

MMR

MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW



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- F880C Quilted Ash
- F990C Ebony
- NF335C Bamboo
- (10) Matching Padded Bags



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MMR

MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

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Anniversary

Creating a Lineage of 'Keepers': Vintage Guitars Observes 25 Years in Business 30

The brand's intersection of price point, quality, and flair was their goal from the start back in 1995, but as the JHS brand has evolved over 25 years, the team at Vintage Guitars becomes more and more confident they've perfected a special "sweet spot" in the guitar market

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Cover photo courtesy Allen & Heath

MMR Musical Merchandise Review® (ISSN 0027-4615), Volume 179, Number 12, December 2020, 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 ©2020 by Timeless Communications Corp., all rights reserved. Printed in USA.



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Unprecedented



By Christian **Wissmuller**

I observe and report on the MI industry and can make guesses (hopefully *educated* guesses) as to how vendors and retailers are faring, but I'm not really "in the trenches." As with most December issues of *MMR*, I happily cede this editorial space to folks who truly are on the front lines to explain this past year – and in the exceedingly bizarre case of 2020 I'm even more grateful than usual for their insight.

Surprisingly 2020 turned out so far to be about like 2019. While rentals have been down this fall the piano and combo business has been up since last spring. Until the COVID situation is cleared up and the schools are back to full time in school teaching there will be a cloud over the school music section of our company. It will take a lot of interesting innovations otherwise to bring us back to previous years' totals. – Bob Saied, Saied Music

COVID has created challenges for all retail, however we emerged this summer stronger and more focused on our competitive differences, invested into our eCommerce/digital environments and focused our stores on operational efficiencies and maintaining visibility in their markets. Inflation will hit based on our government printing money en masse. We have not faced the truth of our unemployment yet and the impact that the mass closings of the hospitality industry will have on disposable income. Mass closings of live music venues and the impact it will have on need/want of MI products. – Tim Kletti, Music Go Round

[2020] was better than I thought it would be based on the shutdowns and economy. I think my biggest concern is all of the kids that might not be able to try music in school because of the shutdown in some states. One side of the coin wants everyone to stay home forever and the other side of the coin wants to pretend that nothing is going on and they are both wrong. If we have to go very long without kids learning music, we could lose a few years of those benefits that music is proven to enhance in young minds. – Tim Jones, N Tune Music & Sound

It's hard to compare 2020 to any other in our 83-year history. However, we feel like it's made us a stronger and more agile company as we quickly adapt to changing conditions. When schools are open for in-person learning on a consistent basis school music programs will thrive again. No way to know exactly when that will happen, but if that extends beyond 2021 things could get interesting for those of us who focus on serving that market. – Peter Sides, Robert M. Sides Family Music Centers

Despite the turbulence of the year, 2020 has shaped up to be a solid year. We've seen definite declines in the band/orchestra sales and rentals as well as declines in our lesson program, but we've made significant increases in merchandise sales, particularly online. – Amanda Rueter, Springfield Music

We acquired a venerable store, Muncie Music Center in Muncie, Indiana in August 2020. MMR has established a strong presence in Central Indiana and has continued to serve educators and students for almost 80 years. Together, we will continue to grow and serve band & orchestra directors and students in the Midwest. Our single greatest concern is the health and safety of students and teachers in our schools. Until that can be guaranteed, the school music sector of the music industry will continue to suffer as a result of the pandemic restrictions. – George Quinlan, Jr., Quinlan & Fabish Music

2020 began with a continued trend of increasing sales. Then varying timelines of store closures (us included), distribution disruption, and manufacturing shutdowns presented great opportunities. No one ever sees the really big things coming, or could plan for them. That has a lot to do with why they have such a huge impact. The way you manage your way through them is what matters... This isn't the first big thing we have been through as a company and that has become clearly evident with the companies and customers we do business with. – Chris Nail, C&M Music Center

2020 has been interesting to say the least, but we are still here. I think the near future will be a bit funky, but I think 2021 might just be a whole lot better. It could suck worse, but I don't know how? If we don't get this virus under control, brick-and-mortar has to change its time honored philosophy that "bigger is better." Now bigger just means more overhead. – Sammy Ash, Sam Ash Music Corp.



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Industry News

News in Brief

NAMM has announced the list of enterprising music product retailers to be honored at the organization's Top 100 Dealer Awards.

More details at mmr.news/namm30

Kawai America Corporation (KAC) and Kawai Canada Music (KCM), the North American subsidiaries of global piano manufacturer Kawai Musical Instruments, announced the appointment of Takanori Aoki as President

More details at mmr.news/kawai-aoki

Music China 2020 received acclaim from exhibitors and visitors alike.

More details at mmr.news/musicchina-2020

Korg USA Inc. announces the promotion of Brian Piccolo to director of Brand Management for all of the company's brands.

More details at mmr.news/korg-hires

Shure has acquired California-based **Midas Technology, Inc.**, also known as Stem Audio, which specializes in providing a suite of products including table, ceiling and wall microphones, as well as loudspeakers, control interfaces, and hubs.

More details at mmr.news/shure-acquires

Music China, the most comprehensive music industry event in Asia, was the scene for a dramatic first, the introduction of Pearl River Piano Group's 3D printed grand piano.

More details at mmr.news/pearl3d

Hal Leonard Europe has announced that it has reshaped parts of its European senior management team to accelerate global strategic initiatives as well as to strengthen leadership within its key European territories.

More details at mmr.news/hal-europe

Yamaha Corporation of America has announced that Rachel Hibser has joined the company as the Midwest District Manager for School Service Sales.

More details at mmr.news/yamaha-hibser

AES Show Fall 2020 convention builds on traditions through new experiences and offerings

More details at mmr.news/aes2020

Kanile'a 'Ukulele opened its flagship retail store in Windward Mall on October 17, 2020.

More details at mmr.news/kanilea-flagship

Event Net created a floating display for a community-focused hospital with CHAUVET Professional.

More details at mmr.news/chauvetpro-eventnet

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➤ News in Brief

GC Announces Restructuring Support Agreement

Guitar Center (GC, "the Company") has announced that it has entered into a comprehensive Restructuring Support Agreement (the "RSA") with its key stakeholders, including its equity sponsor, a fund managed by the Private Equity Group of Ares Management Corporation, new equity investors Brigade Capital Management and a fund managed by The Carlyle Group, as well as supermajorities of its noteholder groups. The RSA provides for a comprehensive transaction that will deleverage the Company's balance sheet, enhance financial flexibility and provide additional liquidity to continue to support its vendors, suppliers and employees. The RSA positions the Company to return to the growth trajectory it had been on prior to the COVID pandemic.

The RSA is intended to allow GC and its related brands (including Music & Arts, Musician's Friend, Woodwind Brasswind, and AVDG) to continue to operate in the normal course while the



transaction is implemented. As a result of the RSA, Guitar Center will continue to meet its financial obligations to vendors, suppliers, and employees, and intends to make payments in full to these parties without interruption in the ordinary course of business.

GC will continue to provide uninterrupted service to its customers through its existing channels, including its stores, websites, call centers and social media pages and will continue to receive goods and ship customer orders as usual. All merchandise credits, prepaid lessons, rentals, gift cards, deposits, orders, financing and warranties will be honored. While Guitar Center is pleased with its overall store footprint, the Company has engaged A&G to explore opportunities to optimize its real estate portfolio and other agreements to focus on investments that best position the Company to return to its growth trajectory prior to COVID-19.

Letters

Christian,

Your thoughtful "Guitar Hero" column of Nov. 2020 *MMR* was spot on!

I started in our industry in 1973, at the age of 20, arguably between "guitar heroes," so to speak. Les Pauls and Twins were our mainstays. Steve Howe of Yes was winning many "best of" awards back then. He and a few others were filling the "gap" between Jimi Hendrix and Eddie Van Halen.

When Van Halen hit, it was truly "the next big thing" and, as you said, guitar dealers were a huge beneficiary. As their career waned, it was true we dealers were always looking for the next "guitar hero." As you also mentioned Eddie got people interested in many different styles of music. I bless him and many others who have done that over the decades.

Segovia, Chet Atkins, Django Reinhardt, Charlie Christian, Les Paul, B.B. King, Wes Montgomery and finally Eddie Van Halen make up my own

personal list of players who changed everything, but always remembered where they came from. The thought astounded me how many guitar players were motivated to start playing because of these greats.

My wife, Alice, and I closed our store and retired in June. Thankfully, we were not broke or sick – it just seemed the right time. Mr. and Mrs. Cliff and Ruth Durdel had started Durdel's Music in 1946, before rock and roll. We were blessed to purchase it in 1993 and lovingly kept it going until this year. As I finished your editorial, it struck me what a good time to leave our great industry. Epoch-ending as it seems, I know it will continue for decades, with new "heroes" to come. The final line of your editorial, "My guess is, it will be a long wait," is so true, and what motivated me to respond.

Thanks,

Fred Shuman

Formerly of Durdel's Music
Toledo, Ohio

Fender's Justin Norvell

By Christian Wissmuller

Earlier this fall, FMIC introduced the second generation of the brand's wildly popular American Professional Series. Executive VP, Fender Products, Justin Norvell walks us through the many changes and improvements to the line.

In 2019 Andy Mooney noted that Fender was "cutting the life-cycle for products to four years as opposed to seven." Given that the initial American Professional line launched in 2017, was that the main catalyst behind launching the American Professional 2 Series at this point in 2020?

We're still holding to the same timeline. We actually released the Am Pro I in December of 2016 before NAMM, so launching Am Pro II in Q4 of 2020 is right in the pocket and to the plan.



Fender's American Professional II Precision Bass

Let's talk about the new colors and the relation of some to automobile paint finishes – a tradition/aesthetic going back to the '60s.

Yes, while many guitars in the '50s were more natural and burst finishes, Leo leaned into car colors – all of the famous vintage Fender colors, including Surf Green, Fiesta Red, Shoreline Gold, and more that can be found in old car catalogs. We've continued to find the "guitars and cars" relationship symbiotic, and still pull from that for inspiration. Miami Blue has a foundation as a contemporary

car color. That said, we usually alter the formula to look its best. Cars are usually seen outdoors in UV light (sun), and guitars are seen in incandescent or fluorescent light, which affects how the color "pops," so we customize formulations for that.

In general, there's a heavy emphasis on colors and finishes at Fender. What drives that focus?

A guitar is a personal statement. You wear it on your body rather than sitting behind it with some other instruments. Color is a way to remain current and vital, as well as appealing to a wide variety of players, and color has just been a huge part of our history. It's part of our DNA!

Pine has a history with early demo models of the Tele and has been used by Fender in the past. What's behind the resurgence of pine with the "roasted pine" (and sunburst and butterscotch) in the American Pro 2 Series?

Some of the resurgence is due to the impending extinction of American Swamp Ash which has been very popular for Fender. If



An up-close view of the Am Pro II Jazzmaster's pickups

not ash, then what other woods could we use? We have been experimenting for years with different species, but pine has historical precedent. Torrifying the wood – "roasting" – helps mitigate potential softness and weight as well as tonal benefits.

I recall the excitement behind the original V-Mod pickups a few years ago – in what ways are V-Mod 2 PUs "improved" or at least changed?

They have different bobbins, some adjustment to wire and winds and more – the secret sauce!

How about the new double tap humbuckers?

Double tap allows for a true single coil sound when splitting the Humbucking pickup, which is just more tonal options, and something that the Am Pro previously didn't have!

Similarly, the "C" shape necks of the previous generation were highly touted, but have also been somewhat altered – can you talk about what's been improved upon?

Based on the success of the Ultra, we have increased the "rolled edges" on the fretboard for comfort and ease of playability, as well as moving to the contoured neck heel.

Are there any specific challenges to launching a whole new/updated line during such a strange year (lockdown/pandemic)?

Absolutely! It was twice as difficult – people working from home, having to implement social distancing and safety protocols in the factory while trying to get these into production. It's a testament to the team that we pulled it off!

Rumors started spreading back in late July and early August that Fender may be retooling the American Professional series. That speaks to keen brand interest and devotion – I'm guessing that must feel pretty good?

We are appreciative, but don't take it for granted at all. We work very hard and keep our eyes and ears open, listening to artists, dealers, and customers, and a good amount of the success is us taking that market feedback to heart and implementing it. "Give the people what they want!" It's not just paint, necks, and pickups. We have all-new bridge designs as well. We go deep when we evolve these instrument platforms and that effort and work resonates.

Any specific info to share with MI dealers on benefits/upsides their businesses may expect as a result of the new American Professional 2 Series?

We not only have a great lineup of guitars, but will be unveiling a massive marketing campaign built to drive customer excitement and get people going to stores to check them out. 🎸🎸🎸



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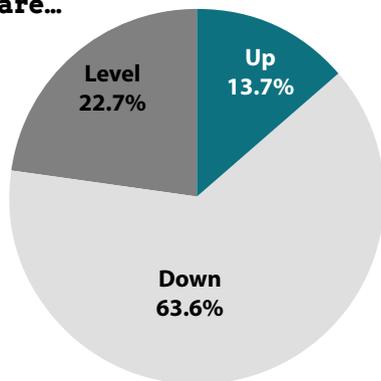
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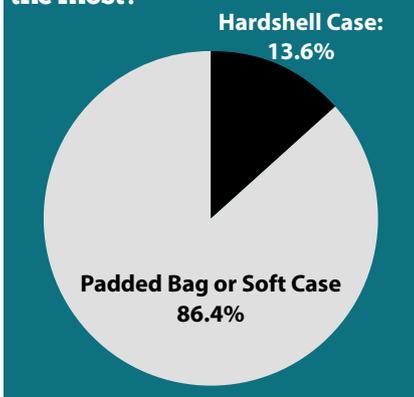
Cases & Bags for Percussion Instruments

By Christian **Wissmuller**

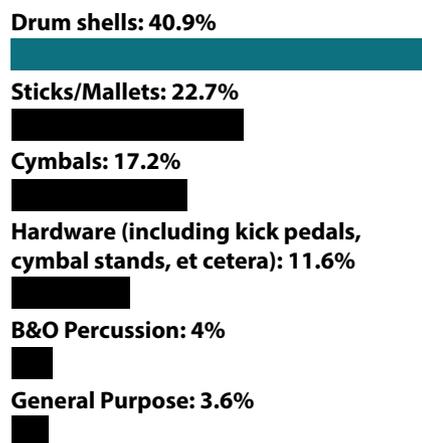
Compared to last year, sales of cases & bags for percussion instruments are...



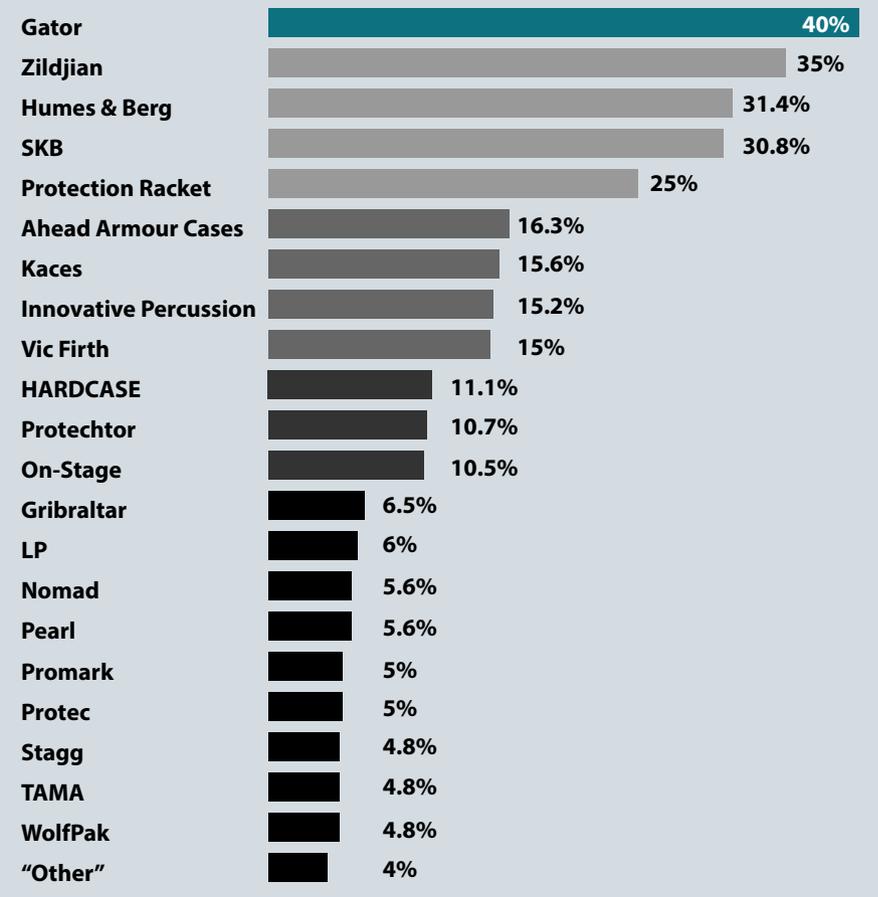
In terms of volume (number of units sold), which types sell the most?



Your store moves cases & bags for what specific type of percussion-related gear the most?



For these sorts of products, what brands are selling the most at your store?



Have you been noticing any significant trends when it comes to cases & bags for drums and percussion instruments?

"It is difficult to spot trends when doing less than half the normal business due to the pandemic!"

Jeff Young
Marshall Music Company
Lansing, Michigan

"Bags that are any color other than black seem to be a breath of fresh air for our customers and they tend to do well."

Shane Kinney
Drum Center of Portsmouth
Portsmouth, New Hampshire

"People are making their old stuff make do."

Karen Copeland
SM Hanson Music, Inc.
Salina, Kansas

"Without traveling gigs, drummers don't need them at this time."

Gus Guastamachio
Dynamic Percussion
East Hartford, Connecticut

"Decline in customer service from the suppliers/manufacturers."

Derek Sharp
Supersonic Music
Topeka, Kansas



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**DEALERS' CHOICE
AWARD**

Product of the Year

Allen & Heath
Avantis

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AWARD**

DJ Line of the Year

Allen & Heath

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**Sound Reinforcement
Line of the Year**

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28th ANNUAL DEALERS' CHOICE AWARDS

By Christian **Wissmuller** & Victoria **Wasyllak**



ALLEN & HEATH
AVANTIS



Allen & Heath was the first company to win "Product of the Year" for a mixer with their SQ Series two years ago, followed by a repeat 2019 win on the strength of the continual software updates for SQ. Now a three-peat for Allen & Heath in this coveted category with the "big brother" to SQ, Avantis.

Sharing the same next-generation horsepower at its core with the company's XCVI FPGA, Avantis sets a new standard for sub-\$10K feature-packed live and broadcast sound digital consoles. From the local high school theater to the church down the street to a key role in FOX Sports broadcasts of the World Series and the NFL, Avantis holds down the audio fort.

With its easy integration with industry-standard audio-over-IP standards like Dante, plug and play networkability with the rest of the Allen & Heath digital consoles (this year's "Sound Reinforcement Line of the Year"), and plethora of readily available interface cards, Avantis was able to pivot into broadcast and live stream world as more traditional live sound events dwindled.

www.allen-heath.com



Taylor Builder's Edition 652e



The first 12-string to take home a victory in this category, the Builder's Edition 652e exhibits all the innovative design and meticulous craftsmanship that players and dealers have come to expect from Taylor. A reverse-strung setup on this maple beauty provides fuller sound, while "electric guitar inspired" contours allow for excellent playing comfort.

www.taylorguitars.com



STEINWAY & SONS



This year, dealers gave the nod to what many consider to be the finest high-end piano brand out there. In addition to the flagship Steinway line, the company also fields the popular, lower priced brands: Boston and Essex.

www.steinway.com



D'Addario



D'Addario has a virtual stranglehold on this category – and it's easy to see why. Be it strings, clip-on tuners, slides, picks, capos, straps, or pretty much anything else that qualifies as a "musical accessory," these guys make them and consumers snap them up (providing retailers with a tidy profit).

www.daddario.com



Fender



With an unsurpassed legacy based upon decades of use on popular recordings and on stages of all sizes the world over, Fender amps are tough to beat. Add to that the sheer volume of models available throughout an impressive roster of specialized series – Bassbreaker, Hot Rod, Tone Master, Acoustasonic, and Champion, among many others – and it's no surprise that FMIC is in the winner's circle again this year.

www.fender.com

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Fender

The American Professional II



The American Professional II Telecaster® in Dark Night features V-Mod II pickups, a Deep "C" neck with rolled edges and a top-load/string-through bridge with Bullet saddles.

The American Professional II Series: Played by more artists on more stages. Night after night.



YAMAHA

YCA is always a strong contender – and a frequent winner – in this category and 2020 was no exception. Dealers pointed to the expansiveness of Yamaha’s B&O offerings across a wide scope of price points, as well as consistently high quality and value, as reasons for selecting the brand this year.

www.usa.yamaha.com



Fender

Fender Vintera '70s Telecaster Custom

With all the swagger of a vintage Tele, but benefiting from the technological, design, and construction know-how of today, Fender’s Vintera '70s Telecaster Custom proved irresistible to many players in 2020. Another solid win for Fender!

www.fender.com



ALLEN & HEATH



Few brands can claim the fanatical devotion inspired by Allen & Heath Xone DJ products. The trailblazing Xone:92 has been the instrument of choice for many of the world’s best DJs since its debut in 2003. Xone:96 is the long-awaited follow-up, taking the soul of the :92 and re-delivering it, enhanced, and with state-of-the-art digital connectivity. Dealers have spoken and when it comes to DJ creativity, it’s go Xone or go home.

www.allen-heath.com



Roland

FP-30



Over 150,000 players can’t be wrong – the Roland FP-30 was made to fit into every home and on every stage, and dealers voted in droves to confirm this. Portable and loaded with tech-forward features, the 88-note format keyboard made waves this year with built-in practice and recording functions, as well as its Bluetooth wireless support for connecting with MIDI music apps on phones or tablets.

www.roland.com



ERNE BALL MUSIC MAN

Ernie Ball Music Man



A go-to bass for the likes of Cliff Williams, John Myung, Tony Levin, and Gail

Ann Dorsey, Music Man basses are equally popular with “normal” end-users – and MI retailers have taken note. This year’s voting in this category was extremely tight, but in the end there was a clear winner.

www.music-man.com



CHAUVET



In a year where live music as “normal” came to an abrupt halt, CHAUVET DJ kept lighting the way for musicians, venues, companies, and events who craved to get crafty and keep the entertainment flowing. Their eighth consecutive win in this category solidifies their status as solution-finders for unique lighting situations across the globe.

www.chauvetdj.com

KAWAI



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The action you love, the sounds you need, the control you dream about. Whether you're in the studio or on the road, the MP Series stage pianos provide maximum performance for the pros on the go. Voted **MMR Magazine's "Pro Digital Keyboard Line of the Year" in 2020**, the MP Series models are the best in their class.

MP11SE



MP7SE



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KAWAI *more performance*

www.kawaius.com



It's fitting that during the year of their momentous 95th anniversary, Shure has taken home another DCA for "Microphone Line of the Year." Shure's integral roles at this year's Super Bowl and the HBO broadcast of "David Byrne's American Utopia" demonstrate how even after 95 years, Shure's reliability simply never falters – and dealers and users alike know it.




www.shure.com




For the third year in a row – and for the fourth time, total – dealers expressed their love for the Kawai MP Series, proudly billed as the "the Pianist's Stage Pianos." The MP11SE and MP7SE carried this category with their authentic acoustic grand piano sounds, variety of Virtual Technician sound editing parameters, and 4-channel MIDI master controller functions. Well-earned, Kawai!



THE FUTURE OF THE PIANO
MP Series

www.kawaius.com




DW locks down this tight category for the second straight year in 2020. Including brands such as Gretsch Drums, Slingerland Drums (also nominated!), and Latin Percussion, the DW family is an all-encompassing one that has long served dealers who need a well-rounded stock of percussion items on their shelves (recall their "cocktail kits" and gong drums, anyone?). Put simply, DW kept the beat of 2020 strong and steady during uncertain times.



www.dwdrums.com





Universal Audio nabs this category after the launch of their new fully-featured DAW: the LUNA Recording System. Combined with Universal's already-impressive selection of UAD accelerators, analog hardware, and audio interfaces, Universal Audio found themselves with an enviable winning ticket.

www.usaudio.com





Hal Leonard still locked in this category for 2020 – perhaps from the major expansion of *Essential Elements Interactive*, free use of Note-flight Learn during the spring, or the release of Digital Books, a new streaming platform "designed to provide musicians of all instruments and skill levels with a fully-interactive, multi-media experience for hundreds of their most popular titles." Regardless of the reason(s), Hal Leonard remains the only company to win this category in the history of the DCAs.

www.halleonard.com





To say that 2020 has been a challenging year for the live sound community would be an understatement of epic proportions. Yet the global Allen & Heath team was able to deliver a steady stream of impressive product updates, completely new award-winning products, end-user and dealer-focused in-person and virtual training and certification programs... and maintain an incredibly supportive, fun and upbeat vibe through it all.

www.allen-heath.com

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Ray Williams

Managing Director, IMSTA



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39th Annual America's Top Music Chains

PO	Piano/Organ
P	Piano
DP	Digital Piano
BO	Band & Orchestra
PC	Percussion
FA	Fretted Instruments/ Amplification
SR	Sound Reinforcement/ Recording Equipment
EK	Electronic Keyboard
PM	Print Music
DJ	DJ Equipment
LT	Lighting
IN	Installation

As the dealers represented in this report are privately held, the data being presented in "America's Top Chains" was supplied by the companies, themselves. In other instances, MMR made estimates based on data available to our research team.

Guitar Center

PO, P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, IN, PM
(Including Music & Arts)
Total Units 525
Opened '20 1
Closed '20 0
Volume (est. '20) N/A
5795 Lindero Canyon Rd., Westlake Village, Calif. 91362
(818) 735-8800 media@guitarcenter.com
www.guitarcenter.com
CEO: Ron Japinga

Sam Ash Music Corp.

DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, PM
Total Units 47
Opened '20 0
Closed '20 0
Volume (est. '20) N/A
278 Duffy Drive, Hicksville, N.Y. 11802
(516) 932-6400 sammy@samash.com
www.samash.com
CEO: Richard Ash

Music Go Round

DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT
Total Units 37
Opened '20 0
Closed '20 0
Volume (est. '20) \$37 MM
605 Hwy 169N #400, Minneapolis, Minn.
(763) 520-8500 tkletti@musicgoround.com
www.musicgoround.com

Brand Director: Tim Kletti

Schmitt Music Co.

P, DP, SR, EK, PC, BO, FA, PM
Total Units 14
Opened '20 0
Closed '20 0
Volume (est. '20) N/A
Butler Square, 2400 Freeway Blvd., Brooklyn Center, Minn. 55430
(763) 566-4560 tom.schmitt@schmittmusic.com
www.schmittmusic.com
CEO: Tom Schmitt

Steinway Hall

P
Total Units 14
Opened '20 2
Closed '20 0
Volume (est. '20) N/A
1133 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y.
(212) 246-1100 showrooms@steinway.com
www.steinway.com
CEO: Ron Losby

J.W. Pepper & Son, Inc.

PM
Total Units 12
Opened '20 0
Closed '20 1
Volume (est. '20) N/A
191 Sheree Blvd., Exton, PA 19341
(610) 648-0500 lpaynter@jwpepper.com
www.jwpepper.com
CEO: Glenn Burtch

Brook Mays/H&H Music

BO
Total Units 9
Opened '20 0
Closed '20 0
Volume (est. '20) \$18 MM
8605 Carpenter Frwy., Dallas, Texas 75229
(214) 905-8614 billeveritt@brookmays.com
www.brookmays.com
CEO: Bill Everitt

Piano Distributors

P, DP
Total Units 9
Opened '20 0
Closed '20 0
Volume (est. '20) N/A
1475 12th St. E., Palmetto, Fla. 34221
(941) 729-5047 fharvey@pianodistributors.com
www.pianodistributors.com
CEO: Sandy Boyce

Eckroth Music Co.

P, DP, BO, FA, SR, PC
Total Units 9
Opened '20 2
Closed '20 0
Volume (est. '20) \$14 MM
1655 N. Grandview Lane, 102, Bismarck, N.D.
(701) 223-5320 jeff@eckroth.com
www.eckroth.com

CEO: Jeffrey Eckroth

Menchey Music Service

P, DP, BO, FA, EK, PC, PM
Total Units 9
Opened '20 0
Closed '20 0
Volume (est. '20) N/A
PO Box 474, 9 Barnhart Drive, Hanover, Pa.
(717) 637-2185 jmenchey@menchey.com
www.mencheymusic.com
President: Joel Menchey

Quinlan & Fabish Music

BO, PC, PM
Total Units 9
Opened '20 1
Closed '20 0
Volume (est. '20) N/A
6827 High Grove Blvd., Burr Ridge, Ill. 60527
(630) 654-4111 gqjr@qandf.com
www.qandf.com
CEO: George Quinlan, Jr.

Bertrand's Music

DP, BO, FA, EK, PM
Total Units 8
Opened '20 1
Closed '20 0
Volume (est. '20) N/A
9906 Carmel Mountain Rd., San Diego, Calif.
(888) 780-1812 www.bertrandmusic.com
CEO: John Bertrand, Sr.

Palen Music Center

PC, FA, SR, EK, PM
Total Units 8
Opened '20 0
Closed '20 0
Volume (est. '20) N/A
1560 E. Raynell Pl., Springfield, Mo. 65804
(417) 882-7000 www.palenmusic.com
CEO: Brett Palen

George's Music Stores

DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, PM
Total Units 8
Opened '20 1
Closed '20 0
Volume (est. '20) N/A
650 W. Swedesford Rd., Berwyn, Pa. 19312
(610) 993-3110 www.georgesmusic.com
CEO: George Hines

Fletcher Music Centers

PO
Total Units 7
Opened '20 0
Closed '20 2
Volume (est. '20) N/A
3966 Airway Circle, Clearwater, Fla. 33762
(727) 571-1088 Jriley@fletchermusic.com
www.fletchermusic.com
CEO: John K. Riley



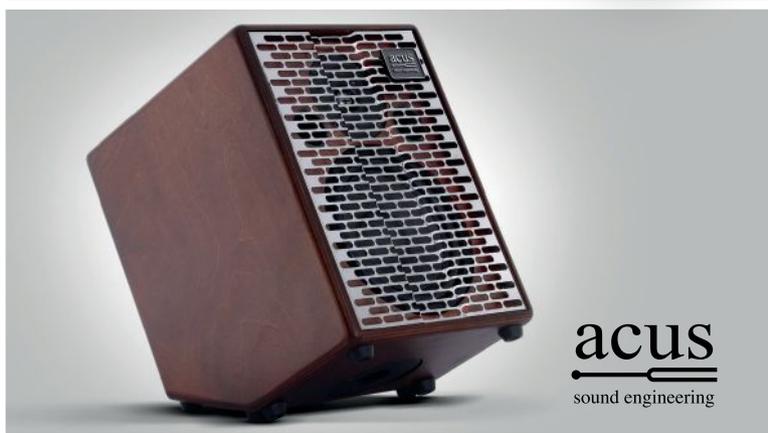

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FOR DEALER INFORMATION: P +1.312.226.1705 E info@lyonhealycorporation.com www.lyonhealycorporation.com

Marshall Music Co.

PO, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, PM
 Total Units 7
 Opened '20 0
 Closed '20 0
 Volume (est. '20) N/A
 3240 E. Saginaw St., Lansing, Mich. 48912
 (517) 337-9700 info@marshallmusic.com
 www.marshallmusic.com
 CEO: Dan Marshall

Jacobs Music

P, DP
 Total Units 7
 Opened '20 0

Closed '20 0
 Volume (est. '20) N/A
 1718 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19103
 (215) 568-7800 chris@jacobsmusic.com
 www.jacobsmusic.com
 President: Chris Rinaldi

Nick Rail Music DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, PM

Total Units 7
 Opened '20 1
 Closed '20 0
 Volume (est. '20) N/A
 2801 De La Vina St., Santa Barbara, Calif.
 (805) 569-5353 laura@nickrailmusic.com

www.nickrailmusic.com
 CEO: Nick Rail

Kennelly Keys

DP, PC, BO, FA, SR, EK, PM
 Total Units 6
 Opened '20 0
 Closed '20 0
 Volume (est. '20) N/A
 4918 196th St. SW, Lynwood, Wash. 98036
 (425) 771-7020 info@kennellykeysmusic.com
 www.kennellykeysmusic.com
 CEO: William J. Kennelly

Ted Brown Music Co.

DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT IN, PM
 Total Units 6
 Opened '20 0
 Closed '20 0
 Volume (est. '20) \$17 MM
 6228 Tacoma Mall Blvd., Tacoma, Wash.
 (253) 272-3211
 stephanie@tedbrownmusic.com
 www.tedbrownmusic.com
 CEO: Whitney Grisaffi

Saied Music

PO, P, DP, BO, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, PM
 Total Units 6
 Opened '20 1
 Closed '20 1
 Volume (est. '20) N/A
 3259 S. Yale Ave., Tulsa, Okla. 74135
 (918) 742-5541 info@saiedmusic.com
 www.saiedmusic.com
 CEO: Bob Saied

Rieman Music

P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, IN, PM
 Total Units 6
 Opened '20 0
 Closed '20 0
 Volume (est. '20) N/A
 4420 E. Broadway, Des Moines, Iowa 50317
 (515) 262-0365 davek@riemans.com
 www.riemanmusic.com
 CEO: Pam Donahue

Tarpley Music Co.

P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, LT, IN, PM
 Total Units 6
 Opened '20 1
 Closed '20 0
 Volume (est. '20) \$11 MM
 2420 Commerce, Amarillo, Texas 79109
 (806) 355-0795 john@tarpleymusic.com
 www.tarpleymusic.com
 CEOs: David & John Tarpley

West Music Co.

P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, IN, PM
 Total Units 6
 Opened '20 0
 Closed '20 3
 Volume (est. '20) \$50 MM
 1212 5th Street, Coralville, Iowa 52241
 (319) 351-2000 rwalenta@westmusic.com
 www.westmusic.com
 CEO: Robin Walenta

Rettig Music

BO, PM
 Total Units 6
 Opened '20 0

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Closed '20 0
Volume (est. '20) N/A
6323 Sawmill Rd., Dublin, Ohio 43017
(614) 792-2100 www.rettigmusic.com

White House of Music

DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, PM
Total Units 6
Opened '20 0
Closed '20 0
Volume (est. '20) N/A
2101 Springdale Rd., Waukesha, Wis. 53186
(262) 798-9700 chris@whitehouseofmusic.com
www.whitehouseofmusic.com
CEO: Christopher White

Music Exchange

PO, P, DP
Total Units 5
Opened '20 0
Closed '20 0
Volume (est. '20) N/A
1501 N. Main St., Walnut Creek, Calif. 95696
(925) 933-6310 www.muex.com

Ken Stanton Music

DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, PM
Total Units 5
Opened '20 0
Closed '20 0
Volume (est. '20) N/A
119 Cobb Pkwy. N., Ste. A, Marietta, Ga.
(770) 427-2491 kenstantonmusic@kenstan-

ton.com www.kenstanton.com
CEO: Kenny Stanton

Heid Music

P, DP, BO, FA, EK, PC, PM
Total Units 5
Opened '20 0
Closed '20 0
Volume (est. '20) N/A
308 E. College Ave., Appleton, Wis. 54911
(920) 734-1969 todd.heid@heidmusic.com
www.heidmusic.com
CEO: Todd Heid

Springfield Music

DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, PM
Total Units 5
Opened '20 0
Closed '20 0
Volume (est. '20) 7 MM
1902 E. Meadowmere, Ste. 1, Springfield, Mo.
(417) 832-1665
amanda@springfield-music.com
www.springfieldmusic.com
President: Donovan Bankhead

Willis Music Co.

P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, PM
Total Units 5
Opened '20 0
Closed '20 0
Volume (est. '20) \$7.5 MM
7380 Industrial Road, Florence, Ky. 41042
(859) 283-2050 paulf@willismusic.com

www.willismusic.com
CEO: Kevin Cranley

Portland Music Co.

DP, BO, PC, FA, SR, EK, PM
Total Units 5
Opened '20 0
Closed '20 0
Volume (est. '20) N/A
16610 SE McLoughlin Blvd., Milwaukie, Ore.
(503) 226-3719 mtaylor@spiritone.com
www.portlandmusiccompany.com
CEO: Mark Taylor

Collins Music Center

PO, P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, IN, PM
Total Units 4
Opened '20 0
Closed '20 0
Volume (est. '20) N/A
706 W. Jackson, El Campo, Texas 77437
(979) 543-2928 randy@collinsmusiccenter.com
www.collinsmusiccenter.com
CEO: Randy Collins

Robert M. Sides Family Music Centers

PO, P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, IN, PM
Total Units 4
Opened '20 0
Closed '20 0
Volume (est. '20) \$8 MM
201 Mullberry St., Williamsport, Pa. 17701

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(570) 326-2094 psides@rmsides.com
www.rmsides.com
President: Peter Sides

C&M Music Center DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, IN, PM
Total Units 4
Opened '20 0
Closed '20 0
Volume (est. '20) N/A
2515 Williams Blvd., Kenner, La. 70062
(504) 468-8688 cnail4cmmusic@yahoo.com
www.candmmusic.com
CEO: Chris Nail & Melvin Volz, Jr.

Dietze Music P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, PM
Total Units 4
Opened '20 0
Closed '20 0
Volume (est. '20) \$7.5 MM
13015 W. Center Rd., Omaha, Neb. 68144
(402) 486-1611 tpratt@dietzemusic.com
www.dietzemusic.com
CEO: Tim Pratt

Keyboard Concepts P, DP, PM
Total Units 4
Opened '20 0
Closed '20 2
Volume (est. '20) N/A
5539 Van Nuys Blvd., Sherman Oaks, Calif.
(818) 787-0201
Dennis.Hagerty@keyboardconcepts.com
www.keyboardconcepts.com
CEO: Dennis Hagerty

Portman's Music BO, PC, FA, SR, EK,
Total Units 4
Opened '20 0
Closed '20 0
Volume (est. '20) N/A
7650 Abercorn St., Savannah, Ga. 31406
(912) 354-1500 www.portmansmusic.com
CEO: Jerry Portman

C.A. House Music P, DP, BO, FA, EK, PC, PM
Total Units 4
Opened '20 0
Closed '20 0
Volume (est. '20) N/A
3700 Cavalier Cir., Parkersburg, W. Va. 26104
(304) 422-4676 www.cahousemusic.com
General Manager: Steve Ceo

Mississippi Music P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, IN, PM
Total Units 4
Opened '20 0
Closed '20 0
Volume (est. '20) \$8.9 MM
PO Box 1705, Hattiesburg, Miss. 39403-1705
(601) 544-5828 rosij@missmusic.com www.mississippi.com
CEO: Rosi K. Johnson

Evola Music Center PO, P, DP, BO, PM
Total Units 4
Opened '20 0
Closed '20 0
Volume (est. '20) N/A
2184 S. Telegraph Rd., Bloomfield Hills, Mich.
(248) 334-0566 www.evola.com

CEO: Jim Evola

Jackson's Music P, DP, BO, FA, PC, EK, SR
 Total Units 4
 Opened '20 0
 Closed '20 0
 Volume (est. '20) N/A
 1409 S. Stratford Rd., Winston-Salem, N.C.
 (336) 760-9635 www.jacksonsmusic.com
 CEO: Douglas J. Dryden

Clavier Group, Steinway Hall – Dallas P
 Total Units 4
 Opened '20 0
 Closed '20 0
 Volume (est. '20) N/A
 5301 N. Central Expressway, Dallas, Texas
 (214) 526-1853
 showrooms@steinwaypianos.com
 www.steinwaypianos.com
 CEO: Danny Saliba

N Tune Music & Sound P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, LT, IN, PM
 Total Units 4
 Opened '20 0
 Closed '20 0
 Volume (est. '20) \$6.75 MM
 1141 E. 42nd St., Odessa, Texas 79762
 (432) 362-1164 info@ntunemusic.com
 www.ntunemusic.com
 CEO: Tim Jones

Riverton Music, Inc.

DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, IN, PM
 Total Units 4
 Opened '20 1
 Closed '20 0
 Volume (est. '20) N/A
 7742 S Campus View Dr., Ste. B-110, West
 Jordan, Utah 84120
 (801) 969-4358 leifn@rivertonmusic.com
 www.rivertonmusic.com
 CEO: Kevin Rindlisbacher

Instrumental Music

BO, PC, FA, SR, EK, PM, LT
 Total Units 3
 Opened '20 0
 Closed '20 1
 Volume (est. '20) N/A
 1501 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd., Thousand
 Oaks, Calif. 91362
 (805) 496-3774 bryan@instmusic.com
 www.instrumentalmusic.com
 President: Bryan McCann

Williamson Music 1st BO, PC, FA
 Total Units 3
 Opened '20 0
 Closed '20 0
 Volume (est. '20) N/A
 701 E. Plano Parkway, Ste. 100, Plano, Texas
 (972) 516-1331 www.wm1st.com
 CEO: Brian Henderson

Piano Gallery

PO, P, DP, EK, PM
 Total Units 3
 Opened '20 0
 Closed '20 0
 Volume (est. '20) N/A
 5478 South Green Street, Murray, Utah
 (801) 266-9550 info@pianogallery.com
 www.pianogallery.com
 CEO: Stan Beagley

Piano & Organ Center

PO, P, DP, EK, PM
 Total Units 3
 Opened '20 0
 Closed '20 0
 Volume (est. '20) N/A
 102 Lawrence Rd. E, North Syracuse, N.Y.
 (315) 454-3823
 www.pianoandorgancenter.com
 President: David Constantino

Henderson Music Co.

P, DP
 Total Units 3
 Opened '20 0
 Closed '20 0
 Volume (est. '20) N/A
 10869 Montgomery Rd., Cincinnati, Ohio
 (513) 697-0000 www.hendersonmusic.com

Hermes Music

BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, IN
 Total Units 3
 Opened '20 0
 Closed '20 0

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(the shaft of the peg does not spin, subsequently there is no friction). Therefore no effort for peg and peghole maintenance
- ⦿ **Self-inhibiting transmission inside the peg**
the string can not lose tension. No more slipping pegs
- ⦿ **The Finetune-Peg needs not/must not be loosened or tightened in order to tune the instrument**
It is sufficient to simply turn the head of the **Finetune-Peg** in the desired direction
- ⦿ **Peg made of "high-tech" composite material and light alloy**
No influence of climate and humidity. Measurements, color and quality are constant
- ⦿ **Protection of natural resources**

Moving Parts: Only the head **A** and the knurled middle section of the shaft **B** rotate when the string is tuned.

Non Moving Parts: The smooth parts of the shaft **C** and **D** are set firmly into the pegbox. They don't rotate when tuning the string.

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NO WOOD

Volume (est. '20) N/A
 830 N. Cage Blvd., Pharr, Texas 78577
 (956) 904-4400 greg@hermes-music.com
 www.hermes-music.com
 CEO: Alberto Kreimerman

Griggs Music BO, PC, FA, SR, PM
 Total Units 3
 Opened '20 0
 Closed '20 0

Volume (est. '20) N/A
 3849 Brady St., Davenport, Iowa 52806
 (563) 391-9000 school@griggsmusic.com
 www.griggsmusic.com
 CEO: Steve Judge

Playground Music Center BO, P, DP, BO, PC, FA, SR, EK
 Total Units 3
 Opened '20 0

Closed '20 0
 Volume (est. '20) N/A
 429 Mary Esther Cut-Off NW, Fort Walton Beach, Fla. 32548 (850) 243-2514
 www.playgroundmusiccenter.com

Larry's Music Center FA
 Total Units 3
 Opened '20 0
 Closed '20 0
 Volume (est. '20) N/A
 302 E Liberty St., Wooster, Ohio 44691
 (330) 262-8855 www.larrysmusiccenter.com

Gadsden Music BO, PM
 Total Units 3
 Opened '20 0
 Closed '20 0
 Volume (est. '20) N/A
 607 Broad Street, PO Box 132, Gadsden, Ala.
 (800) 264-7228 www.gadsdenmusic.com

Pecknel Music DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, IN, PM
 Total Units 3
 Opened '20 0
 Closed '20 0
 Volume (est. '20) \$4.2 MM
 1312 N. Pleasantburg Dr., Greenville, S.C.
 (864) 244-7888 jmanriquez@pecknelmusic.com
 www.pecknelmusic.com
 CEO: Jeremiah Manriquez

Dunkley Music P, DP
 Total Units 3
 Opened '20 0
 Closed '20 0
 Volume (est. '20) N/A
 3410 Eagle Rd., Ste. 150, Meridian, Idaho
 (208) 342-5549 info@dunkleymusic.com
 www.dunkleymusic.com
 CEO: Mark Dunkley

Meyer Music P, DP, BO, PM
 Total Units 3
 Opened '20 0
 Closed '20 0
 Volume (est. '20) N/A
 1512 W. Highway 40, Blue Springs, Mo.
 (816) 228-5656 bettymeyer@meyermusic.com
 www.meyermusic.com
 CEOs: Ted Meyer, Betty Meyer

Kessler & Sons Music BO
 Total Units 3
 Opened '20 0
 Closed '20 0
 Volume (est. '20) N/A
 3047 E. Charleston Blvd. #C, Las Vegas, Nev.
 (702) 385-2263 music@kessler.com
 www.kesslermusic.com
 CEO: Charles Kessler

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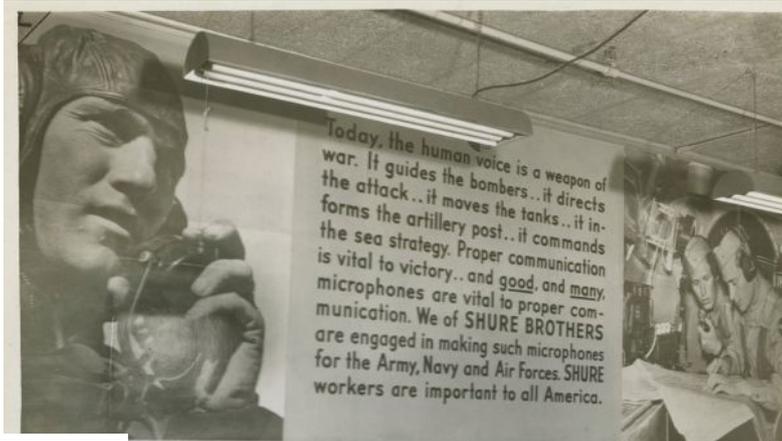
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Mark Brunner, Shure's late VP of Corporate and Government Relations



After 95 Years of Shaping the Pro Audio World, Innovation is Still a **'Shure'** Thing

By Victoria **Wasylak**

The following article is based upon conversations with Shure's Mark Brunner, prior to his unexpected passing on October 1, 2020.

If you were to flip through the annals of modern music history, you'd find Shure's presence on every page. From creating the first handheld wireless microphone system for performers in 1953, to powering annual events of the superstardom world like the Grammys and the Academy Awards, Shure's fixtures and metaphorical fingerprints are everywhere.

"In fact, it is difficult to name a major entertainer who has *not* performed live with a Shure microphone," shared Mark Brunner, longtime VP of Corporate and Government Relations for Shure.

That's not an exaggeration, either: Shure's impact on the tech side of the music industry continues to skyrocket as the brand draws closer and closer to the coveted 100-year marker.

As the legendary pro audio company celebrates its 95th anniversary this year, *MMR* chatted with Brunner about Shure's proudest moments, steadfast mission and their goals before they join century club.

What are Shure's biggest milestones as a company?

Mark Brunner: Shure has had many notable milestones in its history, including products that changed the course of audio. A short list of these include: Model 55 Unidyne, the first unidirectional microphone with a single dynamic element in 1939; Vagabond 88, the first handheld wireless microphone system for performers in 1953; the M3D phonograph cartridge, which brought stereophonic sound into the home at a time when millions of people were discovering high-fidelity sound in 1958; microphone models SM57 and SM58®, recognized globally as industry standards for instrument and vocal applications in 1965-66; SM10, the first headworn mic for musicians (introduced earlier but first advertised for this use) in 1979; model SM81, the first condenser microphone rugged enough to withstand the rigors of touring in 1978; T Series wireless systems, a full line of products that established wireless microphones in the MI retail channel (1994); E Series

Earphones, which paved the way for professional quality earphones for use with portable digital music players and mobile phones (1999); and the UHF-R wireless system, which set a new standard for touring sound in 2005. Of course, Shure's innovations continue to this day at a fervent pace, but these products serve as examples of the impact we have made over the course of our history.

A general achievement that Shure is particularly proud of is that our product quality standards are based on military specifications. This protocol began in 1942 when Shure was contracted to manufacture microphones and headphones for the war effort and S.N. Shure insisted that it stay in place permanently after the war ended. This is why even today we still manufacture products to meet these stringent quality standards.

We are also proud of our innovations in wireless microphone technology, and we have enhanced this product category significantly over the years. Shure wireless microphone transmitters have always been designed to sound just as good as cabled mics, and recent product introductions, such as Axient Digital, feature intelligent hardware and software to detect and avoid interference. Our impressive wireless product line enables users to experience legendary Shure sound with the total freedom of a wireless solution.

Likewise, what are some of Shure's proudest moments in music history, or history in general?

Shure audio products have captured several key historical moments and performances. For example, Shure Model 55S was in use when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. made his famous "I Have A Dream" speech. We were the primary mic brand used at the Monterey Pop Festival (Model SM56) and Woodstock (Model 565), and The White House Communications Agency has used SM57 microphones for the presidential lectern since 1965.

Shure products are used by every major broadcast network to produce special events like the Super Bowl, the Olympics, the Grammys, and the Academy Awards, as well as news and entertainment shows.

High-profile artists including Frank Sinatra, The Beatles, Elvis Presley, Aretha Franklin, U2, The Rolling Stones, The Who, Jennifer Lopez, and Rascal Flatts have wowed audiences through our microphones. This is a very short list, however. In fact, it is difficult to name a major entertainer who has *not* performed live with a Shure microphone.

What is Shure's legacy, in your own words?

The essence of our brand promise is to manufacture products of unmatched quality, reliability, and durability. That was the core value of Mr. Shure when he started the company in 1925 and we have been dedicated to this objective for 95 years. Through this philosophy, for nearly a century, Shure products have delivered the sounds of history and culture to the world. This is our legacy.

How has Shure's mission changed – or stayed the same – over the past 95 years?

Shure's mission has stayed the same over its 95-year history: produce the finest products of their kind and provide exemplary service to customers.

"We are in business to perform a Service to people. 'People' includes our customers, our employees, our suppliers, and the communities in which we live."

This quote from our founder, S.N. Shure, is proudly displayed in the lobby at our Corporate Headquarters. It was his guiding principle for the business since inception and it remains true today.

Audio technology moves fast – probably faster than most other sectors of the music gear/instruments market. How does a company like Shure make sure to not only keep up, but be a leader of the pack?

We believe in staying close to our customers and we frequently ask for their input and feedback on how we can best meet their needs. We use insights gained through observational research to anticipate future audio challenges and possible solutions. Shure makes significant investments in hardware and software engineering, new product development, and exploratory R&D. This engineering prowess is backed by a quality and manufacturing operations team that we believe is second to none in our industry. We augment our product offerings by putting substantial resources into product training – through on-line videos, tutorials, and webinars. We want customers who make an investment in our equipment to know how to achieve the best performance from the gear. This builds loyalty and forwards a virtuous cycle of the manufacturer to end user relationship in the innovation arena.

On that note, what are some trends in the industry that you've noticed in the past year or so that you've tried to capitalize on?

The biggest opportunity we have seen trend wise is for products that support content creators. Our MOTIV™ digital products, along with our extensive line of earphones and headphones, are suited for individuals looking to capture high-quality audio for home recording, podcasts, YouTube videos, streaming, etc. The MOTIV microphones and accessories provide an easy way for anyone to record high-quality sound directly onto many mobile and USB devices. The current situation we are in with COVID-19 has significantly increased demand for these types of products.

Also, recent advances in the transition to digital wireless technology continue to provide benefits for many customers. Over the years, we've made substantial investments in both shaping government policies and revamping our product lines to help lead customers through spectrum regulatory changes. Digital wireless systems offer important benefits in efficient use of spectrum, along with other performance enhancements, and we now offer digital wireless systems

at nearly all price tiers. The products, combined with our formidable support and training, have helped our customers successfully handle this transition.

How many employees does Shure have? How many facilities do you have worldwide? How many countries are Shure products sold in?

We currently employ more than 2,500 Associates and have 40 facilities, worldwide. Shure products are sold in more than 120 countries.

Globally, where does Shure want to go next?

In its 95-year history, Shure has grown from a one-man mail order radio parts distributor into a global audio industry leader, providing microphones, wireless microphone systems, in-ear monitors, earphones, headphones, audio processing, and conferencing systems – available and in use nearly everywhere in the world.

Shure's global presence is reflected in its ever-expanding footprint of facilities for manufacturing and distribution, sales and marketing, and product development. This past year we introduced the new Rose Shure Experience Centre in London – named for our former chairman, Rose L. Shure.

The move further establishes the company's presence in the UK and wider EMEA region by providing a location for product demonstrations for corporate, government, and education customers seeking audio solutions for their respective facilities.

We are continuously evaluating our footprint in each region, and where product demonstration capabilities have high utility, we factor that into our infrastructure plans. We've had tremendous success with the Rose Shure Experience Centre as well as with similar facilities in downtown Chicago, Tokyo, Shanghai, and Hong Kong. Any time we can conveniently showcase our innovative technology to current and prospective customers and partners, it is a win for everyone.

What is the next goal that Shure has? What do you hope to achieve by year 100?

We want to continue on our path, ensuring that we continuously improve our product lines and grow our customer base globally. We believe that Shure is uniquely positioned to address a wide range of evolving technology needs within and across our customer segments – from consumers to business professionals to live event technicians and more.

Anything else on the horizon – plans or products – that you'd like to let our readers know about?

We've been very aggressive with new products recently, rolling out popular items like the MV88+ stereo microphone and our AONIC 50 Bluetooth noise-canceling headphones. These products are direct responses to what our customers are looking for from Shure. We continue our strategy of flexibility and adaptability to the changing needs of the market, and always look for opportunities to innovate. Unfortunately, as we are privately held company, I am not able to disclose details of our product roadmap, but rest assured future offerings from Shure will continue our tradition of delivering maximum performance and value.

It is also worth noting that Shure's mission, discussed earlier, includes a commitment to corporate social responsibility. We believe in giving back to the communities we serve and assisting those in need. These practices have been in place throughout our history, and Mr. and Mrs. Shure established a corporate structure that ensured philanthropy as a cornerstone of our business activity, even after their passing. We continue to practice and expand on their wishes in honor of this legacy. 

Creating a Lineage of 'Keepers'

Dennis Drumm and the trio of Vintage's 25th Anniversary Series guitars

Vintage Guitars Observes 25 Years in Business

By Victoria Wasylak

Over in Leeds, UK, Dennis Drumm believes Vintage Guitars has found the ultimate "sweet spot" in the guitar market. The brand's intersection of price point, quality, and flair was their goal from the start back in 1995, but as the JHS brand has evolved over 25 years, Drumm becomes more and more confident that he and his team have not only nailed it, but also birthed a long reign of lifelong "keeper" guitars.

"I've stood on enough NAMM show booths over the lifetime of the Vintage brand to know from players, reactions, dealers, and musicians, that we have hit the sweet spot," Drumm, JHS managing director, tells *MMR* proudly.

The brainchild of John Hornby Skewes & Co. Ltd. (JHS) was born in 1995, following fellow JHS creation of Encore guitars. After multiple successful lines in the Encore family, the Encore Vintage VC1 Series served as the jumping off point to launch Vintage Guitars in the mid-90s.

The Encore Vintage VC1 Series aimed to make room for a new kind of guitar: one that offered an attractive price point, coupled with an overall untouchable mark of quality for a vintage-looking guitar that wasn't *actually* old or used. Because, as Drumm notes, for years the only way to purchase a guitar that looked vintage was, well, to purchase a true "vintage" guitar.

"The Encore Vintage VC1 Series with a 1995 price point of £199, with alder bodies, Indian rosewood boards, Grover 135 vintage tuners, Lace Sensor pickups and the Wilkinson VS10 vibrato bridge, was a real 'myth buster,' Drumm says. "It was a 'bubble burster,' a poke in the eye for the 1995 £599 USA wonder guitar. You could take Encore Vintage VC1 guitars to any gig, from the local club to the biggest auditorium in the world and they'd absolutely do the job and again, with a price tag of just £199. I know for a fact that folks are still playing these today in 2020 as long-term 'keepers.'"

From there, Vintage Guitars branched off from its older sibling and started forging its own path to accessibility, laying the groundwork for Vintage guitars to make their way into roughly 150 markets worldwide. (To this day, both the Encore and Vintage coexist happily under the JHS family roof, along with myriad other names like Fret King, GraphTech Guitar Labs, and Wilkinson).

"The biggest challenge was being a brand-new small dog in a very big park, fighting to get attention, which we've done by a variety of methods, some commonplace, some challenging, some expensive and some painful, but mostly fun," Drumm reflects.

Some of the brand's greatest highlights rest not in awards or financial achievements (although Vintage has plenty of those, too), but in their products and collaborations. Much of what Drumm mentions ties in the guitar hardware and electronics expertise of Trev Wilkinson, who boasts over 50 years of experience in guitar design, construction, and manufacturing. His ties with JHS and

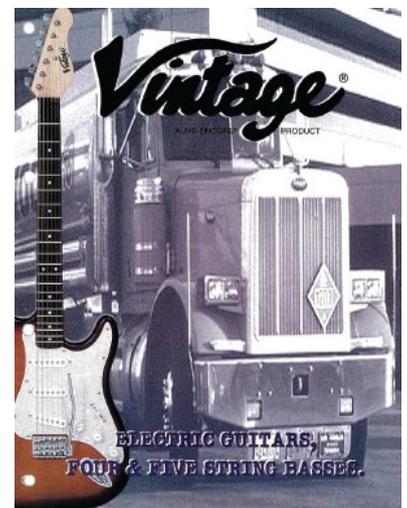


Vintage Guitars also date back to 1995.

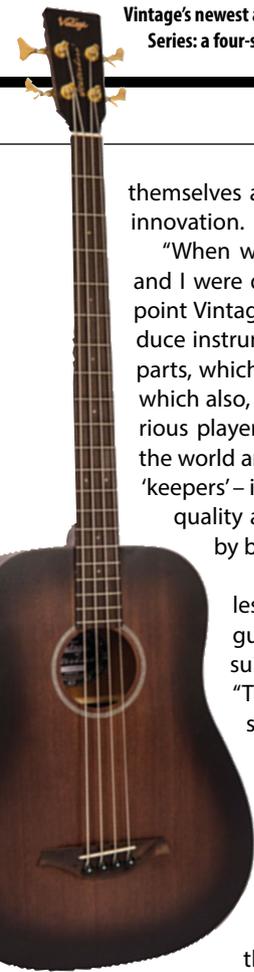
"Some of the milestones in guitars will have been the V100 'Lemon Drop,' which brought together what has turned out to be a real classic combination of features that has seen the model played by a legion of fans in a massive variety of contexts," Drumm explains. "Our relationship with German guitarist Thomas Blug gave Trev Wilkinson and I a fantastic opportunity to show

what we could create within the Vintage brand when we created Thomas' signature Vintage instruments. To produce a serial production, relatively modestly priced electric guitar which a player of that stature will seamlessly swop with his incredibly precious and collectible personal '61 closet classic, worth who knows what, is an achievement which benchmarks what Vintage is all about."

Additionally, when Vintage found itself nearing its 10-year anniversary in the early aughts, the brand introduced the Vintage Relssued series, a clear demonstration of Vintage one-upping



A Vintage Guitars brochure from 1997



themselves and their values surrounding guitar-building and innovation.

"When we launched Vintage Relssued back in 2004, Trev and I were determined to set new benchmarks for the price point Vintage inhabits and prove that it was possible to produce instruments which were far more than the sum of their parts, which a young player would be super happy with, but which also, his or her teacher would happily play, or even serious players could genuinely take on the biggest stages in the world and perform with," he notes. "They all needed to be 'keepers' - it was about building in a specification and level of quality at a price, rather than compromising the product by building down to a price."

"I think consumers are making decisions much less based upon what it says on the headstock of a guitar and far more how an individual instrument suits their need of the moment," Drumm adds. "That's where Vintage wins. It should be a relatively straightforward task to make a great 'closet Classic repro' guitar for \$5000 and there's a lot of brands doing it well. However, even the most well-informed consumer likes a bargain and Vintage has capitalized on that simple fact by producing a whole range of electric guitars across many styles, with prices more akin to the \$500 region."

The company's most recent releases honor their 25-year milestone through a trio of re-re-

"25 years of hard work and some heartache have paid off, as the brand has amazing visibility, folks 'get it,' understand that it does what it says on the tin, trust it, and by and large, from distributor to retailer to consumer, enjoy what the brand brings them."

- Dennis Drumm

leases, all complete with a silver burst finish: the V6H, V75, and V100. Also new is the brand's Pro Shop, which allows customers to create and order guitars custom-built for themselves and allows Texas-based guitar techs to "showcase their talents with unique custom pieces and create one offs to order," as Drumm explains.

Just days before this article goes to print, Vintage added a four-string electro-acoustic bass guitar to the Paul Brett Statesboro' Series. Remarkably, its cost is £199 - the same 1995 pricepoint of the Encore Vintage VC1 Series. Because at Vintage Guitars, Drumm's adage of "quality is consistency" is more than just a catchy slogan - it's truly their way of doing business.

"25 years of hard work and some heartache have paid off, as the brand has amazing visibility, folks 'get it,' understand that it does what it says on the tin, trust it, and by and large, from distributor to retailer to consumer, enjoy what the brand brings them," Drumm concludes.

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Developing Trends Post-COVID

Follow the Money and Look for Green Shoots



By Menzie Pittman

Following trends is akin to catching a falling knife; at best, it's a tricky proposition. Looking back in early 2020 on yearly trend projections, at least 90 percent of them were wrong. No doubt, before COVID-19, some felt the industry would morph into a more "virtual route," but nobody could have predicted what transpired. Now that we are in the winter months of COVID and hopefully dialing up to a better 2021, where do we go from here? I believe that's anybody's guess.

Where are you placing your bets? And how do you read the signs for tomorrow's opportunities in the current environment of COVID-19, which is beleaguered and challenged by health concerns, economic distress, political turmoil, and social strife? Personally, I am intrigued by the exodus of companies from the big cities. It has fast become a trend, and it may offer small town dealers a good opportunity. However, with every change we see a domino effect.

Have you heard about the proposed five percent telework tax? The discussion has started! The idea is to tax teleworkers because of the lost revenue to the various state and local municipalities. It is hard to predict whether that will happen. However, it is worth noting that according to Kate Lister, president of Global Workplace Analytics, "Our best estimate is that 25 to 30 percent of the workforce will be working from home multiple days a week by the end of 2021." It seems that many people are enjoying the idea of working from home. They feel more centered, are more productive, and would pay the tax just to have the flexibility and the enjoyment of continuing to work from home. Again, for every action there is a consequence, and with this change there could be financial impact. When traditional formats are interrupted, tax law changes could soon follow. I am not an expert, so I would suggest that it might be a good idea to attend an Alan Friedman seminar at the next NAMM Show.

When we attempt to read the tea leaves, where do we see green shoots?

How about a small-town town council meeting? What do they do with their COVID-19 grant money? I was privy to a town council meeting where the members discussed the idea of re-investment in the town's advertised image. The town wants to attract new businesses – precisely the ones who are escaping the urban areas.

The potential clients would be tech companies that are trying to provide a better quality of life for their employees outside of the metropolitan areas. Big cities are losing their allure. Look no further than San Francisco, New York, or Washington D.C. Once shining beacons for attracting a flurry of activity, they seem to be losing a great deal of their luster.

These council members discussed the possibility of investing in designing new marketing materials to address the increased interest from businesses considering a move away from the city. They want to market an image that projects the town as quaint and safe – a town where people walk, a town with smart retail and good

schools, a town that promotes high quality businesses with vibe, acumen, unique offerings, and smart customer service models.

The isolation facet of COVID-19 has certainly created an environment where people are craving human interaction. People want genuine, old-fashioned service. Thus, the big box retail model of cheaper, faster, better, with no expertise or service is under enormous strain now.

Will the new trend hold?

When we lose the privilege of simple human interaction, we really must reconsider the former lifestyle privileges we mostly took for granted. Seriously, I would gladly stand in a DMV line for 30 minutes versus making an appointment online and waiting a month to be serviced. I believe it's fair to say the shopping experience, interacting with people and employees at a small, independently owned store, is what wins the day. What changed that experience was the big box model that, until recently, had won the day with volume. And until COVID-19 hit, we had become slaves to that increasingly fast technology at our fingertips, making us an instant gratification society. A point to ponder: maybe that's what's changing; maybe the new trend will be human interaction.

One thing is certain: technology will be at the forefront of any trend going forward.

This is where things get tricky for mom-and-pop style shops. Technology has gained momentum, and while it is true that we have a refreshed appreciation for human interaction, we still want everything our way and delivered yesterday. That won't change – in fact, it will escalate.

However, this, too, may help small dealers. Think of it as embracing the DIY mentality. Along with being tech savvy, nothing is more game-changing than specialized knowledge, and when you blend both skills together, you have more impact on outcome.

Small dealers, like small towns, are quick to adjust to changes.

Small dealers are faster than the big box competition because we don't have to do things through teams or committees – we don't have to ask permission. We may not have the deep pockets, but we have the acumen. We have the specialized knowledge, the passion, and we generally have the support of the communities and towns we live in. We watch for trends and we listen, we feel, and we consider. We are also fast learners, and if there is a technology we need to learn, just like the Shade Tree Mechanic, we learn it.

We know the road ahead won't be easy, but if COVID-19 taught us anything, it has taught us to expect the unexpected and to pay attention to trends early and watch for the green shoots. 

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".

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Accessories

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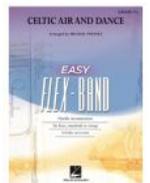


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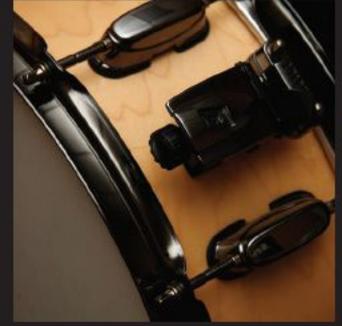
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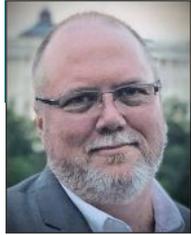
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By
Mike Lawson

The Year It Wasn't Worth It

As I write this, it has been 270 days since my band last performed in Nashville, Tennessee at ACME Feed and Seed. Prior to that last show, we had performed every other Monday for about five years there. It seems like an eternity now since we lugged our gear – rain, snow, or shine – through the traffic, the massive crowds of tourist and tipsy “woo girls” flooding lower Broadway for one of a thousand bachelorette parties for which our city somehow became the “it” destination. Live shows made us consistent money, though not always enough to offset the costs of performing between gas, parking, and gear we had to buy or maintain. Clearly we were not doing it for the money, but the love of making music. Every member of the band has a story relating back to their earliest days of learning to play, that connects to school music programs, and connects to a local music retailer. We are all of a certain age where big box music stores didn't exist, and where the local musical instrument retail store was the place where we got our dreams fed by purchasing the talismans and tools needed to conjure up the magic we sought.

This year sucked. It's going to suck in 2021 for a while, if not most of the year, too. We all know this virus is not behind us yet. Not even close. People we know are still getting sick. People whom we knew are dead. It isn't safe to congregate in large groups. It isn't safe to sing indoors or play on small stages, though my group has been fortunate to typically play on larger stages. That's not even really relevant, because the whole process from loading into the gig, to loading out after is a labyrinth of avoiding people, surfaces, and people who refuse to mask up while smiling in your face. For my bandmates and I, all of whom are also of a certain age where we are at higher risk if we get the virus, it just is not worth it.

One thing certain about music retailers, big or small, is they tend to employ musicians who want to perform. These are many of my friends, some for most of my life. We all just want to perform. We see some friends doing it anyway, playing in “socially distanced venues” or inside tents, and while envious that they are playing, can't join them. Won't join them. It just isn't worth it. We see other friends performing as though nothing has changed, sitting side by side on stools having writer night shows in small venues where people are not distanced. We are envious of them, too. We want to perform. We don't. We choose not to because it just isn't worth it. And that isn't about the money, it is about the health risks, to not only the bandmembers, but to the friends who will normally come out to hear us, or our family members back home we might bring the virus back to after the show. To each his own to some degree, but there is no small amount of social

responsibility involved here for us as a band. And for us, it is not worth the risk.

It is encouraging to see the tours and shows being promoted now for 2021, some as early as spring, but I don't get excited when I see them because I have no real confidence they will actually happen, as badly as I want them to. And I want them to because your customers who are performers, like me, want to work. We want to be entertained, and we want to entertain. The pent-up energy and frustration from not being able to do so is at a boiling point, but until this virus is genuinely under control, it will continue to be this way.

“My hope is that this turns around sooner rather than later, that I can spend Saturday afternoons again popping into music stores to see what's new, buying things on impulse, and getting some socializing. That was part of my normal.”

Ironically, being stuck inside, I have likely spent more on gear this year than I do during most years while I am getting to perform. I bought a couple of guitars, four nice pedals, a new audio interface, and who knows how many plugins. I wrote, and I recorded two albums. All of my purchases have been made online this year. I miss stopping by the various small dealers in Nashville even just to stare at what is in stock, maybe pull something off the wall, or have the folks behind the counter show something cool they just got in stock. There is a comradery that is missing in this year of gear purchases. That is a big part of being a musician, at least it is to me. My local dealer, area dealers, heck, even wandering around Guitar Center, are something I miss.

There are no easy answers to when this will end, if the vaccines being announced now are going to be taken by enough people and if humanity will learn to show concern for others until then. My hope is that this turns around sooner rather than later, that I can spend Saturday afternoons again popping into music stores to see what's new, buying things on impulse, and getting some socializing. That was part of my normal. I'm hoping I get to book my band again, or even just see my bandmates in person. Until then, I will wait it out, writing, recording, shopping for gear online, and being a musician, because that's who I am. Sell me something, I'm so bored. 



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