

MMR

MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW



14

UpFront Q&A:
D'Angelico Guitars'
Brenden Cohen



28

**Virtual Fun in the
Summertime:**
Meyer Music and
Band of Angels Make
The University of
Kansas' Midwestern
Music Camp Possible
for 2020

16

COMPLETE CONTROL

The DJ Controller Market in 2020



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- NF335C Bamboo
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C O N T E N T S



MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

FEATURES Vol.179 OCTOBER 2020 No. 10

Upfront Q&A



Making All Three Brands Better: D'Angelico's Brenden Cohen 14

Back in June, D'Angelico Guitars announced the acquisition of Supro USA and Pigtronix. We recently sat down with CEO Brenden Cohen to discuss the move,

the harmony between the three brands, and how the development presents enhanced opportunities for dealers

Roundtable

Complete Control: The DJ Controller Market in 2020 16

MMR touched base with five of the biggest names in DJ gear to learn about what models and types of controllers are resonating with end-users during this highly unusual year

Survey

Living on a Lighted Stage: Lighting & Stage Effects 18

It's not surprising that sales of lighting and stage effects this year are drastically diminished, but we checked in with dealers to see what brands and types of products are still moving – even if at far lower volumes

Retail

Fender Introduces Online Dealer Meeting Experience Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic 20

Learn more about this new online “experience” from Fender that will assist dealers in stocking their shelves during the pandemic – and for years afterwards

2020 Dealers' Choice Awards Ballot 22

View the nominees for this year's DCAs before logging on to mmrmagazine.com to cast your vote as an MMR subscriber

Retail

Virtual Fun in the Summertime: Meyer Music and Band of Angels Make The University of Kansas' Midwestern Music Camp Possible for 2020 28

As the country braced for major changes this summer due to COVID-19, Mike Meyer stepped in with the funds and know-how to take the camp to the virtual world, helping nearly 1950 students continue their education from home

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Departments	
Editorial	6
UpFront	8
Supplier Scene	10
Trade Regrets	12
People on the Move.....	12
Small Business Matters	30
New Products	31
Classifieds.....	34
Ad Index	34
The Last Word	36

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A woman with a floral face mask and a black top is playing a black acoustic guitar with a blue and green design on the body. She is standing on a cobblestone street in front of a yellow building with a balcony. The guitar has a blue and green design on the body. She is wearing a black top, white socks, and white boots. The background is a yellow building with a balcony and a dark door.

LUNA GUITARS

MUSIC WILL ALWAYS PREVAIL
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The Real MI Industry Winners

By Christian **Wissmuller**

I've been at *MMR* for 18 of the 28 years that this magazine has been presenting the annual Dealers' Choice Awards (DCAs) – long enough to have a pretty decent understanding of what makes these honors unique.

Other organizations, programs, networks, sites, and publications hand out awards, of course, but there are almost always at least one or two elements of the process that could easily be said to fall under the categories of "fine print" or even "back-door dealings." Some engage in fairly shameless "pay for play" practices: "You want to be nominated in a particular category? Fork over some cash!" Still others take that approach even further (ever wonder why the "winners" of awards given out by some magazines and groups consistently seem to be those who advertise or contribute the most? Coincidence, I'm sure...).

Even when you take commerce out of the equation, there's the matter of how champions are determined. Some awards are chosen by those lucky few who've been invited to become members in an exclusive group (The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, The Recording Academy, et cetera), but others – such as many (most) presented by publications – are determined by "a panel of experts" or the editorial staff.



“The winners of *MMR's* Dealers' Choice Awards are the real deal, the true champions in their respective categories as fairly and honestly determined by those in the MI industry.”

The DCAs represent none of the above. The nominations are determined by public suggestion (a process that begins in mid-summer and lasts roughly two and a half months) and the actual winners are selected by *MMR* readers – one vote per subscription. That means that only MI dealers and suppliers can decide the fate of nominees. There's no back room with myself and my associate editors huddled together with the sales staff to figure out which of the nominees we're going to give a trophy to this year, for whatever reasons. With only one vote per subscription number, that also means no ballot-stuffing. Sure, if you have six employees at your store or 20 at your guitar-string company who are all subscribers, then they each get a vote, but you don't get one person sitting at a computer filling in the same fields the exact same way and clicking "submit" over and over and over – or, as back in the olden days, a similar individual faxing the same form 30-plus times and actually having each submission accepted (side note: I do not miss the fax era for precisely this reason).

The winners of *MMR's* Dealers' Choice Awards are the real deal, the true champions in their respective categories as fairly and honestly determined by those in the MI industry. If you haven't already noticed, the nominees were announced a couple weeks ago (see pages 22-26) and voting is currently open and will remain so until October 31 at 12:00 p.m. (PST). If you haven't yet made your picks, please join the process (and fun)! Head over to mmmagazine.com/vote/ and have your subscription number at the ready (located on the front of your magazine in the address box. If there are zeros in front of your number please omit them – for example, "001234" should be entered as "1234"). I'll be announcing the winners – the deserving winners – in our December issue.


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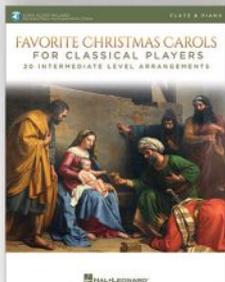
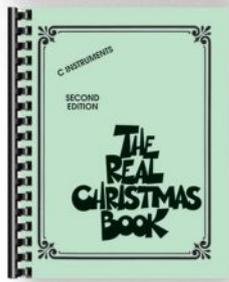
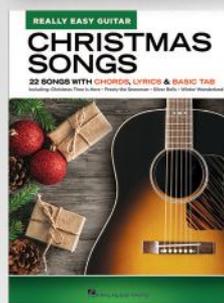
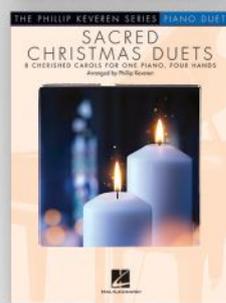
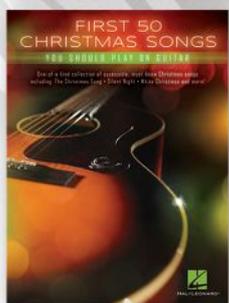
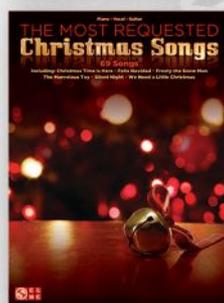
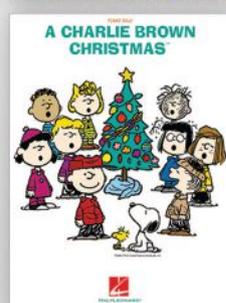
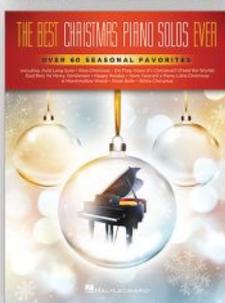
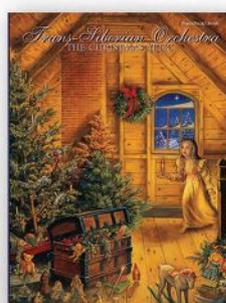
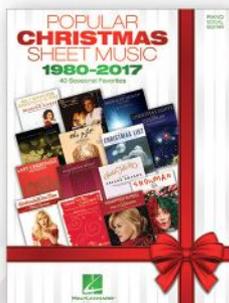
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Industry News

Ask the House to Vote NOW on the RESTART Act for Live Entertainment Industry Relief

NAMM is issuing an urgent call-to-action to all industry professionals to urge House leadership to bring H.R. 7481, the bipartisan RESTART Act, to the floor of the House for a vote.



The bill would provide provisions for the hardest-hit businesses to access additional PPP funds, long term, low-interest loans, and supplemental unemployment insurance to assist the hundreds of thousands of creative industry service workers impacted by the pandemic.

Earlier this year, a study from MMR sister publication, PLSN magazine, indicated that 77% of professionals in the space have lost 100% of their income; 96% of companies have cut their staff; and 97% of independent contractors (1099) have lost their jobs.

Live event businesses and professionals can add their voice in support of relief by contacting their representatives to provide targeted COVID-19 business relief for live event businesses and individual professionals.

- Industry News
- People on the Move
- Supplier Scene
- Trade Regrets

Reverb Announces New Combined Shipping Feature

Reverb has announced that sellers can now offer “Combine & Save” shipping rates to buyers that purchase multiple qualifying items from their Reverb shop. The much-requested feature could enable Reverb sellers to motivate customers to buy more at once to take advantage of discounted shipping rates.

According to Reverb CEO David Mandelbrot, early data suggest that allowing buyers to take advantage of discounted or free shipping rates when they purchase multiple items motivates them to buy additional items from sellers. Additionally, it makes purchasing smaller items – like guitar straps, strings, and picks – more attractive to buyers. When a seller offers Combine & Save shipping, buyers will see qualifying items prominently displayed as



they’re browsing the seller’s shop.

Sellers determine which items in their shop are eligible for discounted shipping rates when combined with other items. For example, if a seller offers free Combine & Save shipping on tuners, buyers that have a guitar, bass, ukulele, violin, or other music gear in their cart could add a tuner that ships free with their instrument.

To set up Combine & Save shipping rates, sellers can simply create a new shipping profile or visit their shipping settings to edit an existing profile. For more information on Combine & Save shipping, sellers can visit reverb.com/selling/combined-shipping.

Music China Still a Go



On September 8, organizers for Music China sent out a press release indicating that the annual trade show will still take place from October 28-31:

“Following a challenging year, exhibitors are keenly looking ahead to Music China – a place where they can reconnect face to face with industry peers, showcase their instruments, and explore new business opportunities,” reads the announcement.

“In the eyes of many, Music China is the perfect platform to unify the entire industry. Since a previous announcement in June, the 2020 show has attracted even more leading brands such as C. Bechstein, ESI, and Roland. This adds to an already impressive list that includes the likes of Casio, Hsinghai, Kawai, Pearl River, Samick, Schimmel, Seiko, Steinway, Taylor, Yamaha, and many more.”

Cordial Partners with Hal Leonard to Cover All Markets

Hal Leonard’s MI Product Division has entered into an exclusive distribution arrangement with German-based Cordial GmbH, makers of premium MI / Pro Audio cables and cable accessories. The announcement was made by François Rousies, Cordial CEO, and Brad Smith, VP of Hal Leonard MI division. Hal Leonard began shipping orders in September.

At its core, Cordial features ready-made, German engineered cabling with hand-soldered Neutrik connectors. With



well over 1,200 products in the company lineup and more than 25 years of experience, innovation, and dedication to the art and science of audio and data transmission, Cordial has become the first choice of performing artists, live sound technicians, recording engineers, and venue designers in over 60 countries across the globe.

CORRECTION

In the last issue, we ran a Letter that stated that Reverb CEO David Mandelbrot is “neither a musician nor music oriented.” Correction: Mandelbrot is a longtime guitar player and was the co-founder of Fretbase, a former online hub for guitar players with guitar tabs, videos, user reviews, and more.



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Supplier Scene

Christ Church Steps Up To Allen & Heath dLive

Christ Church struggled with a limited track count, underwhelming processing power, and a lack of overall sound and build quality in their previous front of house console. After an extensive search, the Arizona-based multi-congregational church switched brands and stepped up their audio game to an Allen & Heath dLive Digital Mixing System and tightly integrated ME Personal Mixing System.



"We've been growing so quickly and our tech requirements have really increased lately. I was definitely feeling the pressure to move forward with a more powerful console," says Christ Church-Gilbert production director Corey Wilson. "Not only a desk with more channels, but with the versatility to send out multiple feeds for broadcast and work well with both internal and external effects."

With the assistance of area technical consultant David Erickson of Church-Technologies, Christ Church purchased a dLive S7,000 console, CDM48 MixRack, a quartet of ME personal mixers, and a 10 port ME-U PoE Monitor Hub. This system design allows backline musicians to tailor their own in-ear mixes while frontline vocalist monitor needs are simultaneously handled from the FOH dLive console position.

Alfred Music Offers New Downloadable Classroom Resources for Remote Instruction

Alfred Music remains dedicated to supporting music educators by providing a broad range of content for all levels to assist with remote learning. Available for immediate download, these newly converted digital products (some as interactive slides, some as PDFs) include the full and same content as the physical versions and are now available at the click of a mouse.

Some of the titles available are: *60 Music Quizzes*, *Accent on Composers*, *All About Music Songs*, *The Cambiata Collection*, *The Complete Choral Warm-Up Book*, *Harmony*

Handbook, *Meet the Great Jazz Legends*, *Music Mosaic*, *Ready to Read Music*, and many more.

These digital products were adapted to be able to be shared directly with students, making it easier to use in a remote teaching setting. For products that are reproducible (shareable), a note is included on the first pages about granting permission to photocopy/reproduce. For more information and to see a full list of available downloadable products, visit media.alfred.com.

PRS Guitars Announces Pulse Artist Program

The newly-unveiled PRS Guitars Pulse Artist program is designed to support leading local artists around the world. This unique program will utilize PRS's extensive dealer network to provide local access to some of the benefits of an endorsement, while also serving as a potential stepping stone to becoming an official PRS artist. With their annual membership, Pulse Artists will be granted exclusive discounts on guitars, amps, and accessories through their local PRS dealer and will be showcased on a dedicated Pulse Artist roster on the PRS Guitars website. PRS social platforms will be utilized as well as the creation of editorial content to amplify these artists and share their music, news, and progress as they pursue their musical journey.

Artists can submit their application to become a Pulse Artist through any authorized PRS dealer. Submissions will be accepted September 1 through October 31, 2020. All applications will be reviewed by the PRS Artist Relations team. The inaugural group of 2021 PRS Pulse Artists will be announced on December 15, 2020.



Hal Leonard Distributes Masks and More to Fight COVID-19

Hal Leonard has acquired exclusive distribution rights to new products that have been successful in making music spaces safer for combatting the COVID-19 virus.

Hal Leonard partnered with Gibraltar to produce two new sound and virus shields. The 3-panel Acrylic Lesson Room Divider stands 5 feet high and 6 feet wide. The new Music Stand Shield was designed so it can sit on the shelf of any standard, sturdy music stand, turning it into a portable 24" x 30" clear shield. Gibraltar also offers a five-panel drum shield and an amp floor sound shield that could also be put on counter tops.

The CapN Shield Clear Plastic Face Shield slides onto the brim of any baseball cap or visor to give the wearer instant



protection. Made in Wisconsin, they are 100 percent reusable so they can be cleaned and shared. The Singers' Mask is a professional cloth face mask made by Broadway professionals for the Broadway community. These are designed to keep the cloth well off your mouth and features side vents to improve air flow.

Hal Leonard is also distributing several COVID-19 fighting products from Gator, due to their distribution agreement for Gator's Levy's Leathers brand. Hal Leonard will distribute their wind and brass player's masks with flaps, allowing the instrument to touch your lips while you keep the mask on, as well as Brass Bell Covers that cover the bell of any brass instrument.

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ON THE MOVE

Audio-Technica has announced that Audio-Technica U.S. president/CEO **Phil Cajka** will retire March 31, 2021, after being with the organization since 1981. Cajka, who has led A-T U.S. since his appointment as president/CEO in 1996, has continually advanced Audio-Technica's position in the industry with unprecedented growth, launched groundbreaking products, increased A-T's dealer network, led the company to expand into new markets, and guided the company's participation in numerous high-profile industry events.



Phil Cajka

Effective August 1, 2020, **Manabu Aoki**, who currently holds the position of Audio-Technica Corp. Japan general manager, International Division, became the new A-T U.S. chief execu-



Manabu Aoki

tive officer. Cajka, who over the years has had a close working relationship with Aoki, will remain as president until his retirement, to help ensure a smooth leadership transition. Prior to joining Audio-Technica, Aoki served as president of JVC Professional Europe, Ltd. and vice president of JVC Europe, Headquartered in London, UK.

"Audio-Technica has been one of my life's passions, and I am honored to have worked with everyone at A-T U.S. and our parent company in Japan. I am extremely proud of what Audio-Technica now stands for, and I am preparing the company for its next phase of growth," stated Cajka. "I am very confident in our management team, and having worked with Mr. Aoki for years, I know he is the best choice to lead the company into its next chapter of success. After being with A-T for almost four decades, this is the right time for me to pass the baton and move forward to the next chapter of my life."

Chris French has joined the **jj Babbitt Company's** team of professional craftsmen and women as director of en-

gineering, according to an announcement by Steve Rorie, president. French will work directly with Rorie and Jim Green, vice president of manufacturing, in the areas of process quality and control, product quality and consistency, technology adaptation, and new product design.



Allen & Heath USA has made a key appointment as part of its increased expansion into the commercial and install market. Based in Kansas City, Missouri, **Samantha Potter** has been tapped to fill the field support – commercial audio role. Working under the American Music & Sound (AM&S) umbrella, Potter will assist and support further adoption of Allen & Heath solutions in the United States installation market across all verticals.



Trade Regrets

On September 2, we received the following from NAMM's Dan Del Fiorentino:

*It is with a heavy heart that we note the passing of our member and friend **Mr. Manji Suzuki**. Suzuki-san passed away August 21, 2020 at the age of 97.*



Suzuki-san had a deep passion for the music industry. He was the founder and chairman of Suzuki Musical Instrument Manufacturing Company in Hamamatsu, Japan. The company began as a harmonica maker and over the years developed innovative instruments such as a full line of wood harmonicas for music education. His passion and personal mission was to introduce music into the lives of young people. During the 1980s he purchased the Hammond Organ Company and for the first time ever brought in the Leslie Speaker Company under the same ownership. Those on hand for the recording of Mr. Suzuki's NAMM interview had a real sense of history, as his career was revolutionary on many levels.

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Making All Three Brands Better

D'Angelico's Brenden Cohen

By Christian Wissmuller

Back in June, D'Angelico Guitars announced the acquisition of Supro USA and Pigtronix. We recently sat down with CEO Brenden Cohen to discuss the move, the harmony between the three brands, and how the development presents enhanced opportunities for dealers.

What was the catalyst behind the recent acquisition of Supro and Pigtronix? How did the move come about?

We have always had a huge amount of respect for both Supro and Pigtronix – their products are outstanding. D'Angelico had been working with Supro in our marketing efforts as a guitar/amp pairing for years, and we always felt like there was something natural yet unique about the vibe we created together. And Pigtronix's pedals are extraordinary, with so much room to grow, as well. When the opportunity arose to acquire the brands, we didn't think twice. We knew that all three brands would be even better if we started working together.

Can you talk about how regional proximity plays into the evolution of this partnership?

The fact that all three brands are located in New York only amplifies the harmony we already share. It allows us to have a larger company footprint, share our resources without many operational challenges, and share a sense of roots and sensibility.

What does this new acquisition represent in terms of new opportunities for MI dealers?

Simply put, our dealers are going to have easier access to even more high-quality products. The best part of this new era is that there is effortless harmony amongst the brands, but they each stand strong independently as well. We will be providing more resources, better marketing support, and also making sure our dealers have access to the absolute best value opportunities possible.

Dave Koltai will be remaining on staff. How many others from the previous Supro and Pigtronix team will also remain?

Yes, Dave Koltai will be serving as our chief technology officer, handling research



Brenden Cohen

and development of the most technical aspects of our product development, especially as it pertains to amplifiers and pedals. Several people on the technical, engineering, sales, and customer service side will also remain.

How will the overall restructuring impact product development or distribution models in the coming months across all three brands?

Product development will be uninterrupted, as all products for the next six to 12 months were already developed and slated. Going forward from that point, there will be more opportunity than ever before for new projects from all three brands, including cross-brand collaborations. We are reviewing each territory and will be making decisions based on what is best for our dealers and our customers.

To what degree was enacting such a significant acquisition made more challenging during a pandemic?

This acquisition was in process well before COVID-19, so when that happened, everything became significantly more difficult. You name it, COVID-19 affected it. It was a great lesson in patience, and a reminder that you only pursue something like this when you really believe in it, and that's exactly what we did.

Expectations for the company in the coming months?

We are currently working on growing certain teams, adopting new systems, and organizing plans for some changes in time for 2021. We truly believe in these brands and our ability to help each reach their full potential. We absolutely cannot wait for our customers and dealers to see what we have in store for them. 

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COMPLETE CONTROL

The DJ Controller Market in 2020

By Christian Wissmuller

While in-person DJ performances have been nearly completely shut down during the pandemic, at-home immersion in learning or advancing DJ skills has seen a serious uptick in recent months, as have sales of DJ Controllers. With stages no longer an option, practitioners are making use of streaming, green screen, and other tech-savvy methods of sharing their creativity with others.

MMR touched base with five of the biggest names in DJ gear to learn about what models and types of Controllers are resonating with end-users during this highly unusual year.

Obviously COVID-19/lockdown has had a devastating impact on live performance and that's, of course, impacted DJs. How has this all been affecting DJ Controller sales?

David Morbey: Our Xone:K2 controller is hugely popular with live/ touring artists, so we have obviously not seen the usual sales to that segment. However, with the world on lockdown we have seen many DJs invest in their home setups, so actually sales of the K2 are up significantly year on year. The fact that the K2 is generic/non-software specific means it's the perfect add-on for so many setups and can be freely mapped to perform many different functions. We have even seen them being used as lighting controllers!

Ben Blakesley: It has certainly been a challenging time for nearly all business learning how to navigate the current state of the world.

Supply chain and manufacturing challenges have arisen, but overall, sales have been up for us. What's really been interesting is that we're seeing product usage spike substantially (particularly early on in the pandemic) as new and aspiring DJs finally get around to using gear that they may have received or purchased previously. With more time on their hands, many people are getting more into music, which is a good thing!

Daniel Lee: Roland is seeing an uptick in DJ controller sales during these times. While lockdown in most parts of the country has greatly affected income streams of performing DJ's, it seems as though people who may have been on the fence about getting into DJing have the time to explore

and commit to learning now.

Jay Cunningham: It's certainly been challenging for all areas of the DJ sector and for us, supply chain and manufacturing have been the toughest. We've been proactively working in all areas to ensure that we're keeping stock flowing around the world to get kit into DJ's hands. We had a big start to the year announcing five new products, so ensuring these get out there has been our top priority! Overall sales have been up for us.

For your brand, what are currently the hottest selling DJ Controllers?

BB: For Numark, we've seen great sales success this year with our newest offerings: DJ2GO2 Touch and the Mixtrack Platinum FX and Mixtrack Pro FX.

DL: Roland's hottest selling controllers right now are the DJ-202, DJ-505 and DJ-707M. The DJ-202 includes the full version of Serato DJ Pro, if purchased in the U.S., so you're getting a top tier experience at a budget price. There's also a drum machine on board that allows for live-remixing or re-drumming on the fly. The DJ-505 sits in that "intermediate" range, and allows easier access to programming the drum machine with unique features like step loop. The DJ-707M is doing well too because of its ability to live-stream to a capable smartphone, like an iPhone. Since there are two USB-B ports you can use the first USB port to connect to your laptop and control Serato DJ Pro, and then use the second USB port to connect straight into your phone via USB dongle.

JC: PRIME 4, PRIME 2 and PRIME GO, our standalone DJ consoles, have been in high demand this year and we're excited to see DJs showing us what they can do with them.

DM: Well, we only have the one model, so it's the Xone:K2! But it's a scalable system.. as well as being a standalone device, the K2 can be connected to any of our mixers featuring an X:LINK port. This port carries data and power to the K2 from the mixer allowing a single USB connection to the PC/Mac. The mixers themselves can be MIDI mapped to software and multiple K2's can be daisy chained together via X:LINK to create some very interesting and individual setups... we are not talking simply two decks and a mixer here.



Allen & Heath's Xone:K2 Controller David Morbey, Commercial Manager – DJ, Allen & Heath



Numark's Mixtrack Platinum FX

Ben Blakesley, Global Brand Director, inMusic Brands/Numark



Aside from pandemic-related issues, what trends have you been noticing in this market segment? Are there any features or recent breakthroughs which are in especially high demand?

DL: Streaming! What's unique about Roland is that, in addition to creating DJ controllers, we manufacture livestream-ready tools at a variety of different price points. Since live streamed DJ sets are the new norm, we've seen DJs like D-Nice rule the internet on platforms like Instagram utilizing the GO:MIXER. Also, since copyright laws haven't caught up yet, DJs have migrated and settled on platforms like Twitch. So, you're seeing a lot of people adapt to utilizing green screen, and guys like Buck Rogers are using the VR-4HD to create these elaborate backdrops and keep listeners entertained.

DM: Innovation in hardware for this segment has been pretty static. Lots of dual platter/mixer controllers at every price point. The real innovation seems to be in software with both Virtual DJ 2021 and Algoriddim's DJAY PRO AI offering new real-time source separation of tracks. I think this is game-changing for many DJ's. The beauty of a generic controller like the K2 means these new features can be easily mapped without having to wait for dedicated hardware to hit the market.

JC: Internal Wi-Fi and streaming are hot topics around our range and have been very well received across the board. We now have four streaming partners (Beatport, Beatsource, Soundcloud Go, and TIDAL) and just recently announced our free Dropbox integration with our latest public beta for Engine OS and Engine Prime.

BB: It's becoming clearer and clearer that streaming music services are now playing, and will play, a significant role for DJs of nearly all skill levels going forward. Simplicity of use, ease of set-up, but robust features are all super important right now as well.

Do you have any upcoming or recent product introductions you'd like to bring to our readers' attention?

JC: We're only nine months into the year and we've added so many new features and products to our range, I can't go into



Denon DJ's Prime 4 Controller

Jay Cunningham, Brand Marketing Manager, Denon DJ|Rane



detail, but I can tell you we're not stopping here – far from it.

BB: We've got plenty of new things cooking that I can't mention yet, but the new Mixtrack FX units are great for new and aspiring DJs and also for those semi-pros who need solid features without spending a ton of money.

DM: Depends how you define recent. The cornerstones of our range are our analog mixers which can often have a very long lifespan. For instance, Xone:92 is heading towards its 20th year and show no signs of losing its revered status. More recently we introduced Xone:96, which takes the legendary analog soul of the original 92 and serves it up in a remastered format with some feature enhancements and state-of-the-art digital connectivity. And of course we're always working on the next big thing.

DL: Not yet!

Expectations for the coming months regarding DJ Controller sales?

DM: More of the same. As we head in to the traditional retail season we see no sign of demand for the K2 slowing. Many users will be new to DJing or have rekindled an old hobby. They perhaps started earlier in the year and are now looking to expand or accessorize their setup. The Xone:K2 is the perfect complement to any setup.



Roland's DJ-202 Controller

Daniel Lee, Roland Corporation U.S. Channel Strategy Manager – DJ, V-MODA



DL: With the holiday season coming up, we're expecting to see the increased trend in DJ controller sales to continue. We're hoping more people get into DJing, and we want to help inspire/cultivate to ultimately grow the culture. This is why we provide free, online, in-person lessons through our platform called Roland Cloud Academy to make sure that we're listening and connecting to our community.

BB: It will be interesting to see if people will continue to take up new hobbies like DJing as they did early in the pandemic. And it will also be interesting to see how music is incorporated into how the economy and society begin to reopen to the public. I don't see large crowds of people getting out on the dance floor anytime soon, but I think there will still be a demand for DJs to use music to connect to people and those DJs will need great gear to help them do it.

JC: These are unprecedented times and understanding where this will go in the coming months is a challenge, we've had a good year so far and remain extremely competitive price wise in the market. 

Living on a Lighted Stage...

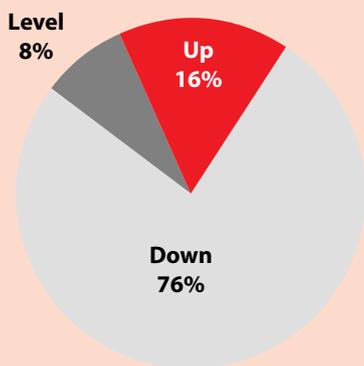
Lighting & Stage Effects

By Christian **Wissmuller**

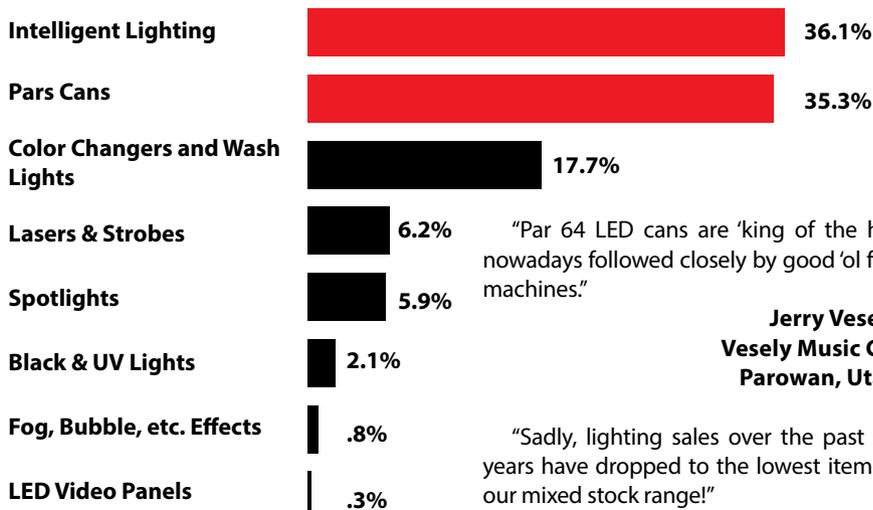
One of the many casualties of the current pandemic has been live music performance. Starting in early February major tours began to be cancelled, clubs and dance-halls shuttered, and large gatherings of all types were put on hold. Though a few “socially distanced” (or perhaps *not* especially distanced...) indoor and outdoor performances have taken place in recent weeks, in general the whole industry remains shut down.

While certain MI market segments have actually benefitted from lockdown (guitars, ukuleles, hand percussion, home recording gear, et cetera), anything directly related to concerts and the like has taken an absolute beating. It’s not surprising, then, that sales of lighting and stage effects this year are drastically diminished, but we checked in with dealers to see what brands and types of products are still moving – even if at far lower volume.

Compared to last year, sales of stage lighting and effects products for your business are...



In terms of volume (number of units sold) which categories of lighting and effects sell most at your store?



“Par 64 LED cans are ‘king of the hill’ nowadays followed closely by good ‘ol fog machines.”

Jerry Vesely
Vesely Music Co.
Parowan, Utah

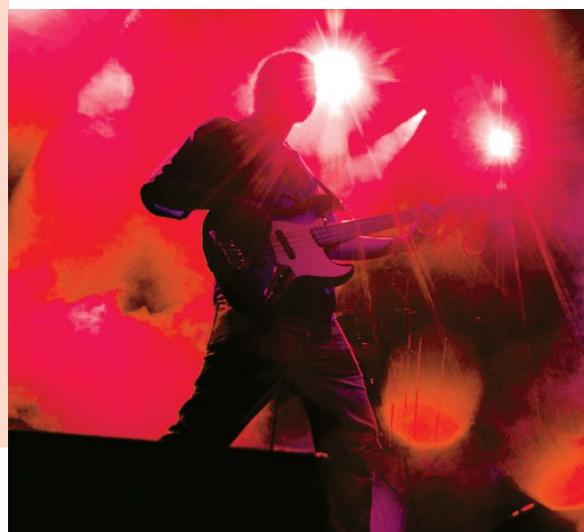
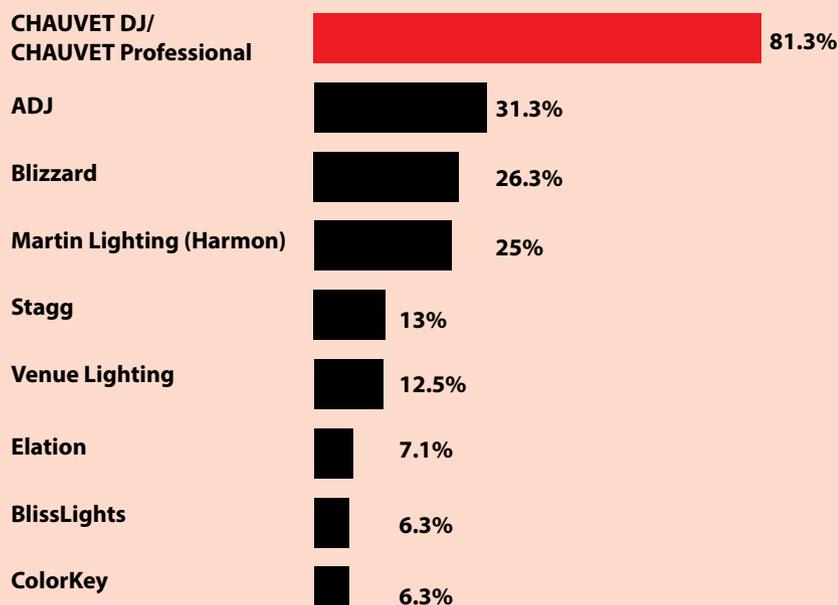
“Sadly, lighting sales over the past six years have dropped to the lowest item of our mixed stock range!”

Robert Rivers
Havant Music Mart
Havant, Hampshire
United Kingdom

“DJs and clubs are our primary customers and they usually look for the newest technology in lighting.”

David St. John
Music & Arts
Glendora, California

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



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Fender Introduces Online Dealer Meeting Experience Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic

By Victoria Wasylak

When the MI industry began to brace for the challenges of COVID-19 this spring, Fender Musical Instruments Corporation (FMIC) didn't waste any time getting creative. Right as the news arrived that the 2020 Summer NAMM Show was cancelled due to public health concerns, the company started cooking up a solution: an online dealer meeting experience.

On August 10, dealers from around the globe tuned in to view FMIC's 30-plus new offerings and peruse brand content at their leisure.

Through this format, Fender is able to release and share all of the products that had originally been scheduled to debut at Summer NAMM, which range from new pedals and amps, to a variety of new acoustic, electric, and Squire model guitars. Chief among the new goodies are the 70th Anniversary Esquire, the 60th Anniversary Jazz Bass (also available as a "Road Worn" model), and the Limited Edition American Acoustasonic Exotic Stratocaster, which will be available in October.

"We started the actual work on the platform (an event module in our dealer portal) the first week of April and we put the final touches on it Friday, August 7," explains Tammy Van Donk, EVP Sales, America and EMEA Fender. "We will reach 100 percent of our dealer network using our online platform, so missing Summer NAMM has not had an impact on our launch plans. This is a global online dealer event which means our entire network will learn about our new products at the same time."

The pieces of the event came together carefully over the course of four months, as the Fender team recorded different video segments across the globe. Albeit more challenging to coordinate, Fender plans to keep this format in place for the foreseeable future. The online experience will also fill a void in 2021, as the Winter NAMM show shifts to a virtual "Believe In Music" week.

"Executing an online event during a pandemic meant we had to ensure strict protocols were followed as we filmed segments," Van Donk adds. "We filmed in our Hollywood office, Jim Hensen Recording Studios, East West Studios, Saltmine Studios in Mesa, Arizona, and even in London and Tokyo. We all began to appreciate the effort that comes with creating an online event, which was something much more detailed than a physical event. I am beyond ecstatic about the finished product and I believe it is what our dealers expect from us. It was truly a collaborative effort across our Solution Delivery IT team, our marketing operations team, and our product line management team."

Shops and businesses who aren't confident in their tech skills can take comfort in knowing that this new "experience" is built upon the familiar format of Fender's Dealer Portal, making it easy for everyone to access.

"That was the great thing about this approach," Van Donk says. "Our dealers already know how to navigate this portal and place orders, so it is not a giant leap to get them into our event module. The navigation of the event is pretty intuitive. We have keynote speakers from our executive team and tracks to go deeper into our product launches. We kept the keynotes and videos brief and were even able to include artist cameos throughout. Since these are all pre-recorded, our dealers can navigate at their own pace."

Even though the dealer portal was born of 2020's hardships, the entire team at FMIC remains delighted about the company's new medium for connection and sharing information. Looking ahead, Fender is already lining up more releases to be shared through the online portal and experience, solidifying it as a tool for dealers that's here to stay, no matter what comes of this year – and whatever else the future holds for the MI industry.

"Continued product innovation is at the core of everything we do, and our new products are a direct reflection of feedback from artists and players around the world," adds Justin Norvell, executive vice president, Product at Fender. "Throughout the remainder of 2020, we're introducing an elevated, compelling selection across all categories – including electric and acoustic guitars, basses, amps, pedals, accessories and more - with something for every player at every stage of their musical journey. Some of the greatest music has come through in the most challenging times, so serving artists now and in the future with tools to create has never been more important." **REDFER**

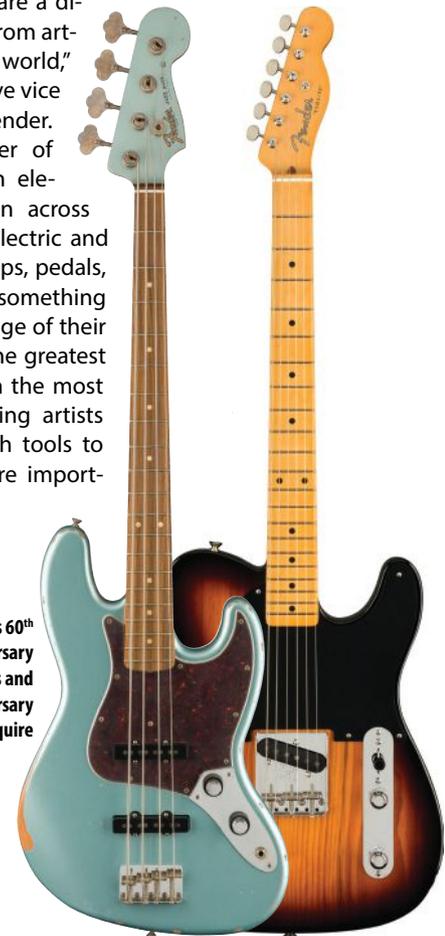


Tammy Van Donk



A peek at the Online Dealer Meeting Experience

Fender's 60th Anniversary Jazz Bass and 70th Anniversary Esquire



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- RECORDING EQUIPMENT LINE OF THE YEAR • BAND & ORCHESTRA INSTRUMENT LINE OF THE YEAR
- ACOUSTIC PIANO LINE OF THE YEAR • PERCUSSION LINE OF THE YEAR
- HOME DIGITAL KEYBOARD OF THE YEAR • LIGHTING LINE OF THE YEAR
- PRO DIGITAL PIANO LINE OF THE YEAR • DJ LINE OF THE YEAR
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VIRTUAL

Fun in the Summertime

Meyer Music and Band of Angels Make The University of Kansas' Midwestern Music Camp Possible for 2020 By Victoria Wasylak

The University of Kansas' Midwestern Music Camp has been a place of learning and refuge for band and orchestra students since 1936.

In 2020, for the first time in 85 years, it almost didn't happen – almost.

As the country braced for major changes this summer due to COVID-19, Mike Meyer of Meyer Music and Band of Angels stepped in with the funds and know-how to take the camp to the virtual world this year. His generosity resulted in roughly 1,930 children from 46 states – and multiple countries – receiving three days of online classes at no cost.

"It's the second oldest camp in the United States," Meyer shares. "The music camp was very worried – they didn't want to see it take a year off and break the streak."

Little did Meyer know at the time that his efforts in the music education world had been leading up to this moment.

On top of serving his family's Missouri and Kansas-based MI shop, Meyer founded Band of Angels 10 years ago to put used instruments in the hands of underserved children who wouldn't be able to play music otherwise. Over its decade of service, the non-profit organization has grown significantly, and began to offer scholarships to summer music programs as well. Last year alone, Band of Angels sent 103 kids to the summer music camp of their choice on full scholarships, in effect paying for \$80,000 worth of registrations and tuition. The financial support comes from outpourings of donations from folks in the Kansas City area, as well as the manufacturing community in the United States. As this summer approached and it became apparent that summer music camps wouldn't be able to occur in person, Meyer easily switched gears and began organizing a virtual camp via Zoom with the University of Kansas.

"We've been preparing for things like this for so long, we just didn't even know it," Meyer says. "I was already used to spending \$60,000, \$70,000, \$80,000 on sending these kids to camp because we – not only as Meyer Music, but as Band of Angels – are raising money to make this happen. When it became apparent really quickly that camps aren't going to happen, I already had the funding that I was going to spend to send kids to camps. We funneled that money into this virtual camp to make sure that we did it right."

Meyer was able to send some children to camps that weren't cancelled, but most of this year's funding went to creating an all-online version The University of Kansas' Midwestern Music Camp, which was held from June 15 to 17.

"They [the university] reached out to me first because we have developed this fantastic relationship," Meyer says. "For the last six years, I've been sending 30 to 60 kids to their camp. Band of Angels has become a very big presence at that camp, sending underserved kids, financially disadvantaged kids, kids with emotional issues that needed music to this camp, and they've embraced that. And what's funny is they don't single the kids out. They don't wear anything different than everybody else does. They don't go to any different classes than everybody else does. They just are there."

When the university contacted Meyer with the idea of a Zoom camp, he hopped on board immediately, offering to pay for the staff, advertising on social media, and the tuition for every student. Meyer also paid for two of the four guest artists who hosted live sessions, while Yamaha paid for the other two (more on that later).

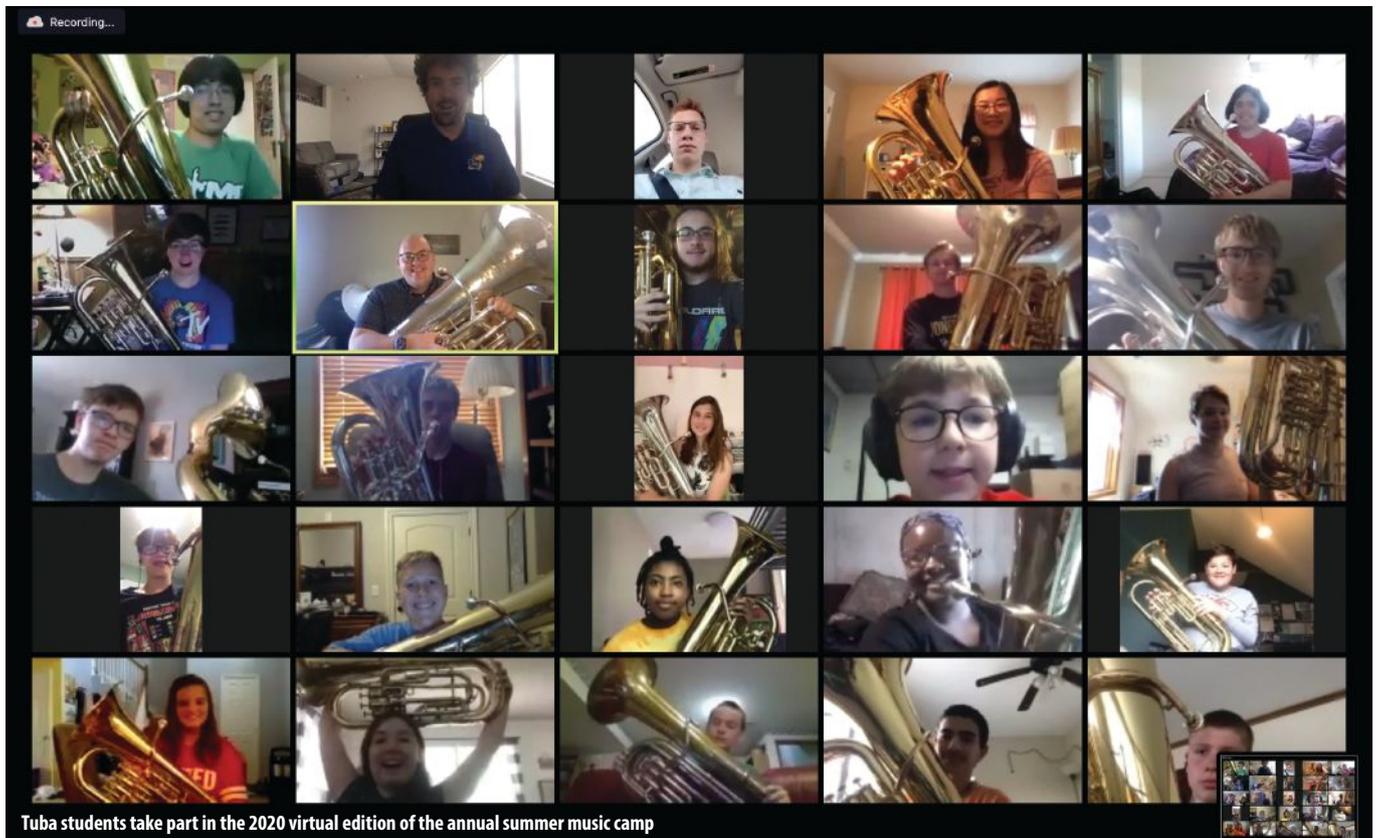
The response to the camp's new format was overwhelming: 900 kids signed up to participate within the first two days of registration. Meyer and the university had originally hoped for 500 to 600 children, total. By the time the camp started, nearly 1950 kids were sitting in. While Meyer reports that the "vast majority" of the students hailed from Kansas and Missouri, 40-plus states were represented in total, as well as kids from Mexico, Switzerland, Canada, Ukraine, and Hungary.

Midwestern Music Camp stepped up to plate, offering 72 virtual group sessions, and just shy of 300 individual lessons. To fully complete course, students had to tune into three sessions per day, but as Meyer and the KU staff quickly found, students stayed plugged in for the duration of the camp. "They blew that number completely away," Meyer says. "Talk about being inspired during a crisis."

While Meyer and Yamaha both helped to pay for guest sessions, Meyer says that his longstanding relationship with Yamaha helped to snag some top-tier talent for the camp: "We paid for two of the artists to bring nationally known people that would typically not have been able to kind of do the camp in most cases, to do it from their home."

Over 300 students tuned into a session by Kat Rodriguez, tenure Bari Sax player for Beyoncé. George Shelby, a saxophone player who plays for the Grammy Awards and on "American Idol," and violinist Matt Stallings also offered sessions. For a truly well-rounded experience, 19-year-old Grammy-nominated producer Imani Presley did a session on producing music, where she explained the software that she uses. To finish the camp on a social note, over 800 kids tuned into "bunker bingo" to play via Zoom.

"It was so cool to see kids who during the middle of the summer, [who] could be outside doing any number of things, and they wanted to learn and sit in front of that computer with their clarinet, or their harp, or their trombone, and study music. It was just so cool." – Mike Meyer



Tuba students take part in the 2020 virtual edition of the annual summer music camp

"Because so much has been shut down nationally, giving young musicians the chance to interact with professionals unique to their instruments felt even more important this summer," says Dr. Matt Smith, KU's associate director of bands and Midwestern Music Camp's director. "With the economic impact of the COVID situation, we're seeing more events go virtual. But, I haven't seen anything that has attempted the size and scope of our music camp this summer. Campers from 46 states and multiple countries, such as Mexico, Hungary, and Switzerland participated."

Meyer and some of his staff were able to tune in for much of the camp, which left them equally awestruck and full of pride. One day, Meyer asked an employee how many students were in a clarinet session, expecting about 30 kids. There were 166.

"I was like, 'You're kidding me. 166 clarinet players?'" Meyer recalls. "I mean, I get goosebumps thinking about it. It was so cool to see kids who during the middle of the summer, [who] could be outside doing any number of things, and they wanted to learn and sit in front of that computer with their clarinet, or their harp, or their trombone, and study music. It was just so cool."

For children who might have missed a session they wanted to virtually "attend," the university sent out recordings of the camp to everyone who had registered, offering another unexpected benefit to the camp's digital format.

In fact, even when things return to "normal" and it's safe for children to congregate for lessons and rehearsals again, Meyer hopes that the camp can still maintain a virtual element going forward. Between allowing more students to participate, and bringing a camp to students who don't have any music camps near them, keeping Zoom in the fold for the future feels like a win for everyone.

"I don't want to see this component of this camp go away," he says. "We have to make sure that we keep a component of this camp that makes that available and accept everybody out there who wants to. And it doesn't cost that much to make that available." 

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Recovery



By **Menzie Pittman**

Recovery – Where to Begin?

As a musician my true nature is to see and seek potential and possibilities, as well as solutions for any resistance I encounter. That formula is also the backbone of the music industry and has carried me through many a challenge enabling me to remove whatever resistance is in my path. Fortunately, or unfortunately, there are always steps in that process.

Identification, Perception, and Admission

All successful problem-solving starts with admission. First, we must be honest and accurate in identifying the characteristics of any problems we encounter. In the case of COVID-19 this is a harder challenge than normal; it is difficult to solve a multi-dimensional problem when it is morphing daily.

Another consideration is the fact that the perception of COVID-19 often differs from person to person and from region to region. Perception is a lens through which we view things. What we perceive as accurate becomes our reality – and although we believe it to be real, it may not be factual. Therefore, when the specifics of a problem are continually changing, and the perceptions of that problem vary, identifying the best solution becomes more difficult. So, starting with that admission is healthy, and it allows us to move forward.

We can now freely admit that since no one knows exactly what we are experiencing or exactly what we should do, it gives us a free pass to experiment in finding productive solutions to our current business challenges, and allows us grace in our mistakes making them more acceptable. My advice is to label it a “jazz moment,” and revel in the improv!

Sobriety

Remember that time at the frat party when you were the cool guy? You woke up the next morning hosting a splitting headache, you didn’t remember too much from the night before, yet you desperately tried to recall the details of the prior night, and you searched madly for your dignity.

Well, that’s how COVID-19 has left most of us feeling – especially the smaller independent dealers.

New Thinking, and Green Shoots

Now, after the initial train-wreck of COVID, creative dealers are furiously pursuing resources, productive partnerships, solutions, and new ways of presenting their business offerings. We can no longer continue to depend on what we did in the past. And just as the mythological phoenix rose from the ashes, so we will emerge from something that has been destroyed. Think about the situation with public education. The fresh ideas we had, that may have been shunned (even recently), don’t seem quite so crazy now. To survive this awkward time, we need to entertain a new level of cooperation. We must embrace a new “old fashioned way,” but with the important new twist: *civility!*

Civility, cooperation, empathy, and inventiveness coupled with technology will be the new cocktail.

The Revival of the Tool of Networking

Taking a cue from the past, revive the art of networking. For those who have truly developed that skill, networking has really paid off recently. When a storm like COVID hits, everyone is humbled, and civility and cooperation become the new cryptocurrency. Networking is the vault where they are stored.

In the past week I have had long conversations with several well-run music stores, and music educators at every level, from individual musicians to college professors. I have spoken to software developers, product reps, families, schoolteachers, local leaders, college students, and the list goes on. Everyone is looking for fresh ways of thinking, relief, and effective ways to rekindle commerce and, lastly, a sense of stability in their business.

Surprise! Every crisis brings unexpected good news!

For many, the news isn’t all bad. Here is a quote from an article published in the *New York Times* entitled “Guitars are Back – Baby!”

“A half-year into a pandemic that has threatened to sink entire industries, people are turning to the guitar as a quarantine companion and psychological salve, spurring a surge in sales for some of the most storied companies (Fender, Gibson, Martin, Taylor) that has shocked even industry veterans.”

So, if you were postured correctly with an excellent online presence, you may have enjoyed an unexpected increase in sales. I personally have seen an increased interest in education, but there is a catch to that last statement. The customers expect perfection. Due to personal stress, there doesn’t seem to be much empathy from customers. They are dealing with all the odd cancellations and restrictions, too, so the increased interest in education doesn’t come without a cost. However, I also believe that that level of good service should be the norm.

In Closing

Recovery is a long and challenging process. I’m sure everyone in the music industry is working harder than ever before just to maintain “normal.” I feel compassion for the performing musicians whose livelihoods have been abruptly interrupted – and let’s not forget all the service businesses who have suffered because of this event.

Many have come to realize that perhaps we, as a society, have been moving too quickly without considering the personal cost. Now, most of my industry friends are riding bikes, hiking, increasing their family time, and re-examining their priorities and values. That’s a positive in all of this.

To truly embrace recovery, you first must start with yourself.

▬▬▬▬▬

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”.

Accessories

ISO Power Block from Rockboard

The RockBoard ISO Power Block V16 is a multi-power supply for effects pedals with 16 isolated transformers and highly filtered power slots, designed for powering up to 15 effects pedals simultaneously without any noise and charging USB devices. The advanced filtering technology used in each of the power slots prevents high frequency noise. Built with individual slot short circuit protection, connected effects pedals are protected in case of a short circuit. With a designated LED for each power slot indicating the slot is working correctly, you can quickly identify any problems without losing power to the rest of your rig. \$189.90



www.rockboard.de

Adoro's Silent Sticks

Silent Sticks are an inexpensive means with which to cut acoustic drum and cymbal volume +/-50%, even when playing at normal velocity. Dual-Twist Reflex Tips consisting of two twisted strands of firm, yet flexible monofilament nylon rounded tightly like small hoops, are permanently embedded with epoxy into the stick shafts. Instead of bouncing like the bead of a typical stick, these tips rebound by flexing, making it possible to practice quietly or play gigs at lower volumes without adjusting the velocity of the playing. The air-filled shafts (16"/406mm long; 0.47"/12mm dia.) are made of lightweight but shock resistant polycarbonate that absorbs the impact of the hardest strokes. They will not wear out or warp. For a relaxed no-slip grip of the sticks and great finger control, there are textured rubber X-Grips.



www.silent-sticks.com

Music Nomad's 2 'n 1 Beyond Plush Players Cloth and Nut Files

Music Nomad's 2 'n 1 Beyond Plush Players Cloth features deep plush fibers to trap and carry dust away from the surface. With 90,000 fibers per square inch and lint-free construction, the suede fiber is designed to wipe away sweat, finger oil, and grime buildup that attacks the strings and reduces string life and string tone. A soft microfiber edging helps avoid it scratching the finish.



Music Nomad's Nut Files feature a diamond coating and round "string-shape" blade design resulting in smooth, precision cuts. They cut and polish slots at the same time and do not drift like common toothed files. The industrial, even diamond coating cuts all new or existing nut or saddle materials, such as nylon, bone, graphite, and even metals such as brass and zinc. With 16 sizes to choose from starting with .010" up to .130", they work great for electric, acoustic and classical guitars, as well as 5 string basses. They can be bought individually or come in popular six-piece sets with an aluminum storage case.



www.musicnomad.com

1440 Stereo Looper and Pitch Fork+ Pitch Shifter from Electro-Harmonix

The 1440 Stereo Looper is the next step in compact loopers from EHX. Building on the footprint and simple yet powerful feature set of the 720 Looper, the 1440 doubles the loop time to 24 minutes, adds extra functionality to the second footswitch, and employs midi functionality. Features like the 1-Shot Playback and Loop Retrigger make it even more useful for making musical moments on the fly. The 1440 Stereo Looper also has a companion Loop Manager App to allow for easy upload and download of loop audio to and from a Mac or PC.



Electro-Harmonix's Pitch Fork+ is a polyphonic pitch shifter/harmony pedal. It comes equipped with two independent pitch shifting engines with full control over each and both capable of transposing over a +/- 3 octave range as well as detuning +/-99 cents. The Pitch Fork+ features dedicated volume controls for both Shift voices and the Dry signal, two outputs (Main and Aux) with multiple routing options, 10 unique factory presets, a Bypass footswitch, and a user footswitch. The Pitch Fork+ comes equipped with a standard EHX 9.6DC200mA power supply.



www.ehx.com

Rovner's SpaceShield

The SpaceShield, made by Rovner, helps create a barrier against large droplets, and is a component that can be added as part of a safety strategy that also includes appropriate social distancing and good hygiene. Flexible, with excellent visual clarity, cleanable with soap and water and reusable, the SpaceShield features an aperture with dual flaps through which a sax or clarinet mouthpiece can be smoothly inserted. Thicker, vented comfort foam pads position the shield farther from the face, helping to reduce heat and fogging. The foam is removable and repositionable. An adjustable, non-elastic head strap offers a personalized fit with less sustained pressure around the head. Includes a storage bag.



www.rovnerproducts.com

Vintage Tone Control Retrofit Kit

The Vintage Tone Control (VTC) Retrofit Kit is the perfect upgrade for older Sadowsky models and new MetroExpress basses that only have separate treble and bass control. The VTC Retrofit Kit includes a stacked potentiometer for treble and bass, a push/pull potentiometer for the passive tone control and preamp bypass switch. The VTC control is passive, the maximum setting is a flat EQ. The further you turn the control down, the more the high end in the signal will be attenuated. Available by mid-November. \$119.90



www.shop.warwick.de

Accessories

Grover Sta-Tite Machine Heads for Ukuleles

The original Grover Sta-Tite machine heads are now available for ukuleles with an 18:1 gear ratio for precise tuning, still with the classic styling and butter bean button of the original Grover Sta-Tite machine heads. The new U98-18N comes with a .994" (25.2mm) long post, while the U99-18N has a slightly shorter post length of .827" (21mm). Both models are available in nickel.



www.grotro.com

Légère's American Cut Reeds

Légère's American Cut reeds are the culmination of a six-year research project to advance the popular Signature Series technology and create a reed that answers the needs of the world's most demanding jazz artists. The reed features a reinvented profile and heart, and a shorter and wider vamp. By drawing material from the edges toward the center spine, the reed strikes a harmonious balance of responsiveness and control. Ultra-fine edges allow unrestrained vibration, rewarding the player with a clear low-register and vibrant altissimo. Comes with a reusable reed case.



www.legere.com

Piano & Keyboard

Kawai's ES920 and ES520 Digital Pianos

The ES920 and ES520 are the latest additions to Kawai's popular ES series of portable digital pianos. The flagship ES920 is the long-awaited successor to the award-winning ES8, while the intermediate ES520 (pictured) is a new midrange model that delivers many of the features of the ES920 at a more affordable price. Kawai's ES series of instruments are high-performance, 88-key portable digital pianos suitable for the home, stage, recital hall, or classroom. The brand new ES920 and ES520 combine Kawai's Responsive Hammer keyboard action and Harmonic Imaging piano sound technologies, to reproduce the touch and tone of a concert grand piano, and provide an authentic, rewarding playing experience for pianists of all abilities.



www.kawaius.com

Amplification

Warwick's Gnome Pocket Amp Heads

The Warwick Gnome bass amplifier head offers bassists a clear, defined bass sound and impressive power, all packed in a super compact, lightweight design. The 3-band EQ with +/- 15 dB cut/boost per band offers a lot of options to shape the sound according to your own ideas and the balanced post-EQ XLR DI output with switchable ground lift offers an easy way to use the Warwick Gnome for live gigs or studio recordings. Silent practicing is also possible if you disconnect the speaker output and use only your headphone.



www.shop.warwick.de

Print & Digital

Adaptable Quartets for Strings and Flexcel Concert Works for Strings from Excelcia

The *Adaptable Quartets for Strings* series is an expansion of the flexible instrumentation *Adaptable Ensemble Series*. It contains 21 new compositions or arrangements that are scored in four-line quartets and can be played with a small chamber group and expanded up to full ensemble. This line scoring arrangement not only facilitates the needs of the classroom, but also offers sound pedagogic progression making a class set a remarkably useful tool. Books in the *Adaptable Quartet* series are available for violin, viola, cello, and bass for \$14.99.



Flexcel Concert Works for Strings series are scored in four parts with optional piano, and can be played with as few as four players. The Flexcel series is packed with goodies like photocopy permission, online Score Videos, and digital copy access for remote learning. When their complete orchestra is back together again, directors can easily transition to the fully-scored version of the same piece.



www.excelciamusic.com

Drums & Percussion

SoundArt Concert Snare Drums from Black Swamp Percussion

Black Swamp has released an update to their SoundArt snare system, featuring the new Arch Throw. The original SoundArt Strainer was the first trio snare system directly integrated into the throw off, giving players accurate and unprecedented control of snare unit tension. The updated Arch Throw functions exactly the same, but with a modern, stylish design. The shape matches the existing arch style tube lugs, with a universal adjustment knob now on the strainer side. Adjustment knobs have also been updated, along with the wire wound snare unit now placed in the center of the drum. The updated throw is available on SoundArt snare drums 5" or deeper, and on the line of Symphonic Field Drums.



www.blackswamp.com

Revamped Black Panther Drums Series from Mapex

The revamped Black Panther series is designed to cover a drummer-centric number of sonic choices, producing a selection of 14 different wood and metal sounds, following a carefully devised sonic-flow logic and further developed through the Mapex Concept Hybrid approach to drum design. The concept then leads to sound-types identified as dry, dark, medium, bright, or vintage. This concept behind this series produces a selection of snare drums that meets the musical needs of drummers everywhere. Select features include the Cylinder Drive snare strainer and butt side, an air flow venting scheme unique to each model, and the famous SONIClear bearing edges all combined for a superb function and player-centric natural feel.



www.mapexdrums.com

Drums & Percussion

Royalty Ride from SABIAN

The 18" Royalty Ride from SABIAN is a replica of Chick Corea's ride, as heard on the 1968 recording *Now He Sings, Now He Sobs*. SABIAN will be introducing this re-creation to market in a limited quantity of 250. As with all SABIAN Limited Edition models, these cymbals will be individually numbered and will include a certificate of authenticity signed by Chick Corea.



www.sabian.com

Pro Audio

Celestion's Axi2050 Axiperiodic Drive

The Axi2050 is a high power, high-output driver which reproduces a frequency range of 300Hz-20,000Hz without the need for a mid-band crossover. The Axi2050 delivers an extended frequency range and an exceptionally accurate signal, particularly in the critical listening band, enhancing clarity and speech intelligibility, as well as reproducing music more dynamically and with greater coherence. In contrast to most existing high-sensitivity, wideband drivers which are designed with two separate diaphragms, the Axi2050 uses a single, large diameter, sculpted, circumferentially axiperiodic, annular titanium diaphragm. This breakthrough technology enables the device's remarkable wideband output, as well as providing a number of other significant advantages.



www.celestion.com

Jensen N12K Speaker

The Jensen N12K, a Vintage Neodymium speaker, is now available for purchase from CE Distribution. The N12K was previously only available in Fender Tone Master amps but is now available for purchase as a standalone speaker. The N12K delivers warm, full-bodied tone with remarkable headroom and just the right amount of brilliance and sparkle. It produces true original American tone in a modern and lightweight 12-inch, 4.41 lb. speaker.



www.cedist.com

H8 Recorder from Zoom

Zoom's H8 recorder features a color touch-screen interface, which presents a "three-way" app workflow navigation. Whether you're recording music, sound effects in the field, or professional podcasts, the H8 adapts instantly to the feature set required for the job. The H8 features all of Zoom's industry-leading audio fidelity, transparent preamps, and overall dependable performance. With four XLR and two XLR/TRS combo jacks, the H8 can record up to 12 tracks simultaneously, and you can quickly and easily adjust input type, lo-cut, EQ, compression, limiter, noise gate, and more.



www.zoom-na.com

Pro Audio

PreSonus' 25th Anniversary AudioBox USB 96 Audio Interface

PreSonus has released a special 25th Anniversary Edition of its best-selling AudioBox USB 96 audio interface. The new version of this 2-in, 2-out audio interface records at up to 24-bit, 96 kHz and looks as great as it sounds, with a sleek new black enclosure. Bus-powered and built to travel, the AudioBox USB 96 offers two front-panel combo mic/instrument inputs with Class A microphone preamps. A mix control lets you control the level between the input signal and computer playback, without hearing annoying delays. You also get a pair of balanced line-level outputs; an ultra-loud, crystal-clear headphone output; and MIDI I/O. A great companion for any recording software, the AudioBox USB 96 25th Anniversary Edition comes with the all new Studio One Artist version 5 recording and production software and the latest version of PreSonus' Studio Magic Suite to provide you with a complete recording solution.



www.presonus.com

Overloud's Gem VOICE Plug-In

The latest plug-in in the Gems series from Overloud is a one-stop-shop for any type of vocal production. VOICE's individual modules are designed with analog DSP engineering that speed up your production workflow. Build complete vocal sound chains from scratch with just a few clicks or select one of the many presets designed by professional sound engineers for inspirational starting points, or for polished, tried and true tones. Not only is Gem VOICE perfect for vocal tracks in a musical context, it also includes dedicated presets for post-production work such as podcasting, voice overs, audiobook recordings, dialogue, and even special vocal effects.



www.ilio.com

Whirlwind's LM2 Level Matchers

The Whirlwind LM2 Level Matchers are unique solutions for converting analog audio levels and impedances between -10 dBV "consumer" or "semi-pro" (also known as IHF standard) unbalanced equipment and +4 dBm balanced professional equipment. The LM2B is the up converter, amplifying unbalanced IHF signals 14dB and providing balanced output signals. The LM2U functions in reverse, taking balanced +4dBm professional levels, actively attenuating them and delivering unbalanced outputs at IHF levels. Both converters use extremely quiet, high quality active circuits with adjustable gain controls so that signal levels from various devices of gear can be matched to one another. Balanced connections are through gold plated XLRs. Unbalanced connections include gold plated RCAs and a stereo 3.5mm mini connector. The units are powered by an external 24 VDC supply (model #PS24) which connects in the rear of the unit above the mounting flange.



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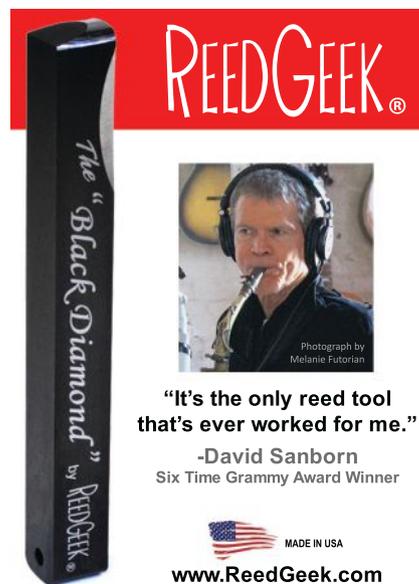
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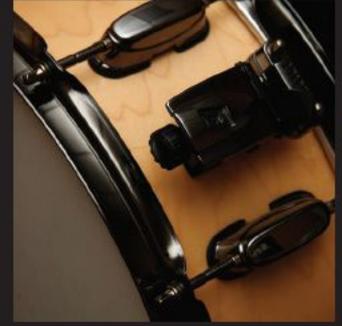


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COMPANY	PAGE	WEB
Allen & Heath	1	allen-heath.com
Amati's Fine Instruments	2, 3	amatis.org
Armadillo Enterprise/Luna Guitars	5	lunaguitars.com
Big Bends LLC	12	bigbends.com
Black Diamond Strings	4	blackdiamondstrings.com
Bourns	29	bourns.com
Chauvet	C1	chauvetdj.com
Hal Leonard Corp.	7	halleonard.com
Ilio Enterprises	C3	ilio.com
Kawai America Corp.	11	kawaius.com
Legere Reeds Ltd.	19	legere.com
Littlite	14	littlite.com
NAMM	20	namm.org
Pearl River	21	kaysbergburgusa.com
Rain Retail Software	15	rainpos.com
Reverb.com LLC	9	reverb.com
Whirlwind Music Inc.	C2	whirlwindusa.com
Yorkville Sound Corp.	13	yorkville.com
Zoom North America	C4	zoom-na.com

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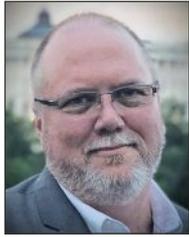
Do you send road reps or operate retail stores in my area?

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By Mike Lawson

Thanks, I Needed That

Here we are, with Q3 wrapping up, and as of this issue it has now been over nine months since I was able to play a gig in Nashville, after five years playing the same venue every other week. This has changed a lot of things for me as a music products consumer. As I've said before, I haven't stopped buying gear, because the shift from playing out to finally making robust use of my home studio has found me somewhat on par with some kinds of purchases. One thing about having to make a bi-weekly trek into downtown Nashville is it upped the chance that I might stop into a music store just to browse or buy something I needed for the show that night. If traffic was going to be awful because of a major event downtown, I would always head into town hours early, needing to kill time, which often sent me to Fanny's House of Music, Gruhn Guitars, Carter Vintage Guitars, or other shops in the general area of the club. That isn't happening now. I still "need" stuff to make music, because I am never going to stop making music. Never mind that I have a house full of toys, it isn't hoarding if it's cool.

I have purchased a lot of software licenses for plugins, a couple of guitars, and three effects boxes. I have ordered from small stores selling through Reverb or eBay, and I have ordered from Sweetwater and other big retailers – sometimes on price, sometimes strictly on availability versus price. One thing's for certain, I will pay a bit more to get it sooner rather than wait to get it cheaper. This is in large part due to the immediacy of the "need" when writing and recording. Typically, something I am buying is done because I hit a point in capturing the song idea where I think I "need" something to finish it, flesh it out, or at least see if this thing I am buying is going to complete the musical thought.

I've been buying a couple of things I will not use a lot, but when I do, uniquely fit the bill. I purchased the Squire Bass IV, an affordable and somewhat surprisingly nice instrument for that price range because it has a unique sonic range as "bass" guitars go. I enjoy the ability to take things "out there" with a combination approach as both as bass player and a guitar player on the same instrument. However, the Bass IV will never be my main bass or prevent me from using another bass player on my recordings. It is a niche, that scratches an itch. While I am a keyboard owner, I am not a pianist by any stretch. I am a Hammond M3/Leslie owner, but not an organist. I have three nice custom-made guitars with MIDI technology in them, and they can fit the bill nicely on some things when recording. That said, after playing MIDI guitar over 30 years now, it isn't always a good solution or the simplest path to take to the point I am

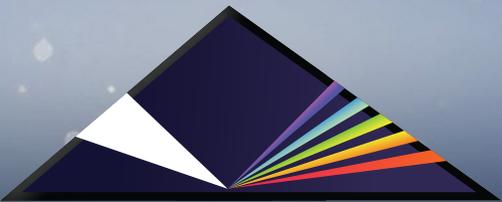
trying to get to on a song.

I bought a couple of pedals made by Electro-Harmonix that, frankly, I probably won't use a lot, but spent the money to fit the "need." One was the Ravish Sitar Emulator, a sound I can sort of use from both my GR-55 or the Line-6 Variax system I inherited from the late Bob Welch, but neither gave me the options this pedal does for that handful of times I may want to include some kind of homage to sitar on a song. The same can be said for their Iron Lung vocoder for guitar, because while I wanted it on a specific song, I am not going to make albums full of simulated sitar or vocoder sounds. The most useful "need" pedal was bought from a small dealer in Georgia, via eBay, who is apparently one of the few importers of it. The remarkable Dr. Robert pedal (Alcam Guitars, Barcelona, Spain) faithfully emulates the storied Vox UL730 amps the Beatles used on *Revolver* and *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. I will use it on a lot of songs, because it sounds amazing.

“One thing we all know about musicians, at nearly all levels of activity, is they will often make impulse purchases to get them past a hump they perceive themselves as facing.”

One thing we all know about musicians, at nearly all levels of activity, is they will often make impulse purchases to get them past a hump they perceive themselves as facing. None of these pedals or guitars I bought since being shut down from gigging this year were marketed to me as being a way to get out of a rut or expand my sonic palate while forced to stay in and create for creation's sake versus being able to play shows again. I had to get to a place where I thought "Hey, a sitar sound would be nice here, but I don't have a good solution."

In continuing my thoughts from last month, and as retailers are finding themselves making more and more pitches in their online versions of their stores, I don't think it can hurt to write sales copy that illustrates the places a particular kind of instrument, effect, or other product can take a customer. Sparking ideas for your customer is something that shows an interest in what they are doing, why they are doing it, and your desire to not just copy and paste a manufacturer's product info, but prompt ways the product can fill a "need" they may have. PAUL



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