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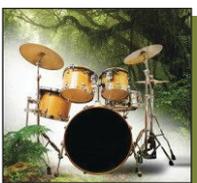
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Cover Photo: Courtesy D'Addario & Co.

MMR Musical Merchandise Review® (ISSN 0027-4615), Volume 176, Number 4, April 2017, founded in 1879, is published monthly by Timeless Communications Corp., 6000 South Eastern Ave., Suite 14J, Las Vegas, NV 89119, (702) 479-1879, publisher of School Band and Orchestra, Choral Director and JAZZed. Periodicals Postage Paid at Las Vegas, NV and additional mailing offices. MMR is distributed free to qualified individuals and is directed to music dealers and retailers, wholesalers and distributors, importers and exporters and manufacturers of all types of musical instruments and their accessories, related electronic sound equipment, general musical accessories, musical publications and teaching aides. **POSTMASTER:** Send all UAA to CFS. **NON-POSTAL AND MILITARY FACILITIES:** send address corrections to Musical Merchandise Review, PO Box 16655 North Hollywood, CA 91615-6655. The publishers of this magazine do not accept responsibility for statements made by their advertisers in business competition. No portion of this issue may be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. Copyright ©2017 by Timeless Communications Corp., all rights reserved. Printed in USA.

“While musicians in the music business may not all be radical environmentalists, they are very open to the idea that there are things way more important than making another dollar, and that seems intrinsically related to protecting the planet we live in, or at the very least, having a profound respect for it.”

– Andy Morris, president, Dream Cymbals

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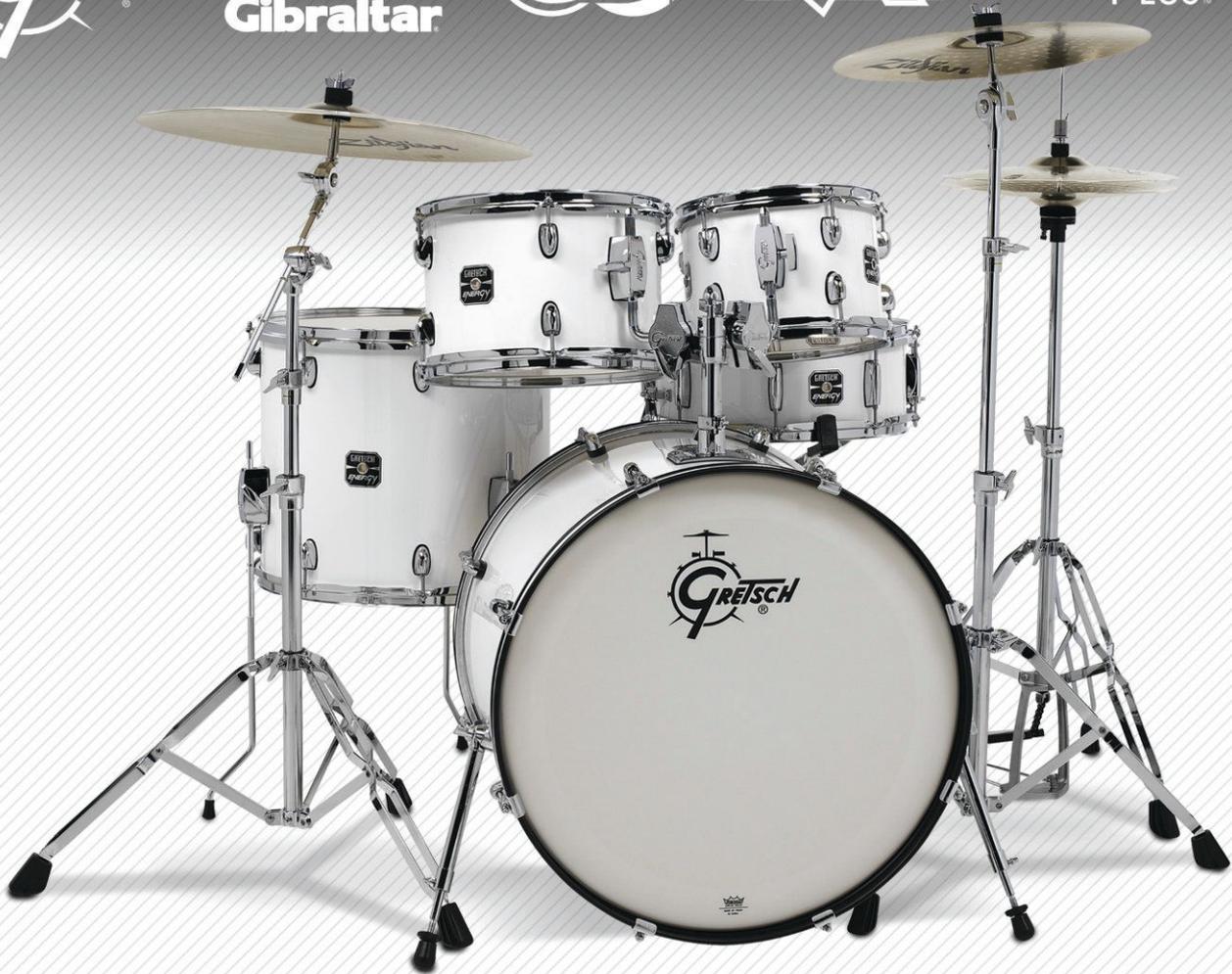
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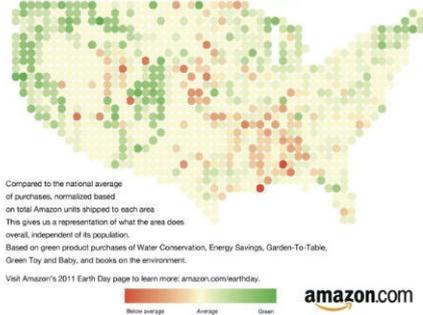
There's More than One Reason to Refer to \$\$\$ as 'Green'



by Christian Wissmuller

MMR has been running our annual "Green Issue" for a few years now and, generally speaking, reader reaction has been very positive. Who doesn't like trees and chirping birds and frolicking woodland creatures, and, you know – the ability to breathe easily and to not get poisoned from tap water and stuff like that?

How America Is Going Green



However, there has been a small minority of folks who've gotten in touch occasionally to question the purpose of these issues. What's the *point*? Why are we shoving our hippie agenda down everyone's throats?

Well, first of all, there's the whole idea outlined above about enjoying nature and living long, healthy lives in peaceful co-existence with the world; Secondly, it's not *our* agenda, as the eager participation of so many MI suppliers and retailers in these features throughout the years attests.

But if you're still not sold on why *you* should care about all of this nonsense, consider the following:

Based on the 2012 *Survey of the American Consumer* released by consumer analysts GfK MRI, "65% of American adults agree with the statement, 'preserving the environment is

very important.'" That's a pretty healthy portion of your potential customer base – and the smart money would be on that figure having gone up in subsequent years.

And the point gets put into even more stark relief when you factor in those pesky "youths" – the so-called "millennials." You must have heard of these kids – the generation that wields the most purchasing power, by volume, since the Baby Boomers? "Nearly 40 percent of millennials prefer to spend money on a good cause, even if it means paying more for a product. Socially conscious, environmentally friendly, and charitable behaviors will win major points with these customers," according to an article appearing on *CMSWire* in June of 2016. Of course where you live (or where your MI store is located) also comes into play here. In 2011, Amazon made a nifty map (look to the left) derived from the purchasing habits of people from across the nation. The results are likely not terribly surprising, but instructive, nonetheless: The Northeast, Southwest, West, and areas around most urban/education centers tend to skew more "green." But wherever you live, the benefits are out there for the taking. This is truly – no pun intended, but I'm digging it – low-hanging fruit for you and your business.

The big point it: "going green" isn't just nice to the earth, there's a good chance it'll be nice to your bottom-line.

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Industry News

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- Letters
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- Trade Regrets

Chauvet Acquires ChamSys

Chauvet & Sons LLC has announced that it completed the acquisition of ChamSys Ltd., designer and manufacturer of lighting controllers.

ChamSys provides Chauvet a strong presence in the controller market that complements its Chauvet Professional lighting fixtures and LED video panels.

"We are very excited about the opportunity to join forces with ChamSys," said Albert Chauvet, CEO of Chauvet & Sons LLC. "ChamSys has a well-deserved reputation for innovation, quality, and value, the same principles that are at the heart of our own Chauvet brands. Together ChamSys and Chauvet are now in a position to better cover and serve worldwide markets."



ChamSys will continue to operate as an independent business unit from its facility in Southampton, U.K. ChamSys founders Chris Kennedy and George McDuff will remain as managing directors of the company and, together with sales director Tony Cameron, will continue to lead its current staff of software and hardware engineers, operations, sales and support teams.

The ChamSys industry standard MagicQ series of lighting control products will continue to be sold by the company's current network of distributors, except in the U.S.A., where Chauvet will sell and support ChamSys products from its Sunrise, Florida, headquarters. The Chauvet Professional sales team will assume responsibility for ChamSys sales in the U.S.A. They will have the full-time support of Phil Watson, former CEO of ChamSys, Inc. who has been named ChamSys U.S.A. director.

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JHS and Gibson Return to Court, Gibson Declares Victory

John Hornby Skewes & Co. Ltd. (JHS) and Gibson were back in court the week of March 6th, 2017, continuing their clash over alleged trademark infringement with regard to guitar design.

U.S. law magazine *Law 360* reports that, in court, Gibson's lawyer claimed that JHS decided at "the highest level" to rip off Gibson Brands' iconic guitar designs during opening statements, drawing a response from JHS that Gibson can't use trademark law to monopolize "standard shapes" for the instrument.

During the first day of the trial, Gibson attorney Kurt Schuettinger of Bates & Bates LLC gave his opening statement to an eight-person jury in front of a backdrop of about 10 guitars, some of which were made by JHS, and several blown-up posters of Gibson's registered trademarks. Gibson is alleging trademark infringement and unfair competition in its suit, which was filed in California's Central District in 2014.

The guitar maker alleges that JHS knowingly and intentionally infringed six trademarks covering four guitar models: the Flying V, the ES, the trapezoidal Explorer, and the SG.

Schuettinger said that Gibson has spent millions of dollars to promote these particular guitar lines since the company first made them – in 1961 for the SG and 1958 for the others – and as a result, has built a reputation that includes books and museum pieces on the instruments. He added that the evidence will show that JHS' top directors went on the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office's website and actually looked up Gibson's trademark registrations,

"The decision to sell the guitars you see here was made at the highest level of JHS," he said. "JHS and their distributor agreed they would rather beg for forgiveness than ask for permission, and you will see that quote in the emails in this case."

Schuettinger said that JHS had lied to Gibson about when it started selling the alleged copies and when it stopped. "This is a simple case of trademark infringement and unfair competition," Schuettinger.

Brent Davis of Scarinci and Hollenbeck

LLC, representing JHS, told the jury during his opening statement that the evidence will actually show that many companies have used the allegedly unique trademarked guitar shapes over the decades – and that guitar customers know to look at the brand name on the headstock of a guitar to know who made it and not rely just on its shape.

"The problem here is that these outlines of body shapes and headstocks of guitars have been used by so many different companies for the last half century that they don't belong to anyone. They're just standard shapes used by the industry," he said.

Davis said that Gibson's own representatives, when deposed, admitted that even they couldn't identify who made a guitar simply from looking at an outline of its shape, which is all the trademarks cover.

"This is a simple case. Lots of companies make something – it can't possibly be an indicator of one company," he said.

He added that the purportedly sinister USPTO website search Schuettinger had mentioned occurred in 2010, well after JHS had already designed and started selling its allegedly infringing guitars.

Gibson then called its first witness, Jason Davidson, the company's senior director of customer service, to the stand. The trial continues on Wednesday.

In 2012, Gibson brought a similar suit against JHS and Viacom International Inc., accusing Viacom of secondary infringement, alleging JHS distributed a SpongeBob Squarepants-branded ukulele that infringed on Gibson's "Flying V" trademark.

In February, a three-judge Ninth Circuit panel dismissed the claims against Viacom, saying Gibson didn't allege Viacom had the required amount of control over U.K.-based John Hornby Skewes & Co. Ltd.'s production and sale of the instrument to trigger liability. The appellate court did, however, revive Gibson's trademark infringement claim against JHS. That case is still pending.

On the evening of March 10th, Gibson issued the following press release:

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NAMM Musikmesse Russia and Prolight + Sound NAMM Russia Return in September

NAMM Musikmesse Russia, the international fair for musical instruments, sheet music, music production, and music business connections, and Prolight + Sound NAMM Russia, the international fair of technologies and services for entertainment, integrated systems, and creation, will welcome visitors to Moscow's Sokolniki Exhibition and Convention Centre, September 14 to 17, 2017.

Now in its sixth year, the show attracts Russian and international manufacturers and distributors to present the latest in musical instruments, products, and pro lighting and audio technologies to a crowd of industry specialists and consumers.

Since making its debut in 2012, over 400 companies from 28 countries have demonstrated their products and services to more than 60,000 unique visitors. In the past five years, NAMM Musikmesse Russia and Prolight + Sound NAMM Russia has become a key platform for the Russian market to create business opportunities and to share experiences between industry professionals from various countries, while experiencing continued visitor growth representing all sectors of the industry.

The 2017 NAMM Musikmesse Russia show will offer several new features and areas as part of the reimagined floorplan, including a reorganization of the pavilions into similar product groups known as "brand worlds." These spaces will showcase similar products and distributors in key locations and will include brand world guitars; brand world keyboards, for piano, synthesizers and other keyboard instruments; and DJ brand world, for manufacturers of DJ equipment and DJ schools to demonstrate their products and services at the show.

Along with the new areas, the show will also launch a new pavilion, Pavilion Classique. Visitors to this area will be able to enjoy and evaluate acoustic musical instruments and accessories in a quiet environment. The area will also feature an open space with musical instruments and teachers to welcome and provide musical instruction to younger guests.

Additional details of show events and programming will be available in the near future. In the interim, please visit the official fair websites to register for additional information or to secure a ticket to attend.

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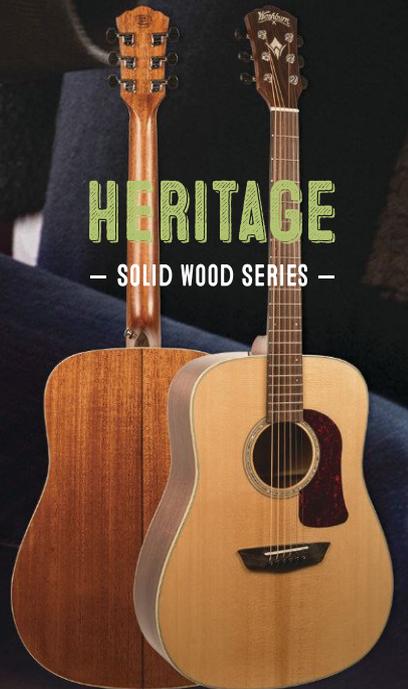
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30th Annual KMC Music EPU Charity Golf Tournament

KMC has announced that it is shooting to raise \$30,000 for the Paul Newman Hole in the Wall Gang Camp when it tees up for the 30th annual KMC Music EPU Charity Golf Tournament on June 5, 2017 in Avon, Connecticut at the Blue Fox Run Golf Course.

"Over the last 30 years this event has raised more than \$180,000 for charitable

organizations such as the Paul Newman Hole in the Wall Gang Camp and the FIDELCO Guide Dog Foundation. We could not have done that without the support of the dealers and manufacturers who sustain us every year with their participation and with their sponsorship support," KMC president Mark Terry said. "This year marks the 30th time we have held this

event and we want to raise \$30,000 for the camp. We call it '30 for 30' and we think we can do it."

The event's Committee chair, Roger Hart, is calling upon manufacturers and dealers to help the cause by making a donation to the raffle prize selection and/or sponsoring a hole or a beverage cart or some other event to be determined. **Platinum Level Sponsorships**, which include a hole sponsorship with corporate signage, mention in print materials, four rounds of golf (including carts), lunch, cocktail reception and dinner can be purchased for \$1250. **Gold Level Sponsorships** include all the benefits of the silver level and two rounds of golf for \$625. **Individual Golfers** can play for \$150 and still enjoy the lunch, cocktail reception, and dinner. The **Beverage Cart Sponsorship** can be purchased for \$1500 and includes corporate signage on the cart, mention in print materials, and four rounds of golf, including carts, lunch, cocktail reception and dinner.

"And we're open to new ideas from everyone who wants to help us reach our goal for the Hole in the Wall Gang Camp kids," Hart stressed. "Bring more golfers, sponsor a hole, donate a prize – we can all do something to make the 30th annual KMC Music EPU Charity Golf Tournament the biggest and best yet."

The daylong event kicks off at 10:00AM on June 5th with a putting green contest. A box lunch will be provided to each golfer before teeing off at 11:00AM in a shotgun scramble format outing. Over the course of the day golfers will participate in the Hole in One Contest (trip for two to Key West, Florida and two sets of irons), the Longest Drive, Closest to the Pin, Par 3 Hit the Green in One, and Putting Contests. The cocktail reception will follow from 4:00PM to 5:00PM, with dinner, prize raffles, and a charity auction to follow in the evening. Participants can book a room at the Avon Old Farms Inn (\$124 per night with attendee code 14374) by visiting www.avonoldfarmshotel.com or calling (860) 677-1651.

To learn more about how individuals and corporations can participate in the 2017 KMC Music Golf Tournament, email Roger Hart at roger.hart@kmcmusic.com or call him at (860) 380-3717.

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Musikmesse 2017: Business Academy Inspired by SOMM

The Business Academy inspired by SOMM will once again offer a source of expert knowledge for trade visitors to Musikmesse (April 5 to 8, 2017).

Over 20 impulse and keynote lectures by renowned speakers will present strategies and potential solutions to the challenges currently facing the musical-instrument industry. The lectures will be held on all four days of the fair in Hall 11.1 ('Business Area & Full-range Companies'), which is open to trade visitors only. A simultaneous translation service means all lectures will be available in German and English.

Subjects affecting the sector:

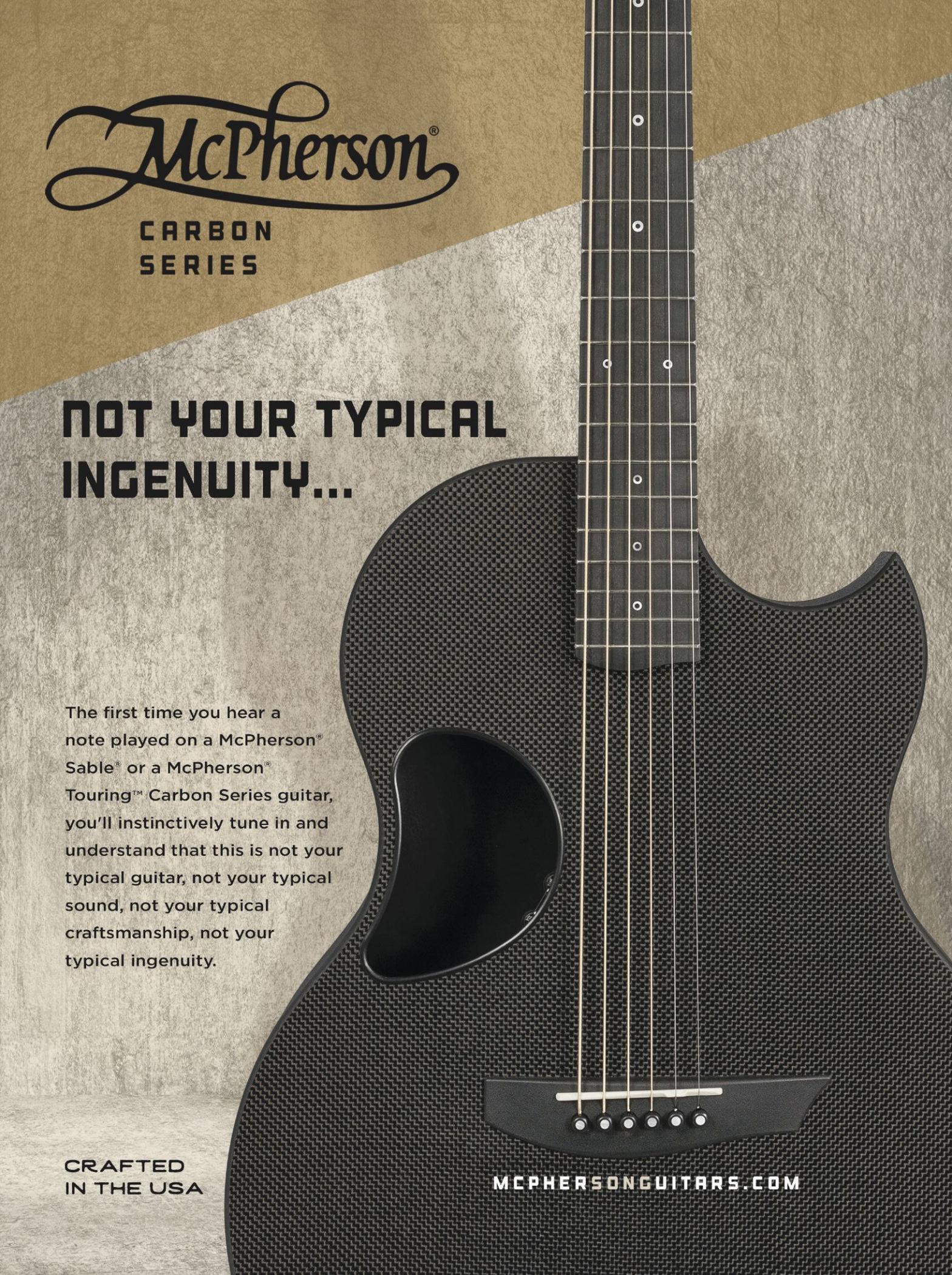
The organizers have confirmed that the guest speakers and sources of inspiration will include Arne Stoscheck, managing partner of eTribes Connect GmbH, who will look at the musical-instrument sector and discuss business models with good perspectives in the digital age. Lawyer Martin Bolm will outline the legal facts and challenges posed by CITES. Matthias Dubbert, head of

the European Policy Department, Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK) in Brussels, will consider the consequences, chances and risks of Brexit for the German (music) business.

Other highlights of the Business Academy include lectures by internationally renowned keynote speakers. In his talk, highly experienced consultant Hamish Taylor (Shinergise Partners Ltd.) will appeal to companies' customer orientation and the willingness of the sector to respond actively to challenges. France's Nelly Ben Hayoun, 'Designer of Experience' at the SETI Institute (Search for Extra-terrestrial Intelligence), will discuss the importance of visions and fundamentally new ways of thinking. Also part of the Business Academy is the lecture entitled 'No excuse - become the #1 in your niche market' by the highly successful Wilhelm K. Weber, founder of SHS Swiss Hospitality Solutions AG.

All Business Academy lectures are free of charge for Musikmesse trade visitors and prior registration is not required.





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Eastman Music Company Announces Exclusive Partnership with D'Addario

D'Addario & Company, Inc. has entered into a partnership with Eastman Music Company that will see the prominent instrument manufacturer exclusively use D'Addario's strings on their entire range of fretted instruments, including their electric guitars, acoustic guitars, and mandolins.

On this exclusive partnership, Bob Bakert, director of Eastman Guitars commented, "It was a very easy decision for Eastman Guitars to partner with D'Addario Strings given their world-class quality and rich history. Couple that with the tremendous talent both internally at D'Addario and externally with their players, and this is really a fantastic opportunity for Eastman moving forward."



JHS and Gibson Return to Court *continued from page 6*

Gibson Brands, Inc. is pleased to announce that the company has successfully confirmed the exclusive rights to their trademarked body and headstock designs of the iconic ES, SG, Flying V, and Explorer guitar models as the result of a legal dispute and settlement with John Hornby Skewes and Co. Ltd. (JHS).

As part of the agreement, John Hornby Skewes and Co. Ltd. acknowledges Gibson's exclusive rights to these products and designs after being sued for trademark infringement. Other specific terms of the agreement are confidential. Gibson is pleased with the result.

LETTERS



Christian,

Did you feel like you had been socked in the gut when the news of Chuck

Berry's passing broke? Yeah, me too. But it's deeper than we realize, and that's why we feel so displaced...

We didn't just lose Chuck Berry; ultimately we lost a founding troubadour, and one of the original architects of our revered rock n' roll.

Chuck Berry's importance and impact on rock n' roll can't even be measured. His seismic impact will reverberate for the rest of time. But here's a haunting thought: we will soon lose more of the last remaining architects of rock n' roll. So, it is important that we face our inconvenient truth and ask ourselves the ultimate question: Where are today's Chuck Berrys?

There are periods in music that have been notably rich in a condensed spurt of time: the 1930s jazz exposition, the 1950s rock n' roll, the 1960s Motown and the British invasion, and of course, the late 1960s with Hendrix and the early 1970s with the now unbridled and unparalleled Stevie Wonder.

But name the last incredible pioneer you can think of. Indeed, and this is why those of us who revere rock n' roll and modern music are uneasy today. We know something that we don't really like to talk about. We are not replenishing leadership in modern music.

It's been too long, and today's music has become generic. You could say it's vanilla, but even vanilla has its place and it contributes. I think simply we have displaced our core spirit. Today, developing technique is inconvenient, and so we loop our way around it. But the ugly truth is you can't loop around spirit, nor can you replace expression with reverb.

Chuck Berry understood spirit and expression to a unique level; he took great risks and defied repression as all great contributors do. Inherently weaved into our musical history, he and his spirit will forever be a part of us. Sad though his loss is, maybe losing an original architect will nudge us to remember our rock n' roll passion.

To quote Mr. Berry, "C'est la vie say the old folks, it goes to show you never can tell."

Au revoir and merci bien, Chuck Berry!
Long live your spirit.

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KMC Named U.S. Distributor for Natal Drums



KMC has announced that it has been appointed to serve as the exclusive United States distributor of Natal Drums & Percussion, according to KMC Music vice president of merchandising Roger Hart.

"Natal is renowned for their stunning range of drums, snare drums and hardware, and we are honored to be able to represent the line to our network of 6,500 resellers," said Hart. "We are fully stocked and ready to ship. The addition of Natal to our portfolio effectively reinforces and strengthens KMC's position as the one-stop source for everything having to do with percussion."

In 1965, Natal was started by one drummer, Alan Sharp, who was seeking

to find the right gear for him to play. Unsatisfied with what was available, he literally built it himself and created a company in the process. Today Natal is known for tailoring their drum kits' sound and attack through the use of choice tone woods. Whether a player desires the pure projection of Maple, the dark voice of Walnut, or the vintage, buttery tone of Tulip, Natal makes a drum where all artists can find their sound. Natal also carries Pro Series and Standard series hardware, as well as a full line of Metal Meta snare drums. Additionally, they offer a full selection of tone-colors where one can paint their own masterpiece.

Chauvet Acquires Chamsys

continued from page 6

"We're committed to maintaining the ChamSys brand and its reputation for excellence by supporting the vision and culture of its management team," added Albert Chauvet. "At the same time, we're also looking forward to building ChamSys in the USA and making this outstanding line of controllers available to an even larger market."

ChamSys managing director Chris Kennedy echoed this enthusiasm. "Chauvet and ChamSys share similar cultures, a strong sense of respect for our customers, an appreciation of our staffs and a powerful drive to be the best in our markets," he said. "This partnership is clearly a logical step for both companies. We deeply appreciate that Chauvet is committed to building on our 14-year heritage so that ChamSys becomes even stronger in the future."



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The idea for the MT Pilot came about when we began to see a growing need for a solid pedal platform with life and natural versatility. This gig-ready 20 watt amplifier comes with two 6V6s in the power section and two 12AX7s in the preamp. Swap out the 6V6s for 6L6s to give the amp more headroom and boost it up to 30 watts. Added luxuries include the amp's three-stage bright switch and clean/grit toggle. From its circuit and sound to its majestic aesthetics, the MT Pilot is a perfectly unique creation; just like its namesake.

mojotone.com

Supplier Scene

LsL Instruments Chooses D'Addario NYXL Strings

D'Addario & Company, Inc. has announced a partnership with LsL Instruments that will see the California-based instrument manufacturer exclusively use D'Addario's NYXL strings on their full line of solid body electric guitars.

LsL Instruments is a small manufacturer of premium American guitars that was founded in 2008 by Lance S. Lerman and his wife Lisa, after an already well-established career in both woodworking and instrument building. With hand-shaped necks, hand-wound pickups, hand-adjusted fingerboards, and hand-picked, high-quality lumber, LsL makes just about everything on their guitars. Much like D'Addario, LsL music products are made with the discerning musician in mind, those who are looking for an inspiring guitar that will drive their playing to the next level.

When asked why he chose D'Addario NYXL strings for his no-compromise guitars, LsL founder and president Lance Lerman explained simply, "Only the best will do."

To celebrate this collaborative partnership, LsL and D'Addario will also be supporting a promotion for ten of LsL's domestic dealers to each give away a five-pack of NYXL1046 strings as part of a social media promotion. The ten dealers include:

- Matt's Music Center
- Nstuff Music
- Peach Guitars
- Lark Guitars
- Music Force Global Networks
- Killerburst Guitars
- Sound Boutique Pedals
- Lawk Star Guitars
- Unisound
- Guitars Etc.

Fred W. Gretsch Visits Hal Leonard

In honor of Hal Leonard's recent appointment as the exclusive distributor of Gretsch Drums' Renown, Catalina, and Energy series, Fred W. Gretsch visited the company's Milwaukee headquarters. He met with the 50-person sales department to provide a historical overview of his family's business that started in 1883 and which he bought back from Baldwin in 1985. Gretsch also spent time with the marketing team from Hal Leonard to discuss long-term planning.

Hal Leonard vice president of MI Products, Brad Smith, commented, "We are well aware of the American legacy being entrusted to us and are honored that Mr. Gretsch would come visit us to share his stories and expertise about the drum market. Hal Leonard is also a family-founded business so we truly value the importance and significance of that history and want to make sure we keep that central to our marketing."

Gretsch commented, "We believe in partnering with the best companies in the industry who share the goal of making a more musical world. Hal Leonard definitely is a perfect fit for us and we



Fred Gretsch (center) with Hal Leonard managers Doug Lady, senior VP – sales; Larry Morton, president; Brad Smith, VP – MI products; and David Cywinski, sales manager – drum & percussion products.

can't wait to get started. Go, team!"

Hal Leonard was appointed the exclusive distributor of the Gretsch series by Drum Workshop, Inc., at the Winter NAMM show. In addition to the Gretsch Renown, Catalina, and Energy lines, Hal Leonard will also be distributing Gibraltar Hardware, CB Percussion, Percussion Plus, and KAT Electronic Drums for DW. Any retailers interested in ordering these DW brands can call the Hal Leonard E-Z Order Line at 1-800-554-0626.

www.halleonard.com
www.gretsch.com

MusicFirst and Soundtrap Offer Online Music Making Solution to Educators

MusicFirst, a learning management system designed specifically for music educators, has signed a distribution agreement with Soundtrap, an online collaborative music and podcast recording studio, to offer a cross-platform music creation solution within its portfolio aimed at educators, teachers, band, choir and orchestra directors.

The MusicFirst Online Classroom offers music teachers and their students a selection of easy-to-use, affordable, cloud-based software tools that enable music learning, creation, sharing, and exploration across devices. Soundtrap is accessible to almost every device user because it works across iOS, Android, Chromebook, Linux, Mac and Windows platforms, making it ideally suited for project-based learning and creative collaborative assignments. All projects are saved in the cloud in a safe environment, which makes Soundtrap especially suited to the classroom and ideal for MusicFirst users.

"We have customers working in all different spheres of music education, so it's

important for us to offer a variety of tools to address all their needs. Soundtrap will enable our classroom users to create, collaborate and publish music," said Jim Frankel, founder of MusicFirst. "The bonus of Soundtrap is that it is a beautifully designed, easy-to-use solution. It's only been a month and I've spoken to a number of customers that are already engaged and excited to get going on Soundtrap."

"Soundtrap is ideally suited to creative music making for students and educators of every kind, so it makes sense that we should partner with MusicFirst," said Per Emanuelson, CEO, Soundtrap. "The great part is that Soundtrap works on any device so you can start a project in the classroom on a laptop, continue to work on it using a smart phone and finish it in the evening at home on a tablet."

The Soundtrap solution is now available to MusicFirst users for an annual subscription of \$4 per user.

www.musicfirst.com
www.soundtrap.com

Chauvet Rogue R1 FX-B Illuminates Dutch Metal Band Epica

Dutch metal band Epica's LD Erwin Van Lokeren created a variety of looks for the band's 22-city tour, using a compact floor package that included four LED strobes and 12 Chauvet Professional Rogue R1 FX-B fixtures supplied by JDI Productions.

"My ambition is to give each song a new look, so I can reflect the band's musical spirit in light," said Van Lokeren, who closely collaborates with two of the band's members, Coen Janssen and Isaac Delahaye, on creative ideas. "I use only two colors when lighting a song. When you have too many colors in a song, you can fall into a trap that makes the lighting for the next song look unoriginal or uninspired, because you wind up repeating the same colors. There are a very few times when I will have three closely related colors in a song, but that is the rare exception. Almost always, it's only two colors, so each song has its own signature look."

In place of multiple colors, Van Lokeren often relied on variations in movement to impart a sense of uniqueness to the lighting for each song. The Rogue R1 FX-B fixtures, with their five independently controlled moving heads and 360° rotation, provided him with a powerful tool for varying movements.

"With 12 fixtures each having five moving heads, I essentially



had 60 lights to move around," he said. "Controlling each head individually gave me a great many creative options. I was able to cover the stage with some very original looks."

For some songs, Van Lokeren would use the Rogues to create a tranquil wave down fold. Then he would point the fixture's moving heads upward, creating beams that shot up between the band members. At other times, he would use the fixtures as spots to highlight particular musicians. Alternating tilts and pans at different speeds, he was able to endow the stage with an ethereal look.

Unlike in Europe, where Epica plays larger arenas, the North American tour stops tended to be at smaller venues. Consequently, Van Lokeren had to adjust his rig to account for different stage configurations. "I had one main design before we went on tour," he said. "We had a pretty big riser and positioned six Rogues behind the band and six in front. The Rogues behind the riser were on a deck with the strobes behind them, creating a shadow effect. The Rogues in front were on the floor. But there were stages where we had no space, so we positioned the Rogues to the left and right and created some interesting crossing effects."

www.chauvetlighting.com



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NAfME Urges Congress to Fully Fund Music Education

The National Association for Music Education (NAfME) and 50 of its State Federated Music Education Associations have submitted letters to the leadership of both Federal Congressional Committees on Appropriations.

The letter advocates to Congress to not pass another Continuing Resolution for Fiscal Year 2017, and provide maximum funding for the Title IV, Part A block grant of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

A copy of the House of Representatives' version is provided below:

March 9, 2017

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Lowey:

The National Association for Music Education (NAfME) and 49 of its Federated State Associations are writing to request the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations to not pass another Continuing Resolution (CR) for Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17) and provide maximum funding for the Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) grant program under Title IV, Part A of the bipartisan Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

For nearly fifteen years, students, educators, and parents faced the unintended consequences behind policies created under "No Child Left Behind," which included frequently narrowed curricula that reduced engagement with critical subjects, such as music. The signing of ESSA marks a positive step forward for all students across the nation by focusing on what makes a student whole by embracing the intrinsic value of a "Well-Rounded Education," which now includes music education as one part of the whole. The SSAE program embodies this fundamental value by allowing school districts the opportunity to choose where to best spend their SSAE dollars in order to provide access to a broad and rich curricula. Students desperately need a "Well-Rounded Education" for academic success and in today's workforce.



If Congress chooses to apply another stop gap spending measure, the first year of implementation and effectiveness for SSAE would be severely hampered. As you may know, this new program is the result of a consolidation of more than 20 existing programs from Title V of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) into a single formula-funded flexible block grant program. If another Continuing Resolution (CR) is passed, the consolidated funding from those programs only amounts to \$278 million, less than one-fourth of its \$1.65 billion authorized funding level, which Congress agreed upon in a bipartisan manner. Significantly underfunding SSAE not only undermines the greater flexibility that Congress had intended for states and districts in ESSA, but also endangers the program's long-term success and would not allow schools to make meaningful investments in critical areas of need, such as school music programs. Under the Continuing Resolution's funding level, school districts would be forced to make difficult and unconscionable trade-offs between high-quality programs and would fail to create a "Well-Rounded" course of study. We urge the Committee to complete FY17's appropriations process and match SSAE's authorized level of \$1.65 billion.

In addition, we object any prescribing or amending language that recommends turning SSAE into a competitive grant program, regardless of the funding level. A competitive program would significantly disadvantage smaller and more rural school districts that often lack the resources to apply for funding at all. These same districts would benefit the most from the program, as they frequently serve students who are in most need, a population that has shown to perform better academically when exposed to a broad curriculum that includes music programs. Sufficiently funding SSAE would eliminate any need for competitive targeting and increase local control over educational investments.

ESSA is a historic piece of legislation and we must ensure that it is properly funded within its first authorized year to guarantee a world-class education for our nation's students. On behalf of music educators, students, and advocates across the nation, we urge you to appropriate as close to full funding as possible for the Student Support and Academic Enrichment grant. Thank you for your consideration and for your service to our nation's students.

Sincerely,

The National Association for Music Education

Audix Awards Sales Leaders

Audix has announced the annual awards for best independent representative firm, dealer, and distributor at their annual sales meeting, which was held during the 2017 NAMM show in Anaheim, California.

The awards were presented to those partners whose performance in 2016 met territory sales targets, demonstrated sales growth, showed consistency in sales throughout the year, increased new or reactivated existing accounts, and elevated the Audix brand within their territory through marketing and sales initiatives.

Awards were given to:

- Independent Representative of the Year – Reflex Marketing
- Distributor of the Year, Europe – SCV Distribution, United Kingdom
- Distributor of the Year, Asia/Pacific – Production Audio, Australia
- Dealer of the Year – Sweetwater

"We take great care and consideration when naming our partner award recipients," says Cliff Castle, Co-Founder, Audix. "A company is only as good as its people and we believe this extends to our world-class channel partners who represent our brand, our solutions, and our products, of which we take great pride. As I step down and Chris Doss takes over, I am confident that Audix is well positioned to build upon the success that we've had in both the MI and installed sound markets with exciting new developments on the horizon. All of our partners, including Reflex Marketing, SCV Distribution, Production Audio and Sweetwater will be key contributors to help us achieve even greater success in the years to come."

"Building a great company, brand and products requires the talent of many committed individuals and Audix is honored to have dedicated independent representatives, distributors and dealers among our team," concluded Chris Doss, VP Sales and Marketing, Audix. "It is with sincere gratitude that we acknowledge the outstanding performance of Reflex Marketing, SCV Distribution, Production Audio and Sweetwater during 2016."

www.audixusa.com

GHS Launches New Line of Shirts

GHS Strings have just launched new T-shirts, featuring the slogans from their new global advertising campaign, which highlights the benefits of their Nitro-Packs.

The two new black shirts feature the provocative 'Nice Package' and cheeky 'Unique-ly Fresh' slogans screen printed across the front of the chest. The back displays a red GHS logo with the sassy, mischievous 'Play With The Best' slogan underneath.

Both shirts are straight fit with a crew neck. Available in a wide range of sizes: small, medium, large, X large and 2X large, these new T-shirts will make sure



your 'nice package' is covered. The new shirts are made from 50% cotton / 50% polyester, are machine washable and 'unique-ly fresh'. At just \$13.50, they are also a bargain.

They join the existing Classic Boomers T-shirt, which comes in red with a white 'explosion' around the words GHS Boomers, together with a stick of explosive with the words 'they're dynamite'.

Let GHS's T-shirts do the talking, letting your friends know you are a player who knows the value of heritage and comfort and only 'play with the best'.

store.ghsstrings.com

Shure Named One of the 'Best and Brightest Companies to Work For'

For the sixth year in a row, Shure Incorporated has been selected as one of the Best and Brightest Companies To Work For® in the Nation by the National Association for Business Resources (NABR).

An awards competition that honors employer excellence, Shure was selected for acknowledging its Associates as the Company's greatest asset and for showcasing best practices across human resources and employee enrichment programs.

"For more than 90 years, we've recognized how essential it is to ensure our Associates know they're our number one reason for success," said Chris Schyvinck, President and CEO of Shure Incorporated. "The world-class work ethic, creativity, and achievements—both personally and professionally—of our Associates serve as the basis for our exceptional culture and renowned product innovations."

To be considered for the award, Shure Associates completed an online survey through a website administered by the NABR. The survey covered various areas of employer excellence, capturing companies with programs and policies that are considered best practices.

The evaluation included ten categories that Associates value in a company: communication and shared vision, community initiatives, compensation and benefits, diversity and inclusion, employee education and development, recruitment and selection, strategic company performance, employee achievement and recognition, employee enrichment and retention, and work/life balance.

"We are honored and thrilled to be recognized on this outstanding list of winners once again," said Paul Applebaum, executive vice president of human resources and general counsel at Shure. "Ensuring our Associates can advance professionally while also balancing a well-rounded life is vital to the continued growth and success of our company."

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by Ronnie
Dungan

A Hollow Body Victory

Quite why Gibson decided to go after U.K. distributor JHS so aggressively is perhaps something that you would need to ask Henry J and his legal team. If that's a conversation you really fancy having.

As William Rees-Mogg asked in *The Times* in 1967 when Mick Jagger was sentenced to three months in prison for drug possession, "Who breaks a butterfly on a wheel?"

After all, isn't pretty much the whole guitar market based on copying a dozen or so of the same guitar shapes *ad infinitum*? If you follow the logic that won the case for Gibson, then maybe a large part of the guitar market should be worried and probably pack up and go home except Gibson and by extension, the market's other great originator, Fender.

Maybe he had taken a dislike to the MD? No, that couldn't happen, surely? But, go after the firm it did and after a successful appeal, the court found that Gibson had exclusive rights to the body and headstock shapes of the ES, SG, Flying V and Explorer.

Now, I'm no Petrocilli (there's one for the teenagers), but the phrase "exclusive rights" does suggest to me that, if it chose to, Gibson would now win against any manufacturer it decided to take on. And maybe any manufacturer that can prove it originated a particular body-shape also wins in the same way?

Perhaps some credit should go to JHS for standing its ground or maybe it was simply a case of having to. But it is likely to have paid a heavy price for doing so. Hopefully, if there is any financial settlement due it won't leave the company scuppered for good. It's hard to imagine any U.K. distributor not feeling a significant amount of hurt from any such setback right now.

Hindsight is a wonderful thing, but trying to take on Gibson in a U.S. court now seems like folly, despite its initial successes. Let's hope it recovers quickly. And let's hope this isn't the first of many such cases.

U.S. Distribution Deal for Swedish Microphone Brand Ehrlund

Momentum Audio Sales has added Swedish microphone manufacturer Ehrlund to its line-up of MI/Pro Audio products for exclusive distribution in the U.S. market.

Ehrlund joins British audio manufacturer Audient, synthesizer maker Modal Electronics and Analogue Solutions, and German loudspeaker manufacturer EVE Audio under Momentum's U.S. distribution umbrella.

Ehrlund Microphones is best known for its innovative triangular membrane capsule that reduces self-resonance and captures a wide frequency range with little to no proximity effect. Coupling the triangular capsule with Ehrlund's proprietary linear phase electronics creates what the firm claims are the quietest mics on the market.

"Ehrlund Microphones is proud to partner with Momentum Audio as our distributor for the U.S. market," said founder Göran Ehrlund. "John Devins and his team have a long history in microphone and pro audio sales and we are confident that together we will shake up the American market."



"We immediately felt that Momentum Audio understood the paradigm shift in how we capture sound with our triangular shaped membranes and our phase linear and silent electronics. We love making microphones and we have so much fun doing it that we wanted a partner that has the same energy for bringing unique and innovative products to their customers. We found that in Momentum Audio."

Momentum was founded by audio industry veteran John Devins, who leads sales for Alesis, Steinberg, Cerwin-Vega, Focusrite, Novation, AKG, and JBL.

"We've been searching for the right microphone line to compliment the professional audio lines we represent and were very impressed with Ehrlund's products at the NAMM show in January," said Devins. "In a market full of vintage knock-offs and cheaply made, low quality microphones, Ehrlund's unique capsule design and superior sound makes them stand out in a crowded market as a true innovator."

Troubled Percussion Plus Saved

Distributor Frederick Hyde has completed its purchase of the troubled Percussion Plus business.

Antony Batty was appointed as administrator of the business earlier this month. Based in Market Harborough, Percussion Plus was established in 1987 and manufactures percussion instruments by hand for the U.K. and international market, supplying over 900 instruments, many of which are made in its Leicestershire factory. The firm is also responsible for around 1500 educational percussion products and brands including Sonix drums, Waka-tubes, and Perfect Pitch instruments.

Frederick Hyde, managing director at John Hughes-Chamberlain said: "We are thrilled to have Percussion Plus under our umbrella! We've had our eye on this marvelous brand for some time and have some exciting plans to take the company forward."

SVM Adds Samba Drum Line

Percussion specialist Soar Valley Music is bringing a new range of Brazilian Samba drums into the U.K. – the "Light" series from the manufacturers of the Contemporânea brand of drums.

Popular with music classrooms and community Samba bands alike, Contemporânea Samba drums are often used at carnival time due to their lightweight construction. The lightweight design means they can be used by primary school children and Samba bands on a budget looking to extend or replace their inventories.

The range succeeds the "Ginga" product line from Contemporânea and is placed in the same price bracket, ensuring that UK schools and bands can continue to buy Samba gear at a sensible price and retailers can make good margins.

Reverb Continues European March

Reverb.com – the online marketplace for buying, selling, and learning about music gear – has hired Mark Johnson, former head of digital marketing at Andertons as European marketing director.



Mark Johnson

Europe is the company's largest and fastest-growing territory outside of North America, and Johnson will be tasked with continuing that momentum.

"Reverb.com is already dramatically changing the game for musicians and music lovers all over the world who previously found it difficult and expensive to buy and sell music gear internationally," said Johnson. "I'm excited to help even more fellow gear lovers find the perfect piece of gear, sell old gear to fund new purchases, and connect with other musicians in the most robust music instrument community in the world."

Johnson joins after nearly six years at Andertons, having joined in 2011 as a copywriter and earned several promotions before being named head of digital marketing. He brings experience in search engine optimization, pay-per-click advertising, email marketing, video marketing and social media.

"Over the past year, we've worked to build out tools and infrastructure to make Reverb.com the easiest place to buy and sell music gear from anywhere in the world," said Kevin Drost, director of international strategy at Reverb.com. "Mark's experience in the industry and passion for gear will undoubtedly help us connect more European buyers and sellers to opportunities across the globe."

KMC Snaps Up Natal U.S. Deal

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the vintage, buttery tone of tulip, Natal makes a drum where all artists can find their sound. Natal also carries Pro Series and Standard series hardware, as well as a full line of Metal Meta snare drums. Additionally, they offer a full selection of tone-colors where one can paint their own masterpiece. From Led Zeppelin to Bastille, Natal has become the player's choice.

"We are confident that KMC will help us to effectively reach a broader and deeper audience of MI retailers with their expansive reseller network," said Jon Ellery, managing director of Natal. "We are excited to be able to provide more drummers across the country with the very best drum kits and hardware available, and to help more artists discover their own unique sound through this new partnership."

KMC's growing percussion portfolio also includes Rhythm Tech, Remo, Vic Firth, Vater, Gibraltar, LP, Paiste, Toca, and Innovative Percussion among others.

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Adam Hall Signs Deal with Russian Distributor Contactica

The Adam Hall Group and the Russian distribution and production company Contactica have signed a partnership agreement to exclusively distribute Adam Hall Group's cable protection brand, Defender.

The agreement brings together a leading Russian sales company and a German manufacturer to form a unique partnership.

Contactica – the officially registered trading name of the Mega Group – founded in 2000 with headquarters in Moscow, will now support sales of German-designed and manufactured Defender cable protection solutions throughout Russia. Contactica's main focus is the sale and production of electrical power and energy distribution devices for system integrators, retailers, and wholesalers. Contactica is the Russian market leader in the sector of switching power supplies and special products for cultural and sports events, as well as for television and film companies. The company works primarily with high-quality products from leading European suppliers, of which the Adam Hall Group is one.

Supplying the cultural and sporting activities sector is an important element of the cable protection systems from the Defender brand, and the partnership will profit specifically from this. Contactica

is now able to bring a more comprehensive portfolio onto the market, and in turn the Adam Hall Group can guarantee Russian dealers even greater delivery reliability. In addition to the distribution of Defender cable protectors, Contactica will in future also represent the Defender brand extensively at exhibitions and events.

"In our market segments, Russia is a potentially important market for the Adam Hall Group. We are extremely happy to continue consolidating and strengthening the presence of Defender products in the Eastern European region. With Contactica, we have gained a strong partner for the distribution of Defender products in Russia," commented Miha Plohl, Adam Hall Group sales manager for South Eastern Europe & Russia.

"The path is now clear for the expansion and positioning of the Defender brand. In addition to the company's wealth of experience in the field of sales and production – which closely resembles our own structure – it was, above all, storage capacity that was important to us. In this respect, Contactica more than meets our expectations. We can now offer our Russian customers the same service and the same speed of delivery guarantee that we offer the rest of the dealer network in Europe," continued Plohl.

Yamaha Opens First Indian Plant

Yamaha has invested in its first Indian manufacturing plant in Chennai. The company has signed up for a 28-acre plot on the city outskirts to set up a facility which is expected to start production in 2019. The plant may also make musical components such as piano parts and digital systems. It will be the first in India for Yamaha, which has seven similar facilities in Indonesia, the most recent of which saw an investment of \$43M.

New Turkish Distributor for AT

Audio-Technica has appointed Ertekin Elektronik as its new distributor for pro-audio products in Turkey.

Established in 1967, the company is based in Istanbul and has operated as a distributor for international brands in the pro-audio, lighting, hi-fi, and consumer electronics industries since 1990. It currently distributes more than 50 brands, including Yamaha, Panasonic, Celestion, and Denon in the territory.

Yurder Ertekin, sales and marketing manager for Ertekin Elektronik, said: "We are proud to have signed a distribution agreement with Audio-Technica to bring its high quality, technically innovative products to our domestic market. We look forward to developing a strong co-operative relationship with the brand and strengthening Audio-Technica's profile in Turkey."

Matthias Exner, Audio-Technica director of sales and marketing EMEA commented: "The agreement with Ertekin Elektronik is an exciting move for Audio-Technica and will enable us to strengthen our position in this key market. The company's proven track record, with full coverage of the country and involvement in all our market segments including conferencing, makes it an ideal partner. I look forward to building a mutually beneficial strategic alliance with Ertekin."



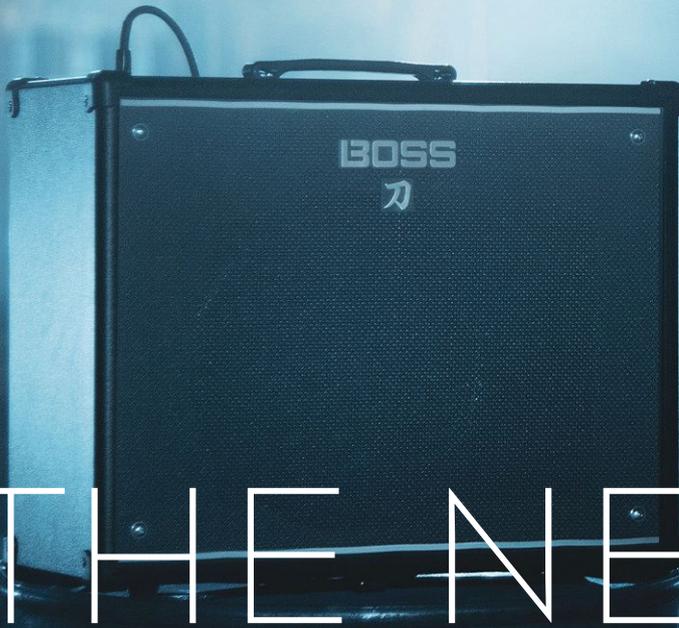
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刀 KATANA

Trade Regrets

Les Ray, a well known music education advocate, died on February 24.



Ray founded ASM Music Schools, which currently has three campuses in the state of Florida – Cooper City, Miami, and West Palm Beach – serving over 2,500 students, weekly. As ASM's site states, "At ASM, we not only teach music as an art form for human expression but as a scientific tool with life changing power. Throughout history, music has been used to unite people, influence emotions, and etch cultural beliefs and values into the minds of our youth."

On March 2, we got the following message from NAMM's Dan Del Fiorentino:



*Longtime music retailer **Wally Pikal** passed away today at the age of 90.*

Wally may have been the only music retailers who played on "The Tonight Show" starring Johnny Carson. Wally opened his store, Wally Pikal Music, in Hutchinson, Minnesota in 1964. Up to that time he had been a sought-after bandleader and trumpeter in and around the Midwest. One of his tricks, that got the attention of Carson, was when Wally played three trumpets at the same time (using a mouthpiece he created) all the while jumping on a pogo stick! The show (as well as several others such as "The Mike Douglas Show") made Wally a local star and put the store on the map.

On March 21, our friends at Hal Leonard sent us the following sad news:



*Hal Leonard lost one of its most legendary employees last week. **Lorraine Ashelin** began at Hal Leonard in 1949 and retired in 2010 (Those aren't typos! that's 61 years of service!).*

She started as office manager and as the company grew she specialized in finance at the helm of the accounts payable and banking departments. Her final title was Banking Manager. Lorraine oversaw our cash flow, monitoring the bank accounts until her last day at Hal. In whichever capacity she worked, she made certain that things were ship-shape. Everyone who worked with her has favorite Lorraine stories to tell of her diligence! She will be greatly missed.

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ON THE MOVE

DANSR, Inc. has promoted **Stephanie Murphy** to DANSR sales manager.



Murphy joined DANSR in 2013 primarily to manage the Vandoren JUNO dealer applications. "We realized very quickly Stephanie possessed great customer service skills," commented VP sales, Gary Winder. She became a customer service representative within six months. In 2016, Murphy was promoted to customer service manager as well as event coordinator for the larger shows such as NAMM, Midwest Band Clinic, and TMEA.

"Stephanie interfaces with our top accounts on a daily basis so I'm very excited for her to take on the position of sales manager," added Winder.

Prior to joining DANSR, she spent many years in the sports publishing industry, in which she dealt with all major and international accounts. Since coming from outside the music industry, Murphy has taken the initiative to learn not only about DANSR products but the competitor's products as well. She has become a regular attendee of NASMD and is a member of NAMM Young Professionals.

Eminence has named industry veteran **Damon Waller** as its European sales manager. Waller previously served as international sales manager at Trace Elliot, and before that, as managing director of Orange Amplification.



Whirlwind, a leading audio interface manufacturer for over 40 years, announces the addition of two new engineers to their team. **Jim Berry**



is an electrical engineer with a wealth of experience. Prior to Whirlwind, Berry was a systems engineer for Alstom Signaling, Ferronics, Inc., and Qualitrol and an electronics engineer with Horizon Aerospace,

Kayex Corp, and Harris RF Communications. **Mike Shapiro** is now a product development engineer at Whirlwind. He previously worked as a software engineer at Xerox and PeerPlace Networks, and as hardware engineer for Yank Technologies.



"We are pleased to have Jim and Mike

join our team," says Michael Laiacona, founder and president of Whirlwind. "Our employees are a major reason for our success and they will contribute to that. Having talented and experienced engineers and designers on staff is why Whirlwind is ideally situated to address the ever-changing demands of the industry with our technology innovations."

For further information on Whirlwind, please go to: <http://whirlwindusa.com>

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40th

**ANNIVERSARY
COMPACT PEDALS**

Jeff Slingluff Discusses Four Decades
of Innovation in Compact Pedal Design



By Christian **Wissmuller**

There's certainly no shortage of effect pedal suppliers out there (just take a look at the responses to the retail survey question on page 48 of our March 2017 issue, as an example). Boutique stompbox startups, upper-tier specialty outfits with long histories, and well-known, mainstream brands provide any number of compact effect pedal options for musicians of all stripes.

But, in certain respects, BOSS stands alone in this crowded field. Referring again to that same question from last month's survey, 62 percent of participants reported that BOSS was the strongest selling effect pedal brand for their store – far eclipsing any other supplier.

We recently chatted with BOSS/Roland U.S. guitar product manager Jeff Slingluff to get the skinny on BOSS' compact pedals' 40th anniversary and why players and dealers, alike, continue to embrace the products.

Where it All Began...

"In the early years, Roland produced some pedal-based effects such as the AS-1 Sustainer, AF-100 Bee Baa (a fuzz/treble booster), AP-7 Jet Phaser, and a few others," says Slingluff of the early days of what would eventually become BOSS. "Those were from 1972 to 1974, and at the time, pedal effects were just beginning to gain wider acceptance in the marketplace – with guitarists in particular.

Roland decided to establish the Music Engineering Group, or MEG Electronics Corporation – later to be re-named BOSS, in the spring of 1973. "The focus of MEG was the development of pedal effects and other products for the guitar market," explains Slingluff. "The very first product slated for the BOSS brand was the B-100, a contact pickup and preamp combo for acoustic guitars and other stringed instruments. But shortly before its release, it was decided that the MEG name might not appeal to guitarists, so the brand name was changed to BOSS to convey a stronger image."

The B-100 debuted in 1974, with limited numbers produced for the American market. "The product came in a unique wood box with a clear plastic lid that featured the now-familiar BOSS logo, though the product itself did not have the logo on it," Jeff continues. "The lid also had the name 'Beckmen Musical Instruments, Inc.' in small print. They were the sales distributor for Roland products in the Western U.S. at that time.

"The first BOSS-branded pedal effect was the CE-1 Chorus Ensemble, which was released in 1976. It was basically the chorus and vibrato circuit of the popular Roland JC-120 Jazz Chorus amplifier housed in a pedal chassis, allowing players to get the rich, full JC chorus sound with their own amps."

1977: The BOSS Compact Pedal Line is Launched

While the CE-1 would ultimately become successful, it didn't make a huge splash when initially released. "It took some time for musicians to realize that they needed to use it with two amplifiers to get the full benefit of the big, immersive chorus sound it produced," Slingluff says. "But when they did, it really took off."

"While it offered fantastic sound, the CE-1 was a large and heavy pedal that required AC power. The same went for the DM-1 Delay Machine and other early BOSS pedals. At the time, a few U.S. manufacturers had started to have success with battery-powered pedals that were smaller and/or lighter, which obviously offered greater convenience for performing musicians. BOSS has always had a philosophy to innovate and not imitate. In that spirit, we set out to create an improved design that solved the many problems inherent with other pedals of the day – and that still exist to varying degrees in many modern pedals."

Switching noise – the loud "pop" heard when mechanical toggle switches are pressed – was one of the first issues addressed. "They also get dirty, which can affect their responsiveness and reliability," adds Slingluff. "After a lot of use, they simply need to be replaced."

"BOSS also wanted to provide easy battery replacement, eliminating the need to use a screwdriver to open the chassis to access the battery. In addition, few—if any—battery-operated pedals had the ability to provide alternate power from an AC adapter. Also, many pedals of the time didn't offer any sort of visual indication of the effect's on/off status.

"The BOSS compact pedal design addressed all those issues, which remain as relevant as ever for today's musicians. It provides FET switching that's silent and wear-free, a battery door that's accessible with a thumbscrew, an LED that displays both on/off and power status, and a jack for connecting an external power supply. Other important elements include a die-cast aluminum chassis that's both

light and famously durable, and an elevated pedal switch that provides integrated protection for the panel knobs.

"A lot of R&D went into creating the BOSS compact pedal design, and it remains basically unchanged to this day. The developers really got it right the first time, and we're extremely proud that the design remains as fresh and vital now as when it was introduced 40 years ago."

Technological Innovation, Unique Brand Identity

When asked about key technological advances that have most defined BOSS, Slingluff responds: "A few things that stand out are of course the FET switching as mentioned before. This provided silent on/off pedal activation but also allowed for buffering. If you have a 'buffered' BOSS pedal, the 'On' state doesn't affect the tone of any pedals that follow it differently than if it were in its 'Off' state. This is different than a true-bypass pedal, which can alter the tone of pedals that follow it depending on its on/off status.

"When it comes to the overdrive pedal, another achievement was the patent on the original OD-1 Overdrive for asymmetrical clipping. Asymmetrical clipping, like tubes, brings out even harmonics and is often considered to be a very 'analog' sounding trait. For many years, BOSS was the only pedal maker offering distortion and overdrive pedals with asymmetrical clipping, and asymmetrical clipping is still a key part of the tonal experience for several BOSS pedals today. Additionally, the OD-1 pedal is the first officially known usage of the term 'overdrive' in reference to a guitar pedal product."

The BOSS DD-2 has the distinction of having been the world's first compact digital delay pedal, while the world's first compact reverb pedal was the BOSS RV-2 – Two more significant "firsts" that set BOSS apart from the pack.

"The DD-2 and RV-2 opened the door to players incorporating BOSS's technology into a small compact pedal during a time when larger, rack-mount delay and reverb were typically only used in studios by pros," Slingluff observes. "This type of gear was not accessible to most players in those days, but BOSS completely changed that."

BOSS has never been a brand to rest on its laurels, though, and as digital technology began to truly evolve, BOSS adapted to the new developments. "Most recently, MDP (Multi-Dimensional Processing) has become a unique part of several BOSS products like the OD-1X Overdrive and CP-1X Compressor," says Slingluff. "These pedals can analyze the tone from input and deliver the best outcome organically, depending on what is played and how it's played.

"With nearly 120 compact pedals released over the past forty years, BOSS has made many major breakthroughs in both analog and digital technology. And BOSS continues to develop products using all available formats based on tonal quality and desired outcome. The tone itself is always first, *not* whether the tone is analog or digital. MDP technology and its incorporation into the X-series is one recent example of BOSS's pursuit of exceptional tone. The Waza Craft line and its craftsmanship is another."

While effects pedals and stompboxes from other suppliers often vary in size and shape, the standard BOSS compact pedal design has remained nearly unchanged and unique for forty years.

"Being so easily identifiable is great for our customers but is also exciting for us," Jeff says. "With every print or online photo, we can instantly identify what pedals our customers and artists are using. As you can imagine, this fuels a lot of internal enthusiasm and pride for everyone at Roland and BOSS. I recently spent two and half months with the engineering team in Hamamatsu and was inspired by how many of the engineers were following worldwide

customers' social media and were sharing photos of their pedalboards and links to users' demos.

"As far as compatibility, a lot of things become easier with the BOSS level of consistency. The compact pedal series comes with a five-year warranty, but in reality it has a nearly negligible failure rate. It surprises people when we tell them one of our biggest competitors is the used market for our own pedals."



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A 40th Anniversary Edition for an Icon

The DS-1 Distortion has been shipping for more than 38 years and still today continues to be one of BOSS' number-one sellers every month. "The reason for its popularity is stated over and over by our customers and the endless list of artists – tone and reliability," Slingluff explains. "And what's nice about DS-1 pedals is they work very well with so many different amplifiers and for a wide variety of musical needs – anything from being the gain source, to boosting the amp, to acting as a tightener in front of high gain amplifiers. They're a solid workhorse, and as pros tell us all the time, you can be on tour anywhere in the world and get a DS-1 for the show when you need it."

To mark BOSS' 40th, the company is introducing a special model – the DS-1-4A – but, while the pedal is, indeed, appropriately extravagant, don't expect anything too terribly different from the original in terms of functionality.

"With such an iconic history, we didn't want to muck anything up on the DS-1," Jeff says. The goal was celebration rather than reinvention. Internally, a DS-1-4A is identical to the standard DS-1. The Limited Edition DS-1-4A has a number of cosmetic elements like a sleek, all-black finish, gold text and knobs, and of course the vintage-style silver battery compartment thumb screw. The box is also manicured with a 40th anniversary logo.

"After forty years of BOSS compact pedals being on the market, the community of collectors is understandably huge, but the Limited Edition DS-1-4A is not only a collectable thank you to all of our long-time followers, it's a total work horse for the day-to-day user. And it looks sharp in all black."

While the DS-1 and its limited-edition "twin" are in the spotlight at the moment, that's hardly the only successful BOSS release with a long shelf-life and legions of fiercely devoted fans. In fact, of nearly 120 pedals released by BOSS over the past forty years, nearly 60 are still in production. "But it's hard to talk about the DS-1 without instantly switching to a conversation about the SD-1 Super Overdrive," Slingluff notes. "The very first compact pedal BOSS released was the OD-1 Overdrive. The OD-1 was very unique because, as I've mentioned already, it was the first pedal to ever use the term 'overdrive,' and it had a patent for asymmetrical clipping that creates distortion with a distinctive, crisp sound, and the richly-nuanced tone of an overdriven tube amp. It grabbed the limelight as an essential piece of gear for adding fat, powerful gain to large stack amps. The SD-1 was based on the OD-1 with a tone control that can boost or cut highs for greater versatility. SD-1s have been shipping since 1981 and are consistently one of our best-selling pedals every month.

"The BOSS DD-3 Digital Delay, released in 1986, is now more than thirty years in production, and to this day, sells very well. Also, the DD-2 and DD-3 are based on the custom IC chip and analog audio design of the Roland SDE-3000 rack mount delay from 1983. The current president of BOSS, Yoshi Ikegami, was the lead



engineer and designer of the SDE-3000.

"Of the newer pedals, all of the Waza Craft pedals are selling incredibly well. There is a lot of excitement about the 'Waza' level of tonal quality available for discerning players. Given the overwhelming desire for faithful re-introductions of these historical tone classics, the customers are responding enthusiastically. Additionally, newer pedals like the DD-500 Digital Delay and RV-6 Reverb are also extremely popular right now. And loopers are getting very popular, not only for guitar players, but also for vocalists, multi-instrumentalists, and performers as we expand RC-series loop stations

from stompboxes to desktop units. Additionally, the ES-8 and ES-5, Effects Switching System have been well received and are an exciting tool for any professional-level pedalboard."

Looking to the Future While Celebrating the Past

After 40 years atop the heap, the folks at BOSS remain as curious, inventive, and aware as ever – tracking and defining trends in the industry. As for the current state of the market, Jeff says that, "Distortions, overdrives, delays, reverbs, and loopers are all hot, and the market appears poised for growth this year. Switcher pedals like ES-8 are becoming popular, as are alternate sounds like the SY-300 polyphonic synth that works with a 1/4-inch guitar cable. A big area of growth over the past decade has been the acoustic electric guitar market. As more and more acoustic players are advancing into amplification they are also seeking better tonal opportunities and new sounds. Acoustic players were quick to adapt to the BOSS looper pedals but are also seeking more. The BOSS VE-8 was created to provide looper functionality, direct acoustic tonal enhancements, and vocal harmonies based on the notes the guitar is playing. But players are just getting started. We see lots of trend setters with everything from the obvious CP-1X compressors or CE-2W Chorus to the bold who seek the infinite possibilities of playing their acoustic through a BOSS SY-300 synth."

As much as crafting the technology and products that has helped to shape the sounds heard on stages and recordings throughout the world over the past four decades, BOSS is defined by a deep understanding and appreciation of the end-users: "A great thing about stompboxes is that they are affordable and easily accessible sound machines," says Jeff. "Year after year, they continue to find their way into the hands and under the feet of an ever-growing movement of creative musicians worldwide. We are humbled that after forty years of BOSS compact pedals, each new generation of musicians continues to take us along for a ride on their musical journey."

To track current and upcoming events in 2017 celebrating the 40th anniversary of BOSS compact pedals, readers should be sure to check out the anniversary page on the BOSS site: www.bossus.com/40thAnniversary **MMA**

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A Top 100 Dealer Award means many things. It means a time that all the effort you put into that marketing campaign is recognized. It means becoming the first store from your city, state or country to win a Top 100 Dealer Award. It means, examining and fine-tuning your business to determine exactly what you did this year that will stand out. It means the opportunity to learn from your peers.

I have heard from stores that are ecstatic and humbled that they were included in the Top 100 and I have heard from stores that are disappointed that they were not included on the list. There is one way to look at The Top 100 whether you are on the list or not. It is the same lesson that I am sure most of you apply to your business: how can I learn and grow from my peers? If you aren't reaching outside your comfort zone, chances are your employees and business is not growing.

My Dad owns a small business. He started this business from scratch in a down economy. He had a stable job but wanted more and just like a lot of you, he started his business with nothing but vision and passion. The vision built his business but the passion has sustained it. I have seen first-hand the struggles, rewards, disappointments and success of going down this path—there are many obstacles that stand in the way.

What I have learned from him is you have to continually adapt your business to meet the demands of the consumer. He is never satisfied with standing still and waiting. Every day he is creating excitement, cultivating customers and making sure his employees see his passion. Each day is a new opportunity even though he has been doing it for almost 40 years. He takes every opportunity he can to learn, especially from his peers. His industry does not have a Top 100 Awards, but if it did, I believe he would jump at the chance to meet with his staff and say we have done some great things this year. Let's talk about them so other businesses can learn from us or better yet, we can learn from them. We are meant to grow together.

As your trade association, it is NAMM's honor to bring the retail community together for one night and honor the passion that ignites our industry.

The most important takeaway from the Top 100 Awards is it brings the music retail community together. There are laughs, tears, high fives and best practices all being exchanged and shared. It is the only place to go to see what a store is doing to bring music into their community. As your trade association, it is NAMM's honor to bring the retail community together for one night and honor the passion that ignites our industry.

Retail as we know it is constantly changing. Our members have to adapt and change just to keep an edge on their business. We recognize their commitment to their businesses and to the music products industry. We want to share with the world the stories of our members and all of the positive things happening in music retail. We are living in exciting times filled with challenges to overcome, new concepts to implement, and the opportunity to make a meaningful, positive impact on the communities we serve!

The Top 100 Awards recognize, reward and promote best practices among NAMM retail members. In May, we will be announcing the 2017 Top 100 Dealers and sharing their strategies for success. Please join us in Nashville to honor our members and their achievements.

See you in Nashville!

Causby Challacombe, CAE
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Giving Innovation the 'Green' Light

Drum & Percussion Suppliers Embrace Environmentally Responsible Solutions

By Christian **Wissmuller**

Each April, for the past four years, *MMR* has turned our attention to MI suppliers or retailers who have wholeheartedly embraced sustainability, adopting policies and practices committed to protecting the environment.

When the whole "green" movement began to pick up steam in popular culture a decade or so ago (I'm sure we all recall when seemingly out of nowhere, every product purchased had a tree or leaf logo on it), the more skeptical cynics out there sniffed that the trend was a fad. However, as industries have become not only more aware of the needless waste and pollution that often

results from "doing things the old fashioned way," but also of the cost-saving (or profit-creating) and PR benefits from coming up with innovative, environmentally friendly solutions, more and more companies have hopped on board.

"Going green" is here to stay.

This year, *MMR* is focusing on six significant manufacturers of drum & percussion products who have gone all-in, embracing sustainable practices in ways that significantly impact their own brands, as well as their end-users, retail partners, and the world at large.

Promark

Promark is, of course, a D'Addario & Co. brand and very few MI suppliers are as closely associated with "green" practices as D'Addario. It comes as no surprise, then, that when we spoke with Elijah Navarro, Promark product specialist, on the topic of environmentally responsible practices, he had plenty to say.

"Promark has been actively practicing green initiatives since its inception in 1957," he observes. "Since D'Addario acquired the company, this effort has been championed with greater tenacity.

"The sawmill ensures 100 percent usage of the log during production. While drumsticks are the primary focus for the mill, we also produce product such as rail road ties, axe handles, wood chips, mulch, et cetera. This is responsible wood consumption. At the Houston facility we operate with two commercial grade centrifuges that helped reduce water consumption by 80 percent by recycling dirty water into clean water. All lacquers and paints have been converted from solvent-based to water-based, reducing carcinogens and toxins in the product and the factory air, making the facility a 'mask-free' operation for our employees."

Additionally, Promark, like its parent company D'Addario, has committed to removing non-recyclable PVC plastics from all of its packaging in favor of recycled paper packaging. Navarro continues: "Lastly, in 2013 Promark launched the landmark reforestation initiative called, 'Play. Plant. Preserve.' With over 250,000 new trees already planted since the inception of the program, Promark is on course to hit a zero impact goal by 2043, which means we will have replanted all of the trees we've consumed since 1957. 'Play. Plant. Preserve.' operates in partnership with the Tennessee division of forestry and enriches the ecosystem in the region by offering landowners new seedlings at a fraction of the cost. This also benefits the state, of Tennessee by reducing erosion critical to maintaining the states infrastructure. All Promark seedlings are raised and cared for by Tennessee division of forestry operated nurseries, which ensures healthy seedlings are grown and the mortality rate is reduced."



Elijah Navarro

While it's clear that many organizations – both within MI and elsewhere – have jumped on the “Green Bandwagon,” none of these activities are some PR stunt.

“Being environmentally responsible is a core part of the D’Addario DNA,” says Navarro. “While there are some benefits from a PR/marketing standpoint, D’Addario and Promark have been active participants in green manufacturing long before it was trendy to do so. In most cases it costs the company more money to operate green. This is seen less as an expense on a financial document, but rather a part of our stewardship in preserving mother earth and the raw materials we extract.”

Yamaha Corporation of America

As YCA marketing manager – drums, Steven Fisher, explains it, “Yamaha has been actively implementing “green” practices for 25 years. We established our Global Environment Department in 1992 and the Yamaha Group Environmental Policy in 1994. Together, they serve as a guide to pursue responsible environmental protection and sustainability practices. Each Yamaha site sets its own environmental policies, goals, and targets according to these guidelines, and conducts itself in a manner tailored specifically to protect its surrounding environment.”

Yamaha goes to great lengths to stress green practices in manufacturing processes, including conserving energy and resources, reducing waste, managing chemicals, preserving forests and biodiversity, and sustainable use of timber resources.

“We promote responsible timber procurement, and emphasize stringent verification through traceability and adherence to the law,” Fisher says. “To fulfill our social obligation as a user of wood, Yamaha conducts tree-planting activities around the world.

“With respect to conserving water resources, Yamaha recently introduced a state-of-the-art wastewater treatment facility at our China location. As a result, we can now reuse around 80 percent of that location’s wastewater for manufacturing processes. As part of our effort to preserve air quality, we aim to continuously reduce CO₂ emissions per unit of sales, and are pursuing a one percent reduction target compared with the previous fiscal year.”

Yamaha is constantly refining and reviewing their procedures to cut the volume of the waste the organization produces, and has implemented recovery/separation protocols to promote the most effective use of resources.

Fisher notes that, “when using chemical substances, Yamaha strives to minimize our impact on the people and environment around us by strictly managing the chemicals we use, such as those designated under applicable Pollutant Release and Transfer Register laws, and reducing emissions from production processes and products.

“We take special care even at the level of our contracted manufacturers, where we wipe the drum shells with a formaldehyde catcher to reduce the emissions from the shells.



Steven Fisher

“We act as environmental custodians for much the same reason everyone else does: to keep our society sustainable, and to preserve and enhance our role in the global ecosystem. Everyone benefits. In that light, we know our customers appreciate our green efforts and the practices we adhere to in manufacturing and production, and that appreciation is reflected in their ongoing positive response to our products. We are proud of the extra steps we take to preserve the environment and our natural resources, and we hope to continue to demonstrate that commercial success and environmental responsibility can indeed go hand in hand.”

Dream Cymbals

Dream Cymbals is yet another in the larger “drum/percussion-related field,” well known for their efforts to reduce their own carbon footprint and encourage ecologically friendly practices. The brand’s recycling program was revolutionary when first introduced and gave players and retail partners a clear notion of how important “going green” is to the organization.

“The Dream Cymbals Recycling Program has been a large part of our operation since 2009,” explains company president Andy Morris. “The recycling program concept was simple: reward customers for bringing in their old, cracked, or un-playable cymbals and use them towards a discount on new Dream Cymbals – one dollar off a new Dream for every inch of recycled cymbal. The program has since grown to become a huge success for Dream dealers and the company. To date we have collected over 135,000 inches – representing over 37,000 pounds of bronze – and recycled it into crop circles, crotales and other items.”

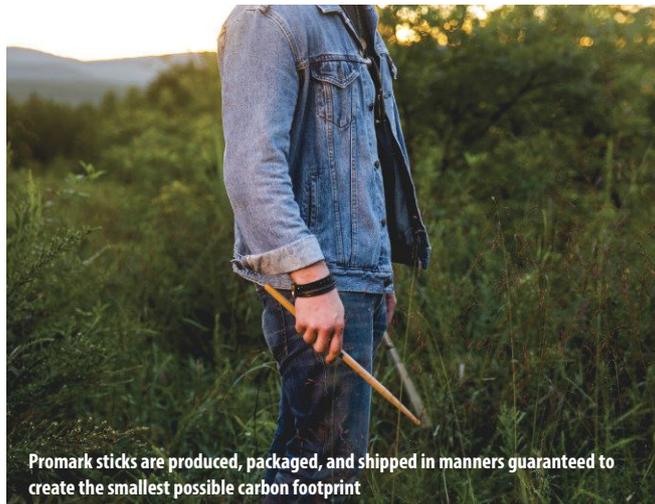
The successful program is now in the initial stages in the UK, as well. “Europe is a leader in stem to stern product responsibility and we want to stay ahead of that curve,” Andy says.

“In addition to the recycling program, three or four years ago we purchased a cool machine that turns surplus cardboard into re-usable, void fill material. We have never bought void fill material again, saving a few thousand dollars worth of Styrofoam chip bags and paper every year. We re-use any box we can that comes in from our factory.

“When we designed our new displays, for example, care was taken to use the optimum amount of material and package it in such a way that the density of the shipments would be the most efficient.”

The Dream Cymbal factory is now almost 100 percent converted to electric furnaces from coal ovens for cymbal production. This has represented a huge reduction in Dream’s greenhouse gas emissions and been supported by the local government.

“Additionally, three years ago we closed the separate warehouse in the U.S. and moved all worldwide logistics to a single location,” he adds. “While this is somewhat counter to what big business has done, improvements in efficiency of package delivery means that we now ship into the USA one or two times a week, but our dealers have not noticed the slightly longer lead time – which went from two-to-three days to door to three-to-six days to door. The savings in our bottom line from this is also supported by larger ship-



Promark sticks are produced, packaged, and shipped in manners guaranteed to create the smallest possible carbon footprint

ments moving as one for longer periods of time. Less consumption of warehouse space has resulted in lower utility consumption.”

As to why Dream Cymbals goes above and beyond to pursue environmentally kind procedures, Andy says, “Dream benefits from being young, just under 10 years old. This means the values of the company reflect environmental values more commonly held by a younger generation. This is not an ageist statement. It is a legacy statement. Think about it this way: Companies reflect the values and best practices of the times they were built in. If we started Dream 40 or 70 years ago, the situation would have been different: fewer people were really worried about the environment, electricity and gas were cheap, and working collaboratively around the globe was expensive. So, back then, manufacturers found it more efficient to have single centralized locations and didn’t worry about certain inefficiencies too much because the cost of being inefficient was negligible.

“To change a business system that has been used for decades

and upgrade costs a *lot* more money and meets a *lot* more resistance than starting from scratch. Dream has the benefit of starting in an age where thinking about the environmental impact of each decision was and is standard operating procedure for us.

“The music industry is a great industry because it is filled with people who are in the music business to allow them to *be musicians*. Don’t forget that many of us (throughout the industry) still play as professionals or amateurs all the time. There is no other industry trade show, such as NAMM, that features live, impromptu jams sessions in the aisles. Music business people, *if* they are also musicians, understand that the business of music is a means to an end – that being: making music. For those people, it just seems easier to understand there are bigger pictures than eking out another two percent market share. Thus, I find that, while musicians in the music business may not all be radical environmentalists, they are very open to the idea that there are things way more important than making another dollar, and that seems intrinsically related to protecting the planet we live in, or at the very least having a profound respect for it. The principles of each share many common values.”

Avedis Zildjian Co. & Vic Firth

Yet another cymbal manufacturer heavily invested in reducing its carbon footprint, the Avedis Zildjian Company continues to enact more and more environmentally sound practices.

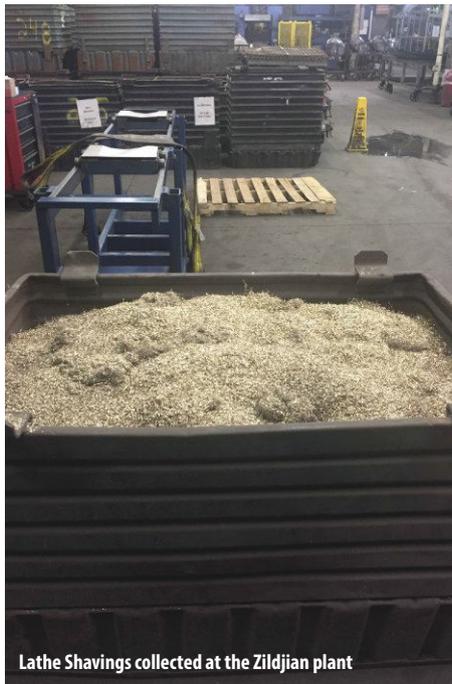
“Zildjian is actively engaged in a variety of practices at our Norwell cymbal making facility to not only maintain a ‘green’ culture, but to ensure a quality and safe environment for our factory employees,” says director of Brand Activation, Dan Wiseman. “All copper scrap metal from the making of our cymbals is fully recycled. This begins with the excess metal left behind as we cut down a cymbal to a certain size. All of the metal shavings off of our lathes is gathered and melted down and used during the development of new castings. We also will fully recycle any cast cymbal that gets returned or does not meet our quality standards.

“Additional areas of focus to ensure a green and safe environment is through the use of a water-based polyurethane cymbal coating that was developed exclusively for Zildjian. This replaces a lacquer-based formula that is traditionally used in cymbal coating operations. For air quality, the air in our Print Room is filtered and exchanged every two minutes which exceeds OSHA air quality standards.”

Echoing the sentiments expressed by virtually all who embrace “green” practices, Wiseman explains that none of the steps Zildjian has taken come from a purely “PR-based” standpoint: “As a USA-based manufacturer, it is incredibly important that our facilities create and follow the best procedures to ensure a quality, safe and envi-



A box of Dream Cymbals awaiting recycling



Lathe Shavings collected at the Zildjian plant



The wastewater treatment facility at Yamaha's factory in Xiaoshan, China

ronmentally friendly workplace. These efforts are not about saving money and they are not crafted to become stories within our marketing and PR campaigns. These are part of the values of our business set forth by the Zildjian family who has been manufacturing domestically since 1929."

Vic Firth was another early adopter of "green" policies, with the brand's first environmentally driven packaging change taking place back in February 1992 when Vic was the first company to package paired sticks in the paper matchbox sleeves. That move – now commonplace industry-wide, eliminates millions of plastic bags from landfill every year. Additionally, the sleeves used today are printed using wind power at an FSC-certified supplier (Forest Stewardship Council.) The ink is vegetable-based and the sleeves are 100 percent recyclable.

At the Vic Firth facility in Newport, Maine, numerous processes have been altered to maximize use of materials and minimize waste.

Water is used to cool the wood during the center-less grinding operation where the wood dowel is converted to a specific stick shape. All of the water and sawdust used in the grinding process is recycled through a de-watering filter press. The water is removed and re-used and the pressed sawdust is sent to a power plant for use as fuel. Burning wood and not oil or gas is carbon neutral. The trees suck the carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere and make wood.

The grinding operation uses 10,000 gallons of water per hour and we re-use it and filter out the suspended solids 10 times per day (roughly every other hour).

By owning their tractor and trailer, Vic Firth is able to maximize all trailer loads of our finished product deliveries to our distribution facility in Boston as well as scheduling wood pick-up to maximize the load delivered to Newport, Maine.

Utilizing a grant from the State of Maine, Vic Firth rewired the motor controls in the kilns and installed energy efficient motors and vents, which has saved considerable electrical consumption.

All of Vic Firth's trash is going into some type of recycling and they also separate out cardboard, paper, and metal. Everything else goes into a zero-sort recycling program.

They've also installed solid state energy efficient lighting in their inspection areas and are beginning the process of re-lamping the entire mill, which will result in a significant energy savings.

Working with their coating and paint partners, Vic Firth is also researching ultraviolet curing systems, high solids content, and water-based materials to reduce or eliminate the use of solvent based coatings. They have changed the composition of the clear finish on Vic sticks to a formulation that eliminated all materials listed by the EPA as Hazardous Air Pollutants.

Lastly, the company has replaced its older air compressors with new, variable speed compressors which match the energy consumption of the compressor to the actual load requirement. This has resulted in significant electrical savings.

In 2008, Vic Firth Inc. received the Maine Wood Product Association's Pine Tree Award based on the company's continued growth and diversification. It signifies our commitment to expanding the labor force, exploring innovative improvements in manufacturing and being environmentally responsible. Our success has helped to provide economic stability in the Central Maine area, where plant closings are more common than expansion.



Sabian's HQ in Meductic, Canada, along the shores of the St. John River



Sabian

Way up north in Meductic, Canada, another renowned cymbal designer and manufacturer is also doing its part to protect the environment.

"In short, we have been pursuing green practices from day one," says Luis Cardoso, marketing manager for Sabian. "Because we are located on the banks of a beautiful river system that winds up from Maine and down to the Atlantic Ocean on the coast of New Brunswick, we have always been careful to make minimal impact on the surrounding ecosystem of old-growth forests, rivers and streams. After all, Sabian founder RZ built this factory on the site of his family's hunting and fishing camp, so the preservation of the surrounding area was paramount to the family."

In terms of specific steps the company has taken, Cardoso notes that, "Some key actions are recycling the leftover metal from sizing, lathing, edging, and other manufacturing processes; returning unused sheet metal from our B8 cymbals to the supplier; filtering the water used in cymbal-making and reusing it in a closed loop; using heat from our cymbal ovens to heat the factory during our long Canadian winters; building and repairing cymbal-making machinery using recycled parts; recycling all office materials; producing literature using FSC-approved printing firms; recycling all of our shipping cartons... right down to using real dishes, cups, and plates and metal utensils in our kitchens and lunch rooms, so there are no disposables.

Sabian joins the others in our profile in adopting these practices for reasons that go beyond public image or chasing trends. As Cardoso says, "Our 'green' efforts definitely save the company money, however, as stated earlier, keeping our surrounding area pristine has always been key to the family that owns Sabian. We should probably make a bigger deal of it than we do, for PR and marketing, however, we're too busy making the world's best cymbals!" **MMR**



Synth I've Been Loving You...

By Christian **Wissmuller**

Four Suppliers Discuss the Synthesizer Market in 2017

While much has been made in recent months and years of the resurgence of interest in analog synthesizers – and for good reason! – it bears mentioning that synths of *all* stripes represent a consistently strong segment of MI. Constant innovation means not only that the boundaries are pushed to heretofore unimagined limits at the upper-tier, but also that the functionality available at the lower end of the price spectrum for these instruments continues to expand. Much as

the processing power in your smartphone drastically exceeds that of NASA's 1960s and '70s room-sized guidance computers, the "entry level" synths of 2017 are capable of sounds, editing, and interaction unimaginable even on the priciest consoles of the '80s.

MMR recently checked in with four representatives of key (no pun intended, but it stays!) purveyors of synths to get a bead on what advancements and trends are driving sales in today's market.

If you had to pick just one specific model, what synthesizer is the "breakout hit" for your brand so far in 2017?

Nate Tschetter: MONTAGE would be our hit so far this year and for last year.

James Sajeva: Korg started off 2017 with a bang with the release of our \$299 analog mono synth, monologue. We knew we had a hit when we heard how unique it sounded and saw everything that it offered – and the fact that it comes in five colors doesn't hurt either! It was amazing to see so many people crowding the multi-synth display at NAMM 2017 to experience one at the onset, and it's been in full swing ever since.

Mike Martin: Our most successful model in 2017 is the Privia PX-560. This type of dual purpose piano plus synthesizer combination has been very successful for Casio beginning with the PX-5S and now also with the PX-560. The HexLayer synthesis technology that is in the PX-560 debuted in Casio's XW-P1 and extremely expressive and powerful for a wide range of sounds.

Duane McDonald: Though it is classified as a stage

piano more than a synth, the RD-2000 has been a tremendous hit for us this year. Customers are drawn to the combination of high quality sound, feel, and control. The ability to control software such as Apple MainStage via a single USB cable has proven very popular. On the true synth side, the System-8 has been very well received. People love the knob-per-function control and the ability to combine multiple PLUG-OUT synth engines, including the new Jupiter-8 and JUNO-106 engines.

Is there a typical customer for your synths and, if so, can you describe the demographic?

JS: I'd say there isn't, no. Korg's design philosophy is very much about making their synths accessible; both from a functionality and cost standpoints. As such, we regularly encounter people of all ages, backgrounds, levels of musicianship, financial status and so on using our synths, and being quite passionate about them. microKORG is another great example. With so many sold over its incredible 15 year history, it's easy to see why so many types of players – even those who don't consider keyboard their first

“Successful storefronts engage customers in a different way, through meet-ups and user groups.”



– Duane McDonald,
U.S. Product Strategy
Manager, Keyboards &
Synthesizers, Roland
Corporation

instrument – embracing them. Tying this back to monologue, there are clear nods to the guitar/bass player in the first-ever E-to-E keyboard, which is sure to expand the reach and usability of this synth for years to come. That’s why “Analog for All” remains a mantra and a direction for Korg.

DM: Most of our customers have more than 10 years of experience playing keyboards. Interestingly, our next largest customer group has been playing for less than a year, indicating that there is a growing user base of new synth players. While we have many professional artists playing our gear, the majority of our customers identify themselves as hobbyists that use our products equally in live and studio environments.

MM: Casio customers cover a wide range of demographics. For years we were known as the beginner brand, but in the last decade this has changed dramatically and we now have professional tour mu-



Roland's RD-2000

sicians using Casio instruments on stage. The value of Casio instruments attracts those beginners, but the performance and quality of our products is embraced by professionals.

NT: It’s varied. We have a pretty high percentage of people using our synths for professional use so their skill level tends to be high. We also have a pretty large segment of people who don’t have live performance aspirations but they are skilled musicians and/or sound designers.

For dealers who you recognize to be particularly successful with synthesizer sales, what methods have you noticed those operations employing in terms of promotion, display, customer outreach, et cetera?

DM: For online dealers, I think the key is content. The common thread of successful synth dealers is their investment in creating product-related content such as demo videos and articles that engage synth customers. Successful storefronts engage customers in a different way, through meet-ups and user groups. Synth enthusiasts are passionate about gear and how it relates to making music. I think they enjoy events that bring them together to share that experience with other musicians.

MM: Display is very important in the retail space. Many Casio products have built-in speakers but our most successful dealers are also using studio monitors or other speakers to highlight how remarkable

our instruments sound in a live or studio environment. Casio also provides retail displays for a wide variety of our products so they look great in the retail store. Dealers that are also making an effort online with custom-created product videos are even more successful by creating not only awareness about the product but, by showing how their store has the expert staff.

NT: We find the greatest success when dealers create an experience for the customer. For example, dealers that are good at selling studio and recording gear have been successful by pairing our synths with stereo monitoring, speaker stands, all the foot pedals, et cetera. Dealers catering to a live audience will setup our synths in stereo with powered monitors, maybe a small mixer, etc. This gives a customer the complete experience of the environment they’ll be in when they get the instrument home. For online dealers, we find those who create applica-

“We find the greatest success when dealers create an experience for the customer.”



– Nate Tschetter,
Marketing Manager,
Music Production,
Yamaha Corporation of
America



Yamaha's MONTAGE6 Synthesizer



Casio's PX-560 MBE



Casio's XW-P1

tion-specific video content tend to find success. It's really the online version of the experience. In both cases, we do our best to partner with dealers to help them create these experiences and content.

JS: Straightforward is best when it comes to synth sales. In-store, highlighting a synth with its own set of speakers out on the floor is always best. Sometimes, creatively connecting a couple of items, like a volcackick with a monologue, which can literal-

ly create the foundation any style of electronic of music for less than \$500 out the door, generates wins. Online retailers are also doing a great job creating their own engaging content in addition to official videos, using a communal approach (reviews) to put their most popular products right at the top of searches gets the customer what they need as fast as they want it.

Are there any significant trends you've been noticing of late with respect to the synth market?

MM: Software instruments continue to be very popular, so hardware instruments that integrate easily into the computer music environment are important. Since the introduction of the XW-series synthesizers Casio has embraced this type of integration with iOS and computer environments. Both our XW-series and our PX-5S have the ability to independently control standard MIDI and USB-MIDI ports separately making them the ideal cornerstone of any computer music setup.

"We regularly encounter people of all ages, backgrounds, levels of musicianship, financial status and so on using our synths, and being quite passionate about them."



– James Sajeve, Director of Technology Brands, Korg USA, Inc.

"Software instruments continue to be very popular, so hardware instruments that integrate easily into the computer music environment are important."



– Mike Martin, General Manager of Marketing, Electronic Musical Instruments, Casio America, Inc.

JS: The median price for synths seems to be coming down a bit. More and more highly capable and popular entries have been breaching the \$500 ceiling over the years.

NT: It's the single largest growth segment in keyboards over the past three years. People are into synthesizers.

DM: I think we are seeing a trend towards new ways of interacting with the great sounds that synthesizers have been producing for many years. Products that rethink the user interface and focus on helping musicians in the creative process are the most exciting to me. **MMR**



Korg's Minilogue Synthesizer

Korg's Monologue Synthesizer

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On the Case (and/or in the Bag...)

Cases & bags tend to be a pretty steady segment in the market. If a customer purchases an instrument of any value whatsoever and plans to do anything other than practice in his or her home, it's a fairly easy add-on/upsell item. With nearly 73 percent of participants in this month's survey (sent out to over 200 MI retailers) reporting that sales of these products are either up or level, it seems reasonable to say that, generally speaking, cases & bags are doing robust business.

As for current trends, many noted an uptick in consumer preference for well constructed bags over cases these days, with quite a few sharing the sentiment of David St. John of Gard's Music, LLC in

The MI Cases & Bags Market in 2017

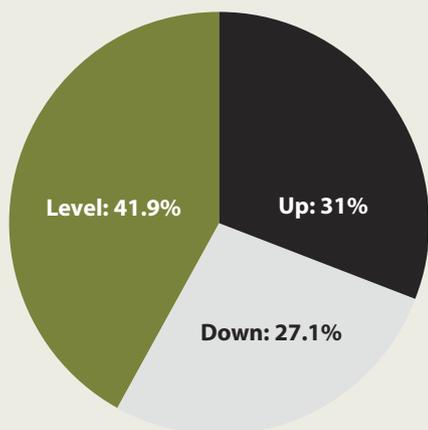
By Christian **Wissmuller**

Glendora, California, who observes: "Quality on lower-priced bags for guitar and bass has improved over the past two years." As Full Score Music's (Toledo, Ohio) sums it up, "Players are moving away from clunky hard-shell cases and embracing a good bag for the local gig!"

Adapting to changing airline and FAA guidelines and resulting challenges are also changing the purchasing habits of many traveling musicians: "The tolex case sales have dropped for the ATA durable baggage handler-proof case and the carry bag that allows for stowage in an overhead bin during air travel," says Dave Lynch of Guitar Workshop in Sacramento, California.

Read on for more about what's hot (and not) in terms of price points, materials and construction, and specific brands in 2017.

Compared to this time last year, sales of cases & bags in your store are:



With respect to cases & bags, what price points are doing best for your store?

"I hate dealing with cases. Customers seem to think they should either come free with a purchase or cost less than that. Freight is almost more than an instrument. Hell's-bells, I can pick something up on Craigslist and make more in profit."

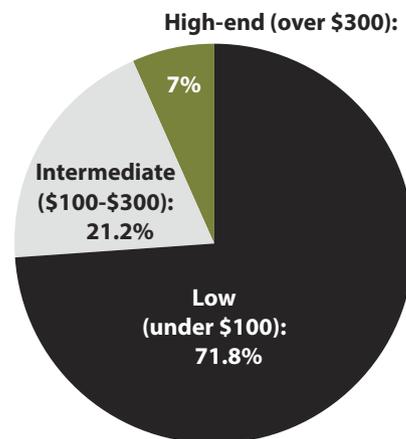
John Diffley
Diffley Guitar Studio
Stewartville, Minnesota

"Typical guitar and bass bags usually sell from \$30 to \$100. Band instrument replacement cases range from \$60 to \$300."

David St. John
Gard's Music, LLC
Glendora, California

"\$40 for a good, thick padded case does best in sales and is in a price zone customers are comfortable with."

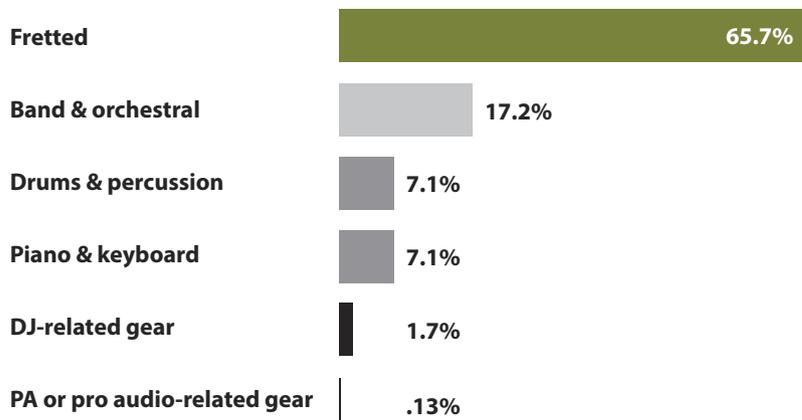
Dionne Hauke
Ziggie's Music
Phoenix, Arizona



"MBT black and red ones just kill it – can't keep them in stock"

Paul Lewis
Lewis Music Store
Kissimmee, Florida

For what instruments or products do you sell the most cases and bags?



Have you been noticing any significant trends in the cases & bags market?

"Our trend is customers want nicer padded bags rather than hard shell cases. Access and Reunion Blues are our go to companies."

Wesley Edwards
Draisden Edwards Music
Anderson, South Carolina

"A good padded bag is sometimes preferred to a case because it is less expensive and still gives considerable protection."

Karl Markl
South County Vintage Instruments
St. Louis, Missouri

"We're in Nashville, and we sell Calton-Hoffee and SKB cases to many touring musicians. We're really loving the new Collings vintage series, and TKL has really stepped up their game lately."

Christie Carter
Carter Vintage Guitars
Nashville, Tennessee

"People seem to want soft cases with at least 20mm foam. Despite the protection a hard case gives, people often complain about the weight, bulky size, and weak hinges."

Karen Janiszewski
Music Room
Buffalo, New York

"The majority of our clients are looking for the most protection for the least amount of money which, of course, is the most difficult combination to provide. Most of the time we end up meeting somewhere in the middle and everyone is happy and satisfied."

Tim Paul
Piano Trends Music and Band Company
Crystal Lake, Illinois

"Higher-quality bags are more popular than hard cases."

Shane Kinney
Drum Center of Portsmouth
Portsmouth, New Hampshire

"Currently, we are selling more bags than cases. As the quality of bags increase, they are becoming more appealing. Players are moving away from clunky hardshell cases and embracing a good bag for the local gig!"

Steve Patterson
Full Score Music
Toledo, Ohio

"Cases, for the most part, are an upsell item. Remind the customer if they're spending good money on an item or instrument, shouldn't it justify protecting it with a case?"

Randy Conley
Southern Music Company
Cordele, Georgia

"We have been selling a lot of high-end cases by Calton and Hoffee. A customer who buys a \$4,000 to \$8,000 guitar, mandolin, or banjo doesn't mind making the investment in a high-end case to protect their expensive investment. To a lot of people these case prices might seem exorbitant...but the owners of such high-end instruments 'get it'."

Tim Bascom
Morgan Music
Lebanon, Missouri

"Simply put, we're selling more gig bags."

Brian Douglas
Cream City Music
Brookfield, Wisconsin

"People want info about fiberglass flight cases but are either put off by the high price of the good ones or the less than stellar quality of the popular priced choices."

Mike Halloran
PPW/Halloran Music
Sunnyvale, California

"If a drummer is gigging and moving their gear, they bag the instruments, and if they have a truck and crew even on a local level, they are casing in ATA style or roto-mold. Many drummers are bagging drums and hard casing the hardware."

John Haga
Bongo's & Bud's Music Center
Hopkins, Minnesota

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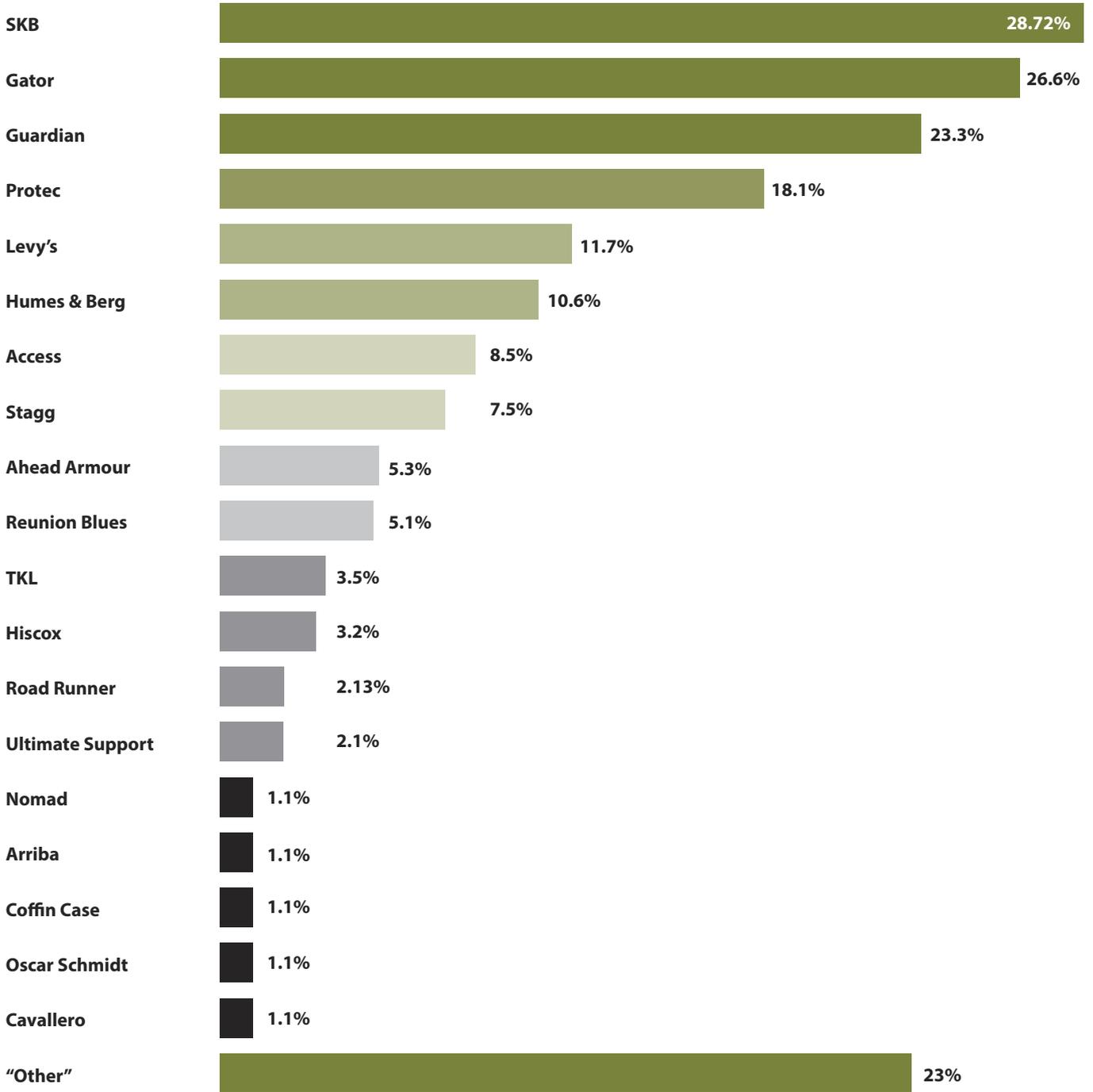


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**What brands of cases are the strongest sellers for your operation in 2017?
(multiple choices were acceptable)**



(Those who selected this category most commonly cited, in order: Pro-Lok, Kaces, Onstage, Rok Sak, and Gibraltar)

"A good padded bag is sometimes preferred to a case because it is less expensive and still gives considerable protection."

– Karl Markl,

South County Vintage Instruments, St. Louis, Missouri

Five Steps Towards Growing a Lifetime Family Customer

The Seeds of Trust Never Fail

By Menzie Pittman

Every customer relationship starts with a single interaction. Sometimes it's over the phone; sometimes a new customer will walk in the door. Sometimes they may participate in a program you offer, but it's a consistent truth that developing a productive customer relationship into a lifetime family of customers takes trust, keen perceptions, and putting the customers' needs first.

1. When you begin, your customer doesn't know what they don't know, and you don't yet know the customer.

In the beginning you have to start with attentive engagement. Most retailers fail with this right out of the gate, and the reason is simple: retailers want to show you how much they know, and they want to talk about their products. But the problem that quickly develops is the retailer knows nothing about the person to whom he selling. Worse yet, there has been no chance for a rapport to begin developing with the customer; therefore, no trust is established. And where there is no trust, no relationship can develop or grow.

2. To listen is to learn, and the customer is the teacher.

My advice is to listen closely to everything the customer is saying. After all, you want him or her to listen to you, right? But the bigger takeaway advice is to listen to the spirit of what is being said, and the manner in which it's being shared. Feel, as well as listen. If you take that approach, you will learn, and when you allow that to happen, you can make suggestions that will serve the customer, and that should be your only goal.

3. Two customers (or a family) are better than one.

Take the example of one of the customers we have: a set of twins and their family. (Note that besides our retail store, we are fortunate to have a performance room that is open to the public.) One twin sings and performs very naturally, albeit she is very shy. However, she has figured out that even though she is shy and slightly uncomfortable on stage, she certainly enjoys the rousing applause from a room packed with people watching her tear the house down with a version of a Dolly Parton song. Her impact is staggering. After observing her, a fellow musician and friend of mine wiped a tear away as she sang. When I approached him, he said two simple words to me: "She's perfect."

4. Establishing the seeds of trust takes some time investment.

Here's her family's story: our first step with this family was addressing their needs of wanting a teacher for their daughter – one that was preferably female, patient, and one who could teach her both voice and guitar.

Once we accomplished that goal, trust had begun to seed, both from the student and the family. The next hurdle was fitting this young rising star with a proper guitar. But it had to fit both the student's size and the family's budget. An astute staff will recognize both needs, and never over-sell. The trust that is devel-

oped by truly serving the customer always pays dividends later.

The next step of trust can be established by our observance of this student's progress and enthusiasm. The family naturally has interest in performance opportunities, so your job becomes to find the right chance to have this young lady sing and play at an open mic night or some kind of live event. For us, that always leads to a student's heightened desire to perform in groups as well.

The experience always speaks for itself. This is where our trust in the quality of the experience we provide our customers comes into play. The most intriguing part of this scenario is that the second twin benefits immensely from all of this undertaking. Although even shyer than her sister, she sees the jubilation, enjoyment, and growth her sister is experiencing, and naturally follows the path of wanting to study, play, and perform. How long will it be before nature takes over and the two girls seek to play together? History proves not long. It is the trust we established from serving the customer in a listening manner that makes that cus-

tomers drive past four music stores to have their experience with us. If it weren't for the trust that was established from the initial conversation, this scenario would not take place.

"Where there is no trust, no relationship can develop or grow."

5. Any approach that works well is worth repeating.

We are fortunate to have many families with more than one child interested in learning the craft of music, and it is not unusual that our families seek to have their children intern or undertake employment with us. We also pay that trust forward by helping students align work opportunities when they graduate school and leave our region. In the meantime, you guessed it: Dad now has extra time on his hands, so then we add a chair to the bluegrass jam and convince him to trust us in our advice to dust off the family banjo, reconnecting to the memory of his grandfather showing him his first chords. The seeds of trust never fail. **MMR**



Menzie Pittman is the owner and director of education at Contemporary Music Center in Virginia (CMC). Following a performance and teaching career spanning more than 32 years, he founded CMC in 1989 and continues to perform, teach, and oversee daily operations. He has 50 years of musical experience as a drummer and drum instructor. Menzie is a frequent speaker at NAMM's Idea Center, and a free-

lance writer for MMR's "Small Business Matters" column. He served on NAMM's Board of Directors from 2012 through 2015 and currently oversees the curriculum for CMC's performance venue @4410. In 2016 NAMM awarded Contemporary Music Center the "Dealer of the Year" award, the "Music Matters" award, and the "Best Sales and Promotion" award.

ACCESSORIES

D'Addario Accessories Beatles Guitar Picks and Straps

This year, The Beatles and D'Addario Accessories are joining together to celebrate the 50th anniversary of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* with limited edition guitar pick 10 packs and guitar straps. *Sgt. Pepper* has been called "the most important and influential rock and roll album ever recorded," and *Rolling Stone* placed it at number one on their list of the "500 Greatest Albums of All Time". While it's earned these accolades for being musically groundbreaking, this album was also ahead of its time for being visually striking as well, featuring a the first ever gatefold as opposed to a single vinyl sleeve that included eye-catching graphics. D'Addario is launching picks and straps to commemorate this iconic album and its vivid art work.

The *Sgt. Pepper* assortment includes a limited edition 10-pack of guitar picks available in thin (.50mm), medium (.70mm), and heavy (1.00mm) gauges. In addition to picks, there will be two guitar straps available in printed polyester and vinyl materials. Guitar Pick Packs MSRP: \$11. Polyester Strap MSRP: \$41.65. Vinyl Strap MSRP: \$57.20. All items will be available May 1.



www.daddario.com

Floyd Rose Rail Tail Tremolo

Floyd Rose Rail Tail Tremolo is a full contact, dive-only tremolo designed to retrofit existing Strat-style 6-point tremolo with no modifications to the guitar; a design merging the feel and reliability of a hardtail bridge with the flexibility of a tremolo system. Computer designed and precision-machined, the Rail Tail achieves performance without compromising comfort or feel while offering a stunning modern look rooted in its vintage predecessors. Its unique features allow for adjustability to fit a variety of guitar bodies and for an easy DIY installation.



The Rail Tail tremolo plate rotates around a precision rail that is mounted directly to the guitar body. The plate cradles the entire rail with precision, as if they were one unit improving sound quality and tuning stability. This union also creates a greater breakpoint, which allows open strings to maintain pitch when bending another, much like a hardtail. The Rail Tail Narrow accommodates an E to E string spacing of 2 1/16". The Rail Tail Wide accommodates an E to E string spacing of 2 7/32".

www.floydrose.com

Music Nomad Octopus 8 'n 1 Tech Tool

Music Nomad Equipment Care Octopus 8 'n 1 Tech Tool is perfect for adjusting output jacks, control pots, tuning machine bushings and screws. It features both Phillips and slotted blade screwdriver heads with our reversible shaft design. The Octopus is engineered for the most popular hex wrench sizes: 10mm, 12mm, 14mm, 1/2" and 7/16". Remove the screwdriver tip and use the 1/2" narrow profile hex wrench for tightening sunken pots and Tele cups. The hex wrenches are made with strong ballistic nylon that can handle any job without scratching. Small in size but big in results, the 6"/15cm overall length is a must have for every guitar case. The Octopus (MN227) retails between \$12.99 and \$14.99.

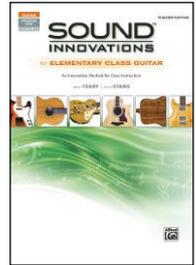


www.musicnomadcare.com

PRINT & DIGITAL

Alfred Music Sound Innovations for Elementary Classroom Guitar

Alfred Music announced the release of *Sound Innovations for Elementary Classroom Guitar*, an innovative method for class instruction, especially for young children.



It was developed specifically to address the needs and learning styles of children. Unlike *Sound Innovations for Guitar 1 and 2*, which were aimed at teenage students, the bulk of instruction for this installment resides within this teacher edition — the content in the matching student book is streamlined and relies on instruction from the teacher. Beginning with rote learning, imitation, and echoing, students will play and perform familiar melodies, strum chords, and perform duets and trios. Eventually the curriculum takes them through singing and accompanying singers. Students will read music notation, guitar tablature, and guitar chord diagrams. They will learn traditional chords but also explore the neck of the guitar with simple and exciting non-traditional "moveable" chord shapes. The method follows both state and national music education standards.

Each book includes web access to online video lessons in which the author explains all concepts and demonstrates the music in the student and teacher editions. There are also downloadable MP3 recordings that demonstrate every musical example, and supplemental worksheets in PDF format that can be printed and handed out to the class.

Sound Innovations for Elementary Classroom Guitar, teacher edition is available for \$34.99, and the student edition is available for \$6.99.

www.alfred.com

FRETTED

PRS Guitars Limited Edition Reclaimed Wood Guitars

PRS Guitars is offering a small batch of Reclaimed Limited CE 24 Semi-Hollow and S2 Vela Semi-Hollow guitars that showcase two exotic wood species new to PRS: Peroba Rosa and Brauna Preto. This reclaimed wood is typically more than 100 years old. PRS Guitars Senior Wood Manager, Michael Reid, sourced these woods from old buildings, noting that their density, unique aesthetic, and history would lend them to guitar making.

Peroba Rosa, typically used as siding, was selected for the top wood. The density of this wood combined with the semi-hollow body construction gives the Reclaimed Limited CE24 Semi-Hollow and S2 Vela Semi-Hollow a unique sound that is punchy but also warm and full. Brauna Preto, typically used as the supporting posts of these old buildings, is used for the fretboards due to its tight-grain and sustain. These guitars are finished in natural satin nitro. Any nail holes and any wear or discoloration have been left in the top wood to showcase its history.

Production on these guitars will be capped at approximately 600 instruments, but the order window for Authorized PRS Dealers is from March 9 – April 30, 2017 only.

www.prsguitars.com



Cort Classic TC Guitar

Cort Guitars and British luthiers Manson Guitar Works announced a new collaboration for 2017, the Cort/Manson Classic TC. It is based upon the Manson MA Classic profile but completely revamped with hardware, custom pickups, and body woods to offer a refined style and voice that lovers of classic guitar sounds will immediately recognize.

The new guitar incorporates a sleek satin-finish maple neck with rosewood fingerboard, a solid ashwood body, and a traditional headstock layout with a cylindrical style string-tree for accurate behind the nut techniques. Manson's team have designed an all-new pickup set that offers a traditional vintage neck model combined with a bright, yet punchy, bridge single coil. Together they offer classic tones with added bite and player response dynamics. Price: \$699



www.cortguitars.com

LIGHTING

ADJ Mini Dekker LZR

Adding to ADJ's Startec series of affordable effect lights, the new Mini Dekker LZR combines a powerful multi-beam derby moonflower with a potent red and green cluster laser to create a room-filling blaze of color, movement, and energy. Its 2-in-1 combo effect is designed to make the lives of mobile entertainers and equipment installers easier. With this compact fixture, there's only one unit to store, transport, and setup, yet it can achieve two very different effects. Likewise, installers working in bars, clubs, bowling alleys, roller rinks and youth centers only need to rig a single fixture to create both cluster laser and LED beam effects.



www.adj.com

ACCESSORIES



Cordial Mic Cable

German cable manufacturer Cordial adds the CMK 234 to its core assortment of mic cables with spiral shields. Featuring a large conductor cross-section of 2 x 0.34 mm², the CMK is absolutely suited for long cable runs (similar to the well-known CMK 250). Due to its design (26 x 0.127 strands), it is about as flexible as the CMK 222 FLEX. Cordial also stocks the popular but lower-priced cables CMK 222 and CME 220. Available lengths: 100/500 metre reels

www.cordial.eu

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AMPS

Fishman Loudbox Acoustic Amplifiers Hardwood Models

Fishman's Loudbox Mini Mahogany produces 60 watts of clean acoustic power and has two channels featuring Fishman's preamp and tone control designs. The amp also features digital reverb and chorus for the instrument channel and reverb for the microphone channel.



The Loudbox Artist Mahogany features 120 watts of bi-amplified acoustic power and includes two flexible mic/instrument input channels with Fishman's accurate 3-band EQ, precise feedback-fighting controls and a new dual digital effects section.

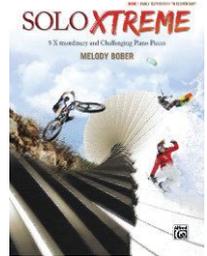
The Loudbox Performer Mahogany produces 180 watts of clear, bi-amplified acoustic sound with two flexible mic/instrument input channels that accept both 1/4" and XLR sources. Each channel includes Fishman 3-band EQ feedback-fighting Phase switch and Notch filter controls, and a new dual digital effects section with Reverb, Chorus, Flanger, Delay, Echo and Slap Echo.

www.fishman.com

PRINT & DIGITAL

Alfred Music's Solo Xtreme Piano Book Series

Alfred Music has announced the debut of *Solo Xtreme*, their new series of piano activity books that challenge students to expand their technique and musicianship. As the name suggests, the pieces in the *Solo Xtreme* books encourage piano students to push their skill sets. Pieces challenge students to move around the keyboard, cross hand-over-hand, use a variety of articulations, play harmonic intervals and accidentals, and use the pedal to create colors and moods. Books are \$7.99 each.



Book 1 Titles: "Beach Fun!" • "Blues Band" • "Chitchat" • "Enchanted Forest Waltz" • "Hot Salsa!" • "Irish Fiddlin'" • "Kitesurfing" • "The Old Typewriter" • "Pizza to Go"

Book 2 Titles: "Bike Trek" • "Evening Sail" • "Goosebump Boogie" • "Holiday Bells" • "La Celebración" • "Night Whispers" • "Stealth Mode" • "Steps to a Mystery" • "Taco Time!"

Book 3 Titles: "Festival Rag" • "Gentle Rain" • "Moonlight Skate" • "Ride Like the Wind" • "Roaming River" • "Rollerblade Race" • "Saturday Stomp" • "Sonoran Sunset" • "Twilight Echoes"

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ACCESSORIES

Radial Engineering North-Star

Radial Engineering Ltd. announced the North-Star, a combination overdrive and power booster, is now shipping.

The North-Star's overdrive is designed to be very responsive and capture the pick attack and dynamics of the player. With its versatile tone-shaping features, players can adjust the sonic characteristics of the North-Star to suit their playing style.

The North-Star is equipped with a separate boost circuit that provides up to 24dB of clean gain to the signal. Activating the boost circuit engages a separate effects loop, allowing the player to connect other pedals for easy transitions from rhythm to lead tones. As the North-Star is a true-bypass pedal, the effects loop can also be used to remove noisy, tone sucking pedals from the signal chain. Even when the boost level is turned all the way down, pedals in the effects loop will still be activated when engaging the boost channel.

Powered by any standard 9V power supply, the North-Star is a dynamic, responsive overdrive built in a tough, pedal-board-friendly 14-gauge steel chassis. MAP: \$169.99



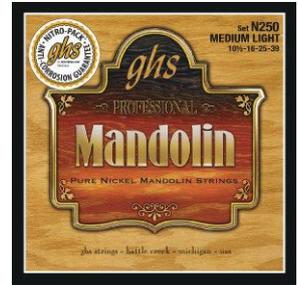
www.radialeng.com

Pure Nickel Mandolin Strings From GHS

GHS Strings have introduced their new Pure Nickel Mandolin strings for both the traditional and modern musician. The new strings from GHS deliver a warm, vintage sound with a superior, long lasting tone, and feature custom gauges that create a comfortable feel across the player's fingers and fretboard.

In the 1950s and 1960s, pure nickel strings were readily available, but string manufacturers quickly started to explore new metal mixes when the cost of nickel increased. The new strings from GHS offer a nickel renaissance for players looking for an authentic tone on vintage mandolins.

The new Pure Nickel Mandolin strings are available in two gauge sets, from 010 1/2-039 to 011-041.

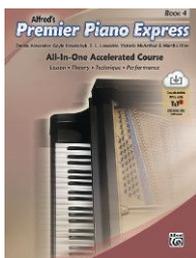


www.ghsstrings.com

PRINT & DIGITAL

Alfred Music Premier Piano Express Book 4

This all-in-one, accelerated piano course is designed for students who need a fast-paced approach to piano study. Book



4, which completes the series, continues the steady development of artistry and keyboard skills that began in books 1, 2, and 3. The book is organized into skills-based units that feature clear explanations of important musical concepts. Worksheets within each unit provide review and strengthen understanding. Audio recordings of performances on acoustic piano can be downloaded.

Price: \$12.99 each

www.alfred.com

ACCESSORIES

New AHEAD Square Felt Kick Beater

AHEAD has released a new Switch Kick beater that uses a square felt quick release bass drum beater head. The beater, which is reversible, was designed to create a heavier sound with maximum surface head contact. Much like the new AHEAD Switch Kick Beater, the square felt beater features nine different heights axto switch speed, volume, and feel, and is available with or without a stainless steel adapter shaft. The reversible, high density, classic hard felt square beater head was created for drummers who enjoy the classic sound of a square felt kick beater on their bass drums.



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By Dan Daley

Install This

Wherever musical instruments are used, look around. Chances are you'll see an installed sound system, perhaps complemented with hanging LED displays or drop-down screens illuminated by ceiling-mounted projectors. There may also be plenty of professional lighting fixtures up there, too. Somebody had to put these AVL elements in place. It might turn out to be the same company that sold those musical instruments.

Installed AV, also known as AV systems integration, has been a growth sector for several decades straight, now. If you wanted to see a trade organization as robust as NAMM, take a gander at InfoComm, whose annual expos sprawl over the convention centers in Las Vegas and Orlando the way NAMM's does in Anaheim. InfoComm's constituency of key verticals like corporate, house of worship, education, government and health-care have gotten turbocharged since the recession faded almost a decade ago. Globally, the system integration market is expected to reach \$393.10 billion by 2020, according to market researcher Radiant Insights, with much of that growth still to be found in the U.S.

A Changing Business

However, AV systems integration is undergoing some radical changes at the moment. Market growth in certain sectors, such as government infrastructure, like airports, and in corporate environments is coming as much from scale as from the number and type of projects. That's led to comments like "Get big, get niche, or get out," by the industry's biggest players, who are themselves scaling up to meet these demands, often through the M&A activity that's rampant in AV integration right now, or they're focusing on narrow but technically complex niches like theme parks. And all AV integrators are going through the transition from a pure AV environment to one in which IT platforms, such as networked AV and control systems, are the dominant forces, a transformation as wrenching for many as what pro audio experienced going from analog to digital.

All of this upheaval is creating opportunities for ambitious MI retailers. As AV integrators bulk up to compete and complete bigger projects, it will inevitably leave smaller ones seeking contractors. That's a window of opportunity for MI retailers to leverage their assets into this market.

It's one that a few of the larger MI retailers already have opened, such as Guitar Center and its GC Pro division, and Sweetwater, which acquired All Pro Sound, a Pensacola, Florida-based audio retailer and integra-

tor back in 2011. Both companies already had scale, the former in the form of scores of physical locations nationally, the latter through its ubiquitous online presence and the market penetration of All Pro Sound in key verticals, like the house-of-worship market. But as most AV systems integrators begin scaling up and adapting to ongoing AV/IT convergence, it will leave a wealth of smaller and mid-sized AV-centric projects waiting to be serviced. It's an opportunity for what the professional AV community has tendentiously referred to as "trunk slammers" – itinerant integrators with widely varying skill sets, usually little in the way of formal certifications, and often working out of a pickup truck. But it's also one that some MI stores can also take advantage of.

Or, take greater advantage of, since there are a number of them that have been in the business for some

“AV systems integration is undergoing some radical changes at the moment.”

time. Corner Music, which opened in Nashville in 1976, added AV services a decade later, but that sideline really blossomed in 2000, says Bob Nickerson, who with founder Larry Garis and chief systems designer David Goon have nurtured Corner Audio Video since then. Nickerson says the foundational advantage the MI store brings is the existing relationships it has an authorized distributor for MI manufacturers, many of whose pro audio lines are also well suited for installed applications. Having access to a JBL portable Eon PA system that a neighborhood band might buy also makes JBL's tour-grade VerTec line array equally available, such as the one they recently installed a north Nashville church, along with a Roland M-5000 audio console. In addition, Corner Music's inventory of everyday items, from mic stands to SM58s to put on them, acts as a handy logistical pool for Corner AV's integration projects. "Bigger companies have to wait for those kinds of items to be drop-shipped, along with all the bigger pieces, to the job site," says Nickerson.

Being small wasn't always an advantage; Nickerson recalls that during the recession larger local sound companies – of which there are many in Nashville – began encroaching on their projects as the overall AV installation market contracted. But now that AV is once again in expansion mode, coupled with the new exigencies of scale and wit IT tugging at the bigger companies' resources, it's a good time to be midsized and familiar with AV.

It's not a move for every MI retailer – the knowledge base required has gotten a lot deeper and broader since the high school AV club – and some of those trunk slammers ain't half bad. But as a long-term strategic play, it's an area worth looking into. **MMM**

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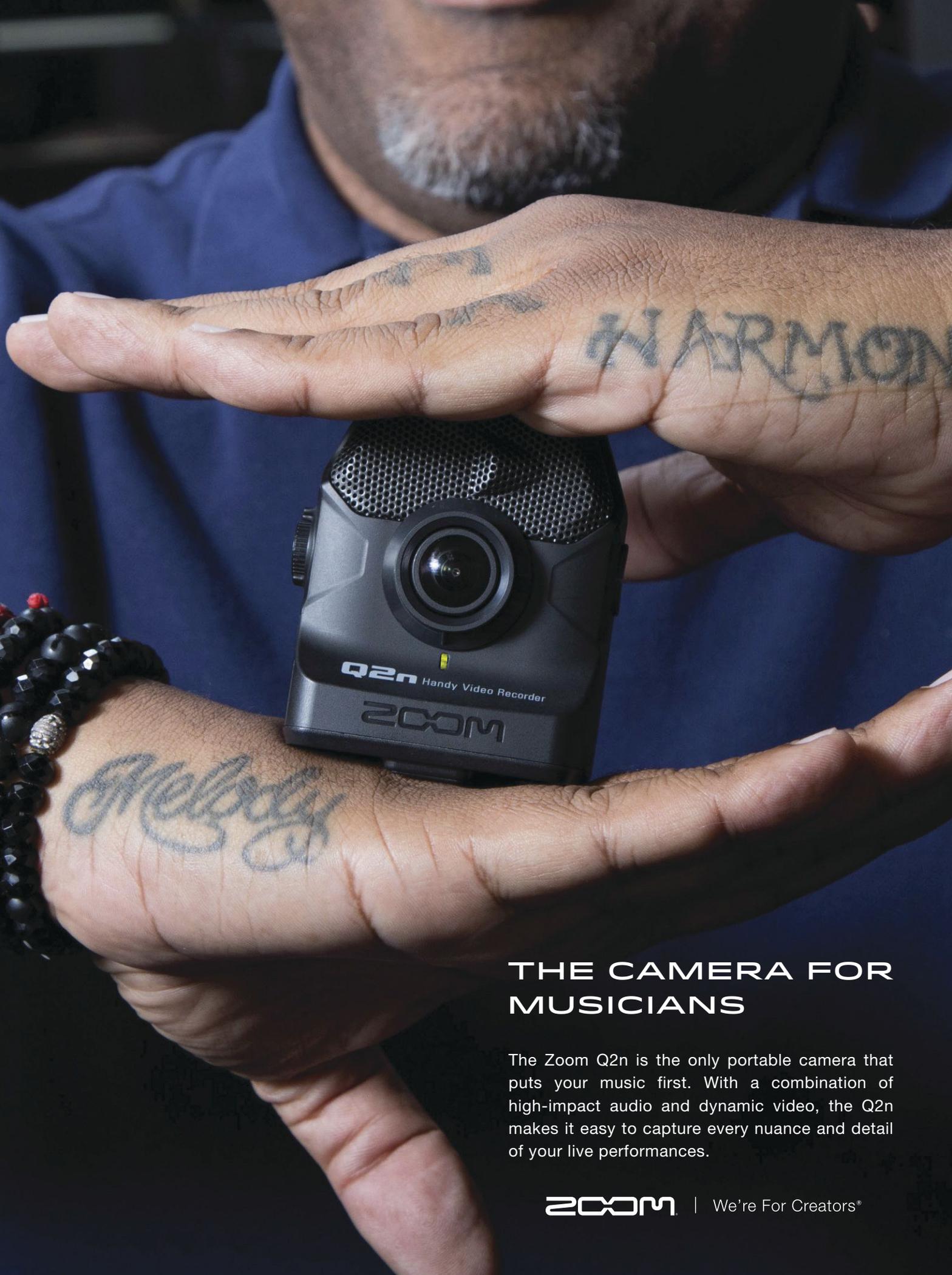
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