

# MMR

MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

UpFront Q&A:  
Fender's Justin Norvell



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The MI Industry  
Descends Upon  
'Smashville' for a  
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## They *Will* be Heard!



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# Fighting the Good Fight *and* Connecting with Kids



by Christian Wissmuller

**W**e report often on the valiant efforts of the likes of NAMM's annual D.C. Fly-In and other organizations (VH1's Save the Music, Mr. Holland's Opus Music Foundation, and countless along the same vein), but – as the Grammy Music Education Coalition recently reported – 3.8 million preK-12 students in the nation don't have access to music education. This, *despite* the fact that 82 percent of parents and 89 percent of teachers consider such instruction as vital to student creativity.

When President Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds (ESSA) Act into law on December 10, 2015, advocates for music education, most MI retailers, and certainly *MMR* applauded this significant step towards formalizing and finalizing that the study of music and the arts is essential to the development of young scholarly minds. Sadly, when school districts find themselves struggling with budgetary constraints, arts are still often the first to go, even in a post-ESSA world.

Aside from the above issues, however, is the question of how to make those children who *are* receiving instruction in music scholarship actually give a damn about it.

In a June 2019 column in *The Washington Post* by Valarie Strauss, the author notes: "Here's what is missing in music education: cultural and social relevance. We've become very well-grounded in traditional education theory, techniques, and subject matters. But being culturally responsive means teaching music where kids are, and with what interests them. It means using songs by Bebe Rexha or Wiz Khalifa before an American folk song. It means teaching kids to play a synthesizer, electric guitar, or drum kit, not just a violin or recorder."

The thrust of Strauss' column suggested

that many music education curriculums are both woefully out of date and racially-biased. If you think you're going to engage some 13 year-old, inner-city kid by teaching him or her how to play "On Top of Old Smokey," then I know plenty of folks who'd like to have some of what *you're* smoking.

The good news is that the teaching programs at MI retailers are providing a welcome counterpoint to some of the stuffer school curriculum by offering more relatable, impactful, and meaningful instruction.

This year's Top 100 Dealer awards at July's Summer NAMM spotlighted many operations which build their business around lesson programs and outreach to the local community. One of the taglines of our own Menzie Pittman's Contemporary Music Center (CMC) in Virginia (see Pittman's "Small Business Matters" column on page 43) – the 2016 Top 100 Dealer of the Year – is, "The first goal of CMC is to advance a music student's experience." And he backs it up with lessons, camps, festivals, performance spaces – you name it. And these are based in curriculum that actually resonates with today's kids.

Fighting for the importance of music education is a worthy, valuable, and honorable expense of energy and time. Recognizing that some – not *all*, but some – kids aren't going to walk away with any lasting takeaway from a lesson focused exclusively on music from bygone centuries or dusty songbooks that have no bearing on their own lives is crucial, as well.

  
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# Industry News

## Gibson Foundation Relaunches Worldwide

Gibson has announced the re-launch of the Gibson Foundation – a 501(c)3 committed to introduce, inspire and amplify the power of music – and the appointment of Dendy Jarrett to executive director, Gibson Foundation.

Since 2002, the Gibson Foundation has provided thousands of guitars and donations in excess of \$30 million. Working directly with partner affiliations to drive future action, the goal of the Gibson Foundation is to make music matter to more people across the globe, one guitar at a time. Gibson will also engage with their artists and various industry partners to support and grow music culture by ensuring that guitarists and guitars remain a driving force in music forever.

As a starting point, Gibson have committed to giving a guitar-a-day away over the next 1,000 days. 100 percent of donations to the Gibson Foundation go directly towards giving the gift of music, re-affirming Gibson's commitment to giving back, empowering music culture and encouraging the creation of music.

The Gibson Foundation works directly with strategic partner affiliations to fund and deliver direct support to music development programs. This includes legacy partners like Notes for Notes, The Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum™, The Grammy Foundation and MusiCares, as well as new organizations, to help achieve their mission.

In his new role, the 30-year music industry veteran Jarrett – who joins the Gibson Foundation from Harmony Central – will bring his passion for creating, sharing, and supporting music to the new Gibson era. Jarrett will join the Gibson team in their Nashville-based headquarters and will report to the newly formed Foundation Board.

For more information and to donate, visit [gibsonfoundation.org](http://gibsonfoundation.org).

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

## Hal Leonard Announces Change in CEO Leadership



Keith Mardak and Larry Morton

Hal Leonard has announced that Keith Mardak is stepping down as its CEO and Larry Morton will become president and CEO. Mardak will remain with Hal Leonard as chairman of the Board and act in a consultant role for the foreseeable future.

Mardak got his start in the music industry as an accordion and organ teacher. He worked in music retail and then entered the world of publishing in 1965 when his boss Zeb Billings, who was a creative, entrepreneurial organ salesman, had him write instructional manuals for the biggest organ manufacturers of the day. In 1970, Mardak left Billings and co-founded Learning Unlimited, which launched innovative cassette band and guitar courses. He first started working with Hal Leonard in 1970 with the Learning Unlimited joint venture

which then revitalized Hal Leonard's hold on the lucrative organ bench-pack business. Hal Leonard annual sales at that time were \$960K. In just two years, the sales of Learning Unlimited products outsold the rest of the offerings from Hal Leonard. Negotiations with the Hal Leonard ownership ensued, and Mardak and the rest of the Learning Unlimited owners became minority shareholders in the Hal Leonard Publishing/Pointer System companies. Mardak led the company through extensive growth in the 1970s and by the end of the decade, Mardak became executive vice president of Hal Leonard. In 1985, Mardak purchased the

See **HAL LEONARD** page 13

## NAMM Elects New Chair, New Members

At Summer NAMM, the NAMM Board of Directors continued the organization's legacy of service to the industry at-large with a vote and seamless transition of the Executive Committee.

Representing a balanced composition of retail and commercial members, the board vote sees Chris Martin, previously NAMM's vice chair, move into the role as chair of NAMM's Board of Directors. Chris Martin is the sixth-generation owner and CEO of C.F. Martin & Co.

As part of his first official duties, Martin welcomed Chris White, president of White House of Music, Inc. as secretary of the board. Outgoing chair Robin Walenta was honored during the meeting and applauded for her eight years of service on the Executive Committee. Reflecting, Walenta offered, "It has been an incredible honor to represent my fellow NAMM members as chair over the past two years. During my tenure, and in my career in the industry, I have learned that networking builds beneficial and productive communities; that educational opportunities provide vital catalysts for new and ongoing musical



Joel Menchey, Tom Sumner, Chris Martin, Chris White, and Joe Lamond

ventures; and that in today's world, music advocacy is more important than ever. I look forward to this next chapter, and to continue to work on behalf of our industry and the many voices it represents."

Further building upon the stability of the organization, Executive Committee members Joel Menchey, president of Menchey Music and Tom Sumner, president of Yamaha Corporation of America, transitioned to their new roles. Menchey will serve as vice chair and Sumner, as treasurer of the NAMM Board.

In other NAMM board-related news, the NAMM Young Professionals welcomed Jeremy McQueary of W.H. Paige & Co. as president and Melissa Ceo of C.A. House Music as secretary. Three other individuals were elected to terms on the NAMM YP board: Jack Dring of Buffet Crampton, Laura Penrose of Maple Leaf Strings, and Brandon Voorhees of Buddy Roger's Music.

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## Academy of Modern Music Production Charts a New Path with Allen & Heath

Working in tandem with Ableton Live 10 music sequencer and digital audio workstation software, the SQ-7 brings an unprecedented level of control to the Mesa, Arizona-based learning center.

“We’re more than a project studio, and different than a university or any other conventional school,” says AMMP founder and all-around ambassador Brandon Mandy. “What sets us apart is that we fo-

cus on teaching what it means to be an artist first, all while demonstrating everything else needed to succeed from technical to marketing skills.”

What sets this SQ-7 installation apart from all others is its deep integration with Ableton 10 Live, something – to the best of Mandy’s knowledge – that has never been done quite like this before.

After carefully assessing their needs,

the AMMP team determined that integrating Allen & Heath’s SQ-7 with Ableton Live through MIDI offered the best solution. Once they had put on their MIDI-mapping thinking caps and downloaded the necessary SQ DAW Control software, they were able to use bi-directional control to harness the power of both systems in order to provide functionality beyond the sum of their parts.

Gaining the full functionality of Allen & Heath’s 48-channel/36 bus SQ-7 – including the 33 motorized faders that attracted them to the console in the first place – along with the DAW brawn of the Ableton 10 Live has moved AAMP into a better place, all at a fraction of the cost of other consoles.

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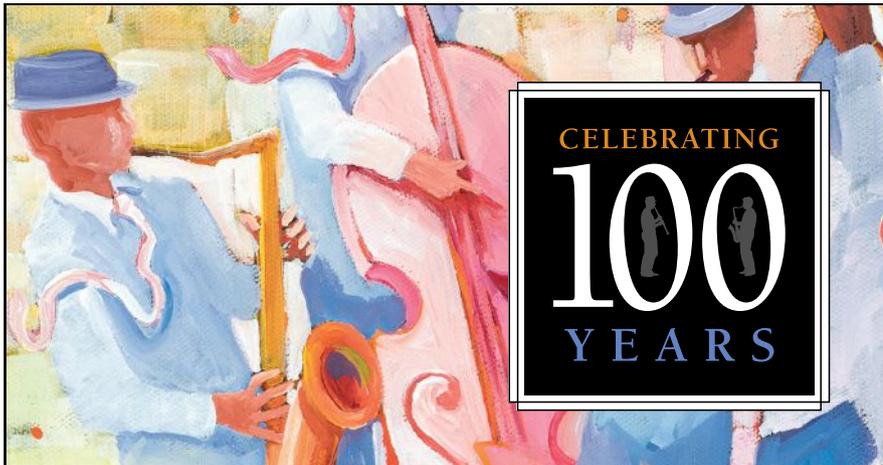
## TEC Nominees Announced at Summer NAMM

On July 18 at Summer NAMM, the 35th Annual TEC Awards celebrated the pro audio and sound production nominees across 23 Technical Achievement and eight Creative Achievement categories. A special product showcase from several nominated brands including Yamaha, Avid, BOSS, iZotope, Line 6, Rupert Neve Designs, PreSonus, Steinberg, and Eventide, served as a gathering point for the leaders in pro audio to acknowledge and celebrate the many innovative nominees.

The products and technologies represent those chosen by masters of their profession as best-in-class – and in demand. Retailers have taken note, too, looking to the TEC Awards to make those important purchasing decisions.

Presented annually by The NAMM Foundation as a part of The NAMM Show, the TEC Awards recognize the individuals, companies and technical innovations behind the sound of recordings, live performances, films, television, video games and multi-media. In total, 23 Technical Achievement and eight Creative Achievement categories were evaluated by a group of industry experts from all facets of the pro audio and sound production industries. Final nominees are those products and projects that, in the opinion of the nominating panel, represent superior accomplishment in their respective fields.

Final voting begins this November and winners will be announced at TEC Awards at The NAMM Show, on January 18, 2020.



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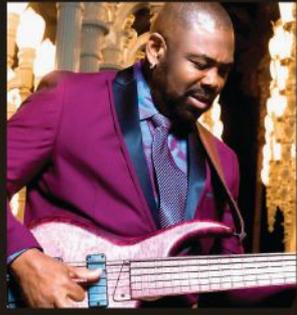
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Phil Cajka (Audio-Technica U.S. president, CEO), Glen Cordial (Online CRM), Greg Shade (Audio-Technica U.S. Midwest Territory manager, Professional Markets), and Reid Peterson (Audio-Technica U.S. director of sales, Professional Markets), at the ceremony presenting Audio-Technica's President's Award during the 2019 InfoComm Expo.

## Audio-Technica Honors Online CRM with President's Award

Audio-Technica recently announced that Online CRM has been presented with A-T's prestigious President's Award, for their work representing Audio-Technica professional audio products during the 2018/2019 fiscal year.

Online CRM principal Glen Cordial accepted the award, which recognizes a leading manufacturer's representative for outstanding commitment and dedication.

Phil Cajka, Audio-Technica U.S. president and C.E.O., presented the A-T President's Award at a ceremony during the 2019 InfoComm Expo on June 11 in Orlando.

## DCMEA Relaunches in Nation's Capital



The National Association for Music Education (NAfME) has announced the new federated music education association relaunched in the nation's capital, the DC Music Education Association (DCMEA). Since January 2019, a small group of volunteers has met virtually and in person to strategize, review bylaws and a mission statement, and elect officers. The next in-person meeting will be held June 19, in conjunction with the NAfME National Leadership Assembly, taking place at the Washington Hilton June 17-21. Learn more about DCMEA at [washingtondcmea.org](http://washingtondcmea.org).

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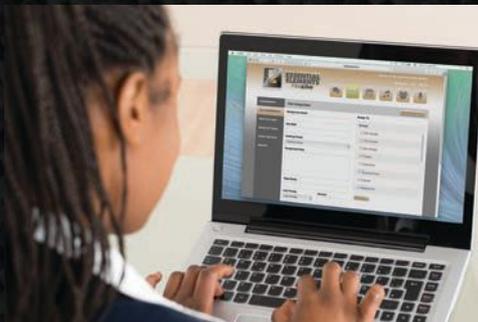
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# Hal Leonard Expands Self-Publishing Program

Hal Leonard has announced a massive expansion of ArrangeMe, their program that lets musicians legally and easily upload sheet music of original works or arrangements of popular songs and sell them on market-leading music websites. The newly expanded self-publishing platform provides a much-needed service for composers, arrangers, indie bands, educators, and anyone else who wants to

sell sheet music of their own compositions or arrangements for all instruments and ensembles.

The beta launch of the ArrangeMe program saw spectacular results: 270,000 self-published titles are already for sale; 30,000 composers from around the world have signed up to participate; and there are already 60,000 published arrangements of popular tunes. The expanded release of the

program quadruples the number of popular songs available to arrange from one million to four million, with the roster constantly being updated with new releases.

The ArrangeMe program will continue to expand to provide more opportunities for musicians to self-publish their music, including via other Hal Leonard and third party digital sites, and through the company's in-store digital retailer network that will allow music stores to print the music on demand. Learn more at [ArrangeMe.com](http://ArrangeMe.com).

## Gibson Returns Oberheim Trademark and Brand

In a gesture of goodwill for the music instrument industry, Gibson and its president and CEO, James "JC" Curleigh, have granted possession of the Oberheim brand and intellectual property back to its original owner and company founder, synthesizer pioneer Tom Oberheim.



Tom Oberheim pictured with his original Oberheim DMX drum machine, introduced in 1981

Gibson has owned the Oberheim brand name for several years as it sought to expand into other categories. With the renewed focus on its core business, Gibson is rationalizing their legacy portfolio accordingly, but the Oberheim brand deserved special attention. A chance encounter at Winter NAMM turned into a quest to return the Oberheim brand name back to its original founder.

"Of the many stories I have heard and decisions I have made since joining Gibson, this situation seemed simple," says James 'JC' Curleigh, president and CEO of Gibson. "Let's do the right thing by putting the Oberheim brand back in the hands of its namesake founder Tom Oberheim."

The team have been working on this solution for the past few months, and recently, JC and Tom had a discussion to "seal the deal."

"After over thirty years of being without it, I am thrilled to once again be able to use the Oberheim trademark for my products," said Oberheim. "I am very grateful to the new leadership team of Gibson for making this possible."

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## Sweetwater's GearFest 2019 Draws Record Crowds

Sweetwater's GearFest 2019 was a record-breaking success that attracted the largest crowds ever in the event's 18 year history. GearFest is the nation's only music and pro audio festival and trade show open to the public, eliminating barriers between customers, vendors, and artists.

The two-day event held at Sweetwater's headquarters in Fort Wayne, Indiana on June 21 and 22 gave attendees unprecedented access to nearly 500 vendors and manufacturers of musical instruments, music technology equipment, and pro audio gear. Hourly prizes were given away to more than 300 winners, totaling \$30,000 worth of musical instruments and audio equipment.

Attendance was up 13 percent from last year, with more than 17,000 people gathering on the expansive Sweetwater campus. Nearly all 50 states were represented along with several countries including Denmark, Japan, and India.

There were an astounding 81 live workshops and seminars hosted by 72 of the biggest names in the music industry, including sessions on guitars, recording, live sound, songwriting, and more. Special guests included legendary guitarists Steve Vai and Eric Johnson, founder of PRS Guitars Paul Reed Smith, YouTube sensation and drummer Casey Cooper, bassist Billy Sheehan, producer/engineer Sylvia Massey, and country star Ricky Skaggs, just to name a few.

## Hal Leonard continued from page 5

company – whose annual sales were now at \$16 million – and he has been its CEO ever since.

Under Mardak's leadership, the company has become a world-wide leader in educational methods and repertoire. In addition to its own publishing of iconic methods such as the *Hal Leonard Guitar Method* and *Essential Elements Band and Strings Methods*; publishing agreements with the biggest names in music, including the Beatles, Disney, Rodgers and Hammerstein, and hundreds more; acquisitions of many print and digital companies including G. Schirmer, Rubank, Willis Piano, Shawnee Press, Music Sales, Noteflight, and Groove3; and distribution deals with many other publishers and musical gear producers, Hal Leonard sales have grown to over \$250 million. In addition, the company has expanded around the world with offices in Australia, England, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, and more. The company now has nearly 800 employees.

Morton joined Hal Leonard in 1990 and quickly worked his way up to national sales manager then vice president of sales. Mardak appointed Morton as president of Hal Leonard in 1999.

When Mardak started thinking about his estate planning and how to ensure the long-term strength, stability, and growth of Hal Leonard, he began looking at potential investors to buy the business. In 2016, after years of research and discussions, Hal Leonard announced that private investment firm Seidler Equity Partners had acquired a majority interest in the company. As part of that agreement, Keith Mardak stayed on for three years to help with the transition. The new roles for both Mardak and Morton took effect on August 1.

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# Supplier Scene

## KORG USA, Inc. Celebrates Annual Gearfest Event

Sweetwater's annual Gearfest event took place on the first week-end of summer, upholding their annual tradition of top tier musical demonstrations, seminar trainings, giveaways and more. KORG USA, Inc. joined the celebration, providing musicians a first-look at the new B2 digital piano series, their popular analog synthesizers including the minilogue xd, and the EK-50, KORG's best serving educational keyboard. Waldorf Music also attended, bringing the sought-after Kyra, the revamped Valkyrie virtual analog synth.

KORG artist Lynette Williams, who has toured with musical icon Childish Gambino since he first hit the scene, spoke during a live seminar about "Getting the Most from your Keys," an in-depth look on how keyboardists can achieve their optimal sound. Williams, who tours with the KORG KRONOS, also brought a KingKorg and her a vintage KORG M50, utilizing all three during her demo and performance portion of the seminar.

"Between Lynette's killer seminar, to the hundreds of attendees who visited our booth, this was one of the best Gearfest's to date. We were excited to show off the new B2, plus talk up fan favorites such as the minilogue series. Sweetwater has done an amazing job building up this festival and we can't wait to see what's in store for next year," says Nick Kwas, lead product Specialist at KORG USA, Inc.



KORG USA product specialists Anthony Williams and Nick Kwas

# Gibson Announces New Collaborations

Gibson announced that it has entered into multi-year collaboration agreements with Jimmy Wallace Guitars, Banker Custom Guitars, and Echopark Guitars. Under these collaboration agreements, Gibson will give these key boutique builders and luthiers a license to use Gibson trademarks, including the Les Paul Body Shape Design® (U.S. Reg. No. 1782606), Explorer Body Shape Design® Trademark (U.S. Reg. No. 2053805), ES-335 Body Shape Design® Trademark (U.S. Reg. No. 2007277), Firebird Body Shape Design® (U.S. Reg. No. 4107670), Flying V Body Shape Design® Trademark (U.S. Reg. No. 2051790), Flying V Headstock® (U.S. Reg. No. 3976202), Headstock Design® (U.S. Reg. No. 1567052), FLYING V® (U.S. Reg. No. 1216644), FIREBIRD® (U.S. Reg. No. 5628009), EXPLORER® (U.S. Reg. No. 2641548), Firebird Headstock™ (collectively "Trademarks").

"We are excited about these collaborations. Orville Gibson started as a boutique builder in 1894 in his workshop in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and these new collaborations are a way to pay tribute to Orville's legacy in support of boutique builders and luthiers," said Cesar Gueikian, chief merchant officer of Gibson Brands.

"I'm thrilled to reunite with Gibson through this exciting collaboration," said Jimmy Wallace. "The opportunity granted to me by the new Gibson team brings authenticity back to Jimmy Wallace Guitars in a way I would have never imagined. I'm looking forward to the future with Gibson."

"Gibson's influence on the inception of electric guitar is deeply embedded in American history," adds Matthew Hughes of Banker Custom Guitars. "We are honored and humbled to have the opportunity to partner with them and utilize their iconic electric guitar designs to further the legacy of quality, playability, and artistry that has inspired the greatest music of generations past, present, and future."

"Everything that is perfect about the instrument had already been developed by Gibson long before any of us got here!" says Gabriel Currie of Echopark Guitars. "My goal is to help preserve this legacy and take part in building inspiring instruments."

Gibson has also announced that they have entered into multi-year collaboration agreements with Thalia Brands and Aviator Nation.

"Thalia and I have been longtime fans of Gibson," says Chris Bradley, founder and CEO of Thalia Brands, Inc. "My favorite guitar is my 1938-Reissue Gibson SJ-200 and Thalia's is her Epiphone Hummingbird. The opportunity to collaborate with Gibson to create co-branded capos, phone cases and other high-quality accessories is a dream come true for us. We have ambitious plans for the future as we extend our reach into other guitar accessory categories and this collaboration with Gibson will enable us to make even better products that Gibson Guitar fans will surely love."

# Royer R-10 Ribbon Microphone is Spot-On for Gibbons' Guitar

ZZ Top is presently on its 50th Anniversary Tour, which began in April and continues into 2020. On the current tour, the R-10 ribbon microphone from Royer Labs is being used to mic Billy Gibbons' guitar cabs.

Jamie (J-Mo) Rephann of Simpsonville SC is serving as the band's FOH engineer while on tour. With a résumé like this, Rephann can use any mic he wants, which makes his choice of the Royer 'entry level' R-10 all that more impressive.

"On this tour, I'm using two Royer R-10 ribbons," Rephann explained. "I have one mic on Billy's Marshall cab and the other is used to mic his Magnatone setup. I have them both in isolation boxes off stage left

in guitar world. Both mics are positioned slightly off center, left of the cone."

"The Royer R-10 is a superb microphone for being in the 'entry range' and I picked it over much more expensive mics because of the sound," said Rephann. "It is unmatched for high SPL close miking of cabinets. If you're an engineer looking to improve your guitar sound, just drop everything and get hold of Royer ribbons. The R-10 is, by far, the best guitar mic I have ever used. I will also have an R-10 on the bass guitar iso cab when we get back to the States. Aside from the sound of the mics, the service and support we have received from the company has been stellar and I couldn't be happier."

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**CELESTION**

# Sweetwater Opens New '24-Hour Store'

Sweetwater has unveiled an all new, one-of-a-kind resource designed to help musicians when they need it most.

Designed with touring and gigging music-makers and technicians in mind, the first Sweetwater 24-Hour Gear Store is now open for business inside the lobby of The Clyde, a music, performance and arts venue in Sweetwater's hometown of Fort Wayne, Indiana.

The Sweetwater 24-Hour Gear Store is an extension of the elements that have helped propel the retailer to become the top choice of musicians and pro audio experts of all types. An assortment of gear and accessories is available at the push of a button. Included are 20 different items, ranging from guitar strings and microphones, to batteries and gaffer's tape.

"We want to make sure that nothing stands in the way of a performance," said Sweetwater chief marketing officer David Stewart. "If an artist needs something at the last minute, we can provide it



on the spot. This reinforces our commitment to do all we can to help our customers make music and to always exceed their expectations."

The Sweetwater 24-Hour Gear Store features a dynamic touch screen that hosts pictures and short descriptions for each item available. Additionally, customers can pay with all major credit and debit cards, as well as both Apple and Google Pay. Customers can also obtain a copy of Sweetwater's 600-plus page gear resource, Pro-Gear, from a display stand immediately next to the machine.

"This is a great way to combine innovation and convenience to help better serve our customers," explained Sweetwater founder & CEO Chuck Surack. "Touring musicians might find themselves with an emergency just before or during a show. We can provide essentials and they never have to leave the venue." Sweetwater hopes to install similar 24-Hour Gear Stores in other locations.

## PRS Guitars Announces 'Experience PRS 2020' Event

PRS Guitars has announced their "Experience PRS 2020" open house and concert event. Experience PRS 2020 will serve as a celebration of PRS Guitars' 35th Anniversary. Scheduled for May 8 and 9, 2020, Experience PRS will be held at the PRS factory in Stevensville, Maryland and will bring together celebrated PRS artists, dealers and international distributors, customers and enthusiasts, and worldwide press for two days of concerts, education, factory tours, and fun. The event, which will be PRS's tenth Experience event, debuted in 2007 with an attendance of around 800 people. The 2020 event is expected to attract close to 3,500 attendees from all over the globe.

As part of the two-day celebration, PRS will open up its doors with an interactive schedule including factory tours, star-studded concerts, artist clinics and panels, product demonstrations, hands-on opportunities (including staining your own piece of curly maple to take home), and a test drive tent where you can try all the latest PRS gear. PRS will build several unique guitars and amplifiers for the 2020 event – details of which will be an-

nounced at a later date.

"I'm honored that for 35 years, guitar players and guitar lovers across the globe have helped us build a strong culture dedicated to making the best guitars possible," stated Paul Reed Smith, PRS Guitars founder and managing general partner. "To open our doors and throw a great party is our way of saying thank you for both believing in our craftsmanship and for your support."

"Experience PRS 2020 coincides with our 35th year in business, and I can definitely say that the passion and creativity in this place are beyond exceptional. We are excited to have the opportunity to (once again) open our factory to our friends and family and share our love of guitar building while also providing the opportunity to meet some of the talented people that make PRS. With food and beer trucks, world-class artists on multiple stages, opportunities to jam with professional musicians, and an astounding array of PRS guitars on display, I think it is fair to say that this is one event you shouldn't miss," stated PRS director of sales, Jim Cullen.

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## Zildjian Endows Percussion Scholarships to Honor Renowned Educators

The Avedis Zildjian Company recently endowed several percussion scholarships at top music schools throughout the country.

"These scholarships will honor three renowned educators at Eastman School of Music, Oberlin Conservatory of Music, and the University of North Texas," says Craigie Zildjian, executive chair of Zildjian.

The Zildjian Percussion Scholarship at Eastman School of Music recognizes Professor Emeritus John H. Beck and his long tenure at the school from 1959 to 2008. After receiving both his bachelor's and master's degree from Eastman, Beck joined the faculty in 1964 and subsequently chaired the Woodwinds, Brass, and Percussion Department until he retired in 2008. The Zildjian Percussion Scholarship at Oberlin Conservatory of Music honors Michael Rosen's long tenure as Director of Oberlin's Division of Woodwinds, Brass, and Percussion. Before joining the faculty at Oberlin in 1972, Rosen was principal percussionist of the Milwaukee Symphony for six years. "I came to Oberlin

with every intention of having a place where I could practice for my next audition," said Rosen. "To my delight, I realized that I actually found my calling and that teaching was my future."

To commemorate Ed Soph's recent retirement from the University of North Texas, Zildjian has established a scholarship for percussion students in Jazz Studies. Soph graduated from the College of Music at UNT in 1968. He then toured and recorded with Stan Kenton, Woody Herman, Clark Terry, and others before returning to the school in 1987 to teach Jazz Studies and Performance.

"Throughout their extraordinary careers, John Beck, Michael Rosen, and Ed Soph have played an important role in Zildjian's educational program, conducting countless clinics and master classes," says Craigie Zildjian. "We are pleased to honor these three at the very music schools where they distinguished themselves as among the most influential percussion educators of their day."

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# Yamaha Drums Launches Innovation Tour

Yamaha Drums will be hitting the road on the company's Innovation Tour, visiting three prominent drum dealers, to share the philosophy on how Yamaha has consistently built professional-sounding handcrafted drums and hardware for more than 52 years. These events, which will also feature demos by top Yamaha Artists, will highlight technological advances from the past and present that revolutionized the drum industry.



Yamaha Artists Rick Marotta and David Garibaldi

The tour will be stopping at Memphis Drum Shop in Memphis, Tennessee on August 13, Fork's Drum Closet in Nashville, Tennessee on August 14, and Drum Center of Portsmouth in North Hampton, New Hampshire on August 15. Each event will take place from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Additional tour dates will be announced.

Joining the tour dates at Memphis Drum Shop and Fork's Drum Closet will be Yamaha Artist David Garibaldi, best known for his drumming with R&B-based horn section and band Tower of Power as well as artists such as Patti Austin, Natalie Cole, Mickey Hart's Planet Drum, and The Buddy Rich Orchestra. During the tour date at Drum Center of Portsmouth, Yamaha Artist Rick Marotta will be in attendance, well known for his work with luminaries such as James Taylor, Jackson Brown, Steely Dan, Carly Simon, Paul Simon, Linda Ronstadt, and Aretha Franklin.

Attendees will have the opportunity to meet Daryl Anderson, drum designer at Yamaha Drums, who will lead a visually-engaging presentation, detailing the story of the company and the research and development that goes into manufacturing drums. With more than 18 years of drum-building and de-

signing experience, Daryl will discuss key innovations from various Yamaha acoustic drum, hardware and electronic percussion products, and why the company developed these new technologies to enhance the drumming experience. Additionally, attendees will learn how the company collaborates with the community and artists, during the research process, to incorporate design aesthetics and tonal characteristics that drummers

look for.

Drummers in attendance will be offered a hands-on experience to meet the Yamaha Drums team and test drive the powerful, dynamic range of the Live Custom Hybrid Oak drum set and the tone variety and flexibility of the Tour Custom and Recording Custom Birch snare drums. Guests will also be able to experiment with detailed customization options from the FP-9 series bass drum pedals as well as the revolutionary EAD10 electronic acoustic drum module, which allows players to easily capture the sounds of an acoustic drum set with a single microphone/trigger component attached to a powerful digital processor.

In addition, each dealer will have prizes and giveaways for attendees.

"We believe attendees will be truly inspired by exciting, new developments in Yamaha drum craftsmanship and electronic percussion technology," said Steven Fisher, director of drums & percussion, Yamaha Corporation of America. "This event will serve to influence their artistic expression, showing them how they can better create their personal sounds and share their performances with the world."

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## Final Focus Gets Big Results With Compact Allen & Heath Qu-16

From its offices in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, Final Focus Productions offers AV services for non-profit, corporate and government clients using a small-footprint Allen & Heath Qu-16 digital mixer purchased from Washington Music Center in Wheaton, Maryland. Proprietor Steve Kownacki upgraded to the Qu-16 from an Allen & Heath MixWizard analog mixer. "We absolutely loved the MixWizard," he says. "But our clients kept asking us to do more and we needed to move to a digital platform. Now, the Qu-16 allows us to simultaneously mix for live audio, multitrack recording and webcast streaming and manage multiple inputs all in a mixer that fits on a tabletop."

A typical event may feature musical entertainment, a speech or keynote address and a panel discussion and include wired and wireless microphones, musical instrument DI boxes and audio from video recordings, streaming sources and websites like YouTube. The Qu-16's copy and paste features make it easy to set up all of these sources. Kownacki copies gain and level settings and

effects like compressors and gates from one channel to another and adds reverb and chorus when needed.

The Qu-16's layers help Kownacki organize these sources and its automatic microphone mixer (AMM) helps him manage panel discussions. He records most events to a USB thumb drive using the mixer's Qu-Drive multitrack recording feature. "It's great to be able to go back and synchronize the multitrack recording in my video editing software and mix each microphone individually," he says.

"Nearly all of my clients are repeat customers," Kownacki commented. "And they love watching how the technology works with the Qu-16's moving faders. Ultimately, however, we want the attendees at an event – and viewers of our video recordings –

to have a great experience and you can't have that without great sound. The music, the discussions all invoke a mood in the room and, if it's clear and easy to listen to, people will enjoy themselves. The Qu-16 makes it possible for us to do that."



Kownacki uses the Allen & Heath Qu-16

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**GLOBAL NEWS**

**Dear Reality Becomes Part of Sennheiser Group**

Audio specialist Sennheiser took a majority shareholding in Dear Reality GmbH on July 1, 2019. The expert in spatial audio algorithms and VR/AR audio software will continue to operate as a separate company based in Düsseldorf; customers will be able to rely on existing Dear VR products and can look forward to joint VR/AR workflows by Sennheiser and Dear Reality. Uwe Cremering, responsible for AMBEO Immersive Audio at Sennheiser, will support the company as a third CEO alongside founders Achim Fell and Christian Sander.



The CEOs of Dear Reality GmbH (from left to right): Uwe Cremering, Achim Fell and Christian Sander

“For us, 3D audio is the future. With AMBEO, Sennheiser is active in all areas of immersive audio production, from the initial recording to mixing and processing and, finally, reproduction,” said co-CEO Dr. Andreas Sennheiser. “Audio software is an important building block in this production chain, especially as regards VR/AR applications.”

Co-CEO Daniel Sennheiser explained: “We are pleased to have gained additional highly qualified software experts and further 3D audio products with the acquisition of Dear Reality. At the same time, leveraging the strength of the Sennheiser brand and its global distribution network will give Dear Reality a larger scope of action.”

**Rodriguez III Details Ukulele Developments in Fiji**

Luthier Manuel Rodriguez III recently checked in with MMR about his voyage to Fiji.

“Two years ago, I visited Fiji with the hope of selling guitars. On the backdrop of changing business environments and challenges concerning my family business, times were tough,” he said. “[This was] a sales trip around the world in an attempt to salvage some small opportunities to sell my guitars resulted in broadening my view of what the world at large had to offer.”

In Fiji, Rodriguez III became acquainted with a small indigenous business, TABS Investments, with TABS managing director Uluibau Tabete. TABS Investments has been supplying mahogany tonewood to the United States of America in small volumes.

While in Fiji, Rodriguez III also took on his first ukulele building apprentice, Sanjalesh Prasad. Sanjalesh got his introduction to ukulele building through his new work-

ing relationship with Manuel Rodriguez III. With Sanjalesh’s help, production of wood pieces for ukulele parts has exceeded 2,000 ukulele sets.



A craftsman works on a uke in Fiji

After two months of working into the ukulele production project, the Embassy of the United States in Fiji held a reception to give recognition to those involved in “Investment in Sustainable Mahogany for Musical Instruments.”

Rodriguez III and TABS Investments were shown appreciation for their commitment to utilizing volumes of small off-cuts from Fiji’s various saw-mill productions, and using these expensive wood species pieces for quality ukulele production. Appreciation for the ukulele project was also shown by the chairperson of the Fiji Hardwood Corporation (Fiji’s local government mahogany plantation management company), where he presented special pens made with Fiji mahogany as a token of appreciation.



**SAS Gives Godiva Festival Debut to Martin Audio MLA Speakers**

Coventry’s Godiva Festival, which takes place in the City’s War Memorial Park, began life as a free festival back in 1997 (and was described as the UK’s biggest free family festival). For much of the event’s life Chris “Stan” Saunders has been overseeing its evolving technology requirements, as has the company with which he has long been associated, Stage Audio Services (SAS).

Stated SAS owner, Kevin Mobberley, “We’ve been providing event services for Godiva since the year 2000 but this is the first year we have used [Martin Audio’s] MLA PA. Previously, we have used other brands.”

This public park is a highly sensitive noise area, and acousticians Vanguardia are contracted to measure sound propagation and set offsite thresholds – something that the advanced controllability of MLA is equal to meeting. “MLA was our natural choice,” said Mobberley, “and we pushed the organizers in that direction.”

They rigged the full-sized MLA, nine elements per side, with 10 x MLX subwoofers in a cardioid array along the front. Three MLA Compact enclosures provided near-fills and four DD12’s were also on hand should any other gaps have needed plugging in the coverage pattern.

## G7th Wins European Product Design Award

G7th, The Capo Company, has won a prestigious European Product Design Award for its innovative new Performance 3 capo with Adaptive Radius Technology (ART), launched at Winter NAMM earlier this year.

The European Product Design Award recognizes the efforts of talented designers and design teams who aim to improve our daily lives with a practical and beautiful creation, designed to solve a problem, make life easier or simply spread joy.

Nick Campling, G7th's chief designer and chairman, said of the award, "It is an honor to receive this reward on behalf of the team so early in the product's lifecycle. G7th and Bluefrog Design are proud



to be counted among the best European designers, especially for a guitar accessory.

"The award is for the ground-breaking ART system that automatically adapts to the shape of any guitar fingerboard to offer unrivalled tuning stability," he added.

"Combined with the award-winning Tension Control System that has been a feature of every Performance Capo since 2004, this European Award recognizes our efforts to offer every guitar player a superior capo solution."

The Performance 3 capo is available in a silver finish, satin black, and 18kt gold plate, and comes with a free lifetime warranty as standard.

## Show Systems Australia Tells 'Downtown' Story in Color with Chauvet Professional Lighting

The production of "Downtown! The Mod Musical" at the Paranal Arts Centre in Australia needed bold, saturated colors to help transport the stage – and the audience – back to the psychedelic '60s.

Michael Westcott of Show Systems Australia reflected the exuberance and free-flowing spirit with his colorful lighting design for the show, which featured a collection of Chauvet Professional fixtures.



"The theme of the show demanded bright, candy-coated colors that could showcase the stage and performers in a variety of different ways, which is what Michael delivered," said Matt Adams, technical director of Show Systems Australia. "The color mixing capabilities of the Maverick MK2 Spot and COLORado 2 Quad Zoom fixtures were critical in helping him make this happen."

## Blackstar Amplification Celebrates Cosmofest

Blackstar Amplification joined Canada's premier musical instrument and gear exhibition, Cosmofest, for their fifth annual music festival right in the heart of Toronto, where thousands gathered for live performances, gear demos, and more.

Blackstar Amplification displayed their gear, including the new Studio 10s, the Unity Bass series, Jared James Nichol's signature amplifier, the well-known, portable FLY3's, and lastly, the new MKII's, Blackstar's elite new series. Their booth attracted a wide array of guitarists, as well as Canadian rock treasures Selfish Things,

who have long supported Blackstar amps as a crucial part of their rig.

Cosmofest introduced a few special guests including Geddy Lee, Sloan, and hosted clinics from acclaimed musicians Omar Hakim, Simon Phillips, and more.



Loren Molinare, Blackstar product specialist

## EU General Court Rules V-Shaped Guitars are Generic

In a longstanding trademark dispute with Gibson Brands, Inc. over the cancellation of Gibson's V-Shaped guitar trademark, Warwick, led by owner Hans-Peter Wilfer, successfully argued that the V-Shaped guitar cannot act as a trademark for a musical instrument in the EU.

In its sweeping decision, the Second Chamber of the EU General Court agreed that numerous guitar manufacturers across the World make V-shaped guitars and, thus, the relevant public does not view V-Shaped guitars as belonging to any single guitar maker. Gibson had lost the two previous decisions in this matter and now its only recourse is to appeal to the European Court of Justice.

## Trade Regrets

**Tommy Moore**, a longtime industry veteran, passed away on July 18.

Moore's father, Woods Moore, operated Alt's Music store in Fort Worth, Texas. After earning a degree in finance from the University of Texas at Austin, the younger Moore joined the family business at his father's suggestion and began to explore what avenues within MI might be better served. After determining that there was a market for rhythm instruments in the schools that could be made and sold inexpensively, he started Rhythm Band Incorporated in 1959.



As he said in his 2007 NAMM Oral History interview with Dan Del Fiorentino, "The music industry back then was a very structured industry. The manufacturer sold to the wholesaler, and the wholesaler sold to the retailer, and the retailer sold to the consumer – very similar to the jewelry business and that kind of thing. Rhythm Band was a different concept. We decided we were going to manufacture elementary musical instruments and sell them direct to schools, and that's the first time that had ever been done."

Over the next four decades Moore established a number of electronic-related music companies including Kasuga International. He co-founded Hondo and Tokai USA, as well as International Music Corporation (IMC) with Jerry Freed.

# ON THE MOVE

**Fishman** is pleased to announce the appointment of Paul Brunelle as vice president of Finance.

Brunelle brings a diverse finance background to Fishman and was most recently the corporate controller for the L. S. Starrett Company, a manufacturer of precision measuring tools and equipment and saw products.



Asked about the new appointment, Fishman's chief operating officer Jason Cambra said, "Paul has the background and experience that we need to manage our financial growth as we continue to invest in new initiatives that will allow us to achieve our goals."

Additionally, Fishman has announced that Rob Ketch has been named senior vice president of Sales. Formerly he was vice president of OEM Sales since 2007.



Ketch was hired by Fishman in 1994 as an inside salesperson, ultimately being promoted to director of U.S. Sales before overseeing OEM product sales exclusively in 2007. Since that time, Rob has more than doubled the company's OEM business, and currently manages sales to over 110 guitar manufacturers worldwide.

In addition to OEM Sales, Rob has remained deeply involved in the design of product solutions with Fishman's engineering and product development team. His hands-on approach to bringing ideas and customer feedback to the team has helped keep Fishman on the leading edge of amplification technology, while also meeting a variety of goals for his OEM partners.

**The ADJ Group of Companies** has appointed Charlotte Wester as its new trade show manager. Based out of the group's Los Angeles headquarters, she will be responsible for organization of the company's booths at the numerous trade-shows at which it exhibits each year representing its market-leading brands including Elation Professional, ADJ Lighting, Acclaim Lighting, Global Truss America, and Avante Audio.



**SABIAN** has refocused its U.S. Sales. Tom O'Dea has been named U.S. sales manager, Rick Murray moves to the position of product manager, and Bob Rupp will take over the role of customer relations specialist.



A native of Philadelphia, Tom O'Dea brings over a dozen years of MI experience to his new role as U.S. sales manager, where he holds overall responsibility for sales revenue performance for SABIAN, Gon Bops and SABIAN Performance accessories (SPA). Tom's extensive sales experience with Hoshino and SABIAN have allowed him to develop a natural and authentic affinity for retailers, musicians, and consumers. His passion for the industry stems from an entire career built around music.

Rick Murray has enjoyed outstanding success in building and maintaining relationships, and he thrives on challenges by developing creative and effective solutions. Throughout his extensive career in MI, Rick has owned and operated a full-line drum shop, served as national sales manager for Pork Pie Percussion, district sales manager for KMC – and he continues to play drums live and in studio sessions. As product manager, Rick will take the lead in all training and events for SABIAN and its brands.



Bob Rupp has a long connection with SABIAN. As founder of Rupp's Drums in Denver in 1984, Rupp was one of the first U.S. dealers to stock SABIAN cymbals in his shop. In 2004 he founded RuppBeat Marketing and entered into a partnership with SABIAN to develop and execute in-store seminars, training, sales events, and promotions. Since that time, Rupp has also been a key part of the SABIAN Sound Team, and a product and training specialist. In his new role as customer relations specialist, Rupp will work closely with a select list of retailers, oversee the Artists Affiliate Program, and head up the SABIAN Street Team.



Rounding out the rest of the sales team is Midwest/West Coast rep Jeff Hendrix, an MI industry veteran who continues to enjoy success with his side venture as owner-builder of Crocket Tubbs Custom Drums. The SABIAN Inside Sales duo of Michelle Clark and Mary Sandschafer brings a combined 42 years of MI experience, ensuring that SABIAN's dealer network continues to receive the best service in in the industry.

**KORG USA, Inc.'s** Marketing and Product Development teams have welcomed Emily Shortell as the company's digital content specialist and Ian Pritchard as product manager for Guitar Brands.

Shortell, a SUNY Purchase alum, has an extensive design and marketing background, excelling as a graphic designer for D'Addario & Company in 2014, to senior designer and web developer, where she took creative lead on ad rolls, email newsletters, webpage design, and more. Since then, Shortell has created digital content for Eastport Backpacks and news and entertainment platform Betches. She will manage the social media strategies and content development for KORG, VOX Amplification, and Cole Clark Guitars, creating compelling content, engaging with followers and increasing brand awareness across all platforms.



Pritchard studied Music Technology at NYU and has worked in select studios assisting with recording, mixing and engineering. As an acclaimed musician, Prichard has created a variety of YouTube videos for guitar, pedal, and synthesizer companies within the industry as a freelance content creator, engineer, and composer. As product manager, he will be responsible for brand management, working with marketing to create engaging video, social and ad content, as well as product copywriting, assisting with global launches and providing direction and support to sales.



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## The Best of Both the Past and the Present

Fender's Justin Norvell Dishes on the New Vintera Series

by Christian Wissmuller

**I**n June of this year, Fender introduced the world to its new Vintera Series of electric guitars. This vintage-inspired lineup features specs from classic models of years gone by: colors and finishes such as Seafoam Green, Burgundy Mist, Fiesta Red, Mocha, Inca Silver, and Blue Metallic; period-correct neck shapes; and carefully engineered new pickups with decade-specific tonal qualities.

*MMR* recently chatted with executive vice president of Fender Products, Justin Norvell to talk about this impressive new line of affordable (honestly!) axes that have replaced the venerable Mexican-made Classic Series.

**The market for vintage instruments has been enjoying a healthy stretch for a while now and the Vintera Series obviously taps into that. Had Fender been hearing – either from players or dealers – that they wanted more “vintage-esque” models?**

Making models that hark back to those storied eras and our origin story is always something that people want from Fender. It had been more than a decade since

we had re-vamped what used to be our Classic Series, and we knew we'd just come so far from a design and development perspective that we could really top those with a new Series. That's how the idea for the Vintera Series was born. The fact that they fall into such an attainable price point just makes them all the more attractive.

**Can you describe for our readers how these new Vintera instruments are *more* period-correct than the previous Classic Series?**

We redesigned all of the pickups with the period correct materials and specs, and used vintage guitars as reference for all of the new neck shapes. We brought back vintage colors we hadn't used in a long time, as well. For a series the size of Vintera, that's a ton of work! We also sweated the small things, like dialing in the amount of tint on the necks for that vintage-style look and feel.

**One thing that's cool about this new launch is that, for every “period correct” model, there is a modded counterpart that offers modern features. Can you talk about how offering that breadth of options will mean connecting with more end users?**

We know that over the decades of life of a vintage guitar and multiple owners, players would modify their instruments, so we wanted to have models that look “of the time,” but have more modern specs, as well – from expanded tonal options and switching to bigger frets, flatter fretboards, hotter pickups. All of these features make this series appeal to a wide array of players, and not just the hardcore vintage enthusiasts. The modded versions are a different consumer group altogether.

**Specific to the new pickups, how did you go about replicating tones specific to particular decades of Fender production?**

It starts with the recipe – the right magnets, magnet stagger, wire, bobbin, et cetera – and from there we get into sonics. However, the recipes are different for each era – Alnico 3, Alnico 5, flat stagger, beveled vs. flat magnets, et cetera.

**This marks the second year (summer) in a row where an established M.I.M. Fender series has been “replaced” – last year with the Player Series stepping in for the Standard, this year with the Vintera replacing the Classic Series. In broad-stroke terms, what was the catalyst behind re-examining these Mexican-produced models?**

We are committed to making the best instruments that we can, and are always tinkering and tweaking. As time passes, we realize that we have made massive improvements from where we were years ago, and so we want to share that with the players. The Classic Series was doing fine as far as sales and reviews, but when we knew we could do better, it became incumbent upon us to share what we’d learned and release it.

**Anything else about the Vintera Series you’d like our readers to know?**

I encourage players to go look at the lineup on fender.com and go try some out at an authorized dealer to see and hear for themselves. They’re fantastic instruments, and we’re really proud of what the team has done.

“It had been more than a decade since we had re-vamped what used to be our Classic Series, and we knew we’d just come so far from a design and development perspective that we could really top those with a new Series.”



Justin Norvell, VP Fender Products



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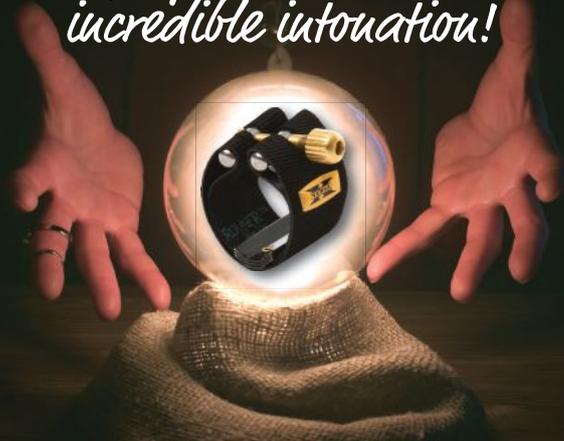


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Note From Mark Hebert

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## A Sense of Community

Discover how Mark Hebert, President and CEO of 2019 Dealer of the Year Cosmo Music, utilizes his NAMM membership to increase his company's success.

Cosmo Music was started humbly in 1968 by my dad, Tom. Known at the time as Cosmo Guitars, the shop began in Ontario, Canada, importing instruments from Italy and Japan, selling music retail merchandise and providing lessons. While a lot has changed since then, our team has shared a powerful and enduring dream: to build the world's most exciting and interactive music-making environment.

For these past fifty years, we've helped our community to make music—a lot of music—and I couldn't be more proud of what we've accomplished together. Today, our 56,000 square foot, custom purpose-built building is the single largest musical instrument store in North America.

### Cosmo Music and NAMM

At Summer NAMM, our team was thrilled to be honored as a NAMM Top 100 Dealer. The team at NAMM asked me to write a bit about our company's journey in order to give some insight for other dealers as they grow and evolve in this industry. I don't claim to have any big secret, but there is one thing I know: there's power in connection and community. This is a people business, and building relationships is the best investment a retailer or manufacturer could possibly make.

Because of this simple fact, Cosmo never misses a chance to attend The NAMM Show and Summer NAMM, allowing us the opportunity to connect with our manufacturers, distributors and fellow retailers in an environment focused on fun and organic business growth. By training our staff through free, professional development at NAMM U, our service-oriented operation maintains a strong and versatile team. We also take the time to bond and enjoy some live music every night. We've got to enjoy the fact that we work in the best industry—the music products business!

### Cosmo Music and the Community

We value community so much that we've made it a part of our DNA. As a full-service retailer, our organization has become its own ecosystem, as opposed to just a store. Each year, we put on Cosmo Fest, a music and gear festival, with over 14,000 registrants and 160 brands. Our goal is to bring the musical community together and to have our store serve as a linchpin, uniting us through our shared love of music. And, the results have been incredible. Sales are consistently up 40% after each fest.

Likewise, we host several events and concerts at our Cosmopolitan Music Hall, supporting local charities like Friends of Music Therapy of the SickKids Foundation, which provides music therapy for children in need.

### Next Steps

While I realize every store might not have the same resources or square footage, I believe the core of what we do can provide inspiration for other retailers. I would recommend sponsoring community events like concerts, music education seminars or recitals. Similarly, I think a lot can be gained by visiting other stores and events. I highly recommend bringing your staff to The NAMM Show and Summer NAMM. You'll be amazed at the skills your staff learns after attending NAMM U education sessions and networking throughout the campus.

Truly, the more you give, the more you get. An investment in people, training and connection is the best you can possibly make in our industry. For that, and many reasons, I am a proud member of our trade association, NAMM.

**Mark Hebert • President, CEO • Cosmo Music**



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# The MI Industry Descends Upon 'Smashville' for a Triumphant Summer NAMM 2019

by Christian Wissmuller and Victoria Wasylak

“It seemed to me that this year’s Summer NAMM Show was particularly important for the industry,” says NAMM president and CEO Joe Lamond. “One thing that really struck me was how the manufacturers and retailers who are playing to win demonstrated their commitment to each other, recognizing each other’s unique role in serving the music community and in growing the market. In addition, NAMM U and TEC Tracks broke all attendance records highlighting the deep desire for our members to learn and grow in this fast paced and everchanging marketplace. I imagine those who attended understand, those who don’t should really try it (or try it again) and see what they’ve been missing!”

Without editorializing overmuch, I’d be hard-pressed to disagree. While the Nashville gathering is far from the size and breadth of the annual convention in Anaheim, Summer NAMM provides unique and valuable avenues for connection and industry insight.

The numbers suggest that many agree, with 16,001 members showing up in Tennessee this summer – a seven percent increase in attendees, compared to 2018, and a 32 percent increase in international attendees. Summer NAMM 2019 hosted 1,500 brands presented by 500 total exhibitors – and first-time exhibitors accounted for nearly 200 companies.

This July, in Music City, the musical instrument industry demonstrated it’s alive and well.

## Top 100 Dealer Awards

On Friday, the industry gathered to honor their peers at the Top 100 Dealer Awards. Now in its ninth year, the Top 100 applaud the excellence and innovation found in music retail. This year, Cosmo Music Co. was named “Dealer of the Year.” Other “Best Of” category winners

included: Walt Grace Vintage for “Best Store Design;” Thomann Musikhaus in “Best Online Engagement;” Beacock Music Co. in “Best Customer Service;” and Ted Brown Music for “Best Marketing and Sales Promotion.” The “Music Makes a Difference” award, which honors passionate music education advocacy, recognized San Diego Music Studio for the store’s tireless efforts to encourage more to start making music and fewer to quit.

Upon acceptance of the “Dealer of the Year” award, Mark Herbert of Cosmo Music said, “It’s not just me – it’s my team. I have an amazing team of over 200 employees [and] they made this happen – they are unbelievable people.” When asked what his advice was for others who aspire to be Dealer of the Year, Herbert offered, “Something that I’ve learned over the years is that it’s not really about me or my store, it’s about the industry – to increase the amount of music makers, to be inspired, and to grow our market.”

Three new submission categories joined this year’s Top 100 Awards: the “Innovation Award” was awarded to Zeswitz Music; “Best Community Retail Store” recognized Amro Music Co., and the “Top 100 Customers’ Choice Award,” which allowed fans and guests of each retail music store to vote for their favorite store, chose Anderton’s Music. CMT personality Katie Cook hosted the evening, which featured a performance by “American Idol” winner, Danny Gokey.

## Lamond Discusses ‘Retail Disrupters’ at Summer NAMM Opening Breakfast

On July 18, NAMM president Joe Lamond came prepared to discuss the ongoing shifts in the MI retail world as he opened Summer NAMM with a breakfast session on “retail disruptors.”

“I think we can all agree that change is happening, and it’s happening incredibly, incredibly fast,” Lamond said. “Great retail is

no longer an option. Great retail is an entry point.”

Defining retail disruptors as game-changing businesses – like shops that use new, innovative online tools and who embrace the popular sharing economy – Lamond ushered guests onstage to share their best advice for using creative forms of disruption to the advantage of their businesses.

Speaker Larry Bailin, for instance, explained that these “disruptors” often utilize the most basic concepts to remove reasons for their customers to say no to purchases.

“It’s not enough to be found nowadays, you have to be chosen,” he said, emphasizing the importance of not just grabbing your customers’ attention, but keeping it. Some stores – like brick and mortar Amazon shops – have already aimed to maximize what people love about shopping (browsing and selecting items) and minimize what they hate (the checkout process), helping them to attract and keep customers.

“Use disruption to get people to say yes,” he explained, pointing to similar creative methods to retain customers. “All you need is one competitor without the same trepidation as you.”

Honing in on a separate factor of MI businesses, guest Michael Cathrea spoke about the disruptive model of Resonate Music School and Studio, which currently boasts 1200 students. By removing the usual September to June-only lesson schedule, the school instead created a month-to-month membership-based system for students. Cathrea and Resonate also created a plan that offers unlimited makeup sessions, rewards points as incentive for booking lessons, and free time in their studio every three months for students of all ages. “Learning is not enough,” he said. “We’re an experience business.”



Host Laura Whitmore with panelists Travis Atz of The Music Link, Cesar Gueikian of Gibson, and Brian Vance of D'Addario

### 'What's Hot in Guitar' Panel Shines a Light on Modern MI Trends

On July 19, Laura Whitmore hosted a panel titled "What's Hot in Guitar: An Interview with the Experts" with three major players in the fretted world: Travis Atz of The Music Link, Cesar Gueikian of Gibson, and Brian Vance of D'Addario. Over the course of a half-hour, the panelists covered a lot of ground, from expanding online tools, to the specific price points that are appealing to customers in 2019.

Travis Atz noted a domination of dreadnought acoustic guitars in the acoustic world, adding that many companies are now changing their production process in order to make products that can be sold around the \$300 price point. Combined with the fact that any given instrument is no longer limited to any one genre, there's significant cross-pollination in the realm of musical styles, helping introduce new instruments to more already-active players.

Cesar Gueikian added that Gibson has been redesigning their guitars to look like '50s and '60s models, seeking modern twists on their classic designs: "that was part of our inspiration, going back to our roots and getting it right. When you do it in a way that doesn't interfere with the classic, I don't think there's any resistance [from consumers]."

By the same token, Gibson's also looking ahead, trying to advance their online platforms and create ways that Gibson players can interact with the brand online.

"We are a little behind the curve when it comes to online engagement with our fanbase," Gueikian said. "There's a big move towards online learning. We're in the process of coding, working, and developing how we can create a better engagement situation with our fans."

### American Eagle Awards Honor Vince Guaraldi, George Clinton, Country Music Hall of Fame

On the first evening of Summer NAMM,



George Clinton accepts his American Eagle Award

The National Music Council of the United States presented the 2019 American Eagle Awards in the Davidson Ballroom of Music City Center.

Vince Guaraldi was honored by fellow pianist George Winston, making him one of the few honorees to ever be acknowledged posthumously. Credited for introducing jazz to tens of millions of children through *Peanuts*, the composer and pianist passed away in 1976.

"His music is actually better known than his name," Winston said, marveling at his legacy. "It's quite unusual that a composer's music is better known than his name."

Andy Thomas also spoke, adding that Guaraldi "invented himself through a chemistry of talent and tenacity . . . serendipity might have been Vince's secret sauce." Together, Thomas and Winston bestowed the



Vince Guaraldi's daughter Dia accepts an American Eagle Award on behalf of her late father

award upon Guaraldi's daughter, Dia.

Songwriter Liz Rose presented the Country Music Hall of Fame with their 2019 American Eagle Award. Rose, a collaborator of Taylor Swift and Little Big Town, among others, passed off the third award of 2019 to honor the Hall of Fame's decades as a cultural and educational institution.

Also honored was funk master George Clinton, who received his American Eagle Award from country legend John Rich. The two gentlemen starred together in the TV program, "Gone Country," roughly ten years ago, and onstage, their friendly bond was apparent as ever.

"How many artists can you say define a genre? Not very many," Rich said. "The simplicity of what he does is his genius. He is what is good and great about music."

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The Time Jumpers and special guest Vince Gill perform at the D'Addario and Taylor Guitars Summer NAMM party

## D'Addario and Taylor Guitars Host Pre-NAMM Party

D'Addario and Taylor Guitars tag teamed the pre-NAMM party Wednesday (July 17) at The Sound Annex in Nashville, hosting an evening of live music and BBQ eats before the convention officially kicked off the next day. Pictured are the Time Jumpers with special guest Vince Gill.

During the evening, D'Addario also presented awards to standout American MI retailers. School Music Dealer of the Year was awarded to Amro Music; Retail Sales Team of the Year was awarded to Ken Stanton Music; Combo Dealer of the Year was awarded to Blues Angel Music; and Community Dealer of the year was awarded to Beacock Music. [Read More](#)



1. Shane Nolan and Ryan Jaquin of **Aviate Audio** 2. S.I.T. Strings' Brian Strong and Tim Pfouts 3. Stephen Schmidt and Mike Martin of **Casio** 4. **D'Addario & Co., Inc.**: Davis Douglas, Natalie Morrison, and John Pizz 5. Petr Furch of **Furch Guitars** 6. **Gator Cases**: Gina Clement 7. The **Hal Leonard** team 8. **Fishman's** Jason Jordan and Gary Lopez 9. Justin Stewart of **FMIC** 10. Dave Lewis and Ryan Meisenheimer of **WD Music Products, Inc.** 11. **KORG's** crew at Summer NAMM 12. Tracy Leenman of **Musical Innovations** gets into the "NAMM Spirit" 13. Tim Keel of **C.F. Martin & Co.** 14. The crew from **Riversong Guitars** 15. **Roland's** Jeff Slingluff 16. Andy Powers of **Taylor Guitars** 17. **Yamaha's** Andy Winston 18. Michael McWhorter and Jon Croft of **Mojotone** 19. Sean Williamson and Chad Smith of **Option Knob** 20. Gordon O'Hara of **Retail Up!** 21. Marc Ingber of **SCORE MKTG** 22. Morgan Miles of **Music Nomad Equipment Care** 23. Nick Kwas & Jennifer Lewis of **KORG USA** 24. Robert Troke & Dawson Flinchbaugh of **Veritas Instrument Rental** 25. Kevin Jolly, Tom Burda, Ralph Trimarchi and Owen Matthews of **Electro-Harmonix** 26. Paul Chu of **Hunter Music** 27. Iain Moore, Jason Thomas of **SKUvault** 28. Dariush Rad of **Asterope** 29. **Bandlab Technologies**: John Chapman and Lauren Hendry Parsons 30. **Phil The Tip Jar's** Dominic Villegas and Scott Robertson 31. James Paul Thompson and Scott Attebery of **Kyser** 32. Taylor Harnois and Eric Thornton of **Rain Retail Software** 33. **TKL Cases**: Ben Myron, Tom Dougherty, Tommy Dougherty, Tom Nicholson, and Everett Porter 34. **KHS America's** Kevin Philbin, Andy Strayer, and A.K. Kist 35. Larry Greene, Brett Marcus, and Mark Blasko of **OMG Music** 36. **Amahi Ukuleles**: Autumn Lambert, Jacqueline Schear, and Amanda Brock 37. Marshall Johns and Chris Labriola of **Peterson Electro Musical Products** 38. **Gatchell Violins**: Allen Gatchell and James Phillips 39. Matt Payne, Vinny Delaria, Jeremy Payne, Jules Van Schelt, and Tom Tedesco of **On-Stage Stands** 40. Will Steven and Kenny Updegraff of **SKB Corporation**



**Voices from the Show Floor ...**

"Overall I felt attendance of dealer business was up. The overall customer attitude to the industry at large was hopeful and optimistic. There was a lot of excitement around D'Addario products. There were some really cool products launching from D'Addario, as well as vendors that truly fill a need for the gigging musician."

**John Pizz, D'Addario & Co.**

"I thought SNAMM 2019 was fantastic. I think Gibson acknowledged the importance of the show with our presence. With Nashville being so close to the largest population of the U.S., it is only logical that we (as instrument manufacturers) get behind the power of the face-to-face interaction with our dealers - and ultimately our fans. What I like about the summer show over the winter show is the ability to conduct business and be able to hear what the person you are communicating with is saying!"

**Dendy Jarrett, Gibson Foundation**

"Success at Summer NAMM doesn't come from the quantity of people we talk to, it's the quality of conversations we have. Summer NAMM continues to be the place to have meaningful conversations with the stores that make it a priority to attend the show. Frankly, I don't know if the attendance was up or down as compared to years past. I do know that the 'vibe' was positive, the outlook was optimistic and the sales potential are real."

**David Jahnke, Hal Leonard**

"It was good to see the show floor has expanded since our last showing in 2017 with more of the big builders there. We did very well. We decided to only show new or recent product development, we had a brand-new (ink still wet) catalog and a new website which has been a huge boost for us. The first day was a bit slow but I scheduled the majority of my meetings that day which offset slower floor traffic and gave us all a chance to explore and see new products. We are all very pleased with the success we had and expect the remainder of 2019 to continue the same positive trends."

**Dave Lewis, WD Music Products, Inc. | Kluson Manufacturing Co.**

"The show was great. It's a very guitar-centric show, so it's always a blast. The overall vibe was very positive and I felt great energy and momentum. You could feel that we're

in a cycle of growth and opportunity. In the coming months we are very excited as we used the summer show to launch several big new products like the Tone Master, Acoustasonic Exotics and the Vintera Series, which should give us a solid second half of the year.

**Justin Norvell, FMIC**

"Summer NAMM was decent this year. The venue is great and NAMM does a nice job putting on the show. The traffic felt a little light compared to last year, but we still were able to meet with many of our key regional dealers in the Midwest. We are positive so far this year in the MI Industry - and specifically guitar and bass accessories. After being flat for a minute, we have seen significant increases last year and so far this year going into Q3 and Q4."

**Tim Pfouts, S.I.T. Strings Co., Inc**

"Airpatch made an impact at the Summer NAMM show gathering lots of attention as a versatile accessory for your favorite effects pedals. The support from industry veterans and amazing reactions of people trying out Airpatch made the first ever public debut a major success. We expect the music products industry to continue moving towards brand new ideas that capitalize on the most cutting edge technology available."

**Ryan Jaquin, Aviate Audio**

"I like it being more focused. I sell a lot of guitar-oriented products at Hercules Stands, there are a ton of guitar players here, and interacting with the consumers is always lots of fun. So that's still intact - the interaction and the engagement that we have with our retail partners and our customers, that remains unchanged. This year especially, a lot of our retail partners are much more upbeat than they have been in the past several years. 2008 changed a lot, and we're out of that now. I think people are more optimistic. We're having fun again."

**Kevin Philbin, KHS America**

"It's great to see some of the bigger companies back here as well this year, and I think the attendance was very good. It's an excellent opportunity to see new products and to be in a smaller environment, but still be able to talk to company representatives and learn about new products, particularly things that could be important for the fourth quarter."

**Chris DeMaria, Fishman**

**BEST & WORST**



**Best Trip Back in Time**

The "shredding T-rex" at the **Empirical Labs** booth put smiles on the faces of all attendees who happened by the area.

**Worst Wake-up**

Being on a 7 AM flight to Nashville with a bachelorette party of 12 and a bachelor party of 25, all of whom were slamming beers, champagne, and shots well before I usually aim to be awake...



**Best Triumphant Return**

Talk about a 180-degree turnaround... This year Gibson's booth - one of the largest, and most interactive/fun at Summer NAMM - offered tons of guitars (some very expensive) for attendees to play, a performance stage, gear giveaways, and workshop stations demonstrating how these fine guitars get put together. Generally speaking, the new leadership seems to be steering the "Gibson ship" into smoother waters - here's to more of the same!



**Best Wheels**

This three-wheeled motorcycle, created by Paul Teutul, Jr. to honor the history of Martin Guitars for the television show "American Chopper" consistently drew a crowd (this shot was taken just as SNAMM opened on Saturday morning).

**Best Guest Speaker**

Taking in a songwriting masterclass from John Oates himself was a great way to cap off the convention at the NAMM Idea Center on Saturday (July 20)



**Worst Petri Dish**

It's pretty hot down in Nashville, in mid-July. Might be refreshing to take a dip in the hotel pool, no? Not when it's completely filled with drink-clutching party-goers, standing/swaying in place while screaming at one another and slowly getting sunburnt. When did this town become "Bachelorette/Bachelor Party Central," again?

**Best Way to Open the 2019 Show**



Chris Isaak and Jason Isbell took the stage at Gibson's Summer NAMM party at the Wildhorse Saloon



# They Will be Heard!

## Clarinet Suppliers Embrace Innovation While Honoring Tradition

by Christian **Wissmuller**

**T**he saying (joke) when I was in school band was that, “Clarinets are like ninjas. You can’t hear them, but they’re there!” While these woodwinds’ distinctive timbre and comparatively subtle sound may sometimes get a little “lost” amidst their more brash B&O brethren, they’re a vital component of orchestras, concert bands, jazz ensembles, marching bands, and any of a number of other genres. As the other joke from my school days went, “Without clarinets, life would Bb!”

We recently touched base with five major clarinet vendors to get the skinny on what’s hot with this market segment in 2019...

### What is your brand’s current top-selling clarinet model?

**Brian Petterson:** Looking across the Yamaha clarinet line, student-level instruments used in dealer rental programs provide the greatest sales volume. The YCL-255 model is the first clarinet many students will play. However, the intermediate YCL-450N and professional level YCL-650 are also best sellers in their respective categories. At the artist level, the top seller has been the Custom YCL-CSVR clarinet for the last half-decade!

**Joel Jaffe:** In terms of total units, the Backun Alpha Synthetic Bb Clarinet, which is quickly gaining popularity in markets where wooden intermediate clarinets were once standard.

**Matt Vance:** In our professional line, the R13 remains “The Legendary Choice of Professionals” and far outsells any other model, although the Festival, Tosca, and Tradition models do very well for us. In terms of sheer quantities, the Prodigie and E11 student clarinets are our best-selling clarinet models, overall.

**John Richardson:** The JCL1100S is currently exceeding our scheduled expectations. With the added features it is well received by educators encouraging students to move forward from their beginning instrument.

**Scott Campbell:** Our top selling student models are the Selmer CL301 and Leblanc Vito (L7214), our top selling step-up clarinet is the Leblanc Serenade (L225N), and our top selling professional clarinet is the Selmer Paris Presence (B16Presence). The Presence, in particular, has seen steady growth recently for several reasons. The Presence is known for its incredible tone and intonation. Additionally, its growth is due to, what is becoming common knowledge, its consistency and reliability. Presence clarinets have gained a reputation of playing wonderfully “right out of the box.” There is added confidence when teachers can recommend an instrument and

know that the student will have a great sounding, reliable tool to enhance their playing at the professional level, right out of the box.

### Have you been observing any significant trends in the clarinet market – be it materials used, sizes or features preferred by players, et cetera?

**JJ:** Previously only popular in Spain and Italy, we are seeing growth in orders for clarinets with the optional Ab/Eb lever, to facilitate advanced fingerings. As well, market acceptance of woods and materials other than Grenadilla, continues to expand. Backun Cocobolo wood barrels and bells continue to set the standard in the market, while our patent-pending CG Carbon Custom Clarinets represent the future for hybrid synthetic/wood instruments.

**MV:** It seems consumers are gravitating back to more traditional equipment and features. There was definitely a bump in aftermarket accessories in different materials, radical designs, et cetera in the 2000s, but we have seen a trend back to original barrels, bells, and historically popular models and set-ups.

**SC:** There is always a need for innovation. With greater research and development we are able to find ways to improve instruments. But it is always a fine line between innovation and tradition. We are a traditional market and, at times, with too much innovation and changes, advancements may not be generally accepted into the marketplace. However, not innovating refuses to be part of today and provide greater quality and benefits to the performers. We try to find a balance between innovation and tradition. General observations from the marketplace is a greater open-mindedness to materials being used, other than only traditional granadilla wood. This is in part due to the desire to minimize the issue of cracking that can be a threat when using such natural material. We feel that we have hit a perfect balance between tradition and innovation with our new line of Selmer Paris Evolution clarinets, launching this early Fall.

**JR:** The younger educators and advancing students are looking for features that not only help with sound and intonation, but also facilitate natural and relaxed hand positioning. Our clarinets address this with the raised and offset third finger C/G tone hole. This keeps the left hand in a relaxed state at all times.

**BP:** We are noticing trends focusing on innovations related to instrument materials and their availability and sound quality. The availability of Grenadilla wood and the global trade laws that govern its transport are top of mind as we plan for customer needs. Yamaha introduced the Duet+ line to provide



“Being a ‘trusted advisor’ to customers – and not just trying to rush to close a sale – can impress customers by establishing a relationship.”

– Brian Petterson,  
Yamaha Corporation of America

high quality, durable instruments that sound excellent and resonate like a solid wood clarinet. This combination of old-world craftsmanship and technological advancements makes the YCL-450NM less prone to cracking and yields better sound production. Duet+ now extends across our clarinet and oboe lines and are now best-sellers.

**What approaches have you noticed successful clarinet dealers adopting when it comes to selling, promotion, display techniques, and the like?**

**MV:** For student clarinets, direct contact with educators has been our most successful approach with the Prodigie and E11 student clarinets. Once educators and clarinet teachers are able to play-test these models and experience the quality first-hand, it becomes obvious why they need to adopt those instruments for their students. Our artists are also crucial in helping “spread the word,” with our student clarinets.

Of course, utilizing social media has become an essential component in marketing our instruments and much of that involves dealers. We recently started a new social media campaign called #WePlayProdige, which utilizes our artists in videos play-testing the Prodigie student clarinets. The next step in that campaign is to directly involve our dealers in making their own videos with customer participation.

Hand-selection of instruments by our artists for dealers has been a very successful promotion for our professional clarinets. Whether selected through one of our division managers, at a conference or trade show, or directly in Jacksonville at our North American Headquarters or at our New York Showroom, the hand-selection from a Buffet Crampon artist adds a certain level of prestige and draw for customers looking for the clarinet that suits them best. This process is not just limited to our specialty shops; more and more school music dealers are taking advantage of our world-class roster of artists to find clarinets for their inventory.

**JR:** Stocking a variety of product that will appeal to every player in the market is what dealers are expected to do. This along with a reliable student rental product spells success for dealers.

**BP:** Successful retailers have knowledgeable sales staff that understand the products and the market as a whole. Being a “trusted advisor” to customers – and not just trying to rush to close a sale – can impress customers by establishing a relationship. Trusted advisors are also able to coach musicians through the purchase and even make informed suggestions about mouthpiece and reed choices that work well with the instrument of choice. They can inform customers about important concepts like production consistency and the need to try an instrument before making a purchase. Though a relationship begins many times with a sale, it is cultivated over time by providing high levels of service, repairs and technical adjustments.

**SC:** Successful clarinet dealers display a “forest” and variety of clarinets. When choosing clarinets, an industry standard is to try



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“Hand-selection of instruments by our artists for dealers has been a very successful promotion for our professional clarinets.”

– Matt Vance, Buffet Crampon Group



several of a certain models. Aside from having a larger display to choose from, dealers who build strong relationships with clarinet influencers in their area and collaborate through events, both educational and pro selling events, are successful.

**JJ:** Having a skilled woodwind technician on staff is vital to earning the trust of clarinet players. As well, maintaining a wide range of products in stock for customers to try is essential in this age of immediate gratification. If a dealer doesn't stock the product, the customer will find it somewhere else.

**Any recent clarinet releases or upcoming clarinet models you'd like to draw MMR readers' attention to?**

**SC:** Absolutely! We are elated to share that in early Fall we will be launching our new Selmer Paris Evolution line of clarinets. The Evolution line will be available for the Presence, Signature, Recital, and Privilege models. By using modern and innovative manufacturing techniques we are able to create clarinets with greater stability, longevity, acoustic response, and best of all - no more cracks! This is accomplished by continuing to use the same prime-grade granadilla wood we always use as our primary material. This is a project that has been tested over the last two years with amazing feedback and results and we cannot wait to bring these to the public.

**JR:** I am not at liberty to say in this early R&D stage! However, I can tell you that anything Jupiter does in the future will be a result of something clarinetists are looking for.

**JJ:** Backun and Eastman are developing a hybrid synthetic/wood clarinet at an affordable price, packaged with one of our popular Vocalise Mouthpieces designed by Richard Hawkins.

**BP:** Yamaha recently introduced the YCL-SE Artist Model clarinets here in the United States, to great artist acclaim. These premium-level instruments play beautifully and have a stunning, elegant look due to the pink gold-plated highlights. One hallmark of Yamaha as a company is our investment in research and development. There is virtually no downtime at the worldwide network of artist Atelier facilities. The world-class technicians and designers on staff are constantly looking to improve what Yamaha offers all levels of clarinetists.

**MV:** We just debuted the new version of the Tradition professional clarinet. Originally introduced in 2016, the new version retains the cylindrical bore of the original model, but now features premium unstained African blackwood, a low F

correction key, and plated posts. It also still offers the two key-plating options of either nickel or silver, and comes with two barrels. The Tradition is definitely our best value in a professional clarinet.

**What are your expectations for this market segment in the coming months?**

**BP:** The clarinet segment is strong and growing, and we expect to see continued demand for premium quality instruments for the foreseeable future. In the late summer and fall, we plan to reinvest in supporting dealer sell-through efforts by offering promotions and programs that include strong sales tools. This supports back-to-school activities, the industry-leading Step Up to Yamaha fall rebate program and a host of other exciting promotions within our premium Shokunin Select and Select dealer program.

**MV:** We are watching the market very carefully, of course. Although the economy overall continues to remain robust, consumers seem to be more and more conservative when considering purchases beyond “the essentials.” With this said, we expect the growth and acceptance we have seen for our Prodigie student clarinet and the new Tradition clarinet to continue in the months ahead. In conjunction with the Martin Frost Foundation, Buffet Crampon has established itself as the main partner providing vital financial support and will donate instruments to the foundation. Buffet Crampon will donate 2€ to the Martin Frost Foundation for each Prodigie, E11, E12F, and E13 clarinet sold. More information is at [www.martinfrostfoundation.com](http://www.martinfrostfoundation.com).

We continue to provide the best value for our loyal customers while giving them the world's best clarinets. It is a very delicate balance and we never take for granted the historical devotion from musicians all over the world we have enjoyed for over 190 years.

**JR:** I look for the market to be more diverse in its acceptance of brands. There are high-quality instruments being made by many manufacturers and it is only a matter of time before they are being recommended by emerging educators.

**JJ:** Orders for Backun clarinets far exceed current capacity and we see no sign of this slowing down.

**SC:** We have seen a steady increase in clarinet sales over the last year. This is thanks to the great products being manufactured, our wonderful family of artists and educators, and our supportive dealers. We expect to see a continuation of this growth in the coming months. 



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# Ring the Bell

Back to School Sales by Christian **Wissmuller**

**F**or some MI retailers, the weeks leading up to the new school year represent amongst the most robust sales in the calendar year. To capitalize further on the profit potential of this season, many dealers host “Back to School” sales – and even those who do not often take a moment to refocus and reenergize the whole team.

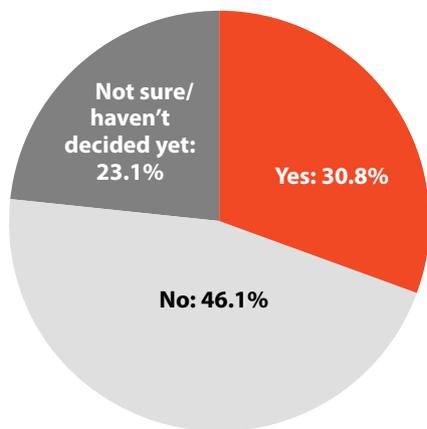
“During our sales meeting before the start of school, we will review and discuss our rental policies, demo techniques, and accessory add-on suggestions to our entire staff, as it is generally ‘all hands on deck’ for the first few weeks,” says Jerry Vesely of Parowan, Utah’s Vesely Music.

Retailers who embrace Back to School sales typically offer

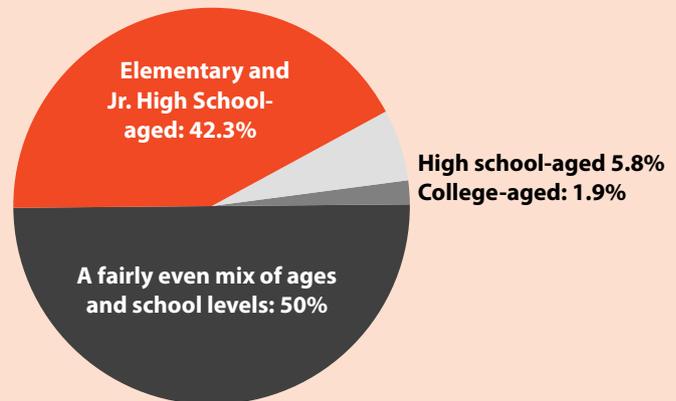
starter or step-up packages, discounted rental or lesson promos, and targeted discounts on key school music instruments and gear. While email and social media campaigns are used to great effect by many, of the participants in this month’s dealer survey, the vast majority pointed to the importance of having a strong relationship with local school music programs and independent instructors – 76.7 percent of respondents reported having such connections.

As Scott Apelgren of The Horn Section, Inc. (Melbourne, Florida) says, “There is very strong support in our area for school music and we do all we can to cultivate and support those relationships!”

## Are you planning on having a “Back to School” sale this summer?



## If you do plan to have, or if you have in the past had “Back to School” promotions, are the customers typically...



“We will reconfigure our B&O department and set up some special displays before school starts, and put a few specials in our monthly publication.”

**Jerry Vesely**  
Vesely Music  
Parowan, Utah

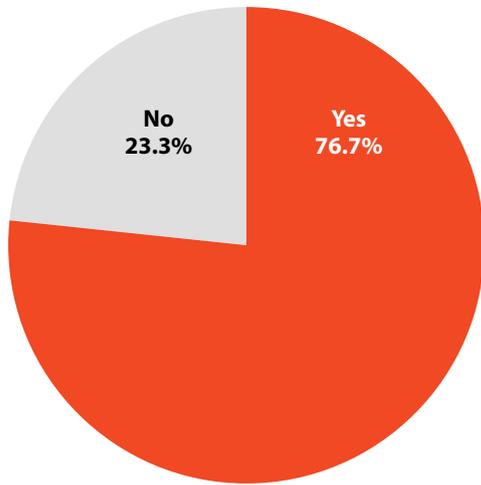
“We target grades 5 through 12. The needs of each are different based upon the grade levels (5th grade beginners are in need of different products/services than high school students). Our approach is to coordinate with area educators to ensure that we are prepared to provide the appropriate products and services for the students when they are needed.”

**Jonathon Breen**  
The Music Shoppe  
Normal, Illinois

“We target families with back-to-school age children from, say, 6 to 18. In doing this the response usually coincides with the target.”

**Stan Stazenski**  
National Direct Marketing-many  
Wheeling West Virginia

**Does your business have a relationship with area school districts, music programs, or directors/teachers?**



“We’re constantly in touch with, and building relationships with, local independent teachers and those at private schools and universities.”

**George Nellas**  
**Piano Planet**  
**Honolulu, Hawaii**

“School music programs are always in trouble and typically have a tough time keeping good teachers. We have become experts at working through teacher turnover and microbudgets.”

**Anthony Mantova**  
**Mantova’s Two Street Music**  
**Eureka, California**

“We have sales reps who call on schools once a week during the school year.”

**Pat Bowles**  
**Saied Music Company**  
**North Little Rock, Arkansas**

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**If you have experience with “Back to School” sales, what specific tactics, events, or promotions have you found to be particularly effective?**

“Keep it simple. Make the savings real, since parents have a lot of expenses not usually on their budget at this time of year. Have plenty of core inventory in stock, so they don’t need to make repeat trips. Have adequate staff to handle the increase in traffic, and a guard to escort you to the bank with all of the extra deposits.”

**Mike Guillot**  
Mississippi Music, Inc.  
Flowood, Mississippi

“A number of years ago, we did a promotion to sell a number of high-end cellos. The instruments were sold before the promo went out. There was a disclaimer, subject to prior sale, so we sent it out anyway. We did get some positive feedback despite not having the items advertised still in inventory. It pays to advertise, even if it is deceptive advertising.”

**Michael Becker**  
Becker Fine Violins  
Park Ridge, Illinois

“We have found that using social media is a great way to draw customers into our store for these kind of promotions.

We also like to run our back to school sale like a sidewalk sale, too. Winter is right around the corner in Wisconsin at this point, so it’s nice to have that one last ‘outside – hoorah!’ sale.”

**Brad Lutton**  
Knapton Musik Knotes  
Janesville, Wisconsin

“Social media coupons.”

**Bark Bolos**  
Big Apple Music  
New Hartford, New York

“It used to be newspaper and radio. Now, most people shop on the internet.”

**Brian Schmidt**  
Piano Gallery Calgary  
Calgary, Alberta  
Canada

“Just being available for the parents in a convenient way, particularly going out to schools!”

**Mike Canady**  
American Music Co.  
Fresno, California

“It’s such a naturally busy time of year,

we do not really need to run any specials. We always offer a ‘Student Starter Kit,’ which will give them a care kit for their instrument, the book they will need in class, and a music stand for home practice at a special discounted price. If they buy the ‘SSK’ we give the first month of rent for free.”

**Scott Apelgren**  
The Horn Section, Inc.  
Melbourne, Florida

“Special display of instruments, shop tours of our restoration center, and internet and other media advertisements.”

**James Reeder**  
Reeder Pianos, Inc.  
Lansing, Michigan

“Working directly with music teachers, so that they know about our products and any sales we might be having.”

**Peter Stevenson**  
P.S. Pianos  
Prince George, British Columbia  
Canada

“First month of rental free.”

**James Burke**  
Blues City Music, LLC  
Cordova, Tennessee

“‘Early bird’ specials seem to do the best. A little extra incentive to start buying in July and early August attracts the budget-conscious parents.”

**Lafayette Music, LLC**  
Lafayette, Colorado

“Building a great rental program that ensures future upgrade sales using high-quality, directly sourced instruments with set-ups that teachers recommend.”

**Steve Nowels**  
Top Notch Violins, LLP  
St. Louis, Missouri

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- PRO DIGITAL PIANO LINE OF THE YEAR • DJ LINE OF THE YEAR
- PRINT MUSIC PUBLISHER OF THE YEAR • ACCESSORY LINE OF THE YEAR

# KRUTZ Strings

**Anton Krutz -  
The Journey of a  
Passionate Craftsman**  
by Denyce **Neilson**



Anton Krutz



lins, violas, cellos, and basses. Anton continues, “Our K.C. Strings retail store sells the full line of KRUTZ products, of course. We also sell the more popular accessories. Players always love to come in and try out the instruments and bows because that decision is very personal for them.”

In 1976, eight-year-old Anton Krutz left St. Petersburg, Russia with his parents to begin a new life in the United States – in Kansas City, Missouri, to be exact. His father, Misha Krutz, had accepted the position of principal bassist with the Kansas City Philharmonic. It was a time of political détente: from 1967 to 1979, the easing of Cold War tensions between the U.S. and the Soviet Union allowed some Soviet citizens, like musicians, to emigrate out of the country. Both of Anton’s parents were classically trained musicians and played in different orchestras in St. Petersburg.

The Krutz family settled in and felt at home in Kansas City. By the time Anton was 12 years old, he started apprenticing with a master violin maker in downtown Kansas City. As he remembers, “I would go there every day in the summer and every Saturday during the school year. So, by the time I finished high school, I already had a lot of experience in violin making and repair. Then I went to the Violin Making School of America (VMSA) in Salt Lake City for the four years of violin-making training. After the VMSA I went to work for two years in New York City shops restoring instruments.” One of those shops included the violin workshop of Philip Injean, across from Carnegie Hall.

In 1992, Anton returned to Kansas, where he and his father became equal partners in a new business venture and both founded KRUTZ Strings and opened K.C. Strings, the flagship, 4,000-square-foot retail space of KRUTZ.

Since then, the business has flourished. Anton explains their success: “As luthiers concentrating on crafting these professional instruments, the reputation of our brand has become more well-known. This used to be common for shops in Europe but is no longer the case today. We started receiving requests for advanced student, step-up, and beginner instruments. These requests started coming from across the country, and so our business grew as we added more lines to meet that demand.”

Today, KRUTZ manufactures student to professional-level vio-

KRUTZ and K.C. Strings are separate companies – K.C. Strings buys products from KRUTZ Strings, just like all other dealers do. From the business side, they are completely separated. From the customer side, the service and quality are the same. Anton explains that, “the retail staff advises other dealers on how to sell instruments, the restoration techs help other dealers’ techs on repairs and possess the knowledge of all things retail with string instruments and share that with dealers who have not had extensive experience with string instruments.”

K.C. Strings is located in Merriam, Kansas, between downtown Kansas City and its surrounding suburbs, in a historic business district dating back to the early 1900s. It has become a thriving area to do business in, as Anton explains, “In fact, IKEA liked the area so much, they built a store five blocks away from us just a couple of years ago.” The KRUTZ warehouse and workshop are just a couple of miles down the road. Over time, their success has enabled them to expand to seven buildings, totaling around 16,000 square feet of space, in all.

Anton explains the evolution of the business: “Originally I thought we were just going to be a small luthier and instrument restoration shop, but we grew – mainly due to word of mouth. There were vertical student to professional brands in the brass and woodwind market. So now dealers had an authentic brand in the bowed string instrument space. We kept growing due to the brand and, at a certain point, grew into more business complexity than I knew how to handle. So, I got a very strong board together to help guide the strategy and logistics of the growth.”

As most business owners know, growth is key, but equally important is adapting to and sustaining that growth. KRUTZ seems to have managed that balance, but how? Anton’s response is simple: “Great instruments, social media engagement, and word of mouth from happy customers. We craft a couple hundred of our advanced student to professional instruments every year. The basses take

**“You have to hire the right people for this to work. Mistakes happen with new staff under a responsible autonomy system, but then it smooths out, and the operational results and customer service go to a higher level.”**

— Anton Krutz

five times longer to craft than the violins. We try to keep ahead of the demand by always having different instruments started in the crafting process. That way if we suddenly sell out, we can get those types of instruments finished and ready for sale sooner.”

Having a good system in place keeps production moving like a well-oiled machine, but how is quality maintained within that system? For Krutz, the answer can be summed up, possibly, in one word – “picky.” Could it be that simple? Anton explains that, “being picky is continually spot-checking the work of the craftsmen and repair techs to make sure they adhere to the standards that I have developed over my lifetime.” He adds, “Good systems are when all staff know what their role is within the overall operation and are aware of what the roles are of other staff around them. That way everything functions effectively with minimum friction and miscommunication.”

Within this framework, Anton Krutz has built a work culture within the company that seems to be working, “I work with our staff through shared conclusion, and then I give them responsible autonomy to make the right decisions that will serve the customer. I think any business is only as good as the culture within the business. Cultures can only be built through shared conclusion.”

Depending on the size of the company, there are many ways to do that, but for Anton, it all comes down to person-to-person communication with his staff and leadership teams to ensure there’s an understanding of what is expected. At KRUTZ, the idea is that this system empowers people to have pride in their work and stretch their creativity. Anton says, “You have to hire the right people for this to work. Mistakes happen with new staff under a responsible autonomy system, but then it smooths out, and the operational results and customer service go to a higher level.”

KRUTZ’s carefully-crafted instruments are distributed to violin shop owners and

music store dealers around the U.S. Anton says, “We don’t have any required minimums. So, if a dealer wants a small order, we’re great with that.” This may be a costlier policy for Krutz, but he says, “That is how we set up operations right from the beginning, so it feels normal to me. Also, as retail dealer that is how I would like to be have an instrument wholesale company work with me.”

As for the KRUTZ business model, they have one overarching business philosophy, which is, “Never play the Minimum Advertised Price (MAP) game.” Anton explains, “We only have retail prices online,

and we check to make sure all of our dealers follow that. This way the dealers are not forced to compete or undercut each other online. Then the dealers can do all the in-store sales they want, serve their customers, and still have great margins.” In terms of marketing, Krutz utilizes what he calls, “the big three” – Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The content is geared toward string players. “We try to use those platforms to publish content that players



An instrument is hand-crafted in the KRUTZ workshop

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would be interested in," says Anton. "That is what will help our dealers the most. I think this is going to be the future role of all premium brands, in whatever field they are in – to come up with unique and interesting content for their end user."

Anton also writes informational newsletters for KRUTZ dealers about how to better sell to and understand string players and teachers. He says, "String players and teachers have a very different culture from brass and woodwind players, and I try to bring an insight to that. I can do that because I have 30 years of experience working with everyone from beginning strings students to string players of some of the biggest symphonies in the country."

His passion reaches far beyond the physicality and mindfulness needed to be a skilled craftsman. Sharing his insight and knowledge may be the purpose of his newsletter, but maybe it's more than that. "Music is the strongest catalyst for emotion – it's about love, hate, and everything in between. If you think about life without emotion, without music, it really has



no meaning." This passionate statement comes from Anton's "Sound of the Soul" video, which can be viewed on the KRUTZ Strings website ([www.krutzstrings.com](http://www.krutzstrings.com)) or YouTube. His passion for his instruments and music is connected to emotion and the range of emotions we have as human beings.

Anton elaborates, saying, "Intelligence and emotion are two completely different mind components. As humans, we are mainly interacting through our emotions. Pure intelligence is very slow and communicates very little. The emotion that is attached to intelligence is what gives context to that communication. Art and music have the greatest effect on emotion. That's because they are one and the same, just in a different form. Art is frozen music and music is liquid art. The human voice intersects both forms. In turn, the bowed string instruments come closest to reproducing the sound of the human voice than any other instrument. That's why string instruments have such a strong impact on emotion. That's why films, video games, and other commercial soundtracks use strings." How does one apply these emotional, poignant, and heartfelt thoughts to the intellectual pragmatism needed to run a business? Anton answers: "We feel we have the best sounding instruments, and that is why the brand statement of KRUTZ is, Creating the Voice of Strings."

KRUTZ's instruments have been used mainly by classical players. However, changes and expansion may be on the horizon. Their featured artists roster is growing, but not just in the classical market. They've also caught the attention of nonclassical players from a whole host of music genres. Anton welcomes this trend and expects it to continue.

For Anton Krutz, it's been a long – sometimes arduous, but joyous – journey from Russia to Kansas, apprentice to master craftsman, perhaps sustained and supported by his belief that we all have a voice and a range of emotions, and it's through music that we can find it. 

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The advertisement features a dark, starry night sky as a background. In the center, a silhouette of a person stands on a hill, playing a stringed instrument. Below this, two mouthpieces are displayed: one on the left and one on the right. The mouthpiece on the right is labeled "Chedeville Elite". The overall aesthetic is elegant and artistic.

# Wham, Bam – Thank You, NAMM



by Menzie Pittman

## Unpacking from NAMM

**A**hhh... you are back in the office and now the real work begins – reviewing your take-aways from Summer NAMM. By any measure, the summer show was, as always, a success. Attendance increased by seven percent, and the energy of the show truly felt ecstatic.

More than once I heard people saying what I hear every year: “Summer NAMM always gives us more time and opportunity to catch up, interact, and engage than Winter NAMM allows.” I personally do agree with that. And, of course, Nashville provides the perfect backdrop for Summer NAMM. As I was engaged in a conversation with a young musician attending his first show, Sam Bush casually strolled by. After I scraped the boy off the ceiling, I reminded him that at the Nashville NAMM show, it is not a stretch to call that a normal occurrence. Superstar artists Vince Gill and Brent Mason were also on the show floor and scads of Nashville’s music monarchs roamed about daily.

## Extra Kudos go to NAMM’s Idea Center and TEC Tracks

Two words, one name, win the day: John Oates! As you would suspect, his session at the Idea Center broke all existing attendance records. He was engaging, insightful, and witty. The superstar writer shared multiple thoughts on the art of songwriting, and no matter which role you play in the industry, this session was special.

The TEC Tracks sessions included Dan Daley moderating a panel that included producer Tony Brown and some of Nashville’s top songwriters. Dave Tuffs, a Belmont University professor, moderated an amazing session with Craig Alvin who engineered *Golden Hour*, Kacey Musgraves’ multi-Grammy award-winning album. Another informative TEC Tracks session was led by Marcus Cobb, the CEO of Jammber. He spoke about his software that helps musicians track the details of any project(s) in which they are involved, including tracking splits on co-writing for songwriters, as well as all back-office organization. Simply knowing about this product helps retailers maintain credibility with rising musicians, and credibility falls in the same category as emotion – it is a silent salesman.

Sincerely, the topics of these sessions were incredibly germane to everyone in the music industry. They encompassed ideas of where the music business is heading to the technologies available to help musicians achieve their goals efficiently. TEC Tracks sessions once again provided information that keeps a music store relevant.

## Classic Cool Gear, Anyone?

Not unexpected, Gibson was present in a big way at the show and they, too, brandished a sense of Nashville style. The performance stage in their booth provided them the opportunity to showcase cool aspects of both their new and traditional products, which ranged from acoustic models to the latest releases in electrics. However, more importantly, the music manufacturer showcased the application of their product, tying it back into to the purpose of their product by incorporating the ultimate sales tool I mentioned earlier – emotion!

Gibson cleverly hosted a plethora of pickers and YouTube stars (who ranged in age from about nine to to the traditional, old-school players). They showcased great vocalists and songwriters covering all aspects of original music and classic cover music too. What a unique way to showcase the various Gibson’s guitars! Plus, this synergy drew the performers’ audiences to the booth on public day helping all parties gain visibility. I would call that a brilliant marketing strategy and a true win-win for all parties involved.

## Reviewing Some Takeaways

Playing on the Vince Gill tune called “The Next Big Thing,” do you want to know what the next big thing I heard repeated most often during the show? Are you ready? The most popular buzz phrase heard most often was, “subscription model.” The good news about that idea is if you do have something unique to subscribe to, you now have a popular format available to invite a membership-style clientele.

Coming in a close second was oddly enough an oldie but a goodie: “customer service.” This time, though, the phrase comes with a twist! “Fast service” is no longer considered as important as “genuine service.” “Human capital” is now considered the hot, new real estate. The reason? We are now competing with the growing AI (artificial intelligence) World. Just think of Alexa. And while AI is faster and exact to an unnerving level, it dehumanizes the experience, very similar to automation when it was introduced many years back.

AI doesn’t comprehend the word “improvise.” While AI puts pressure on a staffer to perform at a faster pace, it also gives folks the chance to use a skill that of late has been taken for granted: human interaction. Now the fight is “Old School” versus “High Tech.” If you don’t think old school can bounce back, just think about the new vinyl movement.

## In Closing

You will notice I haven’t mentioned too much about the music retail businesses we have all grown up knowing. Of course, B&O had a good presence at the show, displaying many traditional instruments. Martin’s booth is always fantastic because it is a quality company, and their vision is always integral. Leadership at the top is a business principle that is never out of vogue.

But the world of music retail is changing faster than we can even comprehend, and traditional models and historic ways of conducting business are now morphing into tomorrow’s way. Products such as the ones Jammber offers are helping musicians run their world better, and retailers need to stay up to speed with that understanding. It is a simple fact that new products help musicians stay working. If you really need proof of change, just think about Etsy and Reverb’s latest news release. Bet you didn’t see that one coming.

NAMM shows consistently bring us into the future world of music, but they never leave us forgetting the old world of music either. Attending this year’s Summer NAMM poignantly captured that. If you have never been to a Summer NAMM show, you are missing the opportunity of a lifetime. Make your next summer vacation a trip to the Nashville event. You get fresh air, exposure to world class musicians, and fresh ideas! 



## Confessions of a Succession Planner

by Jaime Blackman

**A**fter almost two decades as a financial advisor, there is one lesson I have learned that I can reveal with completely certainty: people are “planning averse.” When it comes to individual planning such as financial or estate planning, most individuals have a hard time focusing on goals that extend beyond six months. The process of long-term planning can be complex and the decisions required can be numerous. The obstacles are even greater for a business-owner.

Just mention the term “succession planning” and you can see the pain on an owner’s face. These two words evoke a sense of helplessness, because even though, intellectually, we know we can’t keep working forever, we can’t seem to create a fermata long enough to take action. Most MI retailers, are workaholics – they love what they do, and are great at. The habits that have been created over the decades of putting out fires, motivating the team, updating the inventory system, planning the next event, growing the business, or trying to keep it open for yet another year is all-consuming. There’s no protocol to allocate a few hours a week to work *on* the business, instead of always working *in* the business.

I was recently speaking to a successful music retailer and he said, “Jaimie, I have paperwork that continues to pile up on my desk for years. Yes, it’s important and, yes, I don’t want to touch it. I’d rather be hanging with our customers or my team.”

So, what do I do with this information? I take a deep breath, and stick to my narrative: Build your business from day one to sell it. By so doing, you will create a more valuable business, and more importantly, you will have a stronger work/life balance. Why? If you are creating a business which one day will be sold, that means you are delegating responsibilities. As a result, you will have more time to pick up a guitar, a golf club, or a grandchild.

When I speak at the NAMM Idea Center about this topic, there are plenty of head-nods, but my suspicion is that few will follow-up with their financial professional. However, the handful which have the courage to make changes experience rapid growth, and the “happiness meter” rapidly accelerates.

Here’s what happens.

Step 1: The 50-plus year-old MI retailer recognizes that he or she is not getting any younger.

Step 2: A call is made to their trusted advisor with questions, which generates a to-do list. In other words, changes have to be made in their work habits.

Step 3: Most, not all, people get stuck at step two. They stall, excuses are made: “I have plenty of time... I’ll get to this next month... I’m the only one who can run this company... My bookkeeper is too overwhelmed. I can’t bother her with any new work.”

The reality is that two-thirds of U.S. public and private companies admit that they have no formal CEO succession plan in place. It turns out the reason is not financial, or time, or lack of information. It is 100 percent psychological. People hate to change. People fear change. The status quo is safe. This is nothing new. The Greek philosopher Heraclitus observed over 2,500 years ago that life itself is change. Nothing remains static. From the molecular

level to the celestial level, everything is changing. Not adapting to change doesn’t make the problem go away.

In spite of the fact that fewer than 20 percent of any population are prepared for action at any given time, psychologists have recognized that there is an underlying structure of change; a model, if you will, that is effective if the person understands where he/she is in the process.

According to Dr. James O. Prochaska, there are six well-defined stages of change:

1. Precontemplation (can’t see the problem)
2. Contemplation (I want to stop feeling so stuck)
3. Preparation (I will take action next month)
4. Action (behavior is modified and action is taken)
5. Maintenance (consolidate the gains you attained)
6. Termination (your former bad habits are no longer a problem)

Matching your challenges to your stage of change is key to solving your problem.

“The reality is that two-thirds of U.S. public and private companies admit that they have no formal CEO succession plan in place.”

However, Prochaska points out that the process is rarely linear. The successful self-changer recycles and meanders through the steps several times until goals are reached. For example, people who take action and fail are still twice as likely to succeed over the next six months than those who don’t take any action at all.

Keep in mind the technical components to succession planning are not difficult to understand.

There are only three ways to sell a business:

1. Transfer to a family member
2. Sell to an insider – a key manager or a group of employees
3. Sell to a strategic buyer

The other alternative is to liquidate your inventory. I don’t consider this selling a business. I consider this closing your business.

What’s my big confession as a succession planner? My clients don’t care how much I know, until they know how much I care. It’s all about caring, listening, and asking the right question at the right time.

When you engage your financial professional about succession planning, your shields should be down, and you should “feel” that the relationship with your advisor will promote growth, which requires change. 

*Jaimie Blackman – a former music educator & retailer – is a financial advisor and succession planner. Blackman helps music retailers accelerate business value now through team building, coaching & mentoring. Blackman is a frequent speaker at NAMM’s Idea Center. Visit [jaimieblackman.com](http://jaimieblackman.com) to preview his value-creation tools and to subscribe to Unlocking the Wealth newsletter and webinars. If you have ideas for a future column, email Jaimie at [jb@jaimieblackman.com](mailto:jb@jaimieblackman.com)*

## Amplification

### New Amps from Blackstar

Blackstar's Fly 3 Def Leppard was designed with the iconic *Hysteria* artwork as the face of the grille and includes a customized Def Leppard panel and full-color, collector's gift carton. It has Bluetooth connectivity with ground-breaking sound design, guaranteeing that Def Leppard collection will sound great anywhere. True to the original Fly 3, this model includes Blackstar's patented ISF and clean and overdrive channels. \$99.99.



Blackstar Amplification has also just launched the HT Club 40 MkII Kentucky Special. This new model is powered by a pair of 6L6 valves, and features a striking bright red covering, tan basket weave fret, exclusive "Kentucky Special" metal plaque, cream head knobs, and a boutique-style cabinet.



[www.korg.com](http://www.korg.com)

### Dirt Road Special Amplifier from Electro-Harmonix

The remake of Electro-Harmonix's 1970s Dirt Road Special amp features modern enhancements to its electronics and mechanical design for improved durability, plus four reverbs from the Holy Grail Max reverb pedal. \$395



[www.ehx.com](http://www.ehx.com)

### Peavey's MAX300 Bass Amplifier

Peavey's MAX300 bass amplifier has a built-in Kosmos-C bass enhancement feature that adds harmonics and subharmonics for maximum tone. Along with a three-band EQ, the combo also offers Overdrive, Contour, Mid-Shift, and Bright switches. Peavey's DDT clip-limiting technology protects the speakers and is great for slapping techniques and other loud-playing scenarios. The amp's angled baffle design helps direct the sound where needed. Instead of pointing the sound at the player's ankles, the speaker is angled up to optimize both the ability to hear and the amp's overall projection. The MAX 300 also enables players to enjoy maximum flexibility, whether they're on stage, recording, or rehearsing. Players can utilize the external speaker out or EFX loop, while the ultra-quiet DI output is ideal for connecting into the PA system with excellent control and tone. The MAX 300 also features a built-in chromatic tuner with mute, a tuned and ported enclosure, 1/8" headphone output and 1/8" auxiliary input, as well as XLR direct output with ground lift. To offer a best-in-class power-to-weight ratio, Peavey's team carefully selected lightweight woods, utilized an efficient power amp, and tended to every design aspect. The unique cabinet design allows for superior frequency dispersion in tight spaces.



[www.peavey.com](http://www.peavey.com)

## Accessories

### E♭ Clarinet European Cut from Légère Reeds

Légère Reeds' E♭ Clarinet European Cut incorporates all the qualities that make its bigger brother such an amazing reed to play. It was designed with the professional clarinetist in mind, and is an improvement over the current Classic Cut E♭ reed. This will be the first Légère reed to feature Légère's new label printing technology. Strength and reed name will be printed directly onto the reed.

[www.legere.com](http://www.legere.com)



### Whirlwind's Line Balancer/Splitter

This handy tool balances and isolates a single line level signal or lets you send a line level signal to two destinations with transformer balancing and isolation for one or both of the outputs. The balancing provides superior noise rejection when you have equipment with unbalanced outputs that need to feed equipment with balanced inputs. The transformer isolation helps eliminate unwanted hum and buzz caused by power line and grounding issues. In ISO mode the signal is passed directly through to one output and transformer isolated to the second output. In SPLIT mode the signal is transformer isolated to both outputs with a resulting 6dB drop in level at each output. A ground lift switch is provided for each output. Both a female XLR and a 1/4" TRS jack are provided for the input signal. Male XLR connectors are used for the output signals. Operating Level: Input: -10dBm to +26dBm; Output: -10dBm to +26dBm (ISO mode), -16dBm to +20dBm (SPLIT mode); Frequency Response: 20Hz-20kHz ±1dB



[www.whirlwindusa.com](http://www.whirlwindusa.com)

### Gold Series Flat Looper/Switcher Connector Cables

RockBoard's Gold Series Flat Looper/Switcher Connector Cables are designed to be extra flat and space saving for optimal use of pedalboard real estate with extra thin angled plugs and compact straight plugs optimized for use with looper/switchers. Their slim, rectangular body efficiently prevents cable tangle and breakage. Their contacts and plug housings are gold-plated whilst the cables feature a double shielding of braided copper wire and aluminum foil that shields the flexible copper conductor core from high as well as low frequency interference. The Gold Series Flat Looper/Switcher Cables guarantee best signal quality and keep the player's setup tidy and neat looking.

[www.rockboard.de/en/](http://www.rockboard.de/en/)



### Cleveland's Symphonic Series Mallets

Cleveland's Symphonic Series mallets are designed for college students, amateurs, and professionals alike. This series includes the company's well-known bamboo timpani mallets, and finely crafted keyboard mallets.



[www.grotro.com](http://www.grotro.com)

## Accessories

### PS901 Pedal Power Bank from On-Stage



On-Stage's PS901 Pedal Power Bank drives an almost limitless array of guitar effects pedals and boasts nine fully isolated, individually LED-indicated outputs. Internally surged-protected, the PS901 Pedal Power Bank also includes a five-plug daisy chain for expandability to power up to 13 pedals. The Pedal Power Bank is housed in a heavy-duty, black anodized aluminum housing and a unit-comprehensive package of eight power cables, one reverse polarity plug, and an 18V power supply with European conversion adapter plugs.

[www.onstage.com](http://www.onstage.com)

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### Chedeville's Umbra Series Clarinet Barrels

The new Chedeville Umbra Series Clarinet Barrels have been designed to give your clarinet sound more warmth, depth and body and also provide better intonation and less resistance. The Chedeville Umbra Barrels are made entirely from the same proprietary "Chedeville Rubber" material that gives the beautiful warm sound to the Chedeville Clarinet and Saxophone mouthpieces. All the mouthpieces made from this proprietary hard rubber bear the "CHR" mark, as do the new Chedeville Umbra Clarinet Barrels. The Chedeville Umbra Barrel adds less weight to the overall playing experience when compared to the traditional barrel. They are available in 64mm, 65mm, 66mm, and 67mm lengths. MSRP: \$199



[www.chedeville.com](http://www.chedeville.com)

### Jackie McLean Legends Series Alto Saxophone Mouthpiece

Jackie McLean Legends Series Alto Saxophone Mouthpiece is an exact reproduction of Jackie McLean's original mouthpiece. It features a .077" tip opening and is made of bronze with a natural finish. This mouthpiece is a collaboration with Rene McLean, Jackie's son and master saxophonist in his own right. Available for alto saxophone only.

[www.RSBerkeley.com](http://www.RSBerkeley.com)



### KORG's PuttRhythm

The PuttRhythm is a golf practice tool with a built-in metronome that visualizes the golfer's putt using sound and light to efficiently improve the player's swing. The PuttRhythm was constructed to help polish a crucial aspect to a pristine swins – swing rhythm, the ability to hit the ball in a straight stroke when putting. The design combines both a metronome and pad in a single unit with an innovative bar that calculates the accuracy of the putt. When swinging the club, the PuttRhythm can detect whether or not the putter is centered on the ball, a necessary tactic to ensure a smooth and controlled shot. The tempo setting is also easily adjustable, allowing the golfer to practice at the perfect tempo depending on their level.

[www.korg.com](http://www.korg.com)



### New Accessories from D'Addario

D'Addario Woodwinds' limited-edition Reserve Evolution Marble Mouthpieces are designed for the modern clarinetist, delivering a warm and refined tone featuring quick response and ease of articulation. This new mouthpiece provides clarinetists with greater flexibility for a wide variety of musical styles. The marble mouthpiece features an exclusive marble formula and medium-long facing providing greater tonal flexibility, precision milling for consistency, upholding the strictest design features and tolerances, and altered baffle for added projection and articulation nuance.

Kaplan, D'Addario's line of premium orchestral strings, is expanding the Amo & Vivo sets for violin & viola to include both full and fractional sizes. Kaplan Amo brings warmth, richness, and flexibility for brighter instruments, while Kaplan Vivo brings brilliance, clarity and a robust feel for darker instruments. Violin strings will be available in medium tension in both full and fractional sizes, as well as light and heavy for full size only. Sizes include sets and single packaging for 4/4, 3/4, 1/2, and 1/4 instruments. Viola strings will be available in short-scale (14"-15"), medium-scale (15"-16"), and long scale (16+") in both sets and single packaging. Long scale sets will continue to be available in medium and heavy tension, while medium and short scales will be available in medium tension only.



[www.daddario.com](http://www.daddario.com)

## Accessories

### Fishman's TriplePlay Connect

Fishman's TriplePlay Connect is a MIDI controller that installs easily and non-invasively on most electric and acoustic guitars and allows users to plug into their iPad and create new sounds, instruments, write and record songs, and much more. Players simply download the free TriplePlay Connect iOS app from the App Store to discover and interact in a universe of exciting new musical possibilities. When the TriplePlay controller, app, and guitar are combined, users can blend virtual instruments, add effects, generate complex rhythms, trigger loops and audio file backing tracks, create loops from multiple instruments, add personal loops and audio files from other projects, record performances, and share them online with friends.



[www.fishman.com](http://www.fishman.com)

## Fretted

### The Joan Jett ES-339 from Gibson

The new Joan Jett ES-339 guitar features a thermally-engineered chambered maple centerblock and thermally-engineered Adirondack Spruce bracing, a radical first for Gibson ES guitars. The control assembly is hand-wired with Orange Drop capacitors and is paired with the company's Burstbucker 2 and Burstbucker 3 humbucking pickups, creating a wide range of tonal options. The AAA figured maple veneers are finished in Wine Red. The Joan Jett ES-339 will be produced in a very limited run of only 150 guitars available worldwide, with the first 50 hand-signed by Jett. Each instrument will come with a Gibson Joan Jett Signature hardshell case and custom Joan Jett certificate of authenticity.



[www.gibson.com](http://www.gibson.com)

### Reverend's Reeves Gabrels Signature RG

The Reverend Reeves Gabrels Signature RG comes in transparent black flame maple with "RGX" engraved on the fretboard. Like the standard version of the Reeves Gabrels Signature, the guitar is loaded with Reeves' signature Railhammer pickups in brushed nickel, has a pau ferro fretboard, a bound tilt-back headstock, a Wilkinson trem routed underneath for extra travel, and a push-pull phase switch in the tone control knob. Like all Reverend Guitars, this guitar has a Korina body. A Boneite nut and locking tuners, Reverend's Bass Contour Control, and a dual-action truss rod are all for maximum performance.

[www.reverendguitars.com](http://www.reverendguitars.com)



### Vintera '60s Mustang from Fender

For players who crave the style and sound of Fender's golden era, Fender created the Vintera '60s Mustang. Equipped with the coveted features that defined the decade – including period-accurate neck profile and playing feel, along with re-voiced pickups – this guitar has all of the punch and style that made the Mustang a legend. For authentic, vintage-style tone, Fender re-voiced the pair of single-coil Mustang pickups to sound more like the originals. Crystalline and bell-like, they have a crisp, articulate tone. For classic playing feel, 22 vintage-style frets sit atop the "60s C"-shaped neck has a 7.25"-radius fingerboard with 22 vintage-style frets for classic playing feel. A vintage-style Mustang bridge, tremolo and tuning machines provide original-era aesthetics, rock-solid performance and tuning stability. Other features include the classic pickup slider switches, chrome hardware and four-bolt neck plate. Includes a deluxe gig bag. \$3,299.99 - 3,999.99

[www.fender.com](http://www.fender.com)



### Tri Parallel Mixer from Electro-Harmonix

The New Tri Parallel Mixer (TPM) features three independent, parallel effects loops that can be used to mix effects in a way not possible when connecting effects in series. Users can layer synth sounds with distorted guitar and clean psychedelic modulation, or blend three different drive tones for a faux multi-tracked wall of sound. The TPM can also be used as a switcher in XOR mode where only one loop can be on at a time. It is great for creating drastic tonal shifts and manage tones. Players can also use each loops ins or outs to split one instrument into three amps or mix three instruments down to one output.

[www.ehx.com](http://www.ehx.com)



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## Fretted

### Fairmount CH LTD Rosewood Acoustic Guitar from Godin

Godin Guitars' Fairmount CH LTD Rosewood HG EQ acoustic guitar features a bold and rich tonal palette. Main features include solid rosewood back and sides, concert hall body shape, Godin LTD inlays, matching tortoise shell pickguard and headstock, and LR Baggs Anthem preamp. Includes Deluxe Godin TRIC case. This new model also comes with a solid Spruce top, Mahogany neck, Richlite fretboard, and a high-gloss natural finish.



[www.godinguitars.com](http://www.godinguitars.com)

### Framus Diablo Progressive X

The Framus Diablo Progressive X features an original Floyd Rose Vibrato System, which makes this instrument ideal for '80's and '90's rock and heavy metal. For the pickups, Framus chose a Seymour Duncan Hot Rodded set with Jazz humbucker in the neck position and Jazz/Blues Trembucker in the bridge position. This guitar is equipped with mahogany body with matching electronic compartment cover made of wood, carved AAAA flamed maple top, bolt-in flamed maple neck with tigerstripe ebony fretboard with 22 jumbo frets and fluorescent side dots, Graph Tech Ratio Locking tuners with wooden knobs, locking nut, original Seymour Duncan pickups: SH-2N (Neck), TB-4 Trembucker (bridge), controls for volume and tone, Framus 5-way switch, Warwick Security Locks, Natural Transparent Satin, Colored Transparent Satin or High Polish Finish, and Chrome, Black or Gold hardware.

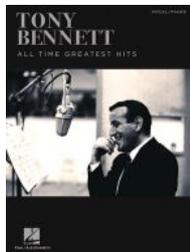


[www.warwickbass.com](http://www.warwickbass.com)

## Print & Digital

### Tony Bennett – All Time Greatest Hits from Hal Leonard

Hal Leonard and Tony Bennett are coming together to bring Bennett's biggest songs to the sheet music world with two editions of *Tony Bennett – All Time Greatest Hits*. Available for both Piano/Vocal/Guitar and Hal Leonard's E-Z Play Today formats, *Tony Bennett – All Time Greatest Hits* features all of Bennett's major classics from the 2011 album of the same name. Songs featured include: "The Best Is Yet to Come," "Cheek to Cheek," "Don't Get Around Much Anymore," "Everybody's Talkin' (Echoes)," "Fly Me to the Moon (In Other Words)," "For Once in My Life," "The Good Life," "I Left My Heart in San Francisco," "I Wanna Be Around," "It Had to Be You," and more. More exciting books are planned for release soon, including the *Tony Bennett Sheet Music Anthology*, a PVG folio of 100 of Bennett's top tunes. The PVG folio of *Tony Bennett – All Time Greatest Hits* is available for \$17.99, while the E-Z Play Today folio is available for \$14.99.



[www.halleonard.com](http://www.halleonard.com)

## Cases & Stands

### Chedeville's Selecta Wooden Reed Case

Chedeville's Selecta Wooden Reed case is made from an elegant cherry-stained birchwood. The case features a super-flat Acrylic plate that will keep reeds from warping in storage. It can hold four reeds from B $\flat$  clarinet to soprano, alto, and tenor saxophone in any combination. The Selecta Reed case provides ample protection and will store reeds in true style while keeping them flat and ready to perform. MSRP: \$59.95



[www.chedeville.com](http://www.chedeville.com)

### CS7201 Cello/Bass Stand from On-Stage

On-Stage's CS7201 cello/bass stand is designed to hold most cellos and double basses. The new stand features a fully independently adjustable lower yoke and offers sturdy and secure access to instruments up to 60 lbs. The CS7201 boasts EVA padding at all contact points to protect the instrument as well as non-slip feet for secure placement. A rear hook/attachment makes for handy bow access. The stand is height adjustable – from lower to upper yoke – 28 inches to 52.5 inches. The base spread is 22.5 inches. The CS7201 features a black powder coat finish.



[www.on-stage.com](http://www.on-stage.com)

## Band & Orchestra

### Hunter's 6403EB B $\flat$ Clarinet

The 6403EB B $\flat$  Clarinet shares the same features as the Hunter 6403E – the Hunter 6403E has a durable plastic body, drop-forged, nickel-silver keys with inline jump side keys, and plays with very good sound and key action. The difference comes in the clarinet's plateau (covered) keys that are specifically designed for the younger player-or anyone who may have difficulty covering the standard open-hole ring keys. The Hunter clarinet comes complete with a case, mouthpiece, cap and ligature, and care products.



[www.huntermusical.com](http://www.huntermusical.com)

### JH500 and JH600 Violins from RS Berkeley

Jascha Heifetz Violins from Meisel are authorized bench copies of the original violin from 1740 by Giuseppe Guarneri (del Gesu), which was obtained by Jascha Heifetz in 1922 and played by him for 65 years in concert and recording sessions. Jascha Heifetz Violins feature beautifully figured Bosnian maple for the backs, sides and necks, while the tops are made of straight grained European spruce. Two models are offered – JH500 and JH600.



[www.rsberkeley.com](http://www.rsberkeley.com)

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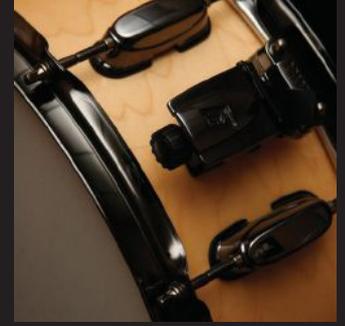
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By **Dan Daley**

# What's in Store for Store Rents

**D**epending on where you live, you may have noticed that a rather large number of retail storefronts have been sitting empty for a rather long time. Long, as in years, in some cases. Why is it that, at a time when unemployment is at an all-time low and the economy (in general) is doing very well, the real estate format used by small businesses – the street-level storefront – remains seemingly moribund?

Retail in general is in a challenging period, and online sales have pulled the wind from the sails (and sales) of many small retail companies, including MI. But there's another dynamic at work here, a form of the millennial malady known as FOMO – fear of missing out. Landlords have been purposely holding properties off the market with the expectation that a better deal, a higher-paying tenant, is always just around the corner. This kind of chronic hesitancy to take a deal on the table versus holding out for a purely speculative one had its clinical roots in basic human instinctual procrastination, but in some especially dynamic urban real estate markets, it might also make a lot of sense. Many landlords don't want to offer short-term leases if they think a richer, longer-term deal is forthcoming from a tenant with money to burn, or they're actively trolling for national brands that have been increasingly turning to pop-up and shorter-term storefront strategies to build brand awareness and launch new products.

— *No one's sure where they're going to be next, or how long they'll be there, or what it's going to cost* —

It's a mindset, however, that works against the core principle of retail, and one that is especially salient for MI retail: the need to be in the same place for a long time in order to build relationships with customers and with other merchants who can refer customers to each other. That becomes impossible without the availability of a long-term lease. It's a problem that's a subset of the larger issue of residential rental affordability in cities like New York and San Francisco. No one's sure where they're going to be, or how long they'll be there, or what it's going to cost.

## Space, The Final Frontier

In Manhattan, where the retail-space vacancy rate is 20 percent, compared with about seven

percent in 2016, and where you'd think that the basic supply-and-demand dynamics would compel rents downward, the opposite is happening. More storefronts are staying dark, their owners waiting for that retail unicorn to show up. And as this odd dynamic plays out, rents keep going up.

An alliance of small-business owners are behind the Small Business Jobs Survival Act, a bill that proponents say could help stop the shuttering of small shops along the city's streets and the by helping small businesses negotiate more equitable lease terms. The New York City Council has held hearings on the bill, which gives commercial

“Landlords have been purposely holding properties off the market with the expectation that a better deal, a higher-paying tenant, is always just around the corner.”

tenants a right to a lease renewal, including a 10-year term for those in good standing, and also lets tenants demand arbitration if a rent hike is too high. (New York City currently has no restrictions on commercial rent increases.) The bill can't compel landlords to rent, but it would provide some encouragement for landlords to sign some more long-term leases. It's getting plenty of pushback from the city's deeply entrenched real estate companies, most of which are decidedly not small businesses. But in June the city also passed sweeping residential rent reform legislation, changing New York's notoriously landlord-friendly rent stabilization laws substantially in tenants' favor, so the winds are shifting.

The vacant-storefront problem is, in New York and elsewhere, part of a much larger equation, and though the momentum seems to be shifting away from the moneyed interests to a more grassroots level, the retail-space availability problem isn't going to suddenly disappear. But it's now been clearly identified as an issue for small businesses, and with 2020 a year away, things could shift even more. 

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