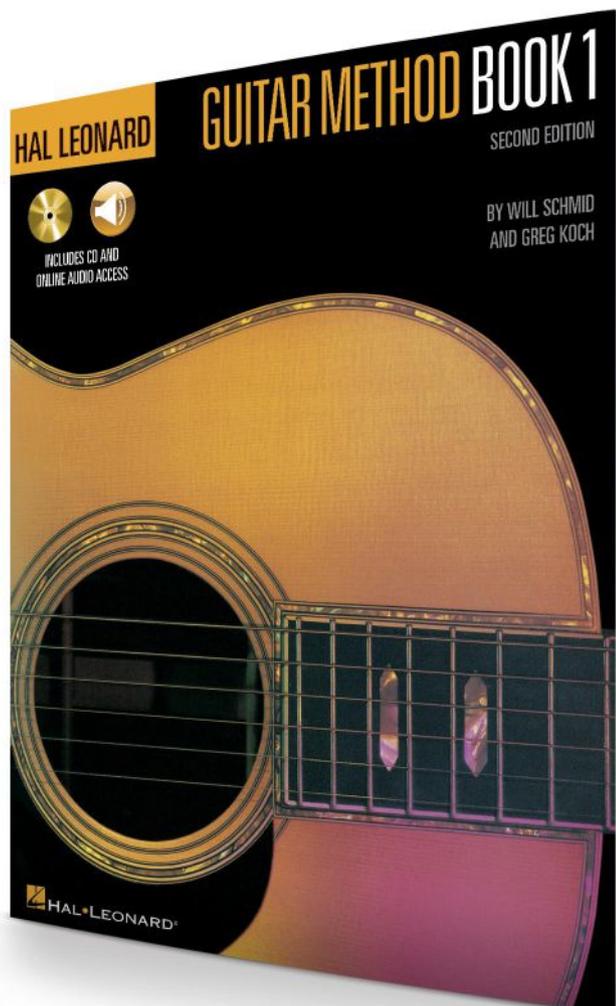
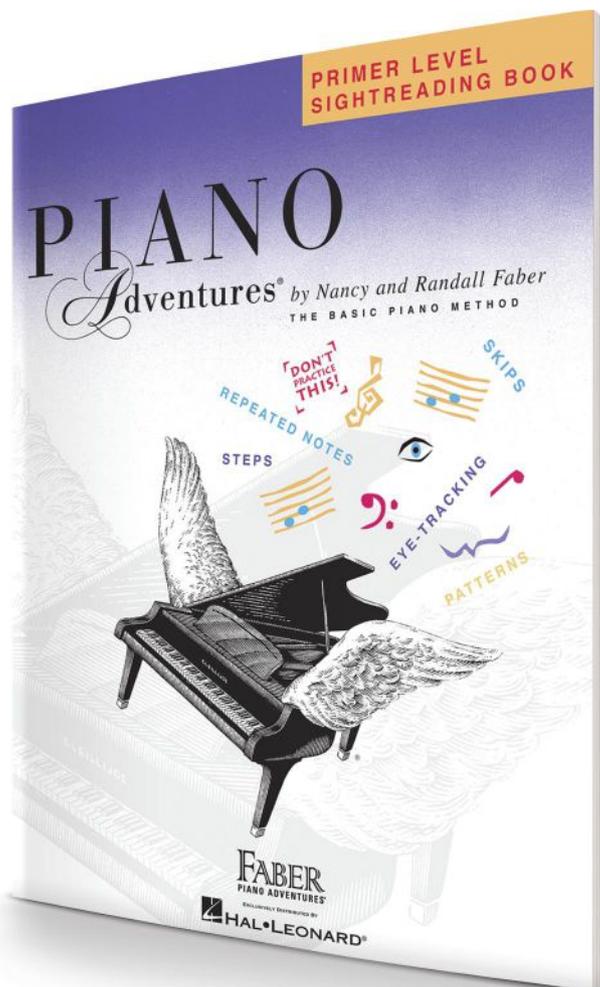


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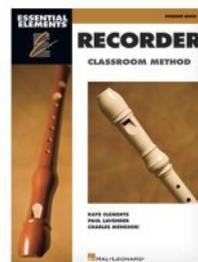
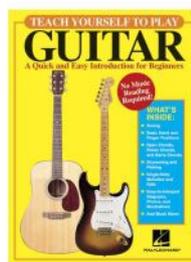
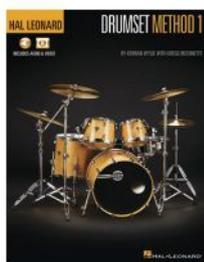
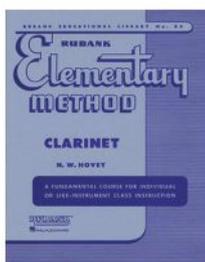
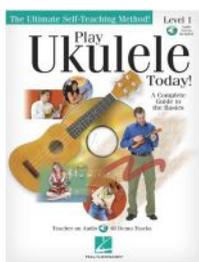
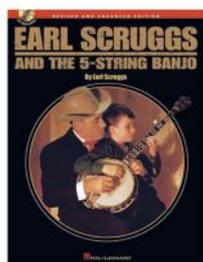


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C O N T E N T S



MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

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84

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Cover design: Garret Petrov

MMR Musical Merchandise Review® (ISSN 0027-4615), Volume 178, Number 1, January 2019, founded in 1879, is published monthly by Timeless Communications Corp., 6000 South Eastern Ave., Suite 14J, Las Vegas, NV 89119, (702) 479-1879, publisher of School Band and Orchestra, Choral Director and JAZZed. Periodicals Postage Paid at Las Vegas, NV and additional mailing offices. MMR is distributed free to qualified individuals and is directed to music dealers and retailers, wholesalers and distributors, importers and exporters and manufacturers of all types of musical instruments and their accessories, related electronic sound equipment, general musical accessories, musical publications and teaching aides. **POSTMASTER:** Send all UAA to CFS. **NON-POSTAL AND MILITARY FACILITIES:** send address corrections to Musical Merchandise Review, PO Box 16655 North Hollywood, CA 91615-6655. The publishers of this magazine do not accept responsibility for statements made by their advertisers in business competition. No portion of this issue may be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. Copyright ©2019 by Timeless Communications Corp., all rights reserved. Printed in USA.

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Obsolete? Hardly...

Many of you reading this editorial are either currently at or en route to the 2019 National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Show in Anaheim, California. This year's gathering is notable not only for being the 117th annual conference (I'm pretty sure?) spearheaded by the organization (congrats, NAMM!), but also for the "regular" reasons the get-together always matters: It's agreed by all to be the most significant MI event of its kind in North America *and* (and this point quite important), it's one convention that clearly, convincingly, and passionately makes the case for why and how trade shows, conferences, and conventions remain relevant and useful, even in the digital, online age.

Famously, in 2016, in an article inspired by that winter's NAMM Show, Bobby Owinski of *Forbes* offered this assessment: "The annual Winter NAMM Show in Anaheim is always one of the most fun trade shows in the music business, and it ended last week with a bang. But despite a record number of attendees and exhibitors, this centerpiece of the music industry provided all the evidence that trade shows may be heading towards obsolesce in today's e-commerce economy."

Owinski pointed to the declining number of brick-and-mortar retailers, online access to information about new gear, and other online commerce and Internet-based factors as the reasons, "why trade shows are obsolete."

Now, obviously the main "point" of exhibiting at or attending a given convention varies depending on the specific show and market/audience, but many of the same factors that the *Forbes* piece pointed to are often brought up by those who question the validity of *any* of these industry/culture get-togethers. Why pay for a plane ticket and a hotel stay when you can just as easily watch performances, lectures, or

lessons on YouTube? Why incur costs for the acquisition of information that's available via a quick Google search?

As I wrote above, the NAMM Show one of the events that – without fail – lays bare those arguments. Sure, you can learn things without leaving your couch or office, but you *cannot* catch the vibe of a large, convivial group of people who share your interests and passions, interacting with one another, exchanging ideas, forming friendships, and expanding their professional and personal worlds. Trust me, if you think a Skype session with some financial advisor or life coach matches the experience of attending a NAMM U lecture in Anaheim this January... well, let's just say you owe it to yourself to discover how wrong you are. Facebook and Instagram can be great for networking and staying in touch, but sitting down and discussing a new instrument innovation or a recent brand acquisition over coffee with a rarely-seen friend takes that dynamic to another level.

Longtime readers of *MMR* may recall that I wrote about this same subject a few years ago, but I think it bears repeating because if you have the means to consider being a part of gatherings such as the NAMM Show (or Musikmesse, NASMD, Summer NAMM, Music China, et cetera), you owe it to yourself to learn how much value is there for the taking and how enriched your professional, financial, and personal life can be. Shows such as this one are decidedly *not* "obsolete."



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Industry News

The Music People Celebrates 40 Years of Product Innovation, Top-line Service

The Music People, parent company of On-Stage and TMP-Pro, is celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2019. For the last four decades, TMP has provided the music industry with high-quality and innovative products coupled with its first-class customer service.

Born out of the drive to create innovative solutions to fill musicians' needs, The Music People was founded in 1979 by Jim Hennessey, who had previously worked artist relations for Ovation Guitars. After years of witnessing musicians' needs first-hand, he invoked his background as a draftsman for Kaman Aircraft and designed the TRI Triple Guitar Stand, an industry first which would also be On-Stage's debut product.



"I've always been a creator and designer so when I saw a need in the industry, I filled it," said Jim Hennessey, who now serves as chairman of The Music People. "To this day, The Music People continues that initiative by creating and distributing high-quality, innovative products that fill the needs of musicians and audio professionals. I'm so proud of where we are as a company today, and we have all of the musicians and audio pros that have used our products throughout the years to thank. It has been a pleasure serving you for the last four decades."

With sales up by more than 20 percent in 2018, The Music People looks forward to continued sales growth in the future as well as continuing to expand TMP-Pro's 200-plus line card of distributed audio products.

"Forty years is a major milestone, and we are endlessly proud each and every day that we get to continue to bring state-of-the-art solutions to the market and couple that with top-quality service from our highly skilled sales representatives," said John Hennessey,

- Industry News
- Supplier Scene
- MMR Global

- People on the Move
- Trade Regrets
- Letters

KORG USA, Inc. to Distribute Darkglass Electronics

KORG USA Inc. (KUSA) has been named as the U.S. distribution partner for Darkglass Electronics. KUSA will handle all sales and distribution of the Finnish brand's premium bass gear.

Since its origin in 2009, Darkglass's innovative products have been making waves in the industry, attracting a loyal fan base. "It's a combination of stealth looks, solid build, and an incredible sound and player-centric design," shared Brian Piccolo, director of Guitar Brands at KUSA. "We are excited to support Darkglass in their quest to take over the bass world with unique and useful effect pedals and amps. Darkglass will be on display at our NAMM booth, product is in our warehouses and we are ready to fulfill orders," added Piccolo.

Darkglass was built and is run by a team of highly-skilled and passionate engineers. "Everything we do is meant to be a stepping stone to something bigger and more ambitious engineering-wise, so joining the KORG USA roster is an exciting move for the brand," stated Darkglass CEO and co-founder Douglas Castro. "We will tap into KUSA's resources and expertise to further our mission of creating tools that help



From Left: John Stippell, product manager for Guitar Brands at KORG USA, Brian Piccolo, director of Guitar Brands at KORG USA, Tommi Otsavaara, chief technology officer for Darkglass, Joe Castronovo, president of KORG USA, Hugo Villarroel, co-owner of Darkglass, Marcos Barilatti, COO at Darkglass and Andy Rossi, vice president of Sales and Marketing at KORG USA

musicians sound better and be inspired. At Darkglass, we make devices that help you transform your sound; we aspire to be a part of it."

Support from pro musicians has helped Darkglass live up to the hype. Artists including Nate Mendel from the Foo Fighters, and acclaimed bassists Devin Townsend and Tony Levin, have helped Darkglass secure greater footing with both amateur and established players alike.

Darkglass products range in price from \$199.00 to \$1,099.

Remo Taps Hal Leonard for U.S. Distribution

Remo announced that as of January 1, 2019, Hal Leonard will serve as a principal distribution and marketing partner for Remo in the



United States, with shipments to dealers starting on February 1. The announcement came from Bob Yerby, VP of Global Sales & Marketing for Remo Inc., and Brad Smith, VP of MI Products at Hal Leonard.

For over 60 years, Remo has been an industry leader since founder Remo Belli pioneered synthetic Mylar drumheads in 1957. Headquartered in Valencia, California, Remo is the world's largest drumhead company and features an impressive lineup of endorsement artists. Featured drummers include Travis Barker, Ronnie Vannucci, Taylor Hawkins, Chad Smith, and many more.

Known as the world's largest publisher

of music education materials, songbooks, and sheet music, Hal Leonard is now also a leading distributor of musical instruments with a

diverse lineup of products. Hal Leonard is adding Remo to a premier line of complimentary drum products including Gretsch drums, Gibraltar hardware, Vater drumsticks, Paiste cymbals, and other drum products from CB Drums, Percussion Plus, KAT Electronics, and Tycoon.

Yerby says, "Hal Leonard is known for service and education, making them a great fit with Remo's mission. We look forward to working together to make more players and more sales for the retailer markets everywhere."

Smith added, "We are thrilled and honored to offer our dealers the great-selling and artist-approved Remo products."

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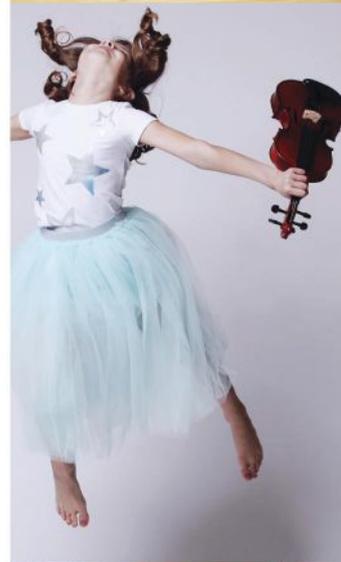
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D&A Guitar Gear Appointed Exclusive U.S. Distributor for Waggi Pedalboards

D&A Guitar Gear, manufacturer of high-quality, innovative instrument stands, and accessories has announced an exclusive U.S. distribution agreement with Colombian guitar pedalboards brand, Waggi, known for its innovative design and unique cable management system.

Waggi, a guitar accessories company based in Bogota, Colombia, South America announced that as of January 7, 2019 D&A Guitar Gear will distribute its line of pedalboards to musical instrument retailers across the U.S.

Waggi pedalboards feature an innovative two-tier design with integrated tidy cable system with plenty of space to accommodate pedal arrangements in a small footprint. The pedalboards come in three different sizes (W20 \$189.99), (W28 \$229.99), and (W34 \$269.99).

John Camelo, founder of Waggi stated: "Waggi is a brand that stands out for extremely well-designed premium products. We keep it simple and effective, but with high attention to all details to create a great pedalboard! We are delighted to be partnering with D&A Guitar Gear, a company that not only shares our same philosophy and passion for design but has the experience and knowledge of the market for distributing our products in America."

Barry Mitchell, president of D&A Guitar Gear stated: "Waggi Pedalboards offer musicians an innovative and smart pedalboard design that is rugged, lightweight and super easy to transport. We are thrilled to be distributing Waggi Pedalboards in the U.S. and are looking forward to getting their products into the hands of our retail partners to help introduce this exciting line of pedalboards to their customers."



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DiGiCo Acquires KLANG:technologies

KLANG TECHNOLOGIES

DiGiCo recently announced the acquisition of KLANG:technologies as a key new addition to the Audiotonix family that already includes leading audio brands Allen & Heath, Calrec, DiGiGrid, Solid State Logic, and DiGiCo. The deal, which was concluded in mid-December, further brings together some of the most influential and innovative brands within the Pro Audio Industry.

James Gordon CEO of Audiotonix comments: "We have had the pleasure of working with KLANG and their pioneering immersive technology for a couple of years and when the opportunity arose for them to join Audiotonix, we were keen to make it happen. We have always stressed that with our M&A we would look at each brand's requirement and help support them with their aspirations. On that basis KLANG will become a key part of DiGiCo's future, as they combine forces to improve the listening world of artists and monitor engineers alike. It is about to sound a lot more natural, with the arrival of I-IEM (Immersive In Ear Monitoring)."

Austin Freshwater, GM of DiGiCo, added: "We have been working in the background with KLANG for some months on increasing our level of integration. Over that time, it was clear the ethos of the development teams was similar, with a lot of shared common goals. Combining the control of the KLANG system into the DiGiCo work-surface will allow I-IEM and 3D personal monitoring to be a part of an engineer's natural work flow, and that's just the beginning for us and the KLANG team. We are keen to meet all their existing supporters and help more potential users understand the difference a KLANG system can make."

Roman Scharrer, CEO of KLANG summarizes with: "This is a fantastic opportunity for the team at KLANG. Having

the wealth of industry knowledge and relationships that only the DiGiCo team have at our disposal is really going to allow us to demonstrate the benefits of our technology to those we feel will benefit the most from our ground-breaking development work.

Being part of the Audiotonix family will allow our R&D team to bring more of our ideas to life. We can already anticipate that 2019 is going to be a busy year for us and we will continue to excite our users with innovative and sustainable solutions."



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U.S. Trustee's Office Challenges Gibson's Effort to End Chapter 11 Cases

On December 14, the U.S. Trustee's Office filed a motion asking the Delaware bankruptcy court to delay action on Gibson Brands, Inc.'s bid to close its Chapter 11, claiming "a number of critical tasks" remain undone. Andrew Vara, a trustee, said Gibson still has "unresolved claim objections and fee applications."



"None of the debtors' claims are fully administered, and the motion is premature. Moreover, the form of relief the debtors seek, collapsing 12 separate cases

into a single consolidated case for administration, is a form of substantive consolidation which would modify the debtors' confirmed and substantially consummated plan."

Gibson has sought to do away with underperforming, non-core subsidiaries and to eliminate \$500 million in debt from its balance sheet. In October, U.S. Bankruptcy Court judge Christopher Sontchi confirmed the Chapter 11 strategy, which involved a group of five investors, was put into motion by Gibson on November 1. According to Vara, on the 29th of that month, the company attempted to close 11 of 12 current Chapter 11 cases. "In reality, the debtors are seeking a form of substantive consolidation that would allow them to administer all 12 cases in the guise of, and for the price of a single case," he claimed.

KORG Teams up with Greg Mackie and Peter Watts

KORG has announced a strategic alliance with noted pro audio product designers, Greg Mackie and Peter Watts. Their company, M&W, has been instrumental in the behind-the-scenes development of products for numerous major manufacturers over the last 15 years.

"We are very excited to be working with Greg and Peter," noted KORG president Seiki Kato, "I have personally known this team since the mid-90's, and have always wanted to collaborate on new products that combine KORG's engineering and manufacturing expertise with Greg and Peter's innovative design talents."

According to Greg Mackie, "We are looking forward to helping KORG expand their impressive and well-earned reputation into the pro audio domain. Peter and I have been 'gestating' some product concepts that are perfect for KORG, and which we think will be well received in the market. These guys have a powerhouse engineering department and they are a joy to work with."

KORG VP of Worldwide Marketing, John McCubbery stated that the first KORG products designed by M&W are slated for third-quarter 2019 release.

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Chris,

How are you? I hope well.

I just got back from Shanghai and head back there again Sunday morning.

Been researching China a lot in regard to their trade practices as we talked about recently. It is a complete mess and designed that way on purpose. The way they calculate their 17% flat VAT, 12.47% duty rate, and 1-45% consumer tax is a joke. No one can figure it out. They

don't want our products there. It identifies their inability to compete unless they steal something.

Biggest problem is the actual trade gap. It is now the worst since 2015 as per *Bloomberg*. \$50.1 billion adjusted for 2018 inflation and it's a whopping \$82.5 billion. Has to stop and people here whining about Trump increasing Chinese import duties is ridiculous. We as western countries, E.U. and U.S.A., CAN NOT get into China. I tried to do so at four different MusicChina shows that I attended WITH local Shanghainese people. We didn't even make a dent.

So, what people need to realize is that it isn't just about rising tariffs here, it is the insanely high, impossible to calculate Chinese tariffs entering their country. We already have enough fake Chinese crap, what we need is to be sending real quality high end products INTO China.

Hopefully President Trump can improve this and continue with bombarding their continual intellectual property rights violations. Christian, I go to their markets all the time in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Guangzhou, etc. ALL fake stuff. You name it. Lulu Lemon, Prada, Chanel, Gucci, Beats, Yeti, etc. Complete theft. Their own Tao Bao or "eBay" is 85% FAKE and they know it. They developed the weapon, silk, currency, etc. but now are known for theft and junk. Sad. Great people. I love the country, but it is what it is until we as Westerners force a change.

Thanks buddy. Happy New Year, or if in China, "Xin Nian Kuai Le." Peace-out.

Lynn Burke
Owner
Blues City Music

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Austin Guitars and Mozingo Music Donate 14 Guitars to Play It Forward Charity Event

Austin Guitars teamed up with Mozingo Music to donate 14 guitars to the Play It Forward STL Organization for underprivileged kids. Based in St. Louis, Play It Forward works with other charitable organizations to provide for the needs of children in the St. Louis metro area.

"I was contacted by longtime friend and local celebrity, Johnny Holzum, of the band Well Hungarians and the John T Holzum Foundation about helping this great organization," says Rich Dumstorff, VP of SLM Marketplace. "After looking at the website, we realized that our good friends at Mozingo Music here in St. Louis have been longtime supporters of Play It Forward. It's a natural fit for us to work with them to help Play It Forward with this incredible endeavor."

Austin presented the guitars at the Children's Home and Aid office in Granite City Illinois during the Play it Forward "Liam's Christmas Guitars" event.



Yamaha Bands Win Gold and Silver Awards at BOA Grand National Championships

The 2018 Bands of America (BOA) Grand National Championships concluded with Yamaha once again leading the way as national presenting sponsor of the event, a role the company has been honored to play for more than two decades.

The Championships attracted more than 93,000 participants and spectators, with thousands more watching the events via livestream. The marching event is the culmination of the Bands of America season, which includes 22 regional events held across the country. Music students representing 108 bands, all of which are using a variety of Yamaha instruments, participated in the regional BOA events.

A field of 108 bands competed in preliminary contests with each band vying to become one of the top 12 bands to advance to Saturday's semi-finals. The top 12 bands then competed in the Finals, where their performances were judged by a panel of nationally-recognized music educators and marching band experts.

In the end, the Championships saw Yamaha Artist Jeff Queen lead Carmel High School of Carmel Indiana, as Grand National Champion and Yamaha



Winds Artist Matt Harloff lead Avon High School of Avon, Indiana to a 2nd place finish. Broken Arrow High School of Broken

Arrow, Oklahoma, led by Yamaha Artist Adam Wiencken captured 4th place, and Prosper High School place win under the leadership of Yamaha Artist Mike Huestis.

Since 1997, high school ensembles performing on Yamaha percussion instruments have achieved an enviable record of accomplishments by garnering more than 60 percent of all of the Gold, Silver and Bronze medals awarded at BOA Championships.

"Yamaha has been honored to partner with Bands of America and Music For All since 1997, and to demonstrate our company's total dedication to music education," says Troy C. Wollwage, percussion marketing manager, Band & Orchestral division, Yamaha Corporation of America. "I am pleased that so many talented, young musicians ultimately choose Yamaha marching instruments, not only to earn high marks and awards at these competitions, but also to master their skills on and off the field."

Aguilar Amplification Adds Mbappé to Artist Family

Aguilar Amplification has announced the addition of bassist Etienne Mbappé to their family of endorsing artists.

Hailing from Cameroon, bassist and composer Etienne Mbappé is known for his highly melodic style which has graced albums from esteemed artists such as the Joe Zawinal Syndicate, Robben Ford, and the Grammy-winning John McLaughlin & The 4th Dimension. Mbappé has also released three albums as a bandleader, as well as the debut of his own band, Etienne Mbappé & The Prophets.

Mbappé is using the AG 700 amplifier with two SL 410x cabinets as well as Aguilar's AG 5M/J-HC pickups. Of his Aguilar rig, Mbappé states, "I've finally found that little something, that little 'je ne sais quoi', I for so many years have been looking for! Now, come what will.... I am ready!"



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Manhasset Specialty Co. Honored with Advisory Board position by Central Washington University

Central Washington University has selected Dan Roberts, president and general manager of Manhasset Specialty Company, for an Advisory Board position in their College of Arts and Humanities for 2019 and 2020.

According to Roberts, "Central Washington University is one of the fastest growing

universities in the state. Todd Shiver, dean of the College of Arts and Humanities outlines the mission of his department as, 'preparing students for the challenges of the 21st century by developing the critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving skills, communication skills, leadership skills, cross-cultural



sensitivity and global awareness that a liberal arts education provides! And CWU does a tremendous in developing new K-12 educators; 18 percent of Washington state K-12 educators are CWU graduates, more than any other college in the state."

Roberts continues, "Central Washington University also has the largest music department in the Pacific Northwest. School bands throughout the northwest are led, with distinction, by CWU alumni. We are honored that Manhasset Stands will have the opportunity to bring a perspective from the business world in our position as an Advisory Board member to the College of Arts and Humanities."

"All of us at Manhasset greatly admire the impressive Music Department at CWU, which made our company's selection to the Advisory Board of the College of Arts and Humanities even more rewarding," concludes Roberts.

Korg USA Inc. Grants Local Music School with Artist Visit

The students of Musicology Performance Center (Long Island, New York) were given a special opportunity to see English rock band The Struts at



Students from the Musicology Performance Center and the Struts

popular Long Island venue, the Paramount. KORG USA, Inc. coordinated tickets to the show, as well as a backstage pass for a meet and greet and sound check opportunity for Musicology.

"This wasn't the first time KORG USA, Inc. came through for the students at Musicology," says owner, Pat Castania. "Last year they met Jordan Rudess at the Paramount as well, so we were ecstatic when another opportunity presented itself for them to meet more of their idols. KORG USA, Inc. understands the importance of music education and we appreciate our relationship with them."

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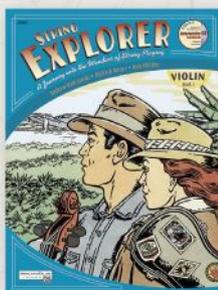
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Shure Axient Digital Takes the Stage at 52nd CMA Awards

On November 14, the 52nd CMA Awards were broadcast live from downtown Nashville on ABC. Over half of the evening's performances used Shure Axient Digital wireless systems.

Audio producer Tom Davis and his team returned intact, with J. Mark King as broadcast production mixer, working with wireless expert James Stoffo as RF coordinator. Broadcast music mixes were done by Jay Vicari and John Harris of Music Mix Mobile, while Rick Shimer and Pat Baltzell mixed live for the Bridgestone Arena crowd. Monitor mixers Tom Pesa and Jason Spence used 24 channels – and 100 P10R bodypacks – of Shure PSM 1000 for all artist in-ear mixes.

One notable change this year was the production's choice of Axient Digital as its primary wireless system. While all artists use their accustomed systems, its RF stability and superb fidelity made Axient Digital the default for the majority of the evening's performances.

From his monitoring perspective, engineer Jason Spence was pleased. "With Axient Digital, I noticed the lower noise floor right away, and no compression! Regardless of the capsule, I am not doing nearly as much EQ as before because of the improved audio quality," he reports.

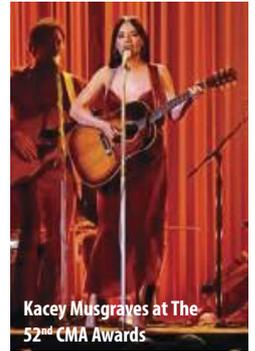
Unsurprisingly, many artists used the classic SM58 capsule on their AD2 handhelds, including Luke Bryan, Keith Urban, Brothers Osborne, Garth Brooks, Maren Morris, Jon Pardi, Ashley McBryde,

Eric Church, and special guest Mavis Staples. Other Shure choices included the KSM8 for Miranda Lambert, KSM9 for endorsers Brett Young and Dan + Shay, and BETA®58A for Dierks Bentley.

RF coordinator James Stoffo notes, "Axient Digital systems are now my 'go-to' for many music and corporate events. With solid RF stability, it's no surprise so many artists and engineers are comfortable using it."

AD1 bodypacks were also in use, including Luke Bryan's band and the acoustic guitars of Garth Brooks and Kacey Musgraves. Musgraves opted for a hardwired BETA58 for her dazzling performance of "Slow Burn." Pistol Annies also opted for an old-school look with their cabled 5575LE vocal microphones.

After a week of preparation, Shure's artist relations manager in Nashville, Ryan Smith, was able to enjoy the awards from backstage. "Attending awards shows is a wonderful reunion with the artists, engineers, and fantastic crews who make the magic happen, both behind the scenes and on stage. It is an honor to support and work alongside the best in the business!"



Kacey Musgraves at The 52nd CMA Awards



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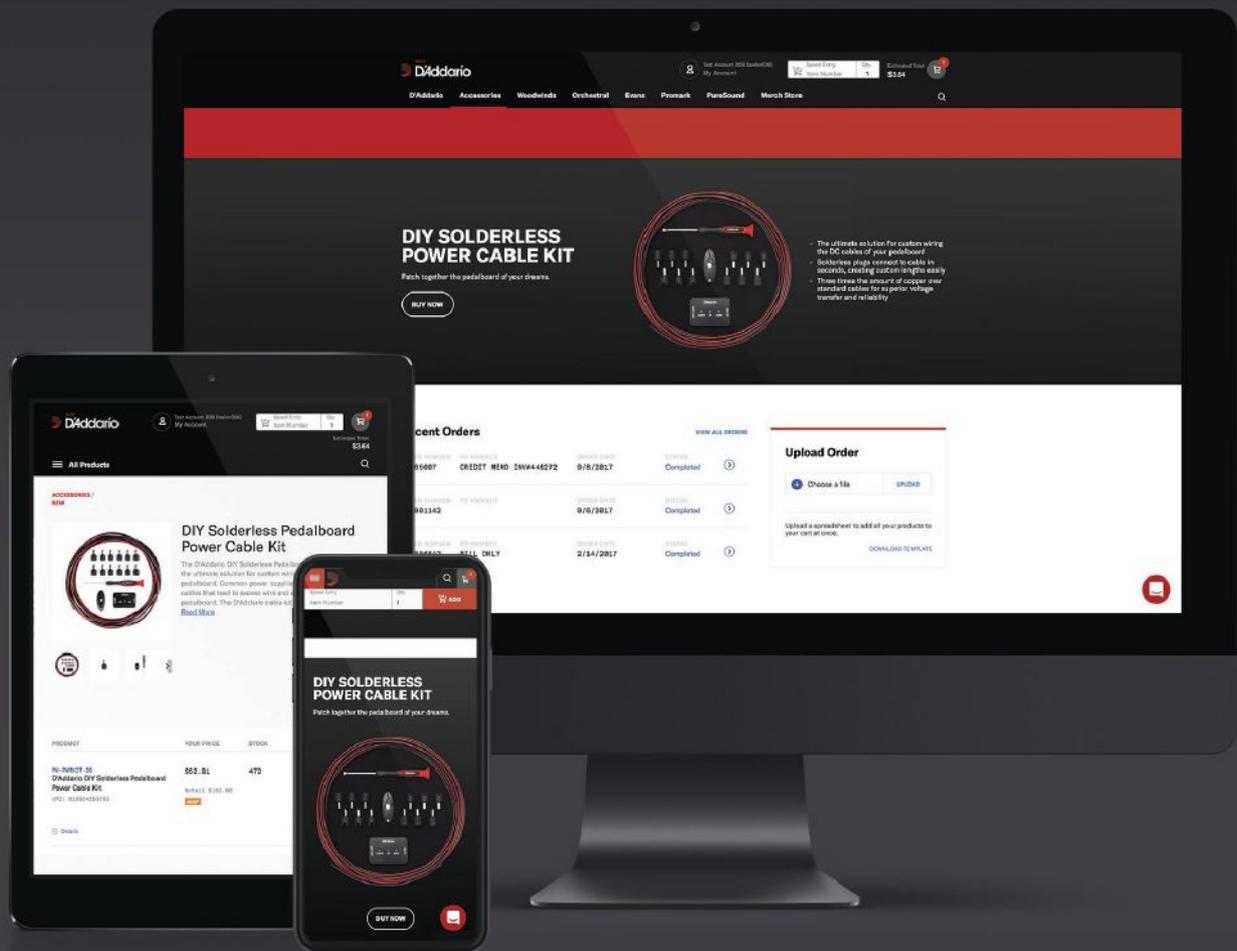
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Water Adds Hirano to Artist Family

Vater has added Taku Hirano to the Vater Family of Artists. Vater will be releasing Taku Hirano's unique signature multi-purpose stick design, "Katana," at NAMM 2019. "I'm so excited to now be a part of Vater's family of artists. I have always admired the reputation that Vater has built on its consistency, dependability and atten-

tion to detail," says Hirano. "It's a great honor to be working with them on the development of my signature sticks." "I am extremely honored to welcome Taku Hirano into the Vater Family," adds Chad Brandolini, Vater director of Artist Relations. "Ironically, his initial connection to Vater goes back to his teens when he was buying the Vater made Jack's Drum Shop



Taku Hirano sticks while he was a student at Berklee College of Music. We are thrilled that Taku has chosen Vater as his new home and all of us at Vater are looking forward to a very positive and productive future working together, starting with the release of his 'Katana' stick design at NAMM 2019!"

ChamSys Wins New Products Award at WFX

ChamSys recently went home with a New Products Award for its new user-friendly console, the ChamSys QuickQ 20.

A panel of judges drawn from leading church TDs and the Worship Tech Director website selected the ChamSys QuickQ 20 for the honor at WFX.

"The worship market was clearly on our mind when we developed the QuickQ 20," said Philip Watson, ChamSys USA director. "The console was designed to

make it simple and straightforward for students, volunteers and part-time technicians at a house of worship to have hands-on control of dimmers, LED color mixing functions and moving lights."

"We're very happy and honored to receive this award," said Watson. "Our team paid careful attention to the needs of churches when designing the QuickQ 20, so this recognition is especially gratifying."



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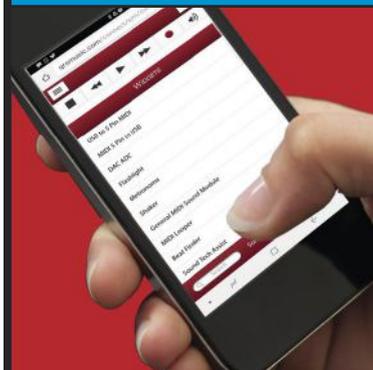
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The Lightpower Collection to Showcase Rock 'n' Roll's Defining Moments from Legendary Photographer Neal Preston at the 2019 NAMM Show



Famed rock 'n' roll photographer and author Neal Preston has spent decades capturing rock's most pivotal moments and the personalities who have defined music

and pop culture. For over 40 years, Preston has toured with the likes of Led Zeppelin, The Who, Queen, Fleetwood Mac, and Bruce Springsteen, among others, and through his work in TV and film, has amassed one of the largest and legendary archives in music photography. This photo collection has traveled the world, and showcased in Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, and now, the timeless images make their way to The 2019 NAMM Show, the global crossroads of the music products, pro audio and event technolo-

gy industries, in Anaheim, California, January 24-27.

At The NAMM Show, the Lightpower Collection will present coveted images from Preston's extensive body of work, featuring more than 50 of his iconic pictures spanning legendary album covers, views behind the scenes, moments that made history – the essence of rock 'n' roll and concert touring.

The Lightpower Collection showcases will be located in two separate areas and take on two themes. The first area will be located at the NAMM Member Center (lobby of the Anaheim Convention Center) and will feature the most iconic and thought-provoking image from Preston, curated by Lightpower and NAMM's Museum of Making Music. The other location will be in Hall A – at the Behind-the-Scenes booth. The booth display will feature a collection of images, including three never-before-seen of the great, late frontman of Queen, Freddie Mercury, as well as select shots of Led Zeppelin from Preston's time as the band's official tour photographer.

In addition to the displays, a selection of Preston's books, *Exhausted and Exhilarated* and *In the Eye of the Rock'n'Roll Hurricane*, along with prints of his most famous and well-loved photographs will be on sale.

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Wu-Tang Clan Uses CHAUVET Professional Fixtures at Anniversary Show

Wu-Tang Clan celebrated their 25th anniversary at the Tsongas Center in Lowell, Massachusetts with a show that featured over 60 CHAUVET Professional fixtures, supplied by JDI Productions, Inc.

Freddy Thompson designed the lighting concept. "There's a strong bond be-

tween this group and their fans," said Thompson. "The start of the show was pretty intense. The crowd was all about seeing the group making their appearance on stage. So, naturally we focused a lot on audience lighting."

Going beyond audience lighting, how-



Wu-Tang Clan performs in Lowell, Massachusetts

ever, Thompson connected the Wu-Tang Clan to the crowd at the arena by creating a lot of bright static scenes on stage.

"This is a decent-sized arena, so we didn't want to rely just on audience lighting, since it's kind of hard to cover the whole crowd," said Thompson. "I was also going for a lot of big looks and static scenes. I didn't want the rig to be moving all over the place with no rhyme or reason."

Color also played a big role in setting the mood and creating the crowd connection for Thompson. "The group was looking for deep and saturated colors, so ambers, reds and yellows dominated this design," he said. "But darker color schemes with blue, lavender and congo combinations were used as well. Both of these color combinations complemented the group's stage presence and their famous logo."

Thompson used 16 Rogue R3 Wash, 16 Maverick MK1 Hybrid, 12 Rogue R2 Wash, 16 Legend 230SR Beam, and 4 STRIKE 4 fixtures to create his looks on stage and over the crowd. The Rogue R3 Wash fixtures were flown on the downstage truss and were used to light the group and their set pieces. Also on the downstage truss were the STRIKE 4 units, which provided audience lighting.

On the upstage truss, Thompson flew eight of his Maverick MK1 Hybrids and an equal number of Rogue R2 Washes. The remaining Maverick and Rogue R2 units, along with the Legend fixtures, were positioned on 12' truss towers stage left and right.

"We got some great looks out of the Mavericks," said Thompson. "We wanted movement and intensity with some songs to balance the static looks we emphasized with some of the other songs."

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One Danley Jericho Covers Alabama High School Football Field

Thompson High School in Alabama recently built a new state-of-the-art education complex, which includes a 5,500-seat football stadium and a Danley J1-94 Jericho Horn for music and announcements.

"They really went all-out to build a great football stadium at Thompson High School," said LaDon Findley, division manager of Encore Technologies, the local AV integration firm responsible for the design and installation of the new sound system. "They have a big Daktronics scoreboard, and we were able to mount a Danley J1-94 Jericho Horn on top to cover the field and both sides of the stands for a single, point-source system. From an acoustics standpoint, that's ideal, and the Jericho Horn has plenty of power to cover every seat in the stands."

Findley continued, "True full-range sound is a big deal for live sporting events these days, and it's definitely worked its way down to the high school level. Fans and staff want big pregame shows and big impact during the game. No one tolerates tinny, inarticulate spoken word anymore. All of the announcements need to be crystal clear and well-balanced. And finally, we're in the South, where high school football is a big deal. We had to give Thompson High School plenty of power to overcome crowd noise. We've found that the Danley J1-94 Jericho Horn is the best solution out there. Just one box does it all: high fidelity, deep low end, intelligible speech and tons of output."

The system begins with new announcement mics, 1/8-inch

inputs for portable devices, a CD player, and Bluetooth wireless audio, all controlled from a Behringer x32 Rack digital mixer. From there, signal travels over fiber to a pair of Danley DNA 20k4 Pro



The Thompson High School Football Field

multi-channel amplifiers with integrated DSP. The amps reside in an American Products air-conditioned amplifier rack that keeps internal conditions "comfy as a button" for the amps, in Findley's words. By keeping the amps at the base of the scoreboard, copper runs are kept to a minimum, delivering 20,000 Watts to the Danley J1-94 Jericho Horn. The second DNA amp serves as redundant backup.

"This is our second Danley Jericho Horn installation for a high school football field, and we've got another one lined up next month," said Findley. "When the client heard it and we shared a video clip of the demo, it went all over Facebook. The architect was sharing it with project staff. It's amazing to hear such clear sound at such high volumes from a single end-fired box!"

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MMR GLOBAL



by **Ronnie Dungan**

Alone Again or...

It came as little surprise to hear that iconic UK music shop HMV had gone into administration again just before Christmas.

Perhaps the last specialist music chain on the UK high street, I had often wandered past my local store pondering how a store selling CDs and DVDs was still in existence. Sadly, it is the second time in six years that it has gone into administration. That there was that much of a gap between them is, in itself, somewhat miraculous given the forward momentum of streaming and downloading music.

The collapse of HMV, however, is merely symptomatic of a general malaise in UK retail (globally, in fact) in which long-established names are struggling to find a reason for their continued existence.

As I write, initial data from Springboard, a retail consultancy, showed that UK footfall in the week to Saturday December 29 fell by around three percent compared with last year, in line with declines seen throughout the Christmas trading period. In-store shopper numbers on Boxing Day fell by 3.1 percent, year on year – the third consecutive annual decline in footfall.

The high street seems in a rapid death spiral and as stores close, and high streets fill up with vacant retail real estate, giving people even less reason to venture out, it's hard to see where the change of direction is going to come.

Yet more tough times are ahead. Even if you're doing everything right, shops need other shops around them to stay alive. Happy New Year, eh?

Rotosound Launching New Ultramag String Range

Rotosound is launching a new range of high-end guitar strings sets at the forthcoming NAMM 2019 show in Anaheim, California.

Best-known for its wide range of mid-price strings, the launch of the new Ultramag sets, made with Type 52 Alloy will see the company push into the higher price-point bracket (around £15*) which will enable it to also offer much-improved margins to dealers. The sets will initially be available in 9, 10 and 11 gauges for electric guitar. Samples will be available to test at the forthcoming NAMM Show, with a launch scheduled for February 2019.

Rotosound materials expert, John Dougherty, explained the science behind the strings, saying: "With a composition of 52 percent nickel and 48 percent iron, this highly magnetic string will certainly accentuate those middles and lows over their steel counterparts. Designed for use in the aerospace



industry and high-end electronics, the low co-efficient of expansion will help maintain tuning in wide ranging environments. With its corrosion resistant properties and its unique blend of sound it is a truly a string for the discerning player seeking that extra tonal character."

Chairman Jason How explained the thinking behind the move: "This is an area of the market that we have not really competed in before, but we have been working on creating the right kind of product for some time. We're very pleased with what we now have and I believe that guitarists and dealers are going to love these strings which are well worth that small extra investment that will take their tone and margins to a new level."

For more information on the new Ultramag range or to try them out, visit stand 4602 at NAMM Show 2019 at the Anaheim Convention Centre.

EarthQuaker Secures Australian Distribution with Yamaha



EarthQuaker Devices and Yamaha Music Australia have announced that effective January 1, 2019, Yamaha Music Australia will be the exclusive distributor of EarthQuaker Devices effects pedals in the territory.

EarthQuaker Devices was started in 2004 in Akron, Ohio, USA, by musician and entrepreneur Jamie Stillman. Since then, EarthQuaker Devices pedals have been used by artists such as Queens of the Stone Age, Boris, the Mars Volta, Mono, CHON, Asai

Kenichi, and the Black Keys. Each effects pedal is built by hand at EarthQuaker Devices' workshop in Akron, Ohio, USA, by a team of passionate artists and musicians.

"EarthQuaker Devices is honored to work beside Yamaha Music Australia, and to play a part in Yamaha's 130-year history," said Earthquaker, in a statement. "We are excited to deliver innovative and creative effects pedals which live up to Yamaha's philosophy of "Kandō," and it is our hope to supply musicians with effects pedals of supreme audio quality, build quality, physical appearance, and performance."

Yamaha Music Australia distributes Yamaha, Vox, Steinberg, Paiste, and more recently Line 6 and Ampeg products.

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CELESTION

Filling/ADG Axis Adds New Foxgear Brand

Filling Distribution and Audio Distribution Group have added the new Italian brand Foxgear to their distribution alliance in Europe.

Foxgear founders Chicco Bellini and Ugo Baroni both have decades of experience and expertise in designing pedals and amplifiers. Following on from their original brands own successes (Gurus, Baroni Lab),

they decided to start Foxgear in an effort to deliver on end users requests for the same quality of product but in a more compact and affordable format.

Boasting a standard five-year warranty on all pedals, the brand is already supported by prominent artists such as Steve Lukather, Doug Aldrich, and Guy Pratt, for whom they designed a signature tremolo

model called the Knee Trembler.

Chicco Bellini, CEO of Foxgear, commented: "At the Music China exhibition, we started discussions about some new important partnerships for our biggest markets, and signed agreements with several new distributors in Europe, China, South America and Australia. We are really happy and proud about our new partnership with Filling Distribution who will take care of Europe, excluding Italy, for our brands. We found them to be a great team of passionate and specialized people, able to share the story and the project behind our brands and products."

Julien Carlier, founder of Filling Distribution, added: "Having known Gurus for quite some time and having had the opportunity to hear and play their wonderful Echosex Delay, we at Filling Distribution were very impressed when we discovered the Foxgear brand for the first time in September. With their very cool looking, great sounding and well featured effects, we were easily convinced that we wanted to enter into a collaboration with them on this new brand."



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Featured Video: Rockabye
Instrument: NS CR4 Cello

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Photo by Michelle Fastman

Sound Technology Adds Hamer Distribution



Sound Technology has taken on distribution of the iconic boutique brand Hamer Guitars for the UK and Ireland.

The first shipment has arrived and is available now. Hamer Guitars was founded in 1973 by vintage guitar shop owners Paul Hamer and Jol Dantzig.

Considered by many to be the first "boutique" guitar brand, the 2018/19 product line-up consists of six models, the newest of which are the Hamer Sunburst and Hamer Monaco Korina.

Red Dog Music Goes Under

After initially announcing that it was operating in administration, UK retailer Red Dog Music has now gone under.

Following the appointment of Stuart Robb and Julien Irving of Leonard Curtis Business Rescue & Recovery Limited as joint administrators the company has ceased trading with immediate effect.

Stuart Robb said: "The Joint Administrators, having assessed the company's financial position, have taken the decision to cease trading with immediate effect.

"Our efforts will now be focused on providing the affected employees with the appropriate support whilst seeking to maximize realizations for the benefit of the company's creditors.

The dealer was formed ten years ago by former Sound Control and Turnkey staff and was quick to embrace the potential of online retailing, setting an online store in October 2008. In 2013 it opened a showroom in London shifting the focus to high end studio equipment.

Welsh Veteran Cranes Closing its Doors

Veteran Welsh music shop Cranes is to become the latest UK MI store to close after more than 30 years in the business.

The shop, based in Swansea's St David's Shopping Centre, has been trading since 1987 but will soon close its doors for good. It also means the whole firm, which was established in Cardiff in 1851, will cease trading.

Lee Jones, the manager of the Swansea store, also worked at the Cardiff branch which closed a few years ago, called it "the end of an era."

He said: "It's hard to put your finger on what exactly it is but retail is down all over and instruments are available online so it starts to get into price wars. We've always had the shadow of the building being torn down [as part of regeneration plans] and there's been less and less footfall so it's hard to stock the gear that people ask for so it slowly starts to slow down.

"It's been different with just Swansea left as the one in Cardiff closed a couple of years ago. There's not as much footfall as

Cardiff so it's been a struggle. It's the end of an era for Cranes."

"For our regular, loyal customers it's not just a shop, it's a social thing as people like to come in here and absorb the atmosphere."

"We've had really loyal customers over the years but the majority of people are buying online and we can't compete. We've got a huge tuition school here too so we're going to try and keep that going and find a new premises. It's a real shame as there are no other businesses like us in Swansea."



Signage announcing Cranes' Closing Down Sale

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In cooperation with the [Zürcher Zentrum Musikerhand www.zzm.ch](http://www.zzm.ch),
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JHS Adds Another to Audio Line-up

JHS has added CAD Audio to its growing line-up of pro-audio brands.

As of January 2019 JHS will exclusively distribute CAD Audio microphones and pro-audio accessories throughout the UK and Republic of Ireland.

Originally founded as Astatic Corporation in 1931, Conneaut Audio Devices (CAD) Professional Microphones was formed in the early 1980s as the Pro Division of the company to serve the emerging recording and live sound markets. Now, over 35 years later, CAD Audio continues to build upon decades of innovation and success in the audio industry, delivering innovative solutions to musicians at every level.

CAD Audio's 2019 catalogue consists of a large number of microphones, including the CAD Live, StageSelect and GXL Wireless ranges, Equitek recording and Acousti-Shield Acoustic Enclosures, Livesound, USB mics, and Astatic microphones and installation accessories as well as Sessions headphones.

Speaking on behalf of CAD Audio following the announcement



of the partnership, Ralph Jung (sales director U.S. Music) said "We are very pleased to have JHS as CAD Audio's exclusive distributor in the UK and ROI. JHS is a very strong and respected organization with deep roots and strong relationships in its markets. The CAD Audio product line of Live Sound microphones, Recording microphones, Headphones and Installation products are a great fit with the current JHS product offering, and we look forward to achieving great success alongside the talented team at JHS."

"We have a long history of representing a number of iconic pro audio and musical instrument brands throughout the UK, ROI, Europe and globally," said JHS manager director, Dennis Drumm. "The addition of CAD Audio to our complement of world class brands is a great way to begin 2019. We will use our considerable reach and promotional resources to further CAD Audio's already peerless reputation in the competitive domestic market."

CAD Audio will be distributed exclusively by JHS in the UK and ROI.

Trade Regrets



On January 4, we received the following from NAMM's Dan Del Fiorentino:

*News was received our dear friend Christian Hoyer in Bubenreuth, Germany that **Artur Teller** passed away. His funeral was held today in the small town he proudly called home.*

Mr. Teller created a successful career by producing highly regarded violin bridges and supplying them to luthiers in and around his hometown. Like many of the instrument builders he sold to, Artur and his family moved to Bubenreuth after World War II as the small town sought to bring luthiers to the area in order to help redevelop the town following the war. Artur expanded his business over time by selling his products outside of the area and soon around the world.

Dynaudio Offers Break to Unsigned Artists

Danish loudspeaker specialist Dynaudio and The NAMM Show is giving unsigned artists the chance to get their big break – free of charge, with no strings attached.

Artists sign up at www.dynaudio.com/unheard for a chance to secure one of 12 coveted slots between January 24-27. It's open to solo artists, bands, a cappella groups... anyone musical with six or fewer members.

The Dynaudio Unheard studio is a state-of-the-art pop-up recording facility built inside shipping containers and containing the latest tech from the world's best equipment makers, and it's touring the world searching for the best new artists. One whole side is glass, so everyone outside can see in, and everything that happens inside is piped out through a powerful front-of-house system, so they can hear it too.

Those successful in their application, will get one hour of recording time in a live session – plus mentoring from



award-winning producer and mixer Ashley Shepherd (Peter Dinklage, Blessid Union of Souls); the masters and film of the session to take away and use; and promotion on both NAMM's and Dynaudio's social networks.

Dynaudio Unheard will also promoting the session through the company's communication platforms, teaming up with TIDAL to appear on its global streaming service.

Acts can sign up and read more about Dynaudio Unheard at www.dynaudio.com/unheard



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ON THE MOVE

On behalf of the **Zildjian** family, Craigie Zildjian is pleased to announce the appointment of John Stephans to chief executive officer of the Avedis Zildjian Company effective January 2, 2019. Stephans will report directly to Craigie Zildjian, who will become executive chair, and maintain an active leadership role in the business.



“Since joining the company as president at the beginning of 2017, John has already had a major impact on the development and execution of the roadmap for growing the family of brands including Zildjian, Vic Firth, and Balter Mallets,” said Craigie Zildjian. “Equally important, John’s previous management & leadership experience with leading brands such as Gillette, Ocean Spray, and IdeaPaint, together with his interpersonal style have allowed him to quickly assimilate into our unique culture and the music industry.”

“I could not be more honored and humbled by this appointment,” says John Stephans. “For almost 400 years the Avedis Zildjian Company and the Zildjian family have been on the forefront of making the world’s greatest musical instruments and implements by understanding where music is and where it is going. I hope to continue to lead the company to many years of growth while maintaining our legacy of leadership in the musical instruments category.”

The Avedis Zildjian Company

is also pleased to announce the key addition of Cady Zildjian MacPherson to the Avedis Zildjian Company Board of Directors. Cady’s addition continues the tradition of Zildjian-family leadership of the company, extending fifteen generations.



“Debbie and I are excited to welcome Cady to the Board,” says Craigie Zildjian. “This continues the 400-year old tradition of family leadership in the business.”

Cady is the daughter of Debbie Zild-

jian, and granddaughter of Armand Zildjian. She is the oldest of the 15th generation of Zildjian shareholders. After graduating from Colgate University in 2002, Cady worked as senior account manager at SmartPak, a fast-growing supplier of supplements and accessories for animals. Cady’s involvement with Zildjian began in 2007, when she joined the company as manager of Z gear, the Zildjian line of apparel and accessories. In 2012, Cady left Zildjian to earn an MBA from Babson College’s Olin Graduate School of Business, while beginning a family. In December of 2018, Cady rejoined Zildjian as a member of the Board of Directors, playing an integral role in guiding the leading percussion company in its continued growth globally.

Yamaha Corporation of America (YCA)

has announced that Dave Clark has been appointed Great Lakes district manager for the company’s Band & Orchestral division, overseeing sales in parts of Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. Clark reports to David Suter, regional sales manager, Band & Orchestral division at the company.



“Yamaha is always on a quest to find, recruit and hire the best talent available to best serve the needs of our dealers,” said Doug Steinmetz, national sales manager for the division. “Dave Clark certainly exemplifies this, as evidenced by his experience, success and solid reputation in the industry.”

Clark is based in Ohio, and has assumed the territory previously managed by longtime Yamaha district manager Chris Jelenic, who retired last year.

“I intend to reinforce the core values and integrity that Chris established over a 35-year career with Yamaha in the territory,” said Clark.

Prior to joining Yamaha, Clark served as district manager for KHS America, providing sales, service and training on all KHS combo division products for nearly six years. Before that, he was an education sales representative for Rettig Music and a Dynasty product manager for DEG Music Products.

Clark attended Hondros College in Columbus, Ohio, and has extensive

teaching experience in drum & bugle corps activities, including being a battery percussion arranger for various marching bands and indoor lines.

EAW promoted Jim Newhouse as VP of global sales. Newhouse has served the company as North American sales director since 2015. Before joining EAW, he worked as a regional sales manager at Bose Corporation and owned and operated AV systems integration firm Clear Signal.



HK Audio announced **Sisme** as its exclusive distributor in Italy. Based north of Milan, Sisme adds HK Audio’s portable sound product range to an impressive portfolio of leading brands including Sony, Audio-Technica, L-Acoustics and more. Pictured here, from left, are Christian Jordan, HK Audio’s international sales director; Claudio Bugari, CEO, Sisme; Antonio Sciarriello, national sales manager, Sisme; and Nils Stamer, HK Audio’s CEO.

Martin Audio

named Bradley Watson international sales director. Watson was instrumental in building domestic sales during the first decade of the millennium before leaving in 2010 while maintaining a close relationship as an installer and later rejoined the company in 2016 as EMEA sales manager.



Martin Audio also named Peter Codron U.K. sales manager. He brings 30 years of audio industry knowledge and experience with professional A/V production companies, recording studios, live music events, theater, exhibitions and conferences.





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CASIO



By Christian Wissmuller

Before we dig in, I just want to touch upon some of the events in Thousand Oaks, California, where American Music & Sound is headquartered, that took place towards the end of 2018...

Jeff Hawley: November was a tough month for the state, the city, and West Coast American Music & Sound employees. The Borderline [nightclub & bar] shooting occurred November 7, less than five miles away from our offices. We watched the procession of the fallen police officer pass the offices the morning after the shooting, and rushed out of the office that afternoon as the Hill

“SQ is one of the first (in the price range of mere mortals) that brings the benefits and charm and flavor of analog desks together with the power of digital without sacrificing on some other major point.”

Fire crested over the hill adjacent to our parking lot. As I arrived home, my neighborhood was coming under a mandatory evacuation and I had just enough time to grab my two small dogs and head out.

Within a few minutes after leaving home, the president of

AM&S – Lynn Martin – called me and said I was welcome to stay at his house. The Thomas Fire that tore through the Ventura area last December had burned his previous house to the ground, so I recall thinking that if something were to happen to my house in the Hill Fire, at least I'd be with someone who had gone through the same thing.

Needless to say, the entire ordeal was quite surreal. I am pleased to be able to report that while we had a number of very close calls, everyone is safe and there was no damage to AM&S offices or any properties belonging to our staff.

Can you give us a little background – your own history in MI and how you wound up at AM&S?

I started out my career early on working in full-line music retail. After a very brief stint at my first job (cleaning cotton trailers and other farming machinery), I realized that a nice heated and air conditioned retail showroom was probably much more my style. In between retail sales gigs, I spent time touring and recording as a jazz bassist and trombonist, as well as recording and producing and engineering whenever the opportunity arose.

The shift from retail to the factory side of things came next as I worked inside sales and then marketing and R&D with Protec Cases. From there, I jumped over to Yamaha in the Band & Orchestral Division as the product manager for Wind Instruments. This was around the time Apple released podcasting to the masses and I combined my production background with connections to B&O

artists and launched one of the first MI podcasts, which set me on a marketing and content-centric path at the company. I basically followed (retired SVP) Rick Young around from division to division while spreading the podcast and marketing content bug, eventually landing the job of directing the inside marketing agency function there, spanning all musical instruments, AV products, and commercial audio in the U.S.

My current role with the AM&S and Allen & Heath team allows me to focus in on the things I've loved throughout my career – nerding out with market and product trend analysis, producing events, and designing content and playing with the latest and greatest tech toys... no complaints at all!

Many MMR readers are likely fairly familiar, but could you outline a brief history of AM&S and the products and brands currently distributed? How are operations divided across the L.A. facility and the Memphis office?

American Music & Sound was formed in 2002 and employs roughly 90 people across the various corporate functions and supported brands. It is a part of JAM Industries, so AM&S has the best of both worlds from a marketing and distribution standpoint – the ability to move quickly and focus in on supporting a brand, but with the strength and massive infrastructure and capabilities of a world-class distribution company behind it.

The Los Angeles area office is home base for much of the AM&S management and marketing function, with most employees working in the field located in the Memphis area warehouse facilities or in Montreal.

While most of my time is spent focusing in on Allen & Heath, AM&S also supports various marketing and/or sales and distribution functions for CAD Audio, dBTechnologies, Focusrite, Fostex, Hercules (DJ), Kurzweil Home, Kurzweil Pro, Lewitt, NORD, Novation, Reloop, Studiologic, and Xone as well.

Allen & Heath started in England in 1969, keeping busy in the early days making mixers for a few bands you may have heard of – Genesis, Pink Floyd, and The Who. About 120 people work at the Cornwall headquarters today, in very close collaboration with our team here in the U.S. and other distributors and partners around the world.

Allen & Heath has a big hit on their hands with the SQ Series, which just won MMR's "Product of the Year" Dealers' Choice Award (congratulations, again) and is up for a TEC Award. Why do you think that line is resonating with dealers and end-users?

The big thing that I hear from dealers and end-users is that the SQ Series offers an amazing amount of technical flexibility. Because of this, the sales folks on the floor don't need to work very hard to overcome objections during the sales process since there aren't many objections to be had. "I have to have a console that operates at 96kHz." Check. "But I have older Allen & Heath stage boxes that are 48kHz." No problem, they'll also work. "I want to use my external Waves effects." Ok, here's the Waves card option. "Oh, I



The SQ-7 with iPads connected



definitely don't want to use external effects." Cool, here are low-latency effects built right in. "But I want even more internal effects." Ok, here are optional plug-ins you can download and add to the system. "I want it to be easy enough for my church volunteers." Yep. "But I'm a power user and I want my faders to lay out exactly like this" No problem.

Basically the product is designed to play nicely in just about any live sound use case, get along with just about every popular audio protocol out there and strike just the right balance of ease of use and the ability to customize. It is a tricky formula to get right!

Relating to the above, this is the first time the "Product of the Year" DCA has gone to a Mixer. In fact, it's the first time the award hasn't gone to a traditional musical instrument. With the continued trend towards home recording and amateur/semi-pro live mixing et cetera, the distinction between pro audio and home/consumer gear seems vaguer than ever. What are your thoughts on this trend?

Looking back at the MMR "Product of the Year" winners over the past decade, an interesting trend begins to appear. What if we could have the benefits of an acoustic piano combined with the awesome features and connectivity that digital can bring?

Cue Yamaha Disklavier. What if the warmth and feel of a tube guitar amp and analog effects could be packaged up in a compact digital package? Cue Boss Katana. While there have certainly been



What are some the approaches to promoting, displaying, and selling gear such as digital mixers that you've noticed successful retailers adopting?

This one may sound obvious, but the approach that has worked best is to do an A/B listening test. Put the SQ up against other consoles with really high quality source material or a live band and good PA speakers, and the SQ consistently wins. There are many reasons I could point to as to why the SQ sounds great, but the 96kHz system sampling rate is a biggie. Most of the other consoles in this price range run at 48kHz and jumping up to 96kHz with SQ is often described as being like "lifting a blanket off the speakers." You can have lots of fun reading up on the Nyquist-Shannon Theorem and the Fourier transform and the psychoacoustics of this phenomenon, but it is best to demonstrate the effect in person. Do the demo, sell the SQ.

digital mixing consoles out in the past that sound amazing, SQ is one of the first (in the price range of mere mortals) that brings the benefits and charm and flavor of analog desks together with the power of digital without sacrificing on some other major point.

For instance, latency in many digital consoles makes monitoring a mess for musicians. In most cases, latency above 16ms in open air (floor monitors) and 6.5ms with in-ear monitors is noticeable (as comb filtering or 'echo') and begins to negatively impact musicians on stage. While you may be able to get away with slightly more latency for keyboardists, vocalists (and particularly vocalists with IEMs) are highly sensitive to latency in a system. For this reason alone, the industry saw a slower switchover from analog to digital desks at the monitor position compared to what we witnessed at front of house. SQ leads in this space with a design that keeps latency consistently low (under 0.7ms) without requiring the engineer to delay things manually to compensate. In short, offer the benefit of clean digital monitor mixing without the pain of managing latency.

To the same point, the generation coming up who was raised in a "drag and drop" touchscreen world expects a high degree of customization without limitations being imposed by a fixed UI or workflow. Look over at your friend's iPhone home screen layout and I'll bet it is almost completely different than yours. Different apps, different arrangement of apps and folders, etc. SQ excels on this front, allowing for the mix layout and effects to be personalized in much the same way.



The view from AM&S' offices in Thousand Oaks, California during the devastating fires that scorched the area in November of last year

How would interested dealers go about partnering with AM&S?

The easiest way would be to contact us at info@americanmusicsound.com and our awesome support staff will connect you with the right folks.

Are there any recent or upcoming products or developments that you'd like to share with our readers?

I think you hit on a great point earlier around the possible trend of a collapsing distinction between amateur and semi-pro mixing, pro audio and consumer gear, et cetera. One thing I think we'll see more of in the near future is the expanding definition of just what a mixer can and should look like. The popularity of tablet-based mixing came on fast and having additional iPad control options for a digital mixer is now table stakes. I continue to be surprised by bands at huge festivals using mixer control surfaces that they could easily have checked on as baggage vs. needing a giant truck. These changes in consumer demands around flexible control surfaces will likely drive the need for increased interoperability and more open (or at least standardized) audio networking in the future. I'd recommend that dealers keep an eye on this trend and begin to think a bit outside of the traditional mixer-shaped box.

Lastly, what are your expectations for your market segment in the coming months?

Well, you know as a marketer with a strong sales background I have to say, "Sales are going to grow, grow, grow!" All kidding aside, we have had a record sales year and knowing what we have in the product pipeline for 2019 and beyond, I am confident that the live sound space will be fun to watch for the foreseeable future.

Given the crazy November we just had and the amazing outpouring of support from industry friends that we all received, I think it is a good time to sit back and really put things in context. Winning awards and having hit products and launching a successful marketing campaign is great, but the people and the relationships are what matter. Remember what is truly important. As noted in a common refrain around the office when a project goes a bit sideways or the stress of NAMM planning starts to build, "It's pro audio, nobody's going to die." 

SQ



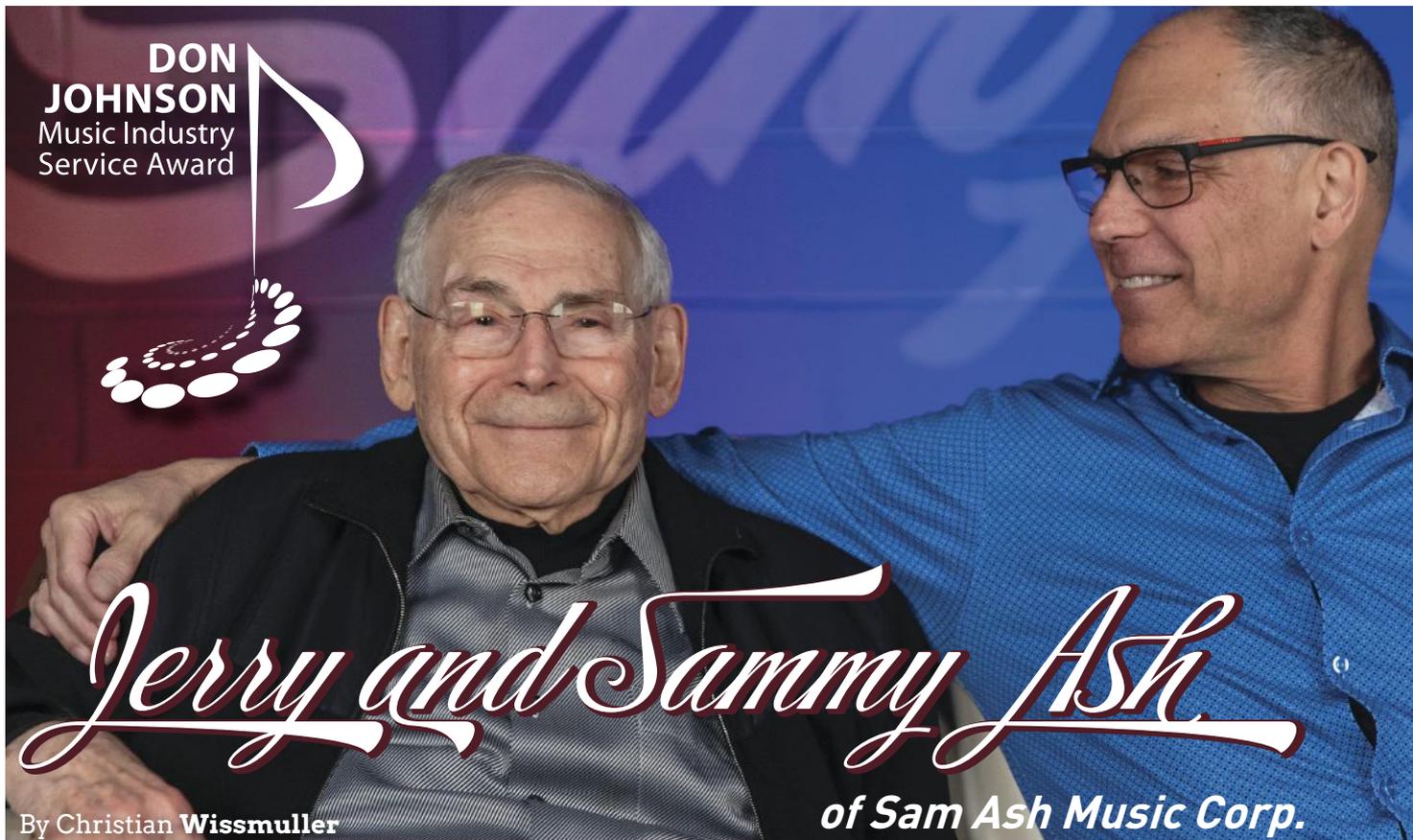
Mix Fast. Not Furious.

Built on our latest generation 96kHz XCVI core, SQ sets a new standard for compact digital mixers — delivering pristine, high resolution audio with a class-leading latency of <math><0.7\text{ms}</math>.

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2019 Recipients of MMR's Annual Don Johnson Industry Service Award

Each year since 2009, *Musical Merchandise Review* has singled out an individual (or, occasionally, individuals) to receive the Don Johnson Industry Service Award – an honor created to celebrate and memorialize the life and legacy of our former editor. The award spotlights those within MI who are going the extra mile to not only succeed in business, but also to excel as *people* by working to better their communities and support the culture of music and music education.

This year we are proud to celebrate Sam and Jerry Ash of Sam Ash Music Corporation for their accomplishments.

10 year-old, Austrian-born Sam Ash (né Ashkynase) arrived in

“We would like to thank our personal and business families for giving us the resources to be able to serve the industry and communities that we love.” – Sam and Jerry Ash

the United States in 1907, and would later found what is today by far the largest family-owned MI retail operation in the country. Surviving the Great Depression, World War II, cultural shifts, Vietnam, multiple moves and expansions, Sam Ash Corp. has never wavered in its commitment to musicians, the MI industry, and their communities.

Patriarch Sam's first son, Jerry, and his grandson, Sam (Sammy) – along with the rest of the Ash family – continued and built upon the legacy that began in Brooklyn in the 1920s.

While officially “retired,” Jerry and his wife Berenice remain actively connected to both the business and their community. Company COO Sam lives with on Long Island with his wife Rachel and their two sons, Alex and Jason, and – of course – Nellie, their dog.

The world of MI and the areas across the nation in which Sam Ash Music has a footprint have benefitted greatly from the efforts of these two individuals.

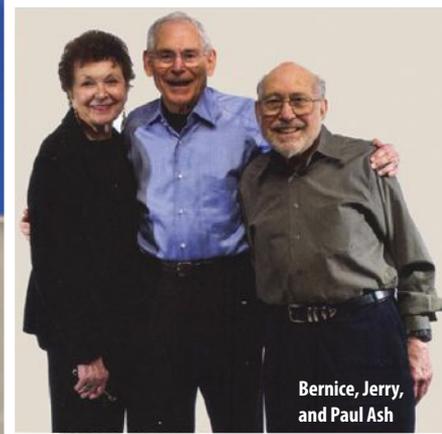
Congratulations on being selected as the joint-recipients of this year's Don Johnson Industry Service Award.

Sam & Jerry Ash: First, we would like to thank our personal and business families for giving us the resources to be able to serve the industry and communities that we love. We are also quite honored to win, of all awards, the Don Johnson award – a person we both admired in this industry. He was one of the greats.

Absolutely agreed. Can you both talk briefly about your childhoods? More specifically, what first drew you to music? Sam was a violinist – I know that. Were either of you a player? Were you fans of any specific styles of music or any artists?

Sam Ash: My childhood was all about music. My father was both a jazz and classical music buff, so we grew up listening to that a lot. Broadway was also one of the house staples. We listened to a lot of Latin music in my Dad's car on Sunday mornings on WRVR Riverside radio. My mother was buying the books and sheet music, so in her car it was always the Top 40. Richard [Ash, Sam's brother] was my biggest influence in music. He introduced me to real rock and roll and great guitar players. I started playing guitar at around 14, and my dad gave me my first new guitar when I was

16. Today I am more of a collector than a player, but I am pretty good at that. I started off as a sax player, but girls didn't dig sax players – the age old story.



Bernice, Jerry, and Paul Ash

Jerry Ash: I had no talent – none. I could never play by ear, I could never memorize anything. I had to look at the music and I would always make mistakes. I had a little band, though. We played in the mountains for two summers. The first summer was no problem because the band

Jerry and Sam Ash

consisted of twins who were the sons of the owner of the little bungalow – the little hotel, a drummer, and me. The second summer we were really bad and in the middle of the year they fired us.

Both of you grew up surrounded by music and the MI retail business. Can you talk about Sam and Rose's early experiences in what eventually became Sam Ash Music Corporation?

J: This was 1924 when they bought the place, so around 1925 radio came in, so that was a total bust. They started to try to sell the instruments. There wasn't that much business. My mother and father took care of everything. My father came here in 1903 at the age of 10. My mother, coincidentally, came in at the age of 3 that same year. By the age of 17, my father was totally immersed in the violin. He started teaching, then he learned how to fix them, then began to sell them and gave up his job to pursue music. He also became a band leader. He would go to the various wedding halls around the area and say, "Recommend me if people come in and want a violinist and I'll throw you a few bucks."

My father had a lot of friends who were musicians – violinists primarily. Before this, he was a rival of theirs; every one of them was teaching and playing. He told each one of them, "I'm giving up playing. Be my customer." Now what did he have to sell? Next to nothing. The big thing these teachers wanted was sheet music because they all taught. "What do you carry in sheet music?" They didn't know. If a guy came in and said, "I want a Hanon book for piano," they'd buy two – put one in stock and sell the other.

Eventually, they built up a very nice and comprehensive sheet music business which was a petty thing because a guy would come in and want three or four pieces of music and you'd go to this draw here, this draw there, et cetera – and you'd maybe have a \$2 sale. They had hardly any instruments worth selling.

What's your first memory of realizing that you lived in a house that was also a music store?

J: We lived in three rooms behind the store. Later on, we took a second apartment. One of the things that's indelible in my memory is the landlady came around for the rent and my father gave her a check and said, "Hold it for two weeks" because he had no money to cover the check and needed to make the money for it.

When Sam played a job on a Saturday night for a wedding, he would dress up in a tuxedo, blacken his mustache, and go. My five-foot tall mother was alone in the store until 11:00 at night. This was life in those days.

What was Sam like?

J: My father had a personality that just beamed. He was always smiling people loved him. Everybody called him Sam and everyone loved him. Since it was the Depression and so many were out of work the store became a hanging/meeting place for all of the local musicians. If you came in more than twice you had a nickname. I have an Olds Mendez trumpet which a man gave me about 4 years ago. He was a retired school principal. As a kid he brought his first trumpet from us then when he wanted the second one he bought it from Sam personally the guy wanted me to have the trumpet provided I didn't sell it. He wanted it to return home. It in my office.

He was a talented musician and band leader. He had several bands like the "Sam Ash Society Club Orchestra" and they would play all over Brooklyn and in the summers in the Catskill Mountains. This is another thing, Fred Gretsch, the original Fred Gretsch said to my father, "If you want to make a living you have to get off your ass and deliver." So he bought a car, a used car. I remember him learning to drive and the car stuttering along because it was a shift car.

At what age were each of you first working in the family business? Can you also talk about the evolution of your roles at Sam Ash Music?

S: When I grew up it was during The Beatles [heyday], so everything was exciting – everything was changing every single day. I worked on Saturdays as a kid, so I would get to see all of the past week's goodies all at once. I am a gear hound – I still can't help it. One day we had a few drums in stock and the next day Ludwig was our biggest supplier. It was a real education because my father liked to try all new gear and trends – always be first. He would listen to his customers and if they were asking for a particular brand he would write a letter to the company to get the line



Jerry, Bernice, and their nine grandchildren

THE SAM ASH STORY
The Sam Ash Music Stores, now the largest musical retailer in the greater New York Area, were founded in 1924 by Sam Ash, pioneer local retailer and manufacturer, at the suggestion of the wife, Thora. From a very modest beginning, Sam Ash's has become a name in the music business. It has grown and the picture of the smiling, knowledgeable, friendly and helpful Sam Ash is on the face of the store. Jerry and Thora have continued the legend with a focus on musical merchandise in the U.S.A. featuring every important brand name.

SHEET MUSIC
The Sam Ash stores stock over one hundred thousand different titles of sheet music, including instrumental, vocal, band and orchestra. Special orders are filled out daily by dozens of jobbers. Music Ash has the department.

TOP BRANDS
Often known as the "house of name brands," Sam Ash features almost every important name in instruments, sound gear, amplification and electronic keyboards.

TRIPLE GUARANTEE
Instruments are carry the original factory guarantee, since the Sam Ash stores are direct factory authorized agents, and the Sam Ash personal guarantee to make sure. Sam Ash's unique guarantee program helps you when you buy an instrument.

REPAIRS
With a staff of expert repair technicians, we have the best repair technicians and specialists.

EXCLUSIVE PRODUCTS
Showcasing new equipment exclusively for the musician, the Sam Ash stores feature the best.

MAINTENANCE SERVICE
Sam Ash offers special deals and has a complete department dedicated exclusively to repairing and maintaining your instrument through the phone or through the mail. People like dealing with the courteous, efficient and knowledgeable staff. All repairs include a warranty, checked and certified without Visa and MasterCard accepted.

SCHOOL DEPARTMENT
The Sam Ash stores stock department serves schools in a wide area handling the needs of music, instruments and supplies, vocal programs and repairs. They are prominent in new trends and feature cutting-edge training materials, equipment and guitar class kits and the durable string options equipment.

LOW PRICE POLICY
Just because for their low prices on instruments and accessories, the Sam Ash stores have attracted people to visit their stores, when for a decision.

Sam Ash in history

38 years ago, when Sam Ash had just one store in Brooklyn, they had only 7 amps - but that was 7 more than any other store in town. Now the six Sam Ash stores, and giant warehouse have thousands of amps and all kinds of electronic equipment for musicians that were never dreamed of in the forties. Still more than anyone else.

Acoustic, AEG, Altus, Ampeg, Arp, Barcus-Berry, Beyer, BOW, Carvin-Vega, Cetrus/Gauss, Community Light & Sound, Dymek, Electro-Harmonix, Electro-Voice, Teentite, Chickworks, Fender, Gibson, HiWatt, Hohner, JBL, King, Kustom, Leslie, Maestro, Marshall, Moog, Mosby, Mueser, MXR, Oberlin, Phase Linear, Fignose, Polytone, Rhodes, RMI, Road, Roland, Samson, Sennheiser, Shure, Soundcraft, SoundOut, Sure, Systech, Tapes, Traynor, Univox, Workzone, Yamaha.

And you know the price is right.

had Jean Baptiste, by the way, was because jobbers ran the musical industry in those days – not the manufacturers like Selmer or Gibson. Jobbers ran it. If you wanted a saxophone or clarinet you would go to these jobbers.

France was one of the places you would get the instruments from. There was no Japan, there was no China, there was nothing coming from the Far East. So we would get trumpets from France, clarinets from France (like Buffet, Selmer), and the one brand my father was dying to get was Selmer. I'll give you a little antidote about that.



Jerry Ash in his 40s

and most times he did. We were the first into synthesizers, we developed PA systems back when they didn't exist. We would stock everything and stock it deep. My father and uncle felt if our customers wanted some of any particular product, we should have it in stock for their convenience. We still follow that mantra as best as we can in today's market.

I started out working on Saturdays from an early age. There was no daycare and both of my parents worked at the business. I spent most Saturdays working (terrorizing, more likely) in the basement of the Hempstead store and the warehouse. When I started getting paid at the age of 15, I started wondering out onto the sales floor. I remember my first sale, it was a Gemeinhardt flute for \$220. I couldn't believe that someone would trust the opinion of a kid with \$220! I did know what I was talking about, but still... just like my brothers, I started at the bottom – working stock, cleaning bathrooms, and generally helping out. Over time, I got onto the sales floor, then to assistant manager, then I ran my own store in White Plains, New York.

On The Spot REPAIRS of Musical Instruments
AND WOODWIND WORK by SY GOTTSMAN
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Selmer sax was the sax to get. Before the war, most people would buy them from Selmer in Manhattan. They had their own store and Conn had their own store in Manhattan and Beaucher was sold through a jobber through "New York Band." Anyway, my father had a customer who was also a friend who wanted to buy a Selmer sax. They got on a subway, and he and my father

and went to the Selmer Company. My father got a discount as a dealer. This guy gave my father a \$5 commission and they came back. He made \$5 on the sax going to and from New York – a nickel each way on the subway – so he made \$4.90. Leaving, of course, my mother in the store alone at the time.

During the war there were no saxes or anything coming in, but he wanted Selmer line so badly. The Selmer Store was still in Manhattan run by a guy named Hank Bennett. So they sold radios, little things – whatever they had to sell he would buy, so he would be recognized when instruments started to come for that. After the war, when I was in the business for a while, no one in Brooklyn had much.

Former company president Paul Ash passed away in February of 2014. Sam, can you talk a little about your uncle Paul's impact on your career?

S: Paul was one of my mentors. He and my Dad helped build a fantastic business for all of us – not just our families. It was Paul who started the giving concept for schools and institutions, which when he passed went to me. I learned a lot of how to give back from him. He passed way too soon.

Of course, the family tradition continues: Can you talk about the involvement of the younger generations at Sam Ash?

S: Well, it's 2019 and the fourth generation is fully in place. My two oldest – Ben and Max – and Richard's two oldest all have important positions in the organization. Ben, my oldest, oversees all of the social media, clinics and shows, and engagements. Adam,

"I am so proud when I come to the office and I get to see so many sons and grandsons all under one roof."
– Jerry Ash

J: As a kid, the first thing I actually did to be productive was to get on the subway with a list of various music houses like G. Schirmer, Carl Fischer, and many others, with a list of what we needed from them and a wad of singles. We had no credit.

How old were you at that time, Jerry?

J: I was in high school. Maybe 16 or so. We started stocking instruments when I was a kid.

My first sale was after I came out of the army. First of all, we had no brands to begin with. We would buy some instruments. The reason we

We made this Studio Flyer 4U.

(you're welcome)



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Bernice, Sam, Jerry, Paul, David, and Richard Ash at "Sam Ash Day" in New York City

Richard's oldest, is the Northeast regional manager and his brother Derek is the liaison between promotions, manufacturers, and the buyers setting up the agenda. Max, my second, is employed full time as a sales manager in the NYC store, but right now he is still also chasing his writing and comedic passions.

J: I am so proud when I come to the office and I get to see so many sons and grandsons all under one roof. It makes it very easy to keep up with them.

These days Jerry and Bernice are in full retirement. Every weekend they go out to their apartment in NYC and see movies, show's, and Jerry's favorite, the ballet and the opera. They also tend to give to many of these venues as well. The Metropolitan Opera, the various NY Ballet Companies and the NY Symphony Orchestra. These are some of my favorite charities. "I feel like I'm giving back a lot than just the price of admission. They need outside support"

There have been so many milestone moments for your organization and your family – so may famous customers and so many stories. Can you describe a few such moments that stick out as having been especially meaningful for you?

S: I can think of a few: Several years ago we were honored by Mayor Bloomberg who decreed that June 23 is Sam Ash Day in New York City, which was a special day for the whole family; Opening on 48th street for the first time. The store was 17 feet wide, a hundred feet long, and it held everything – brass, winds, drums, guitars, audio. I mean everything. It was tight, but we had arrived on the block; The day that Stevie Wonder started playing in the window of our (then) 48th street location and shut down the whole south side of the street.

And it continues. Right now, for example, we are preparing for our 95th anniversary celebration

And there have been some significant store openings, lately. Last year we had a successful opening with our first store in Houston, a former Hermes space. This year have just completed a move of our Torrance [California] location. The old location was too cumbersome and big to run efficiently, so when we had to option to get out and into a better space we took it. Unlike the old location, this one has lesson rooms and a lesson program from the start. It also has on site repairs and an expanded guitar department. Since it is a smaller store, it is much more manageable and has a far better vibe. The customer response was even better than we had hoped.

As of the writing of this article we will have opened our newest location in Jacksonville, Florida. This is a 16,000 square foot former George's



Music. We needed to do some renovations to accept the greatly expanded inventory that a typical Sam Ash Music would carry. Since we have a Guitar Center directly across the street, we have to go in with both barrels loaded. We expect great things out of this location. We even had a preopening sale – a Cannonball Tenor!

It's, of course, quite an accomplishment to be the largest family-owned MI retailer, but Sam Ash is also widely known and appreciated for your many charitable and altruistic endeavors. Can you talk about why you feel compelled to give back to your community and what it means to be able to do so? Specifically, in the area of music and music education advocacy, why do you feel it's so important to support and celebrate the culture of music making?

S: I, for one, have children with special needs – under the Autism spectrum – so that has gotten to be very personal to me. There is a direct correlation between Autism Education and Music Education. I have seen first-hand the positive effects of early intervention and musical introduction. I was honored to be named the "T-off for Autism's" 2013 Honoree and we raised a record number of donations that year, I am very proud to say. Several manufacturers joined in and donated gear, though I ended up buying most of the guitars!

Are there any current or "on the horizon" initiatives or projects in the field of music advocacy that Sam Ash is (or will be) involved in that you'd like to share with our readers?

S: I was very fortunate to have been chosen by NAMM and NAMMU to represent them in Brazil this year and talk to many dealers and educators in Sao Paolo at the "Music Show" that Daniel Neves produced – what a wonderful experience. There is so much going on down there, it's incredible how they have created this robust industry combatting all of the corruption, taxes, and duties imposed. I spent some time on their "Music Row" and it was very exciting to see so many dealers right on top of each other. It reminded me of 48th St. in its heyday.

One of my functions in the company is that I am in charge of corporate donations. I give quite a few gift certificates and some cash to schools and institutions throughout the year. To date, our biggest donation was a check to the American Red Cross for \$25,000 for victims of Hurricane Maria. As a company we were very fortunate, but we knew many who weren't.

I keep in touch with David Wish and his fantastic Modern Band Program. One day we will get involved – sooner than later

These days Jerry and Bernice are in full retirement. Every weekend they go out to their apartment in NYC and see movies, shows, and Jerry's favorite, the ballet and the opera. They also tend to give to many of these venues as well.

J: I have a love affair with New York City. I want its institutions to thrive, so I give to the various entities – Lincoln Center, Metropolitan Museum, other museums, Carnegie Hall – and I give a lot....

I reached a point in life where I had a few bucks and I felt it is important to help other people. It's not right just to hoard it, so I take a certain amount of money every year and I support a number of organizations combating hunger. To me it is a crime

that in this country you can walk out of a restaurant carrying leftover food home because you can't eat it all – and yet there are people hungry, starving. There are kids who go to school with no breakfast, no lunch. And schools that have no funds to provide food for them. It's a crime. So I like to give to causes that address that.

Do you give to any music-specific organizations that you support besides Lincoln Center?

J: Ah, the Philharmonic and I give to the Met (Metropolitan Opera) and also to the New York City Ballet, but most of it is for hunger and to Jewish charities: the Jewish National fund and also UJA which is United Jewish Appeal, which gives to dozens of different charities. Now, maybe I am crazy, but I have too rare a memory of what happened to the Jews in Europe and I feel that it could happen here.

Any final thoughts on the importance of continued advocacy and support for music education?

S: I am a huge believer in NAMM. I think that what Joe, Mary, and the whole team are doing driving more attention towards music advocacy and music in the schools is having a great impact. They have great initiatives that any dealer can get behind.

As a company we are continuing to expand our music programs around the country. A majority of our stores have been converted to have Learning Centers inside of the locations. I believe we will hit 120,000

lessons for the very first time. We have seen the importance, first-hand. With all of the budget cuts and programs closing, we are working closer with the schools than ever before. We allocate a majority of our gift certificate program to PTAs and public schools for fundraisers and tricky trays. We try to help on the grass roots level as much as we can. We feel it is our responsibility. School bids are another way to help – you make so little it is almost a form of charity!

Sam's Last Violin

"Sam was a violin player with some real talent. We have Sam's last violin. It is a very early Carlo Robelli from 1940. It's made in Milan and a rather good fiddle at that. Carlo Robelli and Jean Baptiste are our two oldest trade names. Carlo Robelli primarily for Orchestral and Jean Baptiste for brass and winds. It one of the only items we still have from Sam's playing days. It's a very well-crafted instrument. I guess we were pretty good at importing way back when!"
– Sam Ash, 2019



Sam Ash's 1940 Carlo Robelli violin

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Note From Cindy & Rand Cook

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The NAMM Show Plan: How to Prepare, Work the Floor and Follow-Up

After twenty-nine years of attendance, our business developed a fine-tuned, NAMM Show pre-plan. Here are a few pages from our playbook to create a successful experience.

Why NAMM

We always get excited about our trip to The NAMM Show. It is not only a once-a-year opportunity to improve our business, but also a rare chance to be with industry peers and those from the NAMM organization that we consider to be our extended family (or NAMM-ily!).

The educational opportunities at NAMM U continue to revolutionize our operations. So much of what we know about retail and the industry was learned at NAMM, and the ideas we picked up there are partly the reason why we went from a little-known store to 2014 Dealer of the Year.

Together with our employees, we experience The NAMM Show and understand the full picture of our marketplace. We carry this awareness back to our store and share it with our staff, customers and students. From there, they go out and make even more music. That's why we always like to say: the music begins at The NAMM Show!

Plan for Success

First, identify which staff members to bring along. We think it is essential to bring a meaningful portion of our team to the show with us, as the experience makes better salespeople and more dedicated employees. Prep them on the excitement of attending and what to expect. We recommend sharing past stories to illustrate what the show is really like. Additionally, we review how to best conduct vendor meetings, define goals, discuss vendor-specific issues and identify relevant information.

Be sure to utilize online resources. We scout the education and events schedule and identify NAMM U sessions pertinent to our business. From there, we assign NAMM U sessions to appropriate staff members. On the new My Show Planner tool, we can add events to each team member's calendar and discover recommendations based on their specific interests. Combining these tools, we create a schematic to cross-reference staff, show days, NAMM U sessions and other sessions of interest such as the Coalition on Coalitions, Top 100 Member Reception, Marketplace Fairness Roundtable and Smart Women in Music reception. With these events blocked out, we begin booking appointments with vendors prioritized by the merchandising needs of our business. For example, if we're looking to take on a new ukulele line, we build in visits to ukulele vendors and gather information to bring home and consider.

How We Work the Show

We always plan to arrive in Anaheim a day early for the Retail Innovation Summit, which is an intensive training session loaded with ideas to help improve your business. Every morning, we wake up early to attend the daily Breakfast Session. This inspirational, educational series is filled with trends and strategies, and it's so worth losing that extra hour of sleep! From there, our company sets out on a divide-and-conquer mission of meetings, educational sessions and networking events. At the end of each show day, we all have drinks and share what we accomplished. We excitedly chat about what cool, new merchandise we saw, our fun experiences, any celebrities we met, what we learned and more. It's a total blast because there's always so much to share. Of course, it's not all rest after the show day! There are post-show concerts, receptions, parties and events to visit! Finally, we consistently share our experience on social media so that those back home can attend The NAMM Show virtually through us.

Follow-Up and Implementation of Our NAMM Ideas

We hold a staff meeting right after the show to debrief and share our experiences with the entire group. We distribute the materials we collected about new products (and share show swag!) to include the whole team in making merch decisions. We then complete any orders not placed at the show. We discuss tips learned during NAMM U and collectively determine what to incorporate into our business and marketing plans, making decisions about how to implement new methods and policies. For example, we changed teachers from contractors to employee status from what we learned from a NAMM U session.

Then, for our marketing efforts, we create and unveil our "New from NAMM" webpage, showcasing our new product offerings. We share the website's launch via email and social media and start pre-planning for the next show, which will take place back in Southern California, January 16–19, 2020!

Cindy Cook • NAMM Board of Directors
Co-Owner, Director of Marketing and Education
The Candyman Strings & Things

NAMM Show Tips:

Things we have learned from 29 years of attending:

- Bring staff with you to experience the The NAMM Show, helping create more loyal, involved and happier employees!
- Plan ahead by downloading the new mobile app by searching "NAMM Shows" in your app store.
- Make sure you and your staff have all travel discounts, including Uber and Lyft, to minimize expenses.
- Set goals for vendor appointments and share with your team.
- Prioritize vendor meetings by existing accounts and new products that may work for your business.
- Leave 15 minutes between each appointment, allowing for time if a meeting runs late or if the next appointment is on the other side of the campus.
- Review the education schedule and plan for large doses of ideas from NAMM U!
- Make sure to plan time for special events and networking with friends.
- Take advantage of the opportunity to assemble the "full picture" of our industry.
- Share your experience in real-time via social media so your community can experience it too!

Cindy and Rand Cook have transformed The Candyman Strings & Things in Sante Fe, New Mexico into a welcoming music hub and education center serving people from all walks of life; from families to professional musicians, and everyone in between. The Candyman was presented several NAMM Top 100 Dealer Awards including the 2014 Dealer of the Year. Along the way, Cindy has also been involved with the guidance of NAMM, serving on the NAMM Board of Directors.



Through our unique Circle of Benefits model, the proceeds from The NAMM Show are reinvested into programs to support music education throughout the world. By supporting NAMM, you not only help your own business, but you also directly contribute to creating more music makers.

The NAMM Show
January 24/27 2019 ^{california}
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Plan Your Show

Build a customized agenda, review show discounts and other planning resources by visiting www.namm.org/plan.

2019 Winter NAMM® Buyer's Guide

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

Amplification

Acoustic Pocket Amp from Adam Hall

Providing extensive sound shaping options for acoustic guitars and basses, the Acoustic Pocket Amp is a versatile preamp that's perfect for gigging, recording, and practicing. It accommodates both piezo and magnetic pickups, and the 3-band EQ with semi-parametric mid control is specifically tuned for acoustic instruments. The Pocket Preamp features an input limiter to prevent transient distortion while a 5-position rotary notch filter eliminates resonant frequency feedback. A mode switch selects between crisp contemporary or warm vintage sound characteristics, and a blend control allows you to mix the direct and processed signals.



www.adamhall.com

Booth #11514

Blackstar's New Addition to FLY3 Line

Blackstar's new Super Fly features 12 watts of power, separate microphone and instrument channels that can accommodate a wide variety of instruments, and Bluetooth functionality. For portability, it runs on 8xAAA batteries, or with an optional rechargeable battery pack which discreetly attaches to the back of the unit, providing over 15 hours of playing time. The Super Fly is also available as a pack that includes the aforementioned battery pack, a dedicated power supply, and a rugged carrying case. A 12-watt powered extension cabinet is also available which connects to the Super Fly and expands it to a 24-watt stereo rig. \$229.99.



www.blackstaramps.com

Booth #8802

Loudbox Mini Amplifier from Fishman

Fishman's Loudbox Mini portable amplifier with Bluetooth wireless connectivity enables users to easily and neatly add backing tracks and a variety of vocal or recorded accompaniments. Lightweight and portable, the 60-watt, two-channel Loudbox Mini weighs only 21 lbs. and faithfully reproduces the sound of acoustic instruments with advanced tonal qualities. The Mini includes high-quality digital reverb and chorus for the instrument channel, and reverb for the microphone channel.



www.fishman.com

Booth #4810

Accessories

Fishman's New Bass Pickups

Fishman's new Soapbar multi-voice bass pickups bring the revolutionary multi-voice performance, dynamic range, and articulation of Fluence technology to 4-string and 5-string bassists. The initial Fluence Bass offering is the Soapbar, which is available packaged as individual pickups or in sets of two for 4-string and 5-string basses. Like all Fishman Fluence pickups, the Soapbar is Multi-Voice and can be powered by a standard 9V battery or an optional Fluence Rechargeable Battery Pack. Fluence Soapbar bass pickups are available now at all Fishman Fluence dealers and as original equipment in the Schecter SLS Elite and SLS Evil Twin model basses. MSRP: \$259.95



www.fishman.com

Booth #4810

New Drumsticks from Vic Firth

The new Vic Firth Freestyle series of drumsticks offers an enhanced experience for drummers, allowing them to move up and down the stick, adjusting touch, feel, and sound without any loss of control. The new Freestyle series of sticks draws inspiration from the world of freestyle longboarding, and creates parallels to the flow and freedom of expression that a freestyle rider feels when riding on an extra-long deck. The new sticks feature a massive overall length of 17" and an extra-long taper, resulting in more than double the area where a drummer can place their fulcrum. The Freestyle series are made from hickory, and have a hybrid acorn tip with barrel edges. Freestyle is available in the most popular Vic Firth models: 7A, 85A, 5A, 55A, and 5B.



www.vicfirth.com

Booth #7222

Zoom Q2n-4K Camera

Zoom North America's Zoom Q2n-4K camera is designed to completely capture performances, practices and live streams. It features 4KUHD capability, 12 specialized scene settings, and sound recording up to 24-bit/96kHz, the Zoom Q2n-4K. Easily record everything from acoustic guitar to heavy metal with the Q2n-4K's 150-degree wide angle lens and five field-of-view (FOV) settings.



www.zoom-na.com

Booth #18110



Accessories

One Control's 360 Blue Pedal

The new 360 Blue Pedal is a new bass amp in the box that can convert a modern High Tech amp to have the response of '70s high-powered transistor amps. The 360 was designed by Harvey Gerst and Russ Allee, two engineers who felt the world needed a bass amp that could compete in volume with the Marshall stacks and Fender Twins that guitarists were using. The new One Control Blue 360 is an "amp in the box" style pedal that will satisfy bass players and guitarists seeking something tonally different than the norm.



www.one-control.com

Booth # 3729

The Mute Caddy

The Mute Caddy is for musicians who put their mutes on the ledge of their music stand or find themselves scrambling around the floor for their mutes during performances, recording sessions, or rehearsals. The Music Caddy holds mutes so musicians can access them easily, and is sturdy, attractive, easy to transport, and affordable.



www.themutecaddy.com

Booth # 9951

Tone Attack Pedal from MOD Kits DIY

The Tone Attack is an active tone stack effect pedal that players build themselves. At the 12 o'clock setting, the Tone Attack gives an approximate unity gain with the pedal. Rotate the treble or bass control counterclockwise to cut the corresponding frequencies. Rotate them clockwise to boost the frequency bands. The Master Boost can be used to attenuate your signal or push your tone to screaming loud volumes. The effect pedal operates on a 9V battery; for a longer lasting option, a 9-volt adapter can be purchased separately. MOD Kits are designed to give novice and experienced musicians the opportunity to build their own amps and effects pedals. All kits come with easy-to-follow instructions and use point-to-point wiring. A pre-drilled enclosure and all necessary parts are included.



www.modkitsdiy.com

Booth # 10106

G7th's New Performance 3 Capo

G7th's new Performance 3 Capo offers their revolutionary Adaptive Radius Technology (ART). The ART active string pad infinitely adapts to match the radius over the strings on any guitar perfectly, delivering unrivalled tuning stability by applying even pressure across all the strings. The Performance 3 capos will be available in silver finish, satin black, and 18kt gold plate.



www.g7th.com

Booth # 5215

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Accessories

New Accessories from Warwick

The RockCare Work Bench Pad is a soft non-slip bench top to protect your instruments while working on them. It is made of a dense vulcanized rubber that is shock absorbent and does not slip. It cushions your guitar and protects the finish from scratches and dents, but it is not recommended for instruments with nitro-cellulose finishes.



The RockCare Neck Rest is a shock-absorbing support for guitar necks. Its foldable design fits electric and acoustic instruments alike. The Neck Rest's dense but flexible fine pellet filling acts as shock absorbent and cushions the instrument neck, even during hammer blows when you are working on the frets.



The RockCare Work Bench Pad and the Neck Rest instrument are also available as a "dynamic duo" in a particularly affordable set. Not recommended for instruments with nitro-cellulose finishes.



www.warwick-distribution.de Booth # 6814

Art Pro Audio's New Pedals

Applied Research & Technology (ART) will debut new guitar solution pedals at the forthcoming NAMM Show, including the Patch-In, L-Switch and Loop Switch.

The Patch-In pedal allows the user to easily patch extra effects into signal chain on busy boards. It can be used as a passive signal splitter and accommodate easy hook up of a large board. Users can bring input and output connections to a convenient location on cramped boards. The L-Switch is a normally closed (NC) latching footswitch for use with various effect units or amplifiers that have an external footswitch jack. The pedal's compact footprint takes up less pedalboard space than other products with the same function. The Loop Switch adds true bypass to vintage/valuable effects without modifications. The pedal can bypass multiple effects pedals with a single stomp and works as a simple A/B selector.



www.artproaudio.com Booth # 17305

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Accessories

CruzTOOLS' New Accessories

CruzTOOLS' new GrooveTech Kit for acoustic guitars includes a locking bit driver that allows quick interchange of tool bits, and two bits designed for sound hole truss rod adjustment. The GrooveTech includes other staples such as screwdriver bits; a thickness gauge, ruler and capo to measure neck relief, string winder, GrooveTech String Cutters, and a telescopic mirror for inspection of remote body cavities. Everything is neatly organized into a textile pouch, and an Easy Setup Guide takes the mystery out of truss rod adjustment. Price: \$59.95.



The second generation of the GrooveTech Drum Multi-Tool is also available. The GrooveTech Drum Multi-Tool provides fourteen tools in a compact fold-up unit. Included are four inch and five metric hex wrenches, slotted and Phillips screwdrivers, a stainless ruler; and of course, a drum key. All tool components professional-quality using a heat treated S2 alloy and manufactured to precision tolerances. Price: \$18.95.



www.cruztools.com

Booth #5601

New Mouthpieces from JodyJazz

The Chedeville RC Series Saxophone Mouthpieces feature a round chamber which creates a warm beautiful saxophone tone with excellent control and intonation. The medium length classic "Chedeville facing curve" produces a warm yet strong, full tone with playability that is unsurpassed. The Chedeville RC Series Saxophone Mouthpieces will be available in Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Baritone models, in a comprehensive selection of tip openings. The MSRP for the new Chedeville RC Series Saxophone mouthpieces are Soprano \$450, Alto \$450, Tenor \$475 and Baritone \$495.



The Chedeville Elite B \flat Clarinet Mouthpiece creates a warm beautiful clarinet tone with excellent control and intonation. The medium length classic "Chedeville facing curve" produces a warm yet strong, full tone with playability that is unsurpassed. They are available in a comprehensive selection of tip openings (1/100 MM): F0 (100), F1 (105), F2 (110), F3 (115), F4 (120), F5 (125).



www.chedeville.com

Booth #8727

Visit us at NAMM, Booth 3729 (HALL D)

PAINT THE TONE RED.

The newest "Amp-in-a-Box" circuit designed by Björn Juhl for One Control, the **Jubilee Red** is a modern distortion pedal whose tonal roots descend from the legendary Silver Jubilee series of British tube amps released in the late 1980s. Featuring enhanced midrange control, it delivers the signature high-gain sounds made famous by a number of rock's greatest guitarists in the 80's and 90's.



ONE CONTROL




one-control.com



From Left to Right: Vinnie Del Buono, Evan Rubinson, Ron Williams

ARMADILLO BRANDS

CHANGING OF THE GUARD



Evan Rubinson has solidified Armadillo Enterprises' senior management team with the additions of Ron Williams, Head of Marketing, and Vinnie Del Buono, Head of Sales. Through the extensive music industry knowledge and experience that each individual brings to their respective departments, Evan has successfully ensured that his cutting-edge philosophies, and long-term vision for the Armadillo brands – Dean Guitars, Luna Guitars, and ddrum percussion – will be embraced, adhered to, and executed flawlessly.

"I felt strongly that in order to take our brands to the next level, we needed to bring in fresh talent to run our sales and marketing divisions, whose skill sets better aligned with the company's new strategies and objectives. These positions' fates, as well as the company's continued and renewed success, are all closely intertwined. I couldn't be happier to not only have phenomenal individuals leading these two departments, but also to have a level of integration and synergy between sales and marketing that Armadillo has never experienced prior," said Evan Rubinson.



"To achieve the level of success that I expect from my company and brands, an intimate knowledge of the specialty aspects of music industry sales is the first prerequisite. Building upon this foundation, innate leadership qualities,

an ability to relate to myriad personalities, a carefully honed repertoire of salesmanship skills, and a long and proven track record of success within the music industry, make up the core of the characteristics that I was unwilling to compromise on. Mr. Vinnie Del Buono, who will be spearheading the sales department, not only embodies these ideals, but far exceeds them," continued Rubinson.

Del Buono comes to Armadillo with over twenty years of success in MI, including fifteen years with Guitar Center in positions ranging from Sales, General Manager for flagship locations, to Senior District Manager. During his tenure with Guitar Center, Del Buono received two President's Awards for consistent, annual, multi-million dollar sales growth, as well as multi-channel business development and new business strategies.

"It's an exciting time for Armadillo Enterprises, and it's an absolute honor to partner with Evan Rubinson and the entire Armadillo family, in order to work toward the realization of his vision of elevating our brands to new heights," said Del Buono. "I look forward to serving our ever-expanding dealer network in order to bring Dean, Luna, and ddrum products to more and more end users across the globe."

To achieve the level of success that I expect from my company and brands, an intimate knowledge of the specialty aspects of music industry sales is the first prerequisite.

In looking for a marketing lead, Rubinson took a slightly less traditional approach. "While my father built Armadillo into what it is today as a long-time music industry veteran, it's no secret that I did not share the same degree of music industry experience. However, having grown up being constantly exposed to the music industry and all of its ins and outs has allowed me to blend intra-industry knowledge with extra-industry perspective. This uniquely valuable outlook has enabled me to combine the best aspects of two different worlds in order to revolutionize the strategic approaches that the Armadillo brands now rely on when going to market. I was determined to procure a marketing lead who shared this unique perspective, and thereby able to adequately bridge the gap between understanding the specialized aspects of the music industry, with an outside-the-box mentality, and unencumbered creative approach. Ron Williams fits this description perfectly," said Rubinson.

Williams' marketing career spans twenty-six years working for some of the most prominent advertising agencies in the world, where he has received multiple awards for his work in traditional, digital, social, and experiential marketing. In addition to these accomplishments, Williams has gained a familiarity with music industry culture throughout the last three years via his hand-painted artwork which has been featured on world-renowned guitar brands such as Dean and Luna guitars at myriad music festivals.

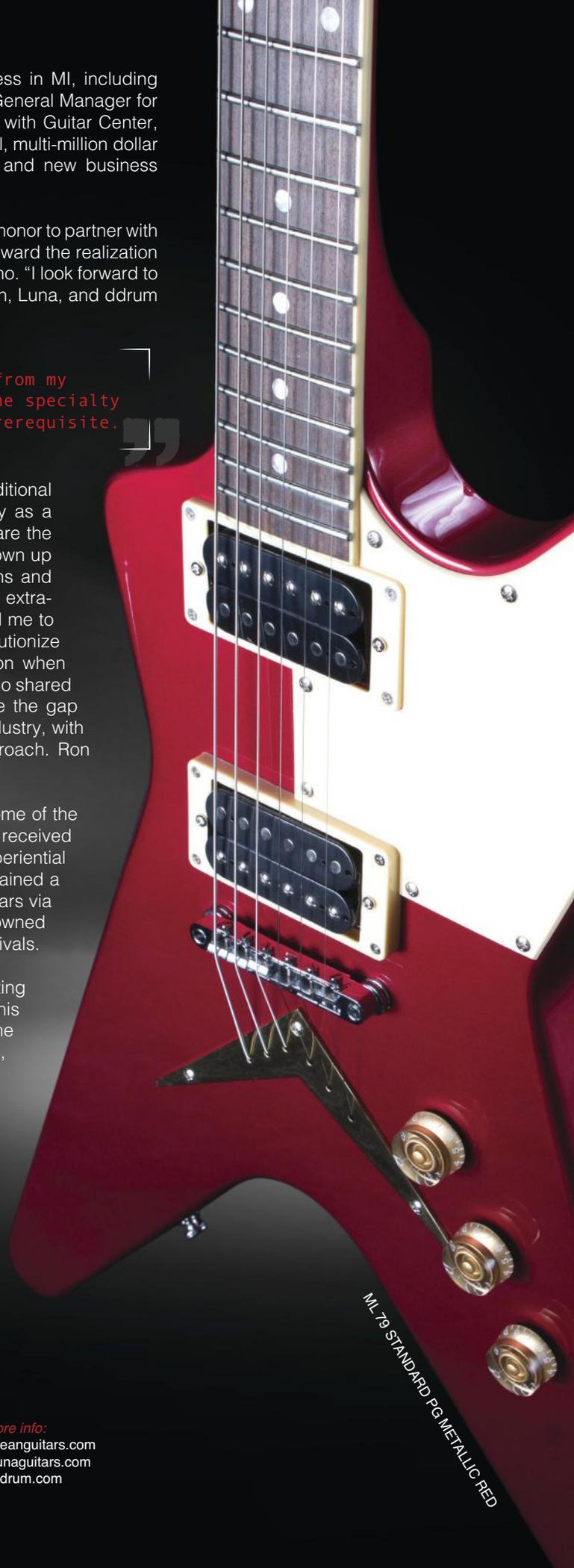
"I'm honored to be joining the Armadillo brands during this exciting time in their rich history," said Williams. "An opportunity like this doesn't come around often, and I have been a huge fan of all the brands under the Armadillo umbrella for many years. In addition, I couldn't be more thrilled to work with Evan Rubinson, and the entire Armadillo team, as we create unique and engaging ways to bring these brands to the forefront of the public's eye."

Del Buono and Williams will both be based at the company's expansive headquarters in Tampa, FL, and will serve as part of Rubinson's leadership and management team.



For more info:
www.deanguitars.com
www.lunaguitars.com
www.ddrum.com

ML-79 STANDARD PG METALLIC RED



Accessories

New Pedals from Electro-Harmonix

The Flatiron Fuzz pedal from Electro-Harmonix is an extremely versatile, classic op-amp powered fuzz/distortion unit housed in a pedalboard friendly, die-cast chassis. The pedal features three controls: Volume, Drive and Filter. Volume sets the output level and Drive adjusts the amount of sustain and distortion. The unique Filter control is actually a low pass filter with a movable cut-off frequency. This lets the player dial in the precise amount of high-end they prefer. \$72.70



The Nano Battalion Bass Preamp and Overdrive features a MOSFET drive circuit that delivers a broad range of distorted tones plus a three-band EQ with three EQ position modes for greater flexibility. The three-band EQ includes Treble (boost/cut above 1kHz) and Bass (boost/cut below 200Hz) controls, plus a Mid switch which provides a 9dB boost or cut at 500Hz. User-friendly controls include Volume to set



the master output level, Blend to adjust the ratio between the clean and distorted signals, Drive to control the intensity and saturation of the distortion and Tone which cuts high frequencies from the distorted signal. The Nano Battalion includes a 1/4" input jack and 1/4" output jack. When a normal TS cable is connected to the output jack it delivers an unbalanced signal. When a TRS cable is plugged into this jack, it outputs a balanced signal that can go directly into a mixing console or recording interface. \$117.50

The new Sovtek Deluxe Big Muff Pi combines the Civil War and Green Russian Big Muff signature tones with the enhanced sound shaping control of the Deluxe Big Muff in a single, integrated pedal. Features include gate, wicked, and blend, as well as true bypass and a Parametric MIDS EQ section with a selectable center frequency ranging from 310Hz to 5.0kHz. The pedal comes equipped with a 9Volt battery and will accept an optional EHX 9-volt power supply. \$149



www.ehx.com

Booth #5249

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NAMM Buyer's Guide

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Accessories

Ortega's New Special Edition Capo

The Ortega Capo special edition in black chrome comes with a premium presentation gift box. This special edition of the ever-popular Ortega Capo Series is made from aluminum alloy and features silicone cushions.



www.ortegaguitars.com

Booth #1810

Henry Heller's New Leather Straps

Henry Heller's four new 2" wide black leather guitar straps feature bold and modern inlays of stars, circles and diamonds. All straps extend to 58" in length and have a smooth Capri leather underside.



www.omgmusic.com

Booth #4602

Roto-Grip from Grover

Grover Musical Products' Roto-Grip (505F Series) allows you to upgrade your vintage Fender tuners to a more modern style locking tuner without making any modifications to your guitar. The overlapping ear design allows you to utilize the existing screw holes and the use of push in bushings, rather than screw in, means no modifications have to be made to the post holes. Available finishes include nickel, chrome, and gold.



www.grotro.com

D'Addario's New Bower Base

The new Professional Tour-Grade Power Base from D'Addario is designed for the touring musician in constant transition between the stage and the road. The Power Base offers five standard spaced outlets and three transformer spaced outlets. Unlike most power strips that easily tip over, the Power Base features a low, wide footprint in a sturdy metal housing that remains anchored in place no matter how many devices are plugged in. The Power Base also features an integrated cable management system that allows you to wrap the cord around the base for convenience while traveling. \$59 MSRP.



www.daddario.com

Booth #7002

New Drumsticks from Promark



Promark Drumsticks has expanded its Shira Kashi Oak drumstick line to include their popular Select Balance acorn tip models. The Select Balance line of drumsticks was designed to give players the opportunity to explore different balance options on their preferred model to fit different playing styles and techniques. Forward models feature a short, 2 1/4" taper, which shifts the weight and momentum of the drumstick towards the front for improved power and speed. Rebound models feature a longer, 3" taper, giving the stick great bounce for optimized finesse and agility. They are available in 5A, 5B, and 7A in both Forward and Rebound models.

www.promark.com

Booth #7002

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More Features to Expand Horizons and Defy Convention!

12 gorgeous delay types, from pristine 24-bit digital delay with available bit crush/sample rate reduction and low pass filtering, to our own Deluxe Memory Man, to a magnetic drum echo that pays homage to a classic Binson Echorec®.

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Our most advanced multifunction delay / looper with up to three seconds of delay time.

Tails feature selects whether echoes fade naturally or stop immediately when the pedal is switched to bypass mode.

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Tap tempo with 9 tap divide subdivisions.

9 tempo subdivisions for each modulation section – from a whole note to a 16th.

100 storable presets.

External foot controller input to access presets.

MOD section offers choice of Vibrato, Flanger, Chorus or Phaser.

MIDI control of parameters and presets.

Each section offers four LFO shapes: rising sawtooth, triangle, falling sawtooth and square wave.

Full stereo input and output.

Perfect for guitarists, synthesists, and electronic musicians... MOD, TREM, PAN and FILTER sections can be used independently or simultaneously to create time-synced polyrhythmic tapestries.

Tap Tempo and Tempo Sync to an external device with MIDI Clock or an external pulse clock.



Accessories

Artesia's Backpack Studio Bundle

Artesia's Backpack Studio bundle has everything you need to produce industry quality tracks while on the go. Complete with the Ultra-Mobile award winning Xkey 25 MIDI Keyboard Controller with carrying case, the Artesia A22XT Hi-Res USB Audio Interface, the professional AMC-10 Cardioid Condenser Microphone, Studio Monitor Headphones, as well as all the connecting cables and software needed for your Mac/PC/Linux laptop. All of this comes in an adjustable backpack with expansive storage for the whole setup and weighs only four pounds.



www.virginmusicalinstrumentcompany.com

Booth # 8610

Chin Rest Zuerich from Wittner

The anatomically-designed, antiallergic Chin Rest Zuerich is for violin and viola players. Height and tilt are adjustable so that the chin rest can be fitted to the player's requirements. The player can try different positions and can change the position quickly and easily if required. Available for violin 4/4- 3/4, for violin 1/2, and for viola.



www.wittner-gmbh.de

Booth # 9716-2

New Ukulele String Sets from Rotosound

Rotosound's four new ukulele string sets are made from "nylgut" synthetic gut and are gauged as follows: RS85B - Baritone Set - 26(D) • 33(G) • 31(B) • 27(E); RS85C - Concert Set - 26(G) • 32(C) • 38(E) • 27(A); RS85S - Soprano Set - 24(G) • 31(C) • 37(E) • 26(A); RS85T - Tenor Set - 26(G) • 33(C) • 39(E) • 29(A).



www.rotosound.com

Booth # 4602

ClariKlang from ReedGeek

ReedGeek's newest Klangbogen is the ClariKlang. This resonance bow is the latest reed and bore stabilizer designed to fit all clarinets. The ClariKlang greatly increases the efficiency of their reed by stabilizing the energy transfer through the mouthpiece and barrel of the clarinet, and also promotes more correct playing by allowing the player's embouchure to stay relaxed while fostering a more stable tongue-level position. Designed to fit traditional inverted two screw ligatures and select Rovner Models by attaching to the current ligature screw and positioned accordingly, the ClariKlang can also be used on bass clarinets with Selmer style two-piece screw fixture tuning necks. Available in brass, silver and 24kt gold plate. \$84.95-\$120



www.reedgeek.com

Booth # 9638

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Accessories

New 6-String Versions of Foundations Line from S.I.T.

S.I.T Strings has released multiple 6-string versions of their Foundations bass strings adding to the already popular Foundations bass line. The strings are available in both nickel and stainless-steel. The new strings include: Custom Light Nickel .030-.120 (FN630120L), Medium Light Nickel .030-.125 (FN630125L), Custom Light Stainless .030-.120 (FS630120L), and Medium Light Stainless: .030-.125 (FS630125L). \$30.



www.sitstrings.com

Booth # 5633

Cases & Stands

New Cases from SKB

The 3i-2922-IMAC Injection Molded Waterproof Custom iMac Case from SKB Cases has been designed especially to accommodate 27" iMacs (2014 or later models), with room for a keyboard, mouse, and all necessary cables. This waterproof iSeries case features a virtually indestructible exterior and a custom plush-lined EPS interior that provides the perfect fit and maximum protection of a 27" iMac and accessories in transport. The case also comes standard with TSA-retrofitable trigger latches, built-in quiet-glide wheels, and an easy-to-operate one-button pull handle for optimal convenience and functionality. \$379.99



The 1SKB-iSF4U Injection Molded 4U Studio Flyer Rack Case features a virtually indestructible, waterproof injection molded shell that is both lighter and stronger than the previous 4U Studio Flyer, and includes innovative molded-in front and rear rack rails that provide even more security and durability for sensitive studio equipment during travel. As a larger Studio Flyer option, The 1SKB-iSF4U offers a 4U rack mount measuring 15" from front rail to rear rail which safely accommodates deeper equipment, such as the Universal Audio Apollo audio interface. It also provides a 21" x 15.5" adjustable work surface with ample room for laptops or monitors, and a specially molded exterior pattern that stacks securely with all SKB Roto Racks for maximum transport convenience. Other standard features include improved quiet-glide wheels, an easy-to-operate one-button pull handle, and TSA-accessible locking trigger latches. \$319.99



The all-new Rolling Compact Rigs feature a standard 10U top, and 2U, 4U, or 6U front and rear rack rails depending on the model. Each Rolling Compact Rig size includes a new one-touch pull handle and back lid mounted wheels for easy transport, as well as redesigned exteriors that allow these new Rigs to easily stack with existing SKB standard and shallow racks, as well as SKB's recently updated Roto Rolling Racks. Featuring injection-molded tops, the new Rolling Compact Rigs also come standard with TSA-accessible locking latches that secure each lid the top of the rig. Roto molded of Linear Medium Density Polyethylene (LMDP) plastic, these Rolling Compact Rigs are rugged, and resistant to heat, chemicals, and impact. They also include molded-in ribs for stacking on SKB Roto Racks, threaded steel rails (including rear rack rails), and cable pass-throughs on both the left and right panels for added convenience. Street price starts at \$391.99.



www.skbcases.com

Booth # 8202

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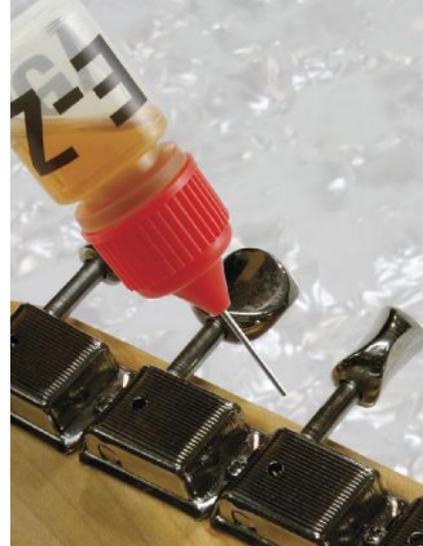
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www.allparts.com/ezkey



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Cases & Stands

Whirlwind's LED Rack Lightning Illumination System

The Rack Lightning system from Whirlwind is a rack rail lighting system that can illuminate your equipment rack in six different color settings, with an adjustable dimming control. An expansion to Whirlwind's renowned Power Link line of power distribution products, the Rack Lightning system is designed to get you out of the dark ages and into the light. The system is available as a rack rail version, or as an overhead single space unit.



www.whirlwindusa.com

Booth #16116

RBX Oxford Series Gig Bag from Ace Products

RBX Oxford Series gig bags for guitar, bass and banjo feature slim and sophisticated designs and a framework of lightweight multi-layer foam. Impact panels, a dense foam neck cradle, and an end-pin rest to keep guitars safe and secure also outfit the cases. Plush soft blue velvet lining makes sure instruments enjoy a safe and comfortable ride, while padded backpack straps, an integrated subway handle and the Reunion Blues Signature Zero-G handle make every journey a breeze. They sport a rugged but refined dark grey heathered exterior, with quilted chevron stitching, water-resistant materials and premium zippers.



www.acedealerportal.com

Booth #6106

On-Stage's Deluxe Keyboard Tier



On-Stage's KSA8500 Deluxe Keyboard Tier features two sets of fully and independently adjustable arms for the ultimate in 2nd tier — or even 2nd and 3rd tier — customization. Compatible with any 1-inch square or 30mm round-tubed stand, as well as On-Stage X stands, each of the KSA8500's support arms feature an independent 10-degree increment posi-lok adjustment for height, angle, depth and width, providing 43 1/2 inches of total width distributed over a 2nd or 2nd and 3rd tier configuration. All independent arms are height, angle, depth and width adjustable. The KSA8500 tier provides users with the ability to create a 3rd tier by raising middle arms to maximum height and lowering the outer arms. A telescoping stabilizer bar adjusts with the width of any stand up to 32 inches.

www.on-stage.com

Booth #10713

The Hug Tuba Stand



The Hug Tuba Stand fits all tubas and adjusts to all players. It is made of steel and weighs only 23 pounds. It is mobile and equipped with three four-inch wheels, one of which can lock. It folds up for transport.

www.adjustabletubastand.com

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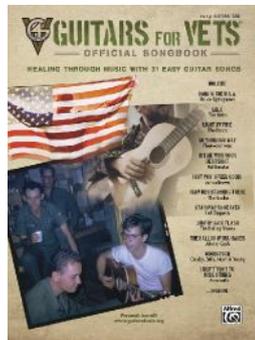
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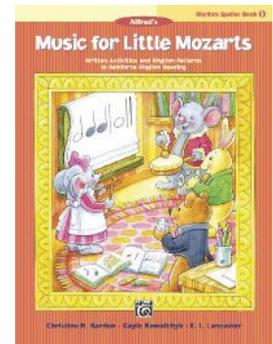
Print & Digital

New Books from Alfred Music

Guitars for Vets: Official Songbook (Healing Through Music with 31 Easy Guitar Songs) was arranged for easy guitar and contains classic tunes from the 1960s to the present. A portion of sales will go directly to the Guitars for Vets organization. Titles include: "Bad to the Bone," "Big Yellow Taxi," "The Ballad of Ira Hayes," "Both Sides Now," "Brown Sugar," "Born in the U.S.A.," "Born to Run," "Do You Want to Know a Secret," "Go Your Own Way," "Good Times Bad Times," "Hit Me with Your Best Shot," "Hold Your Head Up," "I Can See Clearly Now," "I Got You (I Feel Good)," "I See Fire," "I Don't Want to Miss a Thing," "I Hear You Knocking," "I Saw Her Standing There," "James Bond Theme," "Jumpin' Jack Flash," "Light My Fire," "Lola," "Paint It, Black," "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction," "Riders on the Storm," "She Loves You," "Stairway to Heaven," "Stand By Your Man," "Wild Horses," "Wipe Out," and "Woodstock." \$22.99.



Alfred Music's *Music for Little Mozarts* series is celebrating its 20th birthday in 2019. Each of the four levels guides the child through a comprehensive musical learning experience using the piano, over approximately a two-year period. The piano method was written by Christine H. Barden, Gayle Kowalchyk, and E. L. Lancaster, specifically for the preschool age group (four-, five-, and six-year-olds). New concepts are introduced and carefully reinforced throughout the books. Each page contains a fragment of the story as background for each new concept or new piece of music, as well as practice instructions to read to the student. Many pages also offer helpful hints to the teacher and parents for effective instruction and practice. The music was written to develop finger dexterity in young children and includes clever lyrics that will appeal to the student's imagination. Accompaniments for the teacher or parent are noted for each piece.



www.alfred.com

Booth #11402



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Cases & Stands

Manhasset Stands' New Grande Music Stand



Manhasset Stands' #5450 Grande music stand was designed with an all-purpose shelf, rather than a storage area in the back of the stand (as featured on the Regal model). The new Grande music stand also features a wide base with dual shafts to provide outstanding support for larger music scores, a durable powder coat finish, and two Manhasset Symphony Shafts with Magic Finger Clutch The Grande music stand comes packed in a single carton with a retail price of \$199.95.

manhasset-specialty.com

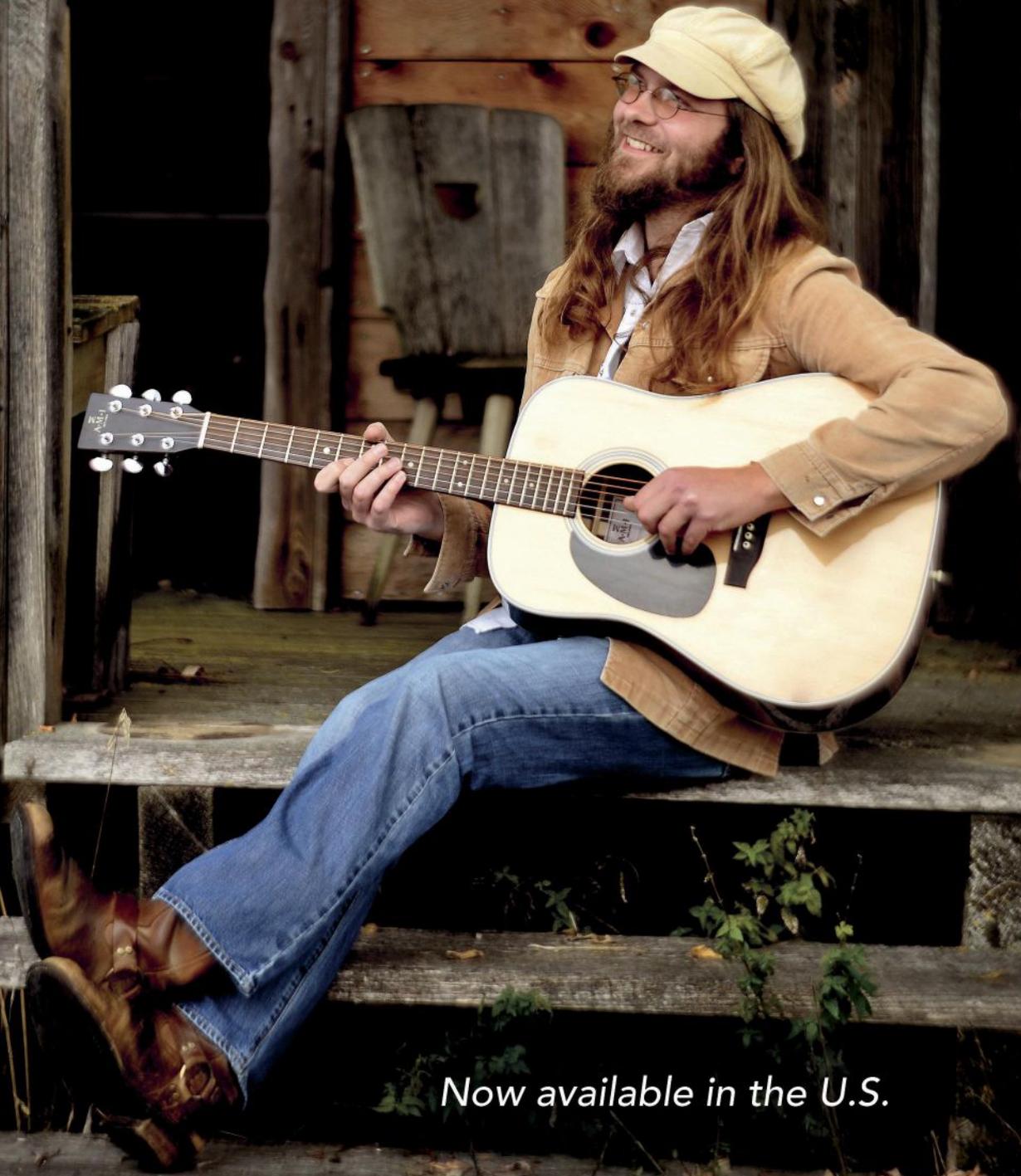
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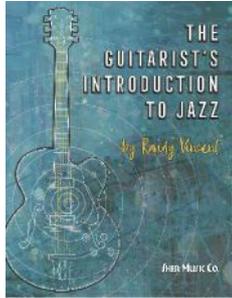
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Print & Digital

The Guitarist's Introduction to Jazz from Sher Music

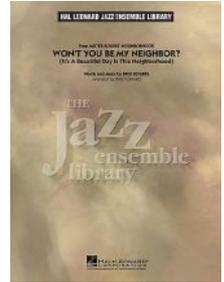
The Guitarist's Introduction to Jazz by Randy Vincent is designed for people who already play guitar, but want to learn how to play jazz too. It is a thorough approach that will serve the guitarist as a reference book for many years on many topics relevant to becoming a jazz player, such as different categories of chord voicings, scale and chord construction, charts for classic jazz tunes, ways to approach practicing jazz, right hand picking techniques, and overall jazz theory. Price: \$28 for the printed version and \$22 for the digital version.



www.shermusic.com

New Arrangements from Hal Leonard

"Won't You Be My Neighbor? (It's a Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood)," the iconic song Mr. Rogers used to start each episode of his program, is available in two jazz ensemble arrangements from Hal Leonard. The Young Jazz Ensemble arrangement, arranged by Paul Murtha, is perfect for young players with three to four years of playing experience, featuring a fun moderate tempo swing style. The Jazz Ensemble arrangement, arranged by Mike Tomaro, is perfect for medium to advanced players with at least four years of jazz ensemble experience, featuring a laid-back samba setting with solos for tenor and trombone included.



www.halleonard.com

Booth # 891



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www.yorkville.com

Fretted

American Performer Series from Fender

Fender's new American Performer Series guitars and basses are priced from \$1,099.99 to \$1,199.99 providing the best craftsmanship and quality at this price point. New features include: Yosemite pickups officially introduced for this line; patent-pending DoubleTap humbucking pickups; ClassicGear tuning machines; special circuitry and enhanced electronics; a '70s style logo in silver on all models; an oversized '70s headstock on Stratocaster models, as well as brand-new gloss and satin finishes.



www.fender.com

Booth #304BCD

Alstar Series from Ibanez

Ibanez's new Altstar series of acoustic guitars come equipped with an Ibanez AEQ2UT on-board preamp and an on-board tuner, making it more than capable in a live performance situation. Every Altstar has a spruce top, sapele back and sides, and a maple neck topped with a Laurel fingerboard, combining to generate a bright and present tone. The body is significantly more compact than a typical acoustic, yet the guitar still retains a full 25.5" scale length. The neck also has narrower string spacing and meets the body at the 16th fret rather than the 12th, providing significantly better upper fret access over most other acoustic designs.



www.ibanez.com

Booth #4620

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New Guitars from Breedlove

The Black Widow Concerto guitar from Breedlove features a black and red thin but decorative finish. Positioning the arachnid at the 14th fret and emanating the web across the instrument top and fretboard, this Concerto CE is framed in African Bloodwood. It sports a genuine Honduran mahogany top, back, sides, and neck, as well as an African ebony fretboard, and Gotoh 510 Chrome tuners. MSRP: \$7,999.



The Honey Bee Concertina features illustrations of worker bees near the rosette and on the slotted headstock. The guitar also sports a figured Hard Rock Maple neck and figured Hawaiian koa binding, with a finishing touch of gold frets and gold tuners. The model offers an Oregon myrtlewood top, back and sides, hard rock maple neck, and an African ebony fretboard. MSRP: \$10,665.



www.breedlovemusic.com

Booth #2503

PRS Private Stock "Graveyard II" Guitar

The McCarty 594 "Graveyard II" Limited Edition model is a 60-piece limited run of McCarty 594 models that utilizes unique maple for the tops. Notable specifications include an ebony and Faded Gray maple fretboard with ebony "Ravens in Flight" inlay, Raven headstock veneer, and Raven's Heart high-gloss nitro finish.



www.prguitars.com

Booth #210A



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Godin's New Guitars

Godin Guitars' first ever line of acoustic guitars was conceived and designed by Simon Godin. The new line comes in three unique models: the Metropolis (dreadnought size), the Fairmount (concert hall size), and the Rialto (parlor body size). Premium tonewoods include rosewood or mahogany back and sides, coupled with solid spruce or cedar select tops. The Metropolis and Fairmount models are equipped with LR Baggs Anthem electronics and the Rialto is amplified with the Q-Discrete preamp. Unique characteristics to the guitar are a re-imagined body bracing, stunning inlays and a couple of never-before-seen finishes (Satina Gray and Havana Burst).

Also new from Godin is the Summit Classic A/E Havana Burst, which provides extreme tonal versatility thanks to a pair of



Seymour Duncan humbucker pickups and an L.R. Baggs T-BRIDGE which enables the chambered guitar to provide acoustic tones at the switch of a button. Other features are a chambered mahogany body, swamp ash top, mahogany neck, Richlite fingerboard and a long 25.5" scale length.



The Godin Multiac Steel was developed to bring authentic acoustic sounds straight to the stage, with zero feedback issues at any volume. The Multiac Steel is based off the design of the Multiac Doyle Dykes Signature and contains many of the same features found on that iconic guitar. The guitar is equipped with a custom voiced LR Baggs Electronic system which offers the possibility of blending an LB6 undersaddle transducer with a Lyric internal microphone. This new model comes with a solid Spruce top on a dual chambered mahogany body, mahogany neck, a Richlite fingerboard, white binding on a natural finish.

www.godinguitars.com

Booth # 211AB

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Anniversary Thumb Bass from Warwick

The Warwick Anniversary Thumb Bass celebrates the 60th birthday of Framus and Warwick founder Hans-Peter Wilfer. The bass is made of high-grade tone-woods, some of which had been stored, and thus tonally matured for up to 30 years. The body's back is pommelé bubinga. The neck-through construction with 7 stripes combines wenge and bunge (bubinga) with white maple veneer. The fingerboard's wild marbling originates from a piece of ebony heartwood. On the bubinga burl top, which features a wane part, the matte UV satin finish smoothly transforms into a shiny UV high polish finish. A trail of gemstone inlays is decked out over the body frontside and fingerboard, following the dynamics of the wood design. Gold-set sapphires back-lit by LEDs were used for the dot inlays and side-dots. On the ebony pots, diamonds are marking the position. Real gold applications are embellishing a framed inscription on the cover of the electronics compartment, the truss rod cover, and the diamond-studded W-logo on the headstock.



www.warwick-distribution.de Booth # 6814

New from Reverend Guitars

The Reverend Rick Vito Signature Soulshaker is Reverend Guitars' third signature model with the influential artist. This guitar is a single cut set-neck with a pair of humbuckers that are emblazoned with Vito's deco triangles. It comes in either Ivory Pearloid or Grey Pearloid – both with custom-made black-and-white checkerboard binding. Designed to be well-balanced for slide players like Vito, the neck has a single-action truss rod for lighter weight. The back of the neck is finished in satin so it feels smooth and comfortable. Equipped with a Bigsby and an Ebony fretboard, the guitar is tailored to Vito's particular brand of slide blues.

Also new is the The Reverend Greg Koch Signature Gristlemaster, which has a T-style body that is slightly larger than a classic T. It features a Fishman Greg Koch Signature Gristle-Tone pickup set, a roasted maple compound radius neck and a Wilkinson Classic 3-Saddle bridge with staggered brass saddles and steel baseplate.



www.reverendguitars.com Booth # 5649

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Pro Audio

New Subwoofer from Yorkville

The ES21P is the most powerful sub in the Elite family from Yorkville Sound. The ES21P is a 21-inch active subwoofer that dials up the watts to produce an astonishing amount of low-end output. Adding to Elite's existing line of 12, 15 and 18 inch subwoofers, the ES21P is an accessible solution for demanding club and concert settings. The ES21P is easily integrated into virtually any medium to large scale PA needing additional bottom end support.



www.yorkville.com

Booth # 17305

Sequenz's New SonicBar Sound System

Sequenz's new SonicBar is a 50W stereo powered sound system, which conveniently attaches to the Sequenz Standard Series, or can be used on any desktop. The speaker was created to provide accurate, stereo onstage monitoring while remaining discreetly and neatly positioned for easy accessibility while in use. Equipped with two stereo inputs and an Aux In, the SonicBar can connect two or three instruments simultaneously for monitoring. It also includes a Thru jack to accommodate additional monitoring and mixing needs. The speaker's height or angle can easily be adjusted to fit any player's performance style or to position the product towards an audience. \$399.99.



www.sequenzmusicgear.com

Booth # 8802

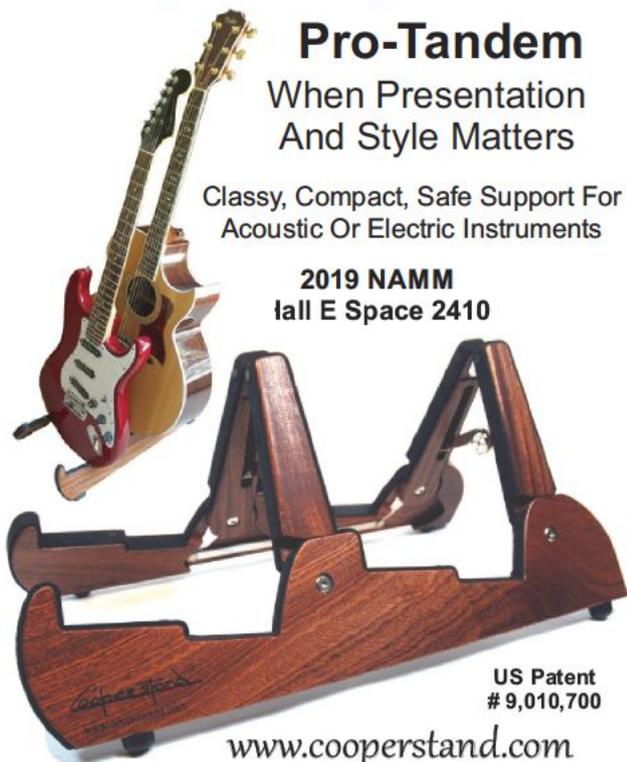
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Drums & Percussion

New Drums from Tama



The new S.L.P. G-Maple's foundation is a thicker 11mm shell made from 12 ply maple and an outer ply of Mappa Burl. The maple supplies a bright, solid, and powerful sound. The shell hardware on this snare drum includes 2.3mm Steel mighty hoops that provide consistent stable tuning and solid fundamental attack, along with Starclassic lugs (10) which allow for maximum acoustic resonance and tone. The Super Sensitive Hi-Carbon snare wires and Evans G1 coated head on the snare side provides strong sensitivity and responsiveness. These specialized features combine to give the G-Maple snare a distinct and powerful sonic character. The Kona Mappa Burl outer ply finish provides a distinct and attractive appearance, complemented by the black nickel hardware.



The Club-Jam Mini is a compact kit is ideal for essential drum set grooves. Quick and easy to set up, the Club-Jam Mini is perfect for small acoustic sets or busker-style performances. The Club-Jam Mini comes standard as a two-piece shell kit with a bass and snare drum. The shells are 7mm thick and made of a combination of mersawa & poplar. The tone offers top-end brightness and supplies solid mid-range projection. The blend of the two woods creates enough projection for moderate-volume situations but also offers the right sound to thrive in a variety of more relaxed acoustic performances.

www.tama.com

Booth #4620

Pro Audio

PreSonus' Quantum 4848 Audio Interface

The new Quantum 4848 24-bit, 192 kHz, Thunderbolt audio interface from PreSonus is a professional recording solution that includes the company's Studio One Professional recording, mixing, and mastering software for macOS and Windows. The 1U rack-mount Quantum 4848 features high-quality A/D/A converters with 120 dB dynamic range on every input and output and offers 32 channels of DB25 line-level I/O for bringing vintage and boutique analog gear into your DAW and back with near-zero latency and pristine signal quality.



An additional 16 channels of ADAT Optical I/O are available to add Light-pipe-equipped digital gear, or extend your analog I/O to 48x48 by connecting two PreSonus DigiMax DP88 A/D/A converters with recallable XMAX Class A preamps and line-level inputs. BNC word clock I/O and low-jitter clocking ensure the Quantum 4848 and other digital audio devices operate in tight sync for superior imaging. The unit's front-panel level meters can be switched between input and output monitoring. For applications requiring more than 48 channels, up to 4 Quantum 4848 interfaces can be stacked via Thunderbolt to create a 192x192 system. Alternatively, the Quantum 4848 can be stacked with any Quantum-series interface to add recallable XMAX mic preamps, SPDIF I/O, and MIDI I/O. The Quantum 4848's second Thunderbolt port also can be used to add peripherals such as hard drives.

As with other Quantum-series interfaces, the Quantum 4848 uses proprietary Thunderbolt drivers for macOS and Windows to deliver ultra-low-latency performance while maximizing efficiency. Even at higher buffer sizes, Quantum-series interfaces deliver consistent low-latency performance. DAW monitoring allows you to manage your session and your musicians' monitor mixes from a single window.

www.presonus.com

Booth #18701

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Piano & Keyboard

Yamaha's MODX Synthesizers



This successor to the popular Yamaha MOXF line will be available in three models –MODX6 (61 semi-weighted keys), MODX7 (76 semi-weighted keys) and MODX8 (88 weighted and graded keys)– to fit the needs of synth players, keyboardists and pianists alike. The MODX sound engine draws on the same technology powering the flagship MONTAGE synth: AWM2 (Advanced Wave Memory 2) sample and synthesis engine plus a pure FM -X (Frequency Modulation) synthesizer modernized for dynamic synthesis and complex sound design. The MODX also incorporates Motion Control, a highly programmable control matrix for dynamic sound interaction. This gives musicians unparalleled ability to direct and manipulate their sound by interacting with their performances in fine detail. The MODX expands on the MOXF by offering a wide array of control and workflow elements. Seamless Sound Switching has been introduced in the tradition of MONTAGE to allow switching between Performances without any sound cutoff. MODX has DSP power with up to 13 simultaneous dual insertion effects and 3 system/master effects. MODX polyphony has been increased to 128 notes of stereo AWM2 (sample-based) plus 64 FM-X (Frequency Modulation synthesis).The control panel now includes four faders, multi-function Super Knob and a touchscreen display. At the same time, the MODX is housed in a lightweight body that makes it easy to carry to sessions, gigs and rehearsals.

www.yamaha.com

Booth #17819

Artesia Harmony Piano

The Artesia Harmony Piano is a Studio digital piano that is great for players of all skill levels. It contains a weighted, hammer keyboard action plus the new proprietary sound engine that provides a robust, nuanced, expression



for an amazing piano playing experience. This digital piano package includes a three-pedal cross piece, so you can fully recreate the range of sounds an acoustic piano is capable of. It also has a variety of features that make learning, playing and sharing music fun for everyone, split and layer capabilities, headphone output jacks for silent practice sessions, and a full array of USB connectivity for playing with your smartphone, tablet and laptop so the musical possibilities are endless. This Big Easy complete bundle includes the Harmony Piano, a furniture stand and a 3-pedal system, piano bench with storage, music rest, piano cover, sound and recording software, free live group piano lessons, and headphones. \$449.

www.virginmusicalinstruments.com

Booth # 8610

KORG's C1 Air Digital Piano in White Ash

KORG's esteemed C1 Air digital piano series has just added a new color variation to the growing line – the C1 Air in a White Ash finish. The C1 Air was released in 2017 and has become a leading model as part of the Japanese-Made Heritage series for KORG digital pianos. The C1 Air can be connected to any BlueTooth device to wirelessly transfer audio data, directly connecting to the piano's speakers. In addition to the new white ash, the C1 Air is also available in black, white and rosewood. \$1399.99.



www.korg.com

Booth #8802

Band & Orchestra

Gatchell's New Instruments

Gatchell Violins' newest specially formulated carbon fiber instruments are made by Gatchell Innovations, Inc., and distributed by Gatchell Violins Company, Inc. throughout the USA. At the NAMM show, Gatchell Violins will be presenting the newest line of carbon fiber instruments, both cellos and violins. The retail price of the violins starts at \$1,599 and the cellos start at \$1,999.



www.gatchellviolins.com

Booth # 8645

New Instruments from BAC Musical

The Paseo Model Trumpet and Trombone and the Maverick Model Trumpet and Trombone from BAC are hand-built at BAC's Kansas City Factory. These instruments in the Handcraft Series are carefully crafted with the highest quality design and construction, yielding exceptional acoustics and tailored to suit a wide range of professional needs.



www.coolisbac.com

Booth # 9133

Drums & Percussion

New Releases from Cympad

The Cympad Shark Snare Drum Dampener is made from premium-grade cellular foam and features a hinged, reactive muffling system that mounts on the inside of the counterhoop. The device is therefore able to float on the playing surface and dampen the drum in a manner that is more subtle, musical and sympathetic to the vibration of the head at any velocity or volume level. The Shark is easily removable and can be used and re-used with a wide variety of snare drum sizes, head and hoop types. For increased effect, multiple Sharks can be deployed on a single drum.



Available in a wide selection of Rides, Hi-Hats, Crashes, Splashes, Chinas and Lightning effects models, TRX ICE cymbals feature a micro-lathed surface, medium-heavy weights and a highly-polished "Diamond Finish" for a clean, bright, sparkling tone.



www.cympad.com

Booth # 6329

New Stacks from Zildjian

The relaunch of the Zildjian fx line with the unveiling of fx Stacks and the 22" fx Oriental Crash of Doom. The new fx cymbals have been crafted to meet the demands of today's popular music, and the desire of drummers to create unique, and alternative accents to their sound.



The new Zildjian fx Stacks are the latest in innovative design, providing drummers with the ability to easily transition from a stack to traditional Hi Hats with the use of an exclusive Zildjian Cymbolt mount. Drummers now have the freedom to explore a variety of pitches and sounds in one versatile cymbal pair – transitioning from bright, fast, and cutting, to trashy and raw, simply by changing the set-up or adjusting the wing nut. The fx Stacks feature a rounded top with a distinctive hole pattern, and a flattened lip to fit seamlessly as a stack or Hi Hat with the cold-rolled steel bottom, to create a very quick, brilliant staccato sound. The fx Stack cymbal pair are available in 8", 10", 12", 14" and 16" sizes.

The new 22" fx Oriental Crash of Doom continues to offer the dark, explosive, monstrous sound that characterized the popular 20" size. This cymbal is low pitched and features an immediate, explosive attack and a long, full-bodied sustain for that "one of a kind" monster crash sound. The fx Oriental Crash of Doom features a traditional finish and a thin weight.

www.zildjian.com

Booth # 7222

DJ & Lighting

Limited Edition XDJ-RX2-W DJ System

Pioneer DJ's Limited Edition XDJ-RX2-W DJ system is an exclusive white model of the XDJ-RX2. It inherits the same operability as our flagship professional multi Player, CDJ-2000NXS2 and professional DJ Mixer, DJM-900NXS2. The new XDJ-RX2-W features a brilliant white finish and each unit will be stamped with a distinctive plaque featuring a unique serial number.



www.pioneerdj.com

Booth # 11120

New Fixtures from Chauvet DJ

The EZLink Par Q4 BT and EZLink Par Q6 BT are battery-powered quad-color (RGBA) LED par fixtures with built in Bluetooth wireless technology. EZLink Par Q4 BT has four 3-watt LEDs on board. EZLink Par Q6 BT has six 3-watt LEDs. Both include genuine amber to provide rich, warm and vibrant color mixing and natural-looking color temperatures. The EZLink Strip Q6 BT, a wireless, battery-operated linear wash light, has six quad-color (RGBA) LEDs on board with three zones of control to create amazing automated effects.



Another product debuting is the EZLink FS BT, a convenient battery-powered footswitch with built-in Bluetooth wireless technology that provides hands-free triggering of lighting scenes exclusively in the BTair app. Quickly access previous scene, next scene and blackout. The rechargeable lithium-ion battery eliminates constant battery replacement.

www.chauvetdj.com

Booth # 11138

ADJ's New LED Pars

The 5PX Hex is a LED Par fixture that features five 12W HEX LEDs housed in a compact case that is ideal for truss warming, as well as up-lighting duties where a powerful wash is required from an unobtrusive fixture. The 5PX Hex Pearl offers the same arrangement of LEDs and casing design, but with an eye-catching all-white exterior finish. The 12PX Hex packs twelve 12W HEX LEDs into what is still a relatively compact unit. It generates a potent beam of colored light that is ideal for stage lighting applications as well as for up-lighting large venues. An all-white model – the 12PX Hex Pearl – is also available.



www.ADJ.com

Booth # 11438



Sax Machine

by Christian Wissmuller

The Saxophone Market in 2019

It's the family of woodwind instruments that to the uninformed appears like it should be a brass-wind; the instrument that calls attention to itself and drives melodic performances in classical, jazz, military, rock, pop, and beyond; the cornerstone of many a B&O retail department – the saxophone.

We recently touched base with representatives from five prominent sax suppliers to get the scoop on how successful MI dealers market and sell these horns, what specific models are in-demand with players, and what the coming months may hold for this market segment.

What musical or cultural trends have been driving saxophone sales lately? In the past few months are sax sales up, down, level when compared to the same time last year?

Matt Vance: Saxophone sales overall in the industry seem to be driven more and more by social media and artist presence in those various platforms. Manufacturers and dealers are utilizing viral videos more and more to promote their new products and artists.

Regarding saxophone sales for 2018 compared to Y-1, our Buffet Crampon 100 Series student saxophones show growth as do the professional sales for the Buffet Crampon Senzo (sold exclusively through Saxquest in St. Louis, Missouri). Buffet Crampon 400 Series and Julius Keilwerth professional saxophone sales are level compared to 2017.

David Benedetto: Saxophones continue to be a sought after instrument across many musical genres. Their unique sound makes them desirable for solo work and as part of many types of ensembles. We participated in a collegiate event aimed purely towards saxophone players. All types of musical styles were discussed and represented, from classical to jazz. At the end of

the event there was a concert with an entire stage full of saxophonists...a fantastic sound and an awesome sight.

Ryan Richman: For us, at Eastman, saxophone sales are up compared to the same time last year. We are very fortunate that we have so many wonderful dealer partners that believe in our products as much as we do.

I think that one trend that has helped saxophone sales is the amount of social media sharing these days. There are so many creative saxophonists that are sharing their love of the saxophone through this medium. I see people sharing everything from their practice sessions to live performances. It can be very inspiring to see what all of these talented musicians are working on, and with the ease of sharing it on Instagram, Facebook, and I am sure many other platforms, this trend will only continue to grow.

John Richardson: Being able to see any artist at any time on YouTube and other social media has definitely affected traditional styles and genres. Younger interested sax players now have an endless library of the type of music they are interested in or have discovered, furthering their interest in music. Also,



Matt Vance, Woodwind Product Specialist, Buffet Crampon

“Saxophone sales overall in the industry seem to be driven more and more by social media and artist presence in those various platforms. Manufacturers and dealers are utilizing viral videos more and more to promote their new products and artists.”

- Matt Vance



“It can be very inspiring to see what all of these talented musicians are working on, and with the ease of sharing it on Instagram, Facebook, and I am sure many other platforms, this trend will only continue to grow.”

-Ryan Richman

seeing players on all different levels of product from student to pro and making great music lets the student know he doesn't have to own a "pro" saxophone to be a killer player... just practice!

We had a big year last year in saxophone sales and we are on track to surpass those numbers this year.

Brian Petterson: The market for saxophones is as strong as it has ever been, from student to step-up and high-end Custom models. The live music scene is as vibrant as ever and it's fun to hear saxophones have a bit of resurgence in Top 40 radio too. But the main drivers behind the strong market are the teachers that work tirelessly to cultivate the next generation of talented saxophonists. When students start on a high-quality instrument from day one and study with a dedicated and inspiring music educator they stay in band! These students will continue to aspire to improve and this leads to step-up instrument sales and more life-long musicians. It all starts with music education in our schools!

Are there any significant recent developments with respect to the design or manufacture of saxophones?

DB: We continue to refine our manufacturing processes. Adherence to strict quality standards is so important to us. This has created a few back orders during the year, but we'd rather get it right the first time. We are also experimenting with new alloys that will have a positive and enhancing impact on sound, timbre and resonance.

BP: One of the interesting trends we have noticed in the live music and studio scenes is a trend towards very flexible instruments that give the player

maximum control over every bit of their sound. The talent level of these gigging musicians is just incredible and their ability to control and manipulate their intonation, timbre and tone pushes the limits of saxophone design capabilities. The same can be said for the saxophonists pushing the limits of repertoire right now, learning college-level pieces before they graduate high school. The construction and quality control of an instrument is as important as its design. Every part of every instrument must be precisely manufactured and in adjustment – and stay that way!

JR: The feature on our saxophones that we truly believe enhances the players experience is the adjustable palm keys. I am a player and teacher, so I have seen how this can positively affect the musicians experience.

RR: I can only speak to things that we have been working on at Eastman; we are always working on better ways to manufacture our instruments. We strive to continuously improve the performance of our products. Eastman is lucky to have a diverse group of endorsing artists and talented instrument makers that work together to make better saxophones. This, along with our team from our specialty brands like Wm. S. Haynes and Backun, gives us the ability to create really special instruments. We have

some new products that you'll see in the coming months that as a saxophonist I am very excited about.

MV: Buffet Crampon is constantly reviewing manufacturing processes to insure quality and more consistency throughout all our brands and models.

For your band, what are currently some of the "hot" sax models?

JR: Our 1100 series saxophones are without a doubt the best thing to happen to our saxophone lineup. Available in Soprano, alto, tenor and bari, they feature the adjustable palm keys I mentioned above. It is available in gold lacquer finish and silver-plated with gold lacquered keys. Advancing players notice a significant difference in sound, feel and resonance, no matter what student brand they are currently playing.

RR: For us the 52nd Street instruments are the "hot" models in our line currently. It is always a best seller for us.

MV: The Buffet Crampon Senzo alto continues to gain traction in the professional saxophone market and the visibility and promotion of Senzo Artists Preston Duncan from the University of Minnesota and Alex Terrier from New York City have helped us make great strides in capturing more market share. Our 100 Series saxophones are also gaining market share as more and more



Ryan J. Richman,
Vice President,
Eastman Music Company



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Roundtable

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Chesbro, Tone King, Universal Melody.

educators realize the great value in this superb student instrument. 400 Series baritone saxophones also remain a favorite for school bids, given its excellent playability, affordability, and durability.

BP: It's almost impossible to single out a single model that's driving sales of Yamaha saxophones. The Custom Z saxes are the horns of choice for gigging saxophonists because of their flexibility of sound. The Custom EX saxes allow players to focus on making music because they've got a low end that speaks at any volume and ergonomics that fit your hands like a glove. However, the single hottest models in the Yamaha line have to be the ones that have been the hottest in the line for more than 30 years: the 62 models. You can't find step-up horns with better bang for the buck!

DB: Our innovative raw bronze models (XR Series) continue to sell very well. These models are in high demand and offering them in alto, tenor, soprano and baritone models means we can fulfill the sax sound spectrum. Our straight alto and tenor saxophones are also selling well....they are tremendous for on stage performance.

For dealers who are especially successful with saxophone sales, what have you observed to be impactful promotion/display/sales techniques?

DB: Clinics that are offered in store along with one of our artists demonstrating/speaking, have been very successful and well received by the dealers, their local community, and surrounding school market resulting in new sales and product interest. The participating dealer then focuses on local promotion to build interest making the day something musicians, particularly middle and high

schoolers, mark on their calendar as a "can't miss" event.

RR: When I see a dealer that is successful with any instrument sales, there are always a couple of similarities. One is a great shop or instrument technician. Being able to service instruments after the sale is something that will keep customers coming back. Another is employing sales people that are passionate about the products that they are selling. It may not be a technique per se, but I think it is much more effective. People can usually tell if the salesperson would actually buy what they're selling.

BP: The most impactful sales and promotional strategy we see Yamaha dealers using is creating exciting in-store sales events. Events that are well-executed start with months of planning, developing leads, networking with educators, and reaching out to the community. Once the event arrives there are several creative incentives to motivate them to show up, such as confirmed appointments, extra inventory, financing or rebate offers, and clinics. How they were drawn into the store that day may have been just one of those factors, but all of them combined help expert dealer salespeople close the sale!

JR: For us, we have seen that doing A-B comparisons by either teachers or students have led to an openness of what traditionally has been a closed door to intermediate level sales. The 1100 series instruments are a very affordable instrument for advancing players needing pro features at a modest price.

MV: In-store events with our artists is always a successful way to promote our instruments and generate sales. We consider our artists to be our greatest asset when representing our brands and



David Benedetto,
Dakota/FE Olds

“Clinics that are offered in-store along with one of our artists demonstrating/speaking, have been very successful and well received by the dealers, their local community, and surrounding school market resulting in new sales and product interest.”

- David Benedetto



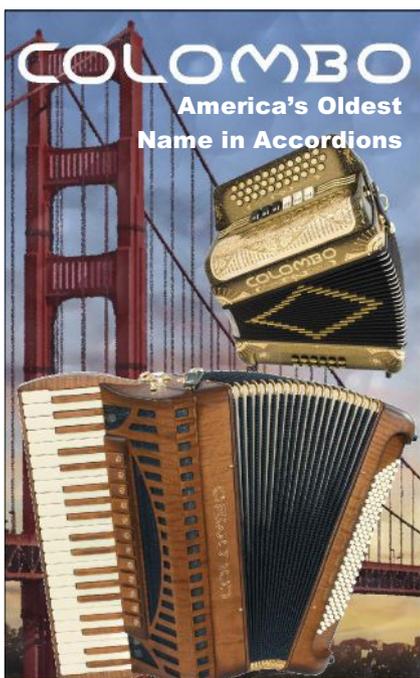
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John Richardson,
 Winds Product Manager,
 KHS/Jupiter/XO

“We have seen that doing A-B comparisons by either teachers or students have led to an openness of what traditionally has been a closed door to intermediate level sales.”

- John Richardson



having one of them playing and speaking about our instruments in an intimate setting is the best promotion.

What are your expectations for the sax market in the coming year?

BP: We have high expectations for the saxophone market over the next year and beyond. There is an option in the Yamaha saxophone line for every level of musician and at every price point. Ongoing research and development projects – like the ones that resulted in the recently-introduced YAS-62III or YSS-82Z models – are in the works. There is a dedicated, ongoing effort to generate exciting new products for Yamaha dealers to sell that are in demand and will grow their sales.

RR: We expect great things in the years to come for Eastman saxophones. We have a lot of saxophonists within our company and we are all very passionate about the instrument. It makes our development projects personal, since so many of us play. There are many new saxophone models that we are working on and we hope that our new instruments will help us attract additional customers.

MV: The student, intermediate and professional saxophone market grows more and more crowded each year, making quality, consistency and reliability all top priorities. Our goals are to grow each segment across both of our saxophone brands (Buffet Crampon and Julius Keilwerth), with particular emphasis on the 100 Series student saxophones, while maintaining the highest levels of quality, playability, durability, and craftsmanship.

DB: We feel the overall saxophone market will remain steady with our share continuing to increase. We are excited for 2019 as we are launching a new website, catalog and first ever Dakota calendar showcasing many of our endorsing artists. In addition, we have an entirely new booth for The NAMM Show providing another reason to give Dakota a prominent look.

JR: This is a tough question because the saxophone market is being flooded with brands, but I believe we are going to see a wider range of educator accepted brands, which will lead to students having more choices, but also teachers being more careful about what they recommend to ensure success at all levels of playing. 



Brian Petterson,
 Marketing Manager,
 Wind Instruments, Yamaha
 Corporation of America

“The live music scene is as vibrant as ever and it’s fun to hear saxophones have a bit of resurgence in Top 40 radio too. But the main drivers behind the strong market are the teachers that work tirelessly to cultivate the next generation of talented saxophonists.”

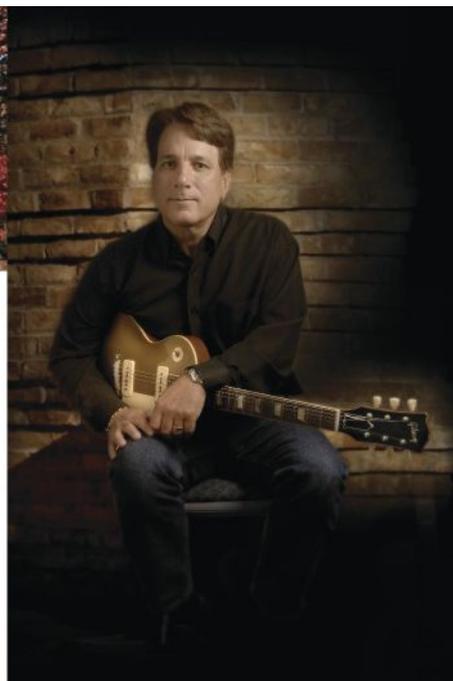
- Brian Petterson



A Musician's Understanding

Whirlwind's Michael Laiacona Leads with Innovation

By Wilson **Burke**



Michael Laiacona

Whirlwind (whirlwindusa.com), based in Rochester, New York, has been leading the audio interface industry for over 40 years, having built their well-earned reputation on offering some of the most rugged cables, interface boxes, and all things that connect audio products.

Whirlwind was founded in 1975 by Michael Laiacona, a musician himself, who had already started and sold a booming music electronics business that supported musicians internationally. "Products that we made in the early days were basically products that I had made myself for the use in our recording studio," says Laiacona. "We had a little recording studio near our factory, and we made our own direct boxes, our own patch cables, and our own snakes to get in and out of the control room."

Laiacona tested the waters at his first NAMM show in 1975, with a couple of imported guitars that were made in Europe; he also brought along a few of his guitar cords that he had made to show off the guitars. "For three days in Chicago, no one wanted to talk to us about the guitars, but they wanted to talk to us about the guitar cords! We ended up selling about 25,000 of them in three days and I remember sitting in the car driving home going, 'Well, I guess we're a guitar cord factory.'"

After the first two years, Whirlwind was already twice as large as his former company and expanding the interfaces they offered for the audio and music industries. Guitar cords led to microphone cables, speaker cables, stage snakes, et cetera – in fact, Whirlwind built the first 48-channel snake. The company was the first to take the interface connections business seriously and provided high-quality products, as they pioneered this market segment in the entertainment technology.

Laiacona has some great stories from his years in business, one of which was a customer who "gave something back." Laiacona recalls, "Back in 1978, I was invited to a party down in Maryland and, while I was there, they asked me if I would come to another room; someone wanted to meet me. I walked into the room and standing in the room was Les Paul. I'd always been a fan of his, not just because he is an amazing guitarist and entertainer, but also because he is an inventor and innovator who is responsible for many of the advances in instrument and electronic technology. While I was at MXR I had sent a complete set of MXR pedals to him and when I was at Whirlwind, I had sent a complete set of Whirlwind cables to him. I had always felt that he was the reason for our existence – he was the father of rock 'n' roll, and without rock 'n' roll there would be no music as we know it today. Les Paul told me that a lot of people sent him things, but that they usually wanted something from

him in return. 'You gave me all that stuff over the years, but never asked for anything. Why?' I explained that I had always admired him and considered him the father of the solid body electric guitar and just thought he'd find my

stuff interesting.' Les Paul then said, 'I went up to my attic; I have many guitars up in my attic and I went through a few of them to find a good one.' He handed me this guitar – a '53 Les Paul Goldtop. I was just totally blown away!"

Laiacone, being a musician, brought that understanding to the Whirlwind product line, as do many Whirlwind employees. He points to the Whirlwind employees as a major reason for the company's success and continued growth over the last 43 years. Most of the employees have been at Whirlwind long-term with decades of experience. "Whirlwind is a unique community of individuals," says Laiacona. "Most of us have been in bands or have worked as sound contractors or have worked as roadies or sound men for different bands, different sound companies in the area. Myself, I played professionally for 38 years. We have a production manager who still works on weekends doing sound for major acts all over the country."

That wealth of hands-on experience is a big part of Whirlwind's strength. They are always innovating to provide the best solution to their customers. Being innovative is important to Laiacona and core to Whirlwind as a company. "We are the people that create the product from scratch," he explains. "We're the pioneers of the product line. And because of that, we have a philosophy that we have not changed over the life of the company: build a good product and build it consistently. And if there's a component or part out there that we don't like, or we think we can make better, we build it ourselves. We build our own multi-pins, we design and build our own XLR connectors, we design and build our own chassis and boxes. That's what makes us different. Every time you pick up a piece of Whirlwind gear you can hold it in your hand and you know it came only from Whirlwind. That's our commitment." 

Corner Music's New Corner

Corner Music's



Moving a music store in Nashville – or anywhere else – is a major undertaking

By Dan Daley

was already in decline, like other U.S. cities during the “Miami Vice” crack cocaine era. He bought what had been a small grocery and later a pharmacy building dating back to the early 1920s, expanding over the next three decades, buying nearby businesses and eventually reaching 7,000 square feet covering guitars, amps, keyboards and pro audio, with a separate 3,000-square-foot building housing Fork’s Drum Closet, established by Garris’ former employee Gary Forkum on a piece of the nearly one-acre corner lot that Garris acquired and sold to Forkum five years later.

However, Garris looked below the surface in assessing the neighborhood. “I came and I stood outside the building for a week before I bought it,” he recalls. “The kids were wearing brand names like Jordache, the parents had good jobs and owned their homes. There was some crime, but the area was solid.”

Since then, the 12 South neighborhood has undergone a Disney-esque makeover. Hipster craft-beer bars, ethnic restaurants with third-world fare at first-world prices, and a bevy of new four- and five-story apartment buildings above them have transformed the mile-long street into the poster child of the new urban cityscape. The transformation ginned Garris’ \$400,000-plus investment in 1984 into one worth the \$7.2 million he accepted from developers earlier this year. It may seem like a windfall, but it’s one that came only after Garris and Forkum stuck out the area’s once-uncertain future and its long gentrification process. And since Garris and his two sons, Ben and Kirk, intended to keep the business going, they faced a location situation in which even upper-seven figures no longer seems like the princely sum it once was.

When it comes to retail space specifically, the numbers are also good – Nashville’s retail vacancy rate is one of the lowest in the country, according to a report by Marcus & Millichap – but that growth shows some signs of slowing: Nashville saw nearly 70 million square feet of retail close last year when just three big-box retailers, including Toys R Us, shuttered. But for MI retail, Nashville remains a fertile market, with its huge and constantly replenishing base of professional, semi-pro and serious-hobbyist musicians. Perhaps more importantly, many of those musicians much prefer local stores to chain outlets. “I’d definitely drive some miles out of my way to go to Corner or World Music,” said one well-respected guitarist at the recent Summer NAMM Show in Nashville, naming another well-established MI retail store on Nashville’s far west side.

Location, Location, Location

Garris was counting on that kind of loyalty as he surveyed Nashville’s denser center, which grows more expensive by the week, and its further reaches, like Madison and Antioch, once condescended to by residents who now look at those outlying neighborhoods as ways to outrun Nashville’s galloping residential rents and home prices. Obvious retail choices, such as the Gulch, once a warren of low-slung warehouses and manufacturing shops near downtown’s rail yards and now a Rodeo Drive of sorts with boutique shops, hotels and restaurants,

Everyone hates moving, so when Nashville’s Corner Music decided it was time to move its thousands of SKUs from the literal corner location it’s occupied for the last 34 years, it was not a decision taken lightly. The city is in the midst of a real-estate gold rush, with values of commercial properties skyrocketing, as speculators, investors and developers toss cartloads of cash at slivers of land that will soon become condos, high-end retail, or office towers. When Corner Music owner Larry Garris moved his eight-year-old MI retail business to the 12 South neighborhood from a site slightly closer to downtown Nashville in 1984, the area



left to right: Nolan Lucas, Corner Music acoustic guitar specialist; noted guitarist (and customer) Pat Bergeson; JD Williamson, Corner Music staff; Ben Garris, Corner Music staff



Larry Garris in the new store on Dickerson Road

was beyond affordable, and is just the tip of Nashville's increasingly expensive real estate iceberg. Garris began scouting the transformed city well before the deal for Corner Music's property closed in June, and there wasn't a lot that met his stipulations, first and foremost of which were that he own the property – Garris recalls that his first location, in the Berry Hill area of Nashville, became untenable when a new owner bought the building his business was in and immediately doubled the rent. That, he vowed, would never happen again.

Garris looked initially at the Thompson Lane area, near where his first shop had been, but municipal infrastructure rebuilding there will take years and could impact access by customers. The Dickerson Road area north of downtown, strewn with cheap motels and dollar stores, had until very recently been even worse than 12 South when Corner Music set up shop there. It was now quickly gentrifying, but what had been a 12-to-15-minute drive even a few years ago now could be considerably longer, as Nashville's traffic situation worsened, a consideration for both customers and staff. Any choice in Nashville today would involve trade-offs. The ones around Dickerson Road seemed the most navigable.

Garris found an existing mall on Nashville's north side, just under 10 miles from his old location and barely six miles from downtown, where he'd have 10,500 square feet to build into, with an option to acquire another 3,200 square feet next door. (It was also previously a drug store, as was the existing location, a bit of kismet that wasn't lost on Garris.) After timing the drive from downtown and music Row numerous times, he found it acceptable. The property purchase also kept him within the bounds of the IRS' Sec. 1031 Exchange rule, which allows

him to defer paying capital-gains taxes on an investment property when it is sold as long another "like-kind property" is purchased with the profit gained by the sale of the first property. That process provided 45 days to nominate potential replacement properties and a total of 180 days from closing to acquire the replacement property. As a result, government regulations framed the move's timing.

Checking It Out

Garris got a feel for the neighborhood before buying, as he did with Corner Music's previous location, and he got a similar sense of an area on the verge of change. "There's a Lowe's, there's a Wal-Mart, [popular local record store] Grimey's just opened an outlet nearby, [major sound-reinforcement company] Clair Brothers just built a huge rehearsal

facility nearby – we've timed it well," he says. He also notes the location's 100-plus parking spots, an order of magnitude more than he had in 12 South (and without the tourists that blithely parked in them despite the warning notices he'd tacked up). The space also offers room for an onsite warehouse and room to expand Corner Music's teaching program, much of which took place off site before due to lack of space, and is already fitted with ADA-compliant fixtures and sprinklers. And at a time when some retail space in Nashville is renting for as much as \$20 to \$30 per square foot, the neighborhood here lets Garris' real-estate holding company "charge" his MI retail business a market rate of about \$8 per square foot, for tax purposes. "I can pay my people more from the difference than I could if I'd stayed closer in [to downtown]," he calculates.

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Meanwhile, Forks Drum Closet owner Gary Forkum had purchased a location in one of the city's fast-rising neighborhoods, the Wedgewood-Houston arts district, a former factory area taken over by galleries that themselves are watching nervously as box-like apartments and condos sprout prodigiously around them. Garris says he might have preferred that spot for his store, but points out that Forks had started looking earlier than he was able to. "I had to wait until the entire deal was absolutely done first," he says.

Moving Day

The logistics of moving a music store start with taking what's already in boxes, such as inventory products and parts, and moving them piecemeal from one location to the other, in the process gauging traffic patterns at different times of the day. "Traffic is a real consideration now here, something it wasn't just a few years ago," Garris concedes. The moves took place virtually every day in August and September, aiming at late-September/early-October opening. Arriving inventory was staged in a storage area behind the new store's north wall, where 416 linear feet of racks will be the permanent storage. Garris says a kind of Murphy's Law dogged the process. "As soon we moved an instrument to Dickerson Road, someone came into 12 South and asked to buy it," he says. "So we had to run back up and drive it back." An AIMSi Tri-Tech integrated POS and retail management system helped keep track of SKUs and customer records.

After the concrete floor was cleaned and sealed, over 1,000

linear feet of 10-foot-high slat walls were installed to define product areas, including one for drums for the first time in almost 30 years for the store. Garris says manufacturers, including Fender, Yamaha, and Korg, have been extremely helpful in the moving process, offering advice and materials. He understands that some of that stems from self-interest, but also equal parts collegiality and simple southern helpfulness (all have offices in Nashville). "The tricky part is to not make it look like any other store," he says, and given the wide-open space and concrete floors especially not a certain other store. "We want to keep the sense that we're an organic part of the community," he says. Corner Music's deep roots in the local music community also helped: Garris said any number of customers offered to assist with the move. (A thank-you concert in the new parking lot is planned for shortly after opening.)

The move gave Garris a chance to re-strategize his retail layout. Most MI retail stores that have been around as long as Corner Music has tend to have expanded incrementally and outwardly from their original core designs. New departments are add-ons, as was the case when Corner Music added a pro-audio division in 1995, allocating square footage within an existing fixed space. In the new location, Garris could envision it as he looked out over a vast empty floor. He intended to give his department heads free rein to lay out their individual fiefdoms, but Garris said the store would have an overarching flow, with visitors greeted in a "decompression" area, away from the main street's bustle but before entering any sales areas and with couches and greeting counter. The flow then leans naturally to the right, with guitars the first stop, followed by basses, although those who know what they want can wend their way through the middle of a slat-wall maze to the desired department. A set of offices in the back, next to a new on-site repair shop run by local luthier Jeff Marple, overlook the entire store. It all feels organic rather than calculated. "A music store," says Garris, "is a cross between a warehouse and bar."

The Coda

In less than six months, Corner Music uprooted itself from a four-decades' long perch and relocated to an entirely new location, with most of the heavy lifting done in the weeks leading up to the October 1 re-opening day. The story of that move is intertwined with the narratives of how MI retail has evolved over the last 40 years, and how the city Corner Music lives in has changed.

Looking back, Garris said the entire process was grueling and at times rushed, as he sought to minimize the operating gap between the new location and the old one. His advice to those who might one day have to do this themselves is, simply, mark the boxes better. Small inventory items were packed into cartons for the move but the handwritten Sharpie notes on the box tops didn't always accurately convey what was inside. "Guitar stuff" might seem to cover it when packing but when it gets unpacked, its vagueness is magnified by the push to get the walls stocked and the doors open. One thing he says they got right was writing the make, model and serial number of the guitars they moved on a piece of masking tape on the outside of the cases the guitars were being moved in. Exact ones needed were able to be pulled out from scores stacked in the storeroom.

"We sold three high-end guitars in the first week, so that really helped," he says. "Moving was really like everything else in life – it's the small stuff that drives you crazy." 

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Don't Hate The Player...



Fender's New Player Series Eclipses their Standard Models

By Victoria Wasylak

Rock band Cherry Glazerr with the Player Stratocaster in Sage Green

Hey, modern music naysayers – Fender Guitars has some news for you.

“We’ve got more interest in live and recorded music than at any time in history,” Fender CEO Andy Mooney explains on the phone with *MMR*. It’s the perfect time, then, to launch a new chapter of the iconic guitar brand with their Player Series, which entirely replaced their time-tested Standard series as of June 2018.

After 27 years, Fender has retired the Standard series in favor of a new line of guitars and basses, all updated in the least obvious ways for the most noticeable improvements to their sound and feel – all in the \$649.99-\$774.99 price range.

“We offer guitars that are in a range from \$200 to \$200,000, but what the guitar player sees is the first entryway portal into the Fender brand. We wanted to update everything on the guitar, give it a new name, and put some marketing muscle behind it,” Mooney says, referencing the new Player series.

“A lot of people who are not players kind of look at the guitars vis a vis the previous model and ask, ‘Well, what’s changed?’ My response is, ‘Nothing really, except the sound, the feel, the touch, and the color,’” he continues. “It’s got different pickups, it’s got different controls, a different fret height – it’s even got a more mainstream logo than we’ve had on the guitar before. All of these things are really important for that particular consumer.”

Specifically, some of the upgraded features on models include Alnico pickups for all models, updated body radii, 22 fret necks, upgraded bridges, and a revised classic logo for a more traditional look. Colors like Sage Green, Polar White, Tide Pool, Butter Cream, and Sonic Red pop across the 94 new SKUs, which Mooney says reflects how color is now more important to players than in the past. All these changes, he explains, namely reflect how players’ preferences have changed over the recent years.

“The basic form that Fender designed in the ‘50s and ‘60s with the Stratocaster and Telecaster – they’re very, very difficult to improve upon, but the nuances of the guitars have evolved,” he notes. “Players’ preferences on the length of the neck, the shape of the neck, the wood types that are used, even small things like the height of the frets. These are all really important things.”

Due to Fender’s three-year product line plan, the Player series has been in the works for two to two and a half years, Mooney says, much of which was time spent listening to feedback from Fender artists.

“Leo [Fender] himself was not a guitar player, but he was a great listener, and we proved ourselves as a company on being good listeners,” he says. “We have relationships with 1,600 artists who are giving constant feedback on what they like, what they think could be improved upon, and we put that feedback into every model that we do.”

Prior to their release, the Player series already hitchhiked across the country, being used on tour with groups like Turnstile, Mattson 2, Cherry Glazerr, and Whitney Morgan, spanning from the realm of free-flowing jazz to underground grunge and garage rock.

For Mooney, himself, as a heavy metal fan, he’s most excited about the 22 fret necks (the original guitar had 21).

“As artists dig deep to find new sounds and means of expression, the guitar continues to be central to so much of this creativity that’s happening in music and culture,” adds Justin Norvell, SVP Fender Products. “We hope to empower the next generation of artists and players by arming them with the best tools to help bring their craft to life. The Player Series guitars embody that coveted Fender sound and form that has made our guitars iconic with so many generations of creators.”

“The basic form that Fender designed in the ‘50s and ‘60s with the Stratocaster and Telecaster - they’re very, very difficult to improve upon, but the nuances of the guitars have evolved. Players’ preferences on the length of the neck, the shape of the neck, the wood types that are used, even small things like the height of the frets. These are all really important things.” – Andy Mooney

As for why Fender elected to release all these new models under a completely new name and cycle out the Signature series, Mooney says that decision stemmed from previous confusion regarding updates. Especially online, distinguishing between any of Fender’s prior Standard models and their sequential updated versions could be close to impossible for anyone who’s not a complete guitar geek.

“One of our classic guitars was a guitar called the American Standard, and that guitar was first introduced in 1986, and had actually been updated seven times. Every time the name has been the same. As a consumer outside of the industry, when I joined, you really had to be well-informed to understand the evolution. You could find American Standards from 1986 on eBay sitting alongside brand-new American Standards that had been updated, same name, essentially the same look,” Mooney says.

Based on similar experiences, Fender chose to give models new names going forward, starting with the Player series this past summer.

“We decided that any time we did a significant update to a model, we were going to get a new name and drop the old name. We wanted to distinctly signal to players that Standard is the old model – if you like that model, you can buy that, but the Player is the new model, and we encourage you to buy the new model. The response from the dealers and the consumers has been really positive.”

For musicians who are devout to the older models, Mooney says getting their hands on them shouldn’t be an issue, especially with their custom programs. After-market customizing, of course, always remains an option for other finicky players.

“There are some people who think that original 1954 Strato-

caster is the one to have, and any update that was done to that was a step in the wrong direction. For those fans, we do faithful reproductions of the 1954 Strat in our custom shop, so if you like the specifications of a previous generation of guitar, that option is available to you,” Mooney says. “In our custom shop, you have 70,000 options to customize your own guitar within the mod shop. Or you can do what a lot of people do – for a lot of lower-priced models like the Player, a lot of players modify them. They buy them and they put in different pickups or different wiring because they just prefer it that way.”

Preferences and all, Mooney says that “death of the guitar” remains a total falsity, and that according to stats from LiveNation and various streaming services, delving into music – kids, parents, retired folks, whoever – has never been better or more accessible.

“Really there’s been growth in electric guitar sales for the last five years – all guitar sales, electric, acoustic, and even ukuleles,” he explains. “The two external things that are really fueling the growth is a growth in streaming music. There’s about 125 million people paying for streaming music now, and our latest estimates are about 65 percent of streaming is back catalogues [older music]. The other thing is, the demand for live music is at an all-time high. Live Nation, in their public records last year, [noted that] 86 million people went to see a LiveNation concert, and that was up 21 percent.”

Certainly, if there was ever a time *be* a player – and/or buy one – it’s now.

“The guitar as an instrument is being embraced by a more diverse group of players than we’ve ever seen in history – more genders, more genres,” Mooney says, “and I think the Player really appeals to that.”

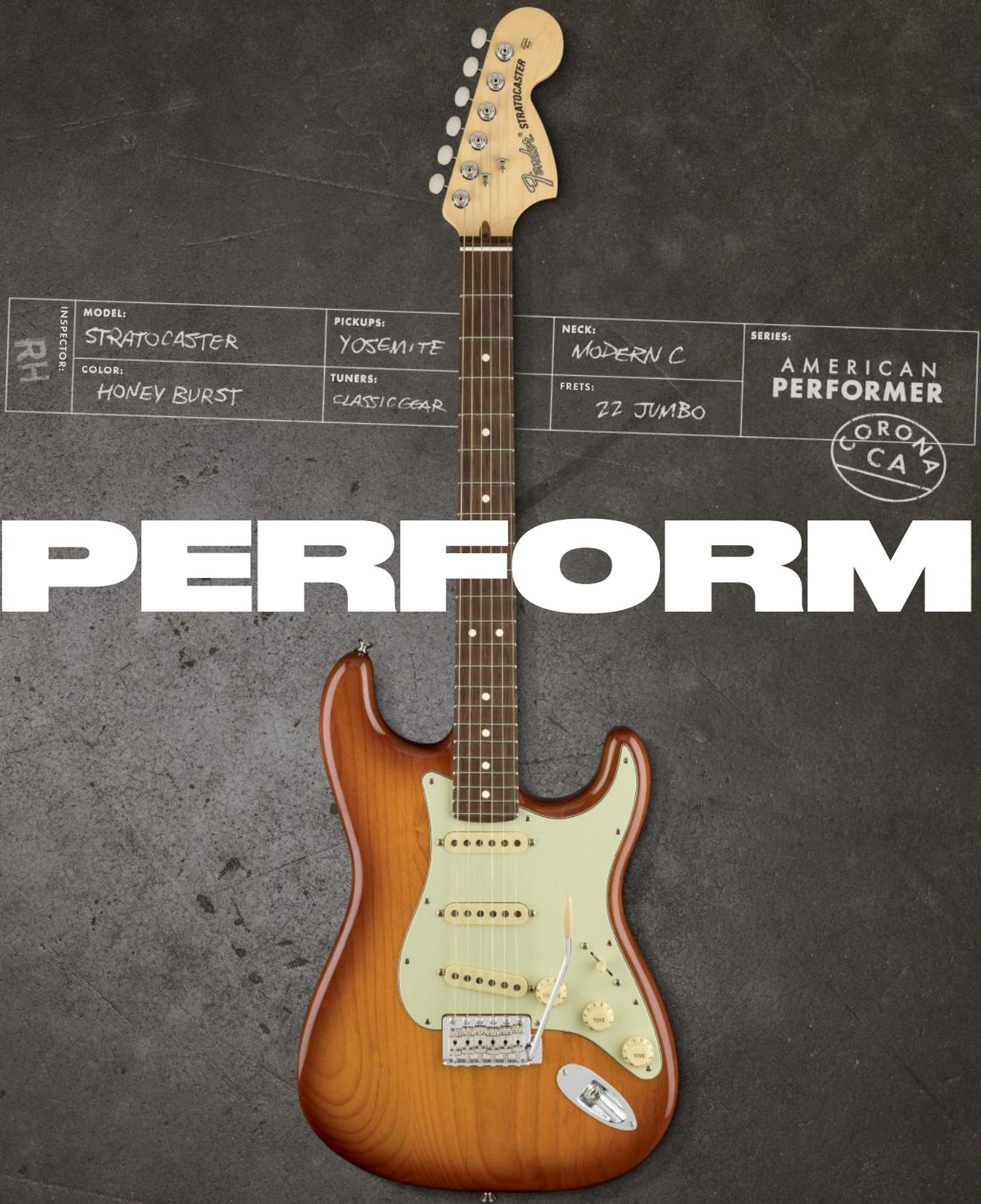




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ARTIST: LA LUZ

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Loog Mini-Amp

Loog, the makers of the tiny three-stringed guitar for kids, have come up with a logical accessory: a tiny combo amplifier. Less than six inches wide and tall and only about three inches deep, this 3W amp won't take up a lot of space, but still manages to pack a whole lot of sound into such a tiny box.

The amp itself features the kind of minimalism that makes you wonder if Apple designed it. The use of white on white especially evokes the company from Cupertino. On top, you'll find just an input jack, gain and volume knobs and an on/off switch. To the delight of parents everywhere, there's also a headphone jack next to the aux-in on the back. The Loog Mini Amp runs on a single 9-volt battery, so you can take it anywhere you go, but also features a jack for a power supply (not included). It also comes with a matching white cable so once you get a battery, you're all set to plug and play out of the box.



Despite only having a three inch speaker, the sound was surprisingly crisp and clear and out-performed other mini-amps that I've tried out in the past. I started out just playing the top three strings on my guitar to emulate the Loog, itself, and was able to coax some really nice tones out of it, but by the end I was cranking up the gain and crushing power chords and letting the fuzz fly. I don't know if I'd bring this into a rock club, but I could honestly see someone using this to amplify a coffeeshop or busking performance quite easily. It's definitely more than enough sound for any kid's bedroom stage. (Jeff Martin)

Anatomy of Sound Heart Beat 3D Guitar Picks

Most guitarists I know – myself included – have a go-to guitar pick. The concept of “my pick” is widespread and, in some ways, surprising when you consider how basic and rudimentary the product is. How can one pick be all that different from another? Sure, there's the obvious – width and overall size – but aside from that you typically just have different approaches to achieving “grip,” materials used, and then it just comes down to personal aesthetic and intuitive preference.

At \$17.99 for six, Anatomy of Sound's Heart Beat 3D guitar picks are considerably more expensive than the picks I've been using for well over a decade, so what's so special about them? Let's start with the whole “3D” thing. As the name suggests, “Heart Beat” picks are shaped (wait for it...) like hearts and are (here comes the next shocker) three-dimensional, with each half (ventricle?) of the pick bulging out and back and tapering in vertically down the middle. This allows for more overall surface area to make contact with a player's fingers and it – and this absolutely surprised me – unquestionably affects feel and playability. Simply put, these picks are extremely comfortable and positively impact a guitar-

ist's ability to execute. Who would have figured that something as simple as a plectrum be improved upon – especially so many years in?

Anatomy of Sound also claims that these picks deliver “incredible tones.” On that point, I'll have to take a pass because I honestly can't tell the different between picks when it comes to how (or if) they impact “tone.” Someone playing guitar or bass with fingers as opposed to with a pick? I can hear the difference. Someone playing guitar or bass with “pick A” versus “pick B”? Not so much. These things certainly appear to be well engineered and constructed with quality materials, so there's that. Even the thinner gauges convey sturdiness and durability.

In short: Heart Beat 3Ds are innovative guitar picks with considerable, noticeable upside. Is it enough for me to abandon “my” pick? Probaby not, but odds are there are plenty of guitarists out there who *would* consider making the change. (Christian Wissmuller)



Hercules Upgraded AGS Guitar Hanger

Hercules has changed the stand game with their Upgraded AGS Guitar Stand so it would “stand” to reason [Ouch... – Ed.] that the wall-mounted version would be similarly effective. There's not a whole lot that's different than the guitar stand version other than the fact that this is wall-mountable. The wooden base is simple and tastefully cut. Mechanically, the AGS system has been tweaked from previous models to allow for a wider range of instruments. Also included are the NINA (Narrow Instrument Neck Adjustment), which can be slipped on to make the arms thicker, so you can put a violin or ukulele, or you can leave them off to accommodate your more standard guitars, basses, and cellos. Unlike most wall mounts, the Auto Grip System locks into place when the instrument comes to rest inside the yoke and when the instrument is lift-

ed, it releases easily. The yoke swivels to accommodate different types of necks so it's a one-size-fits-all system. The finish of the instrument is protected at all contact points by a proprietary foam rubber coating. The black plastic yoke gives it a modern feel while almost all moving parts remain invisible at a quick glance.

At an affordable price point, this guitar hanger offers superior craftsmanship without breaking the bank allowing a player to mount all their guitars on the wall in an elegant yet modern fashion. (Jeff Martin)

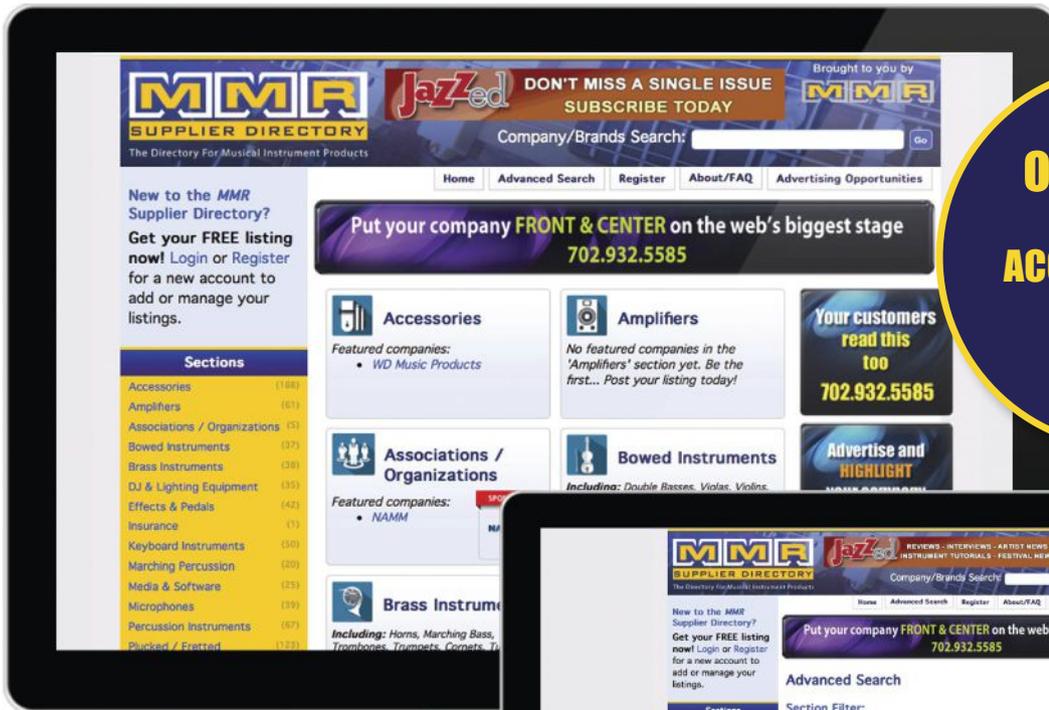


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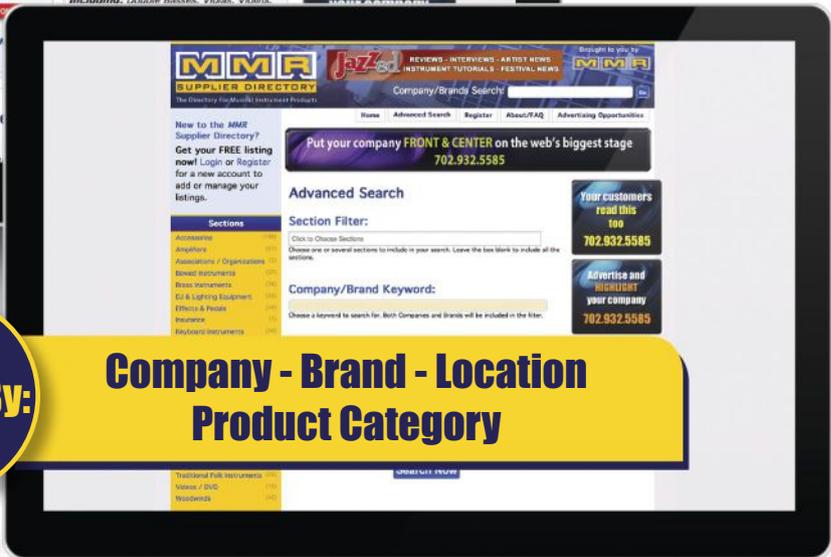
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Kraft Music, Yamaha Corporation of America, and Guitars for Vets



Loma Linda, CA chapter coordinator James Robledo (far left) performs with his Guitars for Vets chapter at a Yamaha employee conference in Cerritos, CA in 2014

Collaborate to Help Veterans Cope with PTSD

By Charlie Banks

Dan Van Buskirk, a Vietnam War vet, had always been interested in learning how to play the guitar, but was concerned that his Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) might make it impossible. But in 2006, he decided to start lessons and was referred to Patrick Nettesheim, a Milwaukee guitar instructor. At their first meeting, Van Buskirk shared his concerns. “He told me he had a hard time remembering things and that sometimes, even coming in for a lesson would be difficult,” Nettesheim recalled. “So, we started out just talking – he about the war and me about making a living as a musician. As we talked, I’d show him how to make first one chord and then another, and we took it from there.”

In just a few months, playing guitar became Van Buskirk’s way of self-soothing when he awoke in the middle of the night in a panic. As important, it helped build his self-esteem and confidence. He suggested that Nettesheim join him at the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center in Milwaukee to play for the vets there. Their impromptu performance was a big hit and became the catalyst to create Guitars for Vets (G4V) as a way to help the increasing number of returning veterans diagnosed with PTSD.

Indeed, roughly 20 percent of U.S. service members deployed in the last six years have developed the condition, and since the Vietnam War, more U.S. veterans have committed suicide as a result of PTSD than have actually died in combat. “I learned that when vets returned home, what they missed most was the sense of camaraderie in the military, the teamwork and common mission,” Nettesheim said. “You drift into a whole different state when playing the guitar, and it helps re-establish a feeling of connection. Playing and performing music gives the vets a way to heal and cope with their condition.”

The G4V concept was simple: a veteran would go through a free 10-week music instruction period and then receive a brand-new acoustic guitar upon graduation. The program steadily grew, and in 2012, Nettesheim knew he needed some outside help to accommodate all the vets that wanted to participate.

He contacted his old friend Ben Kraft, owner, operator and son of the founder of Kraft Music

in Franklin, Wisconsin, just outside Milwaukee. “I’d known Patrick for quite a long time,” Kraft said. “He actually taught at one of my dad’s stores. We began talking about Guitars for Vets, and after learning about the program, I definitely wanted to help. He needed warehouse space and a more efficient way of shipping guitars. I had extra space at the time and the capability of becoming their distribution arm. Managing all the logistics – acquiring, packing, tracking and shipping – allows G4V to do what they do best: garner support for the country’s unsung heroes.”

“Ben actually joined our board of directors, and one of the first things he told me was that he could get us better-quality guitars than the ones we had been using,” Nettesheim said. “And that is when Yamaha came on board. The company is the world’s largest manufacturer of musical instruments and a huge supporter of music education, and they have been providing us with their top-selling guitars at dealer cost ever since then.”

“Nowhere is the healing power of music more evident than in the Guitars for Vets program,” said David Jewell, marketing communications manager at Yamaha Corporation of America. “Patrick discovered that playing guitar helped ease PTSD symptoms in returning vets, allowing them to redirect their bad memories toward making music. Through our dealer, Kraft Music, Yamaha to date has supplied more than 3,000 new guitars to G4V to assist in their mission.”

Kraft said that working with G4V has been gratifying for his entire team. “Most of our staff are musicians, and everyone gets a little pep in their step when working on a shipment of G4V guitars.

This program is now built into our business model – it’s in our DNA to help this program grow.”

Recently, Kraft noted, there was a front-page article about G4V in the local Milwaukee Sentinel. “A couple of days later Patrick called, saying he was going to a local assisted-living facility and needed a guitar for a World War II vet with Alzheimer’s. It seems the man had been carrying the article around the facility for days. The staff was baffled and called his family to see if they knew why this story meant so much to him.



Guitars for Vets co-founder Patrick Nettesheim, Kraft Music owner and operator Ben Kraft, Yamaha marketing communications manager Dave Jewell with pallets of new Yamaha guitars ready to ship to veterans upon their graduation from the G4V program.

ANDREW FELLER

“You drift into a whole different state when playing the guitar, and it helps re-establish a feeling of connection. Playing and performing music gives the vets a way to heal and cope with their condition.”

— Patrick Nettesheim

The family explained that he used to be a jazz guitarist. When Patrick gave the old vet the guitar, he gently placed his fingers on the frets. It was like the movie ‘Awakenings’ – slowly he started strumming, remembering chords, and his deep understanding of music came back.”

“This story is a perfect example of how music positively affects us,” Nettesheim said. “Now we have science to back up what we already knew. Clinical trial data from a recently completed pilot study showed remarkable improvements in PTSD symptoms, supporting our belief in the importance of what we do.” Nettesheim is quick to point out that G4V volunteers are not therapists. “When I talk to volunteers, I tell them the requirements are to know basic chords and have a sense of music. But most important is having patience, acceptance, gratitude and empathy.”

Van Buskirk added, “We wouldn’t practice discord on a musical instrument. We practice harmony, and as we practice harmony on a musical instrument, we practice it in our lives. Music can bring peace and kindness and compassion. And that helps replace the fear and distress and anxiety that comes from being a survivor of a war.”

G4V currently operates more than 90 chapters in 40 states nationwide with the assistance of nearly 400 volunteers. Nettesheim estimates there will be 100 chapters by Veterans Day and G4V will be represented in all 50 states by next year. In addition to their U.S. operations, the organization has plans to go international with services for U.S. allies and veterans abroad. Two chapters for Australian Defense Force veterans with PTSD were recently started, and there is similar interest from British and Israeli veterans as well as U.S. service members in Germany and Costa Rica. 

For more information, visit the following organizations online:

Kraft Music: www.kraftmusic.com

Guitars for Vets: www.guitars4vets.org

Yamaha Corporation of America:

usa.yamaha.com



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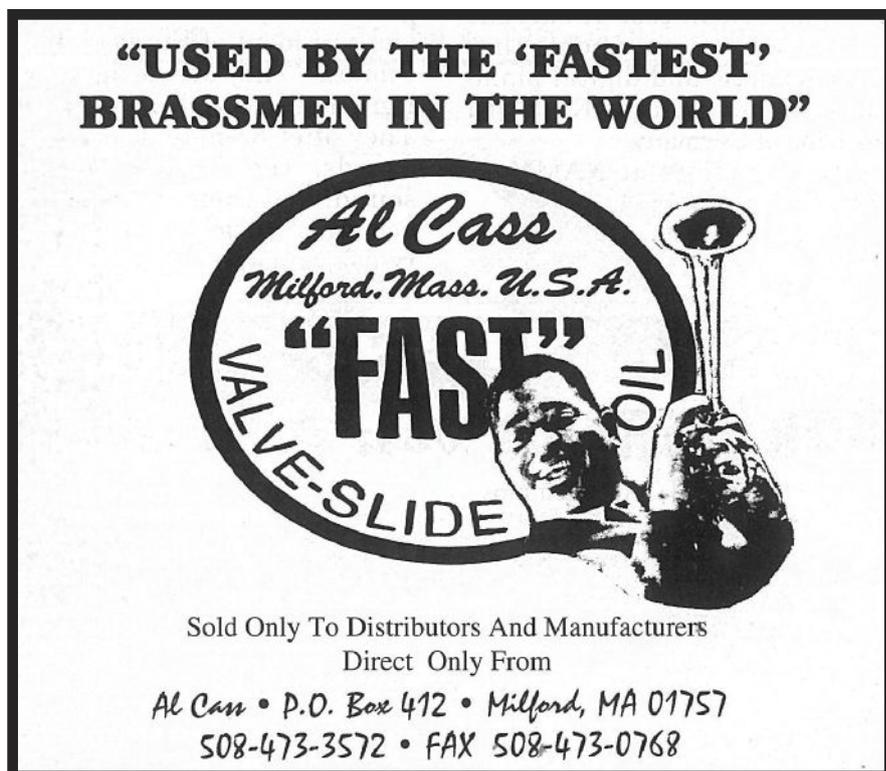
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A New Style in Customer Service

By Menzie Pittman The Last Hope for Retail Equality

Whenever the topic of customer service is discussed, I am unabashedly “old school.” I am one to believe that good service improves the way a person perceives your business and changes the way a customer feels about the experience you have provided.

Most people in business erroneously believe that good customer service means *fast* customer service. Generally it is understood that in today’s marketplace fast is expected, so less than expedient is rarely tolerated. I believe more important than fast service is memorable and personalized service.

As we start the new year, let me reminisce on a moment where I was emotionally moved by the action of a business, and why and how they have won my loyalty as a customer.

The Element of Creative Surprise

When we think of online businesses, generally we think free shipping, rock bottom prices, a flexible return policy, and a great website. We think of convenience as their go-to style of customer service, but under most circumstances we don’t normally think of emotional impact. That is usually the advantage a well-run brick and mortar store has, because you are dealing face-to-face.

Enter Chewy, an Online Pet Supplies Business

It’s to Chewy’s advantage that they collect your address in order to ship the products you order, but it’s what they do with your address that’s more impressive. When most businesses collect your address, they send catalogs and sales materials, and sometimes spam you with BIG SALE announcements. Chewy is different – they aim for your heart strings. They do unusual things such as send cards addressed to your pet. How do they know your pet’s name? Easy, if you call in, they ask you for it, because they put the Chewy account in the pet’s name. If you open an online account, your pet’s name is a required field. How do they learn more about your pet? Again, easy – if you call in, they get you to talk about your pet, and every person I know with a pet loves to talk about them. But Chewy doesn’t stop there, the cards and messages are personalized and written in calligraphy. They use every possible opportunity such as pet birthdays and holidays to reach out and make you *feel special*.

“Over The Top” Service

I may not be the only person to experience what happened next, but whether I am or not, *it felt like I was*. I needed products from Chewy and had a question, so I elected to call because I still prefer human interactions. In the process of the call, the operator mentioned that she had no picture of my dog on file and they like to have that for reference, and she mentioned she was humored that his name was Ringo. I said I would gladly email a picture because I, like everyone else, am crazy about my dog. So I sent a picture of Ringo that captured

his face and spirit nicely. I mean, if you are going out on a limb and naming your dog after one of the Beatles he better be a unique animal, right?

We concluded the call and a few weeks later this odd, blue package showed up on my porch. I looked and saw that it was from Chewy, and not expecting anything, I was surprised. I opened it to find a hand-written note saying how much the operator enjoyed our conversation, and a 9”x9” hand-painted canvas of the photo I had emailed her of Ringo. This wasn’t a quick gimmick. The painting is an exact capture of the photo.

“In a time when Chicken Little says the sky is falling, some people in sales are reverting to a very simple principle: paying *real* attention to the customer in unusual and effective ways.”

The Takeaway

Chewy’s operator didn’t have to do what she did; they have already earned my business. What moved the operator to do it? I am guessing it’s because she, like me, enjoys nice people. I was pleasant with her while on the phone, and I was also engaging. When she asked for a picture of Ringo, I expressed to her that this animal is stunning and takes my breath away. That unusual response apparently moved her, because like me, she loves her dog. Sending me the hand-painted picture makes their business unforgettable.

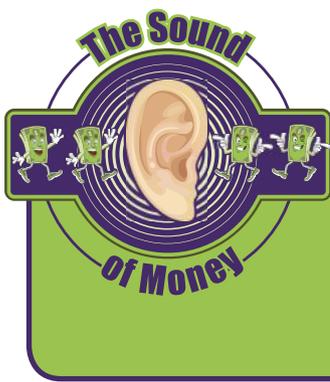
Importantly, I will re-tell this story over and over because it is the definition of unique customer service.

In a time when Chicken Little says the sky is falling, some people in sales are reverting to a very simple principle: paying *real* attention to the customer in unusual and effective ways.

Unique service isn’t about price or speed. It’s about changing the trust value rating your customer gives you. When you have demonstrated a memorable difference in how you provide your customers service, they will always talk about you and what you, personally, did for them. PAUL WILSON



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.



How Do You Orchestrate a Culture of 'A' Players? One Moment at a Time

By Jaimie Blackman

Imagine your key manager departed from your MI retail store, and sent out the following email to all his contacts:

Dear Friends and Customers,

Earlier this month, I resigned as store manager at XYZ Music Store and will end my position with the company on January 1, 2019. I have sincerely enjoyed working with all the members of the team, and appreciate the many close customer relationships I've developed over the years. On February 1st, I will continue to take care of my customers with another great music company.¹ Please do not hesitate to reach out to me on my personal phone or email.

Sincerely,

Exiting "A" Player Key Manager

This is not so far-fetched. I recently received a similar email in my inbox. Let's assume this individual was a top performer. Why do top performers leave? What are they not receiving? Did the new company offer a more engaging culture?

In my most recent MMR column, titled *How to Retain, Grow and Recruit Top Performers*, I wrote that one of the most important roles of a business owner is recruiting and retention, and offered a few strategies on how to measure your top performers. In this month's column, I want to offer a few tips to help you create a culture which grows, encourages, and nourishes a team of top performers.

We are all familiar with the visual of the mighty orchestral conductor waving the baton, and directing the orchestra. But think about this: the orchestral conductor makes no sound. The role of the conductor is to ignite the passion of the individual musicians – to inspire each and every member to give their best at every performance. For this to happen there must be trust between the musicians and the conductor. *Where there is trust, there is music. Where there is no trust, music withers away.¹*

The same goes for your team. To create a culture of high performers, your employees must trust you and you have to trust your employees. Developing trust in a relationship begins with caring.

CULTURE: From the Latin *cultus*, which means *care*.

Each employee must feel that they are cared about as a person. Now some of you might be saying, *"They get a paycheck. Doesn't that suffice? And besides, I'm not a touchy-feely guy."* But you would be wrong to believe that retaining your very best is only about money. And the most valuable tip I can give you is... It only takes a moment. Actually, a series of moments.

Think back to a time during a work-related interaction which resulted in a profoundly positive feeling. The feeling was so positive, you remember it years later. How much time did it take? Perhaps it was a compliment offered to you, an acknowledgment of a job well done, time you spent with a supervisor during a one-on-one conversation. Perhaps the conversation was centered around your personal career goals. Every interaction we have with another individual can be capsulized in moments, and those moments may be positive or negative.

To create, deliver, and sustain a positive employee experience is key to creating a culture of high performers. This can't be accomplished via any contract. Only a caring and attentive relationship will grow your rock stars. And, like any relationship, it requires a time investment. And while trying to create quality moments for your employees may seem counterproductive, when trying to boost sales, so is trying to replace a disengaged top performer.

Unfortunately, according to a Gallup's 2017 state of the global workplace report, only 15 percent of full-time employees are highly involved in and enthusiastic about their work and workplace. That means 85 percent of employees are not giving their all.

"A company can't buy true emotional commitment from managers no matter how much it's willing to spend; this is something too valuable to have a price tag. And yet a company can't afford not to have it." – Stan Slap, CEO of Slap Company

If you want your employees to succeed, try teaching them the rules of engagement through motivation, rather than fear. An effective way to get your mission accomplished is by having conversations, backed up in writing detailing their performance goals.

Here's a concise five criteria model from the *mindtools* 2018 teams called S.M.A.R.T.²

S - Specific. The intent of the goal is crystal clear, no ambiguity.

M - Measurable. How will I know if I succeed?

A - Achievable. A goal can stretch your capabilities, but shouldn't feel impossible.

R - Relevant. The goal should be connected to a bigger objective or aspiration

T - Time bound. There is a time by which the goal should be achieved- a finish line.

I'll be doing a deep dive on this topic at Winter NAMM Idea Center on Thursday, January 24 at 3:30. The title of my talk is *Strategies to Engage and Keep Your Best Employees...* Stop by and say hello. 

¹ - Charles Hazelwood, Scottish conductor

² - Jason Lauritsen *Unlocking High Performance*. How to use performance management to engage and empower employees to reach their full potential.



Jaimie Blackman – a former music educator & 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 Unlocking the Wealth newsletter and webinars.

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By Dan Daley

The New Year is an Opportunity to Take Stock of How Retail is Changing

It's January, the point in the year where retailers look both forward and back, trying to predict what's coming while assessing what's been. With the implicit caution that YMMV [Your Mileage May Vary], the gods of retail have declared both directions positive ones. The National Retail Federation upped its 2018 forecast to a minimum gain of 4.5 percent over 2017, while Deloitte predicted an equally healthy 3.8 percent jump over the previous year. The coming year is drawing some positive predictions, as well, as last year's tax cut distributed some additional confidence – as well as lower government levies – to manufacturers and retailers.

However, those are being hedged by a number of issues that may stall some of that growth. For instance, those tariffs the Trump administration imposed on China weren't fully implemented in 2018; when they are this year, they will add as much as a 25 percent premium on \$200 billion of goods from China. Given the reliance on Chinese MI imports, that will bear close watching. In addition, U.S. consumers are carrying more debt than they have since the recession a decade ago, including credit-card debt that's reached the \$1 trillion mark, and that debt will cost them more, with the Fed signaling four more rate increases for 2019. Commodity costs are also on the upswing, and those will inevitably find their way into wholesale and the retail pricing.

Last year's end-of-year selling season might also provide some guidance for 2019. It's a bit early just yet to factor Christmas sales in, but Thanksgiving sales got off to a fast start, with \$2.4 billion ring up just online the day before the holiday, an increase of over 30 percent from last 2018, with another 1.75 billion spent by 5 p.m. ET on Thanksgiving Day. And that's with a number of major retailers, such as TJ Maxx and Costco – and Guitar Center – staying closed for the holiday.

That's another indication that that larger retailers are declaring their own holidays to build discounts around. Most notably, for example, Amazon's Prime Day sales – 77 percent of which had lower prices than comparable deals offered for the year's Black Friday. Big MI retailers like Guitar Center and Sweetwater will launch major initiatives during the year that are likely better fits with their own sales, inventory, and supply cycles, which might be a

smarter strategy than just trying to hold your own during the still-substantial madness of the Black Friday-through-Christmas selling season, as retail in general seeks to establish new norms that fit the changed economic landscape.

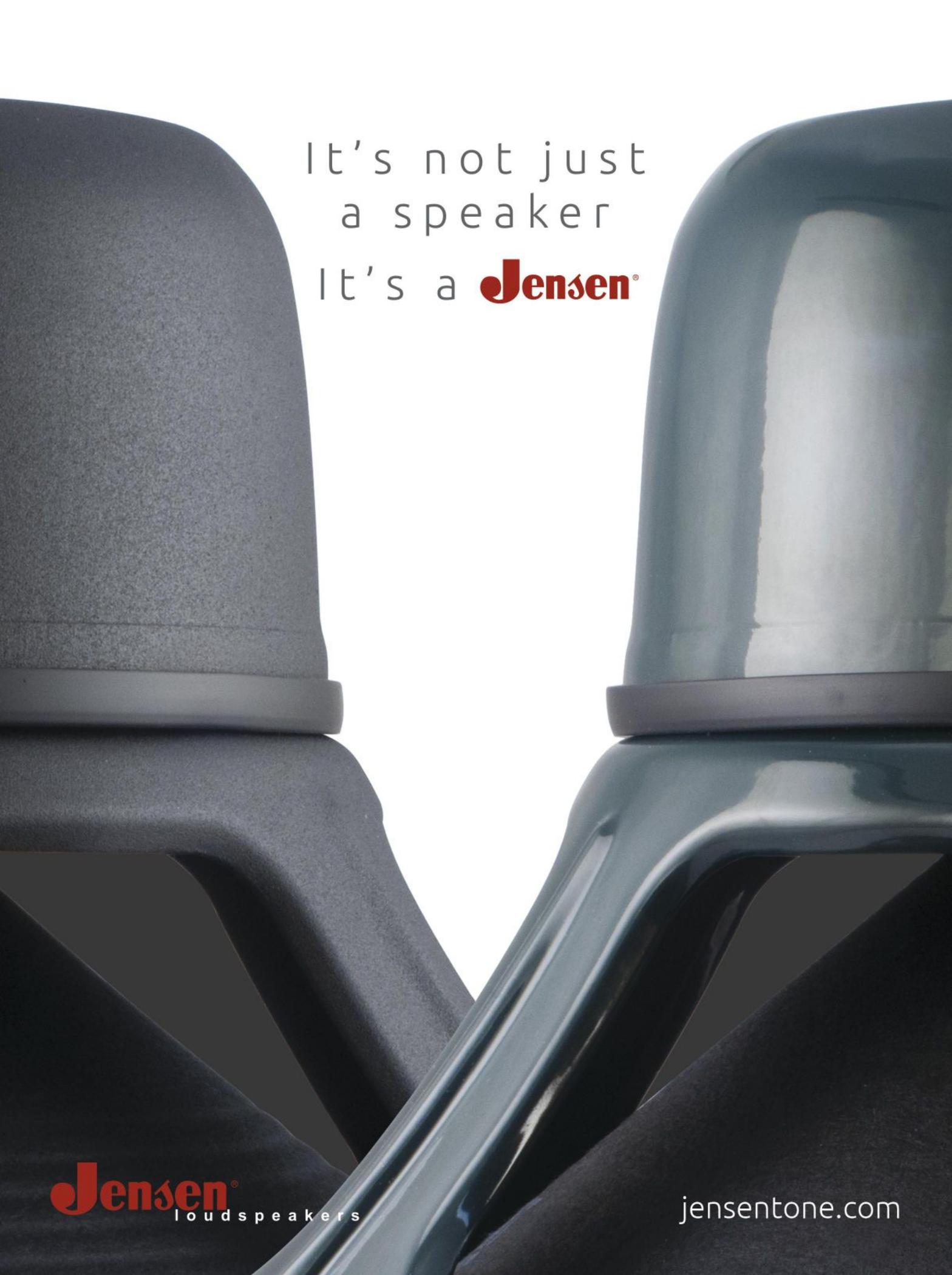
Technology is also going to make a difference for retail this year. The past year saw a number of trends take shape that will help retail in general push back against online shopping. These include unmanned checkout counters and minute-to-minute dynamic price changing. While these and other technological innovations might not be good fits for MI retail, others might be, like bringing augmented reality (AR) into the store. Apparel sellers have been the earliest adopters – virtual dressing rooms – but the broader application possibilities for AR are massive. We'll look into those in the future, but one point worth making now: over two-thirds of consumers polled by a UK AR firm expect retailers to launch an AR app within the

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next six months. However, says another survey, nearly two-thirds of retailers don't use AR at all now. That's a pretty big gap.

Changes that are more accessible are those around the design and layout of stores, aimed at making retail more experiential than transactional. Given MI retail's depth of technology in their wares, it's an excellent candidate for layout disruption, and Guitar Center has launched an initiative around that with the remake of their Hollywood store in October. Next year, watch for stores to be turning into destinations instead of just stops along the way.

End-of-year sales will remain a major retail phenomenon, if for no other reason than the anxiety-provoking condition known to Millennials as FOMO – what might you lose by not participating? But at the same time, retailers, including MI retailers, can now feel more comfortable about varying their level of participation each year, adjusting it to other dynamics at the time (such as the sudden erasure of a year's worth of stock-market gains the week after the midterm elections). Heading into 2019, it's going to start becoming more about the experience and less about the price tag. 



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