

MMR

MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW



22

34th
50 Dealer/
50 State Review
& Forecast



56
Small Business Matters:
The Real Value in
Telling a True Story



Dealers' Choice Awards

- ACCESSORY LINE
- ACOUSTIC GUITAR
- ACOUSTIC PIANO
- AMPLIFIER LINE
- BAND AND ORCHESTRA
- DJ LINE
- ELECTRIC BASS
- ELECTRIC GUITAR
- HOME DIGITAL KEYBOARD
- LIGHTING
- MICROPHONE
- PERCUSSION
- PRINT MUSIC
- PRO DIGITAL PIANO
- PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
- RECORDING EQUIPMENT
- SOUND REINFORCEMENT



40

WE ANNOUNCE
THE WINNERS
OF THE 25TH
ANNUAL
AWARDS



CHAUVET
SWARM
SERIES
Holiday Party Essentials



SWARM WASH FX

4-in-1 LED light with RGBAW rotating derby, RGB+UV wash, red/green laser, and a ring of white SMD strobes.



SWARM 4FX

Ultra-bright, quad-color moonflower, red/green laser and white strobe effect.



SWARM 5FX

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* Cool side note! All the guitars shown above are owned by employees of Whirlwind (we don't just make cables, we make music!)

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C O N T E N T S

MMR

MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

Vol.176 DECEMBER 2017 No.12

FEATURES

34th Annual 50 Dealer/50 State Review & Forecast 22

MMR presents our annual nationwide survey of MI retailers, many of which experienced steady or increased sales this year, despite the growing threat of online sales

36th Annual America's Top Music Chains 36

This year's data about American MI chains fielding at least three locations

25th Annual Dealers' Choice Awards 40

You voted, we listened; MMR polled MI retailers to learn more about the best-performing products of 2017. Here are the winners of this year's Dealers' Choice Awards

Small Business Matters: The Real Value in Telling a True Story 56

Menzie Pittman explains how the best weapon in the industry is integrity



The staff of Uptown Music in Keizer, Oregon. The store reports sales are up 11% from last year.

25th Anniversary

2017

MMR
MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

DEALERS' CHOICE
AWARD

WINNERS

40

The votes are in! See who won this year's MMR Dealers' Choice Awards!

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2017: A Look Back



by Christian Wissmuller

2017 has certainly given us plenty to discuss and contemplate. From email hacks to Russian interference in the U.S. political process, deadly hurricanes to NFL player protests, sexual harassment accusations made against numerous high-profile figures to Twitter feuds between President Trump and... well, nearly everyone, it's been a busy year to be sure.

But how about in the world of MI? How did this calendar year treat those who make their livelihoods selling musical instruments and related gear and what's the overall outlook for 2018?

Who better to answer that question than some of the most successful names in the game:

"Concerns: Continued budgetary pressure on music departments in the state of Pennsylvania. Education costs are rising, funding/school taxes are flat and music departments are the first to be impacted. To address these fiscal challenges, many schools are not replacing retiring music teachers." – Joel Menchey, Menchey Music Service

"We did a lot better than some of those articles that have been floating about are saying. We are doing fine and electric guitar sales are up. We dodged a major bullet in Houston and Florida, that could have been a game changer for the worse. Someone is looking out for us!" – Sammy Ash, Sam Ash Music Corp.

"[I'm concerned] that retail sales growth is only going to come from online sales via third party channels. Owning your own customer is getting harder and harder to do." – Donovan Bankhead, Springfield Music

"2017 was a very good year. Our school music relationships continue to grow as does our revenue. We couldn't be prouder of our teams." – Jeffrey Eckroth, Eckroth Music Co.

"While the market continues to hit record highs, consumer confidence is fickle. With the civil and political unrest our country is experiencing, it wouldn't take much to have drastic impact on consumers willingness to spend their disposable income." – Tim Kletti, Music Go Round

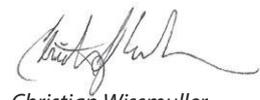
"We saw all segments of our business go up in 2017 with the business as a whole up 15-20 percent" – Charles Kessler, Kessler & Sons Music

"2017 is strong. We are tracking toward an 9.49 percent increase over 2016. The economy and buyer confidence seem to be moving in the right direction. Online competition remains a concern." – Kevin Cranley, Willis Music Co.

"The year started off strong and we saw the breaks go in late summer, we are prepping for a healthy and aggressive holiday selling season. Concerns: Keeping employee engagement high to work to build a better customer experience to stay more then relevant. [Also] to build time and focus to be a more diverse music retail option." – Todd Heid, Heid Music

"It was challenging time, but exciting as we opened new sales avenues into e-commerce and our installed division." – Greg Hermes, Hermes Music

"Sales showed an increase over 2016, as well as gross margins. Concerns: Maintaining and updating our brick and mortar stores as well as training and keeping good, knowledgeable employees to keep our customers coming back for more of MMI." – Rosi K. Johnson, Mississippi Music



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Industry News

Korg USA to Distribute Sequenz

Korg USA has announced upcoming distribution for Sequenz premium keyboard stands.

Available in three different sizes to support various keyboard lengths, these A-frame stands offer rugged and stylish support for any keyboard.



SEQUENZ

Created with a hybrid structure of aluminum and steel, the stands are constructed to support keyboards of any width or depth, yet remain lightweight and easy to set up. When disassembled, the stand's components become extremely compact and portable, making the transport easy for touring musicians.

"Sequenz stands are stylish, durable and have a standout look all their own," says director of Technology Brands at Korg USA, James Sajeve. "We've seen the quality and unique design approach from this company with our Grandstage and VOX Continental stands, and bringing them to market as a top-notch solution for any keyboard make or model is a natural fit," Sajeve concludes.

Distribution is scheduled to begin late 2017. Pricing is to be determined.

For more information, visit www.sequenzmusicgear.com. For more information on Korg USA and its affiliates, visit www.korgusa.com.

➤ Industry News

➤ Supplier Scene

➤ MMR Global

➤ People on the Move

➤ Trade Regrets

ACT Lighting Acquires RapcoHorizon

ACT Lighting, Inc., a leading importer and distributor of technology to the entertainment industry, has completed the acquisition of RHC Holdings Corp. ("RapcoHorizon").

This move follows ACT Lighting's recent acquisition of AC Power Distribution, a manufacturer of UL-listed portable power distribution for film, video, touring and exterior event venues. The RapcoHorizon acquisition further solidifies ACT Lighting's position as the market-leading value-added distributor of premier entertainment technology products.

Headquartered in Jackson, Missouri and with core facilities in Massachusetts, Canada and Mexico, RapcoHorizon is the leading, vertically-integrated manufacturer of interconnect assemblies, audio,

data and interface products, and specialty industrial wire. With a brand portfolio that includes ProCo, RAT, RoadHog, and StageMASTER, RapcoHorizon has developed a

reputation for the reliability and superior performance of its brands across many industries as well as their ability to quickly customize products to fit specific user requirements. The company's products are used worldwide by

concert touring sound companies, video and sound contractors, recording studios, system integrators, audiophiles and musicians to provide optimal flexibility and premium performance. RapcoHorizon also has market leading research & development capabilities and a state-of-the-art custom metal shop to build new devices to meet any customer need.



Bent Grass Holdings Acquires M&M Merchandisers

Bent Grass Holdings, Inc. announced it has acquired M&M Merchandisers, Inc., a pioneer in wholesale distribution for the Pawn industry.

The company will continue to operate under the M&M Merchandisers name but with new leadership at the helm. Bent Grass Holdings, Inc. finalized the asset purchase Monday Oct 23, 2017 for an undisclosed purchase price. Craig Harrison of Bent Grass Holdings, Inc. will lead the company as the new CEO. Harrison is a 20+ year veteran in the retail industry, having led thousands of employees with primarily big box retailers such as Lowe's, Cabelas, and most recently, Golfsmith International.

Changes at M&M began immediately with the consolidation of distribution centers into the Fort Worth facility. M&M Merchandisers operated warehouses in both Atlanta, Georgia and Fort Worth, Texas.

Harrison stated, "The consolidation of distribution centers puts us in a position to serve our customers more efficiently by providing faster service, increased buying options and reduced shipping costs. This also puts the company as a whole, in a more profitable position overall," he added.

Harrison and the M&M Merchandisers team are looking to capitalize on the wholesale industry as the retail landscape begins to consolidate.

B2B customers are becoming increasingly interested in multi-channel purchasing options similar to what B2C customers enjoy in today's rapidly changing marketplace. With US B2B ecommerce expected to grow to \$1.1 trillion by 2020, a key focus moving forward is in enhanced technology to serve our customers in the most efficient manner. It's all about ease of purchase and speed of delivery.

"We understand that one of the main challenges wholesalers face today is that we can no longer manage our customers and channels the way we have in the past. In order to excel, new technology and skill sets are required and we are ready for that change."

Harrison concluded with, "The entire team at M&M Merchandisers is excited about the growth opportunity we have in front of us. We look forward to strengthening our current long-standing relationships as well as building many new ones."

ALFRED MUSIC STAFF PICKS

Mike Odabashian, Sales Rep

Years at Alfred Music: One

Instruments: Drum Set, Hand Percussion

Best Perk of Working at Alfred Music:
Being surrounded by so much great musical talent!

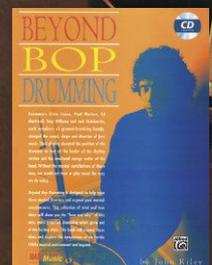
Favorite Genres to Play: I'm a lover of ALL music—too hard to pick one!

Favorite Artists: Robert Glasper, Snarky Puppy, Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd

First Concert Experience: Pink Floyd, 1988



John Riley's *The Art of Bop Drumming* and *Beyond Bop Drumming* are THE drummer's guides to diving into jazz/bop drumming. His books practically build your rhythmic vocabulary so that when you are handed a chart you can play freely over the entire piece, and feel comfortable comping and playing regardless of the rhythmic challenge. John also has an amazing way of giving you the history behind jazz, and it really helps you understand where it all started.



alfred.com

AES New York 2017

The AES New York 2017 Convention once again hosted the year's largest annual contingent of pro audio professionals, students, and enthusiasts at the Jacob Javits Center, October 18 - 21.

Convention co-chairs Agnieszka Roginska and Paul Gallo, along with numerous convention organizers and volunteers, provided the programming and

events spanning the four days of audio presentations, discussion panels, and three-day gear exhibition. Additionally, co-location at the Javits Center with the NAB New York show created an additional edge, bringing in an even more diverse attendee base to the premier professional audio education and networking event of the year.

Total registration for the 143rd International Convention eclipsed that of last year's Los Angeles Convention. With 15,590 registrants, AES New York 2017 registrations were 24 percent higher than final registration for AES LA 2016 (where 12,540 registrations were tallied, including those for the parallel AVAR Conference). The quality of the technical program in New York drew over 40 percent more All Access attendees than in Los Angeles last year, setting a new milestone.



"I've never been so proud of our team and of an AES Convention as I am after the amazingly successful AES New York 2017," said AES executive director Bob Moses. "Words don't come close to conveying the admiration I have for every member of the Convention committee and every member of the AES staff and our volunteers. Attendees and the Convention exhibitors and sponsors offered unsolicited praise for the entire convention experience, from the technical program to the exhibition hall. Our co-location experience with The NAB Show New York proved that working with collaborative partners can be mutually beneficial and still allow each organization to retain its unique and independent identity."

Next up, the Audio Engineering Society returns to the west coast for the AES@NAMM Pro Sound Symposium, Live and Studio, to be held in NAMM's education campus, adjacent to the Anaheim Convention Center, during The 2018 NAMM Show, which runs January 25 - 28, 2018 (aesatnamm.com). This first-of-its-kind education and training event is a collaboration with NAMM, bringing AES expertise to AES@NAMM attendees while offering registrants access to the NAMM exhibition. The AES celebrates its 70th Anniversary as the Society returns to the Javits Center in New York for AES New York 2018, the 145th AES International Convention, taking place October 17 - 20, 2018, co-located once again with The NAB Show New York. Visit aes.org/events for AES event updates throughout the year.



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Co-Owner, Cream City Music
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MMR DEALERS' CHOICE AWARDS
2017 Product of the Year

KATANA AMPS



ADJ Lighting Partners with Aldridge Marketing

ADJ Products, LLC has appointed Aldridge Marketing, Inc., a manufacturer's representative firm located in Austin, Texas, its growing sales network.

Since 1992, Randall Aldridge and the Aldridge Marketing team have represented AV and MI manufacturers in the states of Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana. Effective November 1, 2017, Aldridge Marketing will represent ADJ Products, LLC (ADJ Lighting, American Audio, Accu-Cable and Accu-Case) throughout their territory.

"We are very excited to welcome Randall and his team at Aldridge Marketing to the ADJ family!," said Alfred Gonzales, national sales manager of ADJ USA. "Aldridge Marketing's expertise is exactly what we were looking for to represent ADJ's growing range of professional lighting and video products for installation, rental and production." Randall added, "It's great to be working with the company that pioneered the affordable entertainment lighting category."

ADJ Dealers and sales enquires may contact Aldridge Marketing via phone, email or web: (512) 261-0550, sales@aldrigemarketing.com or www.aldrigemarketing.com. Randall and his team will be at LDI 2017 in Las Vegas with the ADJ team to meet customers from his assigned territory.

Laney and HH Electronics Partner with EMD Music

Headstock Group, the British parent company of long-standing U.K. brands Laney Amplification and HH Electronics, has announced a new strategic partnership with EMD Music, Inc., of Nashville, Tennessee, for their brands in the USA with effect from 1st November 2018.

Headstock Group CEO, James Laney, said, "We are very excited that this new alliance with EMD Music will allow us to positively meet the demands of the US market and give stronger and better representation of both Laney and HH Electronics in both the M.I. and Pro-Audio sectors."



EMD Music is a hugely successful company with a great track record of reaching dealers of all levels and types, offering reliable and efficient support, excellent supply chain management, and a proven sales force. We look forward to working closely with them to build our presence in the most influential market in the world."

EMD Music Operations manager Andrew Swift added, "We are so impressed with the dedication and quality we see in the Laney staff and the product selection. We couldn't have found a more perfect fit for our growing distribution model."



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Consistent Factory Quality Control at All Price Points

Regardless of price point, every single Breedlove undergoes a rigorous +40 point inspection in Bend, OR. Our guitars sound and play better, right out of the box.

Industry Leading Customer Support

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Yamaha Commits to Musikmesse Frankfurt

Yamaha Music Europe is planning another extensive showcase of brands and new products at the upcoming Frankfurt Musikmesse.

The firm will once again be exhibiting its full range in the Portalhaus building and will offer insights into the 'World of Yamaha', which, in addition to musical instruments, will touch on topics of Hi-Fi Audio – presenting its MusicCast system – as well as Yamaha Motors. Moreover, products by Yamaha brands Bösendorfer, Line 6 and Steinberg, will also be presented. In addition, the firm is extending its display in Hall 3.1 at Prolight + Sound and will be exhibiting new products for live sound presentations, installed sound and digital audio networking.

Several Yamaha artists will perform on stages in the Portalhaus, and there will be workshops and lectures by specialists in Yamaha products.

"Yamaha's displays in the Portalhaus have been a major highlight over the last couple of years and a magnet for all musical communities. Moreover, the brand has, for decades, stood for innovation in the field of professional audio engineering. We are delighted to be able to continue the long-standing cooperation between Messe Frankfurt and Yamaha in 2018," said Michael Biewer, group show director at Messe Frankfurt.



YAMAHA

"Musikmesse and Prolight + Sound give us an opportunity to connect to our customers and potential customers – from musical beginners to professional sound engineers and qualified specialist retailers. The Portalhaus has proved its worth as a showcase for our products and offers ideal conditions for staging our high-quality instruments. And we have also reached the audience important to us in Hall 3.1, so that we are extending our presence there in 2018," added Thomas Schöpe, president of Yamaha Music Europe.

Musikmesse will take place from April 11 to 14, 2018 in Frankfurt am Main: Prolight + Sound will be held from April 10 to 13, 2018.

Correction

On page 46 of our November 2017 issue, the following statement ran: "Ludwig, which is owned by Selmer Saxophone Company, which is owned by Steinway Piano Company, which is owned by a real estate company..."

Steinway Musical Instruments, Inc. was acquired by Paulson & Co. in 2013 – not, specifically, a "real estate company" and no "real estate company" is involved in any of the organizations mentioned in the article appearing in our last issue.

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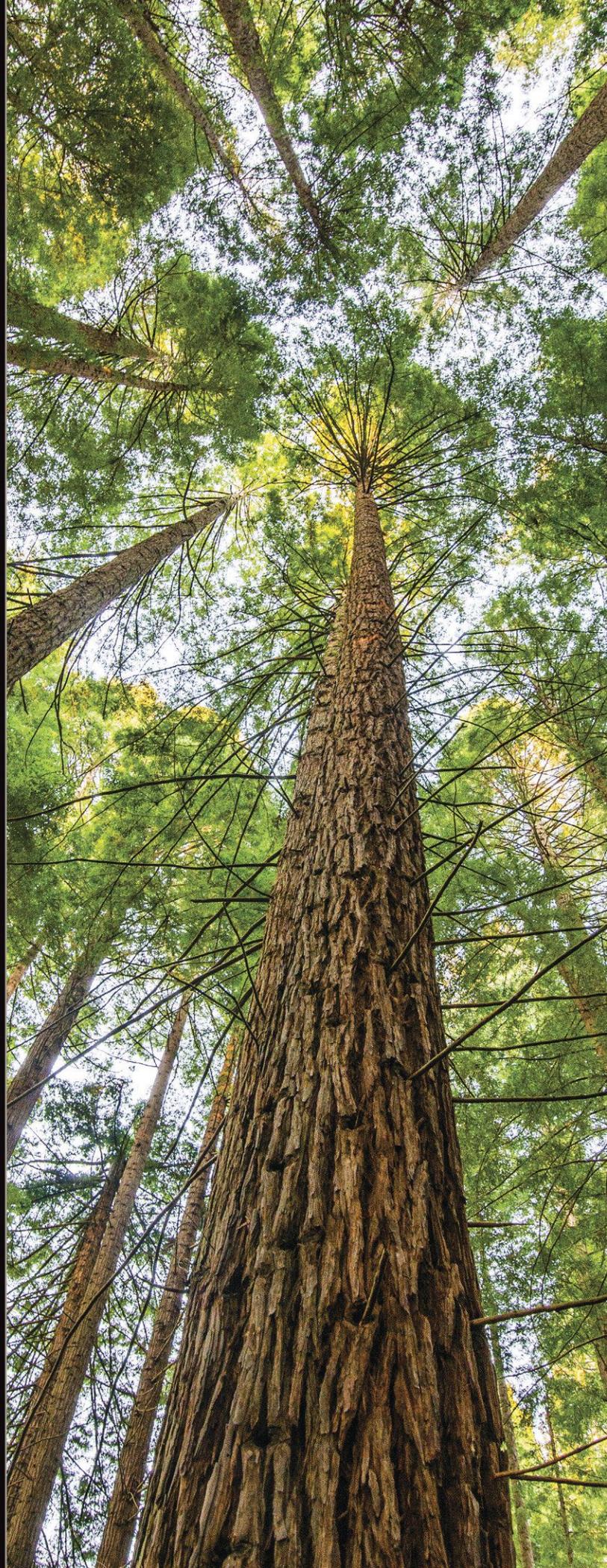
Like you, Yamaha employees around the world want to live in an environment with clean air and water. So we created a wide range of initiatives that embrace our corporate responsibility and address vital issues, like global warming and biodiversity. For instance, we recycle and reuse factory waste water, plant trees in growing forests, build instruments from eco-friendly materials, cut emissions of greenhouse gases from manufacturing and shipping, and employ ISO 14001 environmental management systems worldwide. We thought you'd like to know because we don't just work together, we all live together.



Planting new trees is one of many Yamaha eco initiatives.



@YamahaMusicUSA



Supplier Scene

Andrew W.K. Joins Audix Artist Endorser Roster

Audix announced today that songwriter, musician, and performer Andrew W.K. has joined Audix's Artist Endorser roster.

W.K. experimented with an Audix OM7 dynamic vocal microphone at a recent show.

"When my front of house sound engineer, Chez, suggested I try a different vocal mic live, I was open minded, but couldn't imagine it making much of a difference. I thought, at best, it would help cut down some of the bleed and stage noise issues, but I never imagined it would literally REINVENT my approach to vocals and live singing, period," he said. "Well, the Audix mic has done just that. I cannot adequately convey how powerful of an effect this has had on our show, and on me as a performer. It's changed everything for me and has helped usher in a new era for my band and my music. I'm thrilled to now be an endorser of Audix."

"At Audix, we are interested in developing a diverse and eclectic roster of talented musicians and sound engineers who truly appreciate the design, innovation, and quality that Audix microphones are renowned for," said Abbey Masciarotte, marketing manager at Audix. "Andrew W.K. is an experienced and exciting artist whose energetic stage presence, commitment to music education and involvement in the music industry community really exemplify what we look for in artist endorsers. We are so pleased Andrew W.K. is now part of the Audix family."

W.K. also used Audix vocal microphones when he performed at Corona Capital Festival in Mexico City in November.

State Mariachi Festival Uses Danley Sound Labs Equipment

The University Interscholastic League (UIL), which runs The State Mariachi Festival in Texas, hired the live sound experts at Hermes Music of Pharr, Texas, and used Danley Sound Labs loudspeakers, subwoofers, and amplification/DSP for the event.

"The State Mariachi Festival is still in the pilot phase of what UIL hopes to grow into a bigger event, with officially-sanctioned awards to the winning schools," explained Ed Zamorano, director of educational/governmental sales at Hermes Music. "We've worked with the UIL on other projects in the past, and they have always been more than happy with the quality of our service. In a nutshell, we make events look and sound great, with zero hassle for our clients. At the State Mariachi Festival, we provided sound for seventy mariachi groups in two days of competition at Southwest High School in San Antonio. All told, there were over 1,500 people in attendance over the duration."

Hermes Music used a simple stereo hang of Danley SM-80 full-range loudspeakers, Danley TH-118 subwoofers, and



a single four-channel, 20,000-Watt Danley DNA 20k4 Pro amplifier. Zamorano used the amp's onboard DSP and custom Danley presets to provide the final tweaks. A Midas M32 console completed the system.

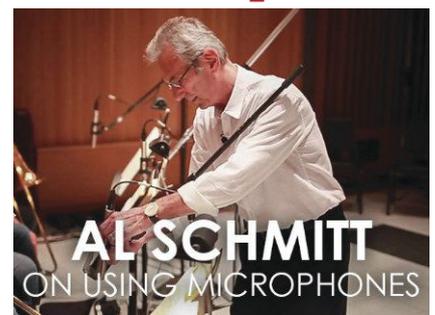
"Everyone, and perhaps most importantly, the organizer of the event for UIL, was thrilled with the way the festival sounded," Zamorano said. "I'll take some credit, but I also think the Danley gear served as the excellent starting point. Danley's point-source sound quality is honest and musical. Mariachi has naturally-great sounding instrumentation, so mixing on the Danleys was a lot like mixing on big studio monitors. I had a lot of fun, and the students appreciated the professionalism of the event!"

Hal Leonard and the METAlliance Present METAlliance Academy Series

Hal Leonard and the METAlliance have presented the first installment of the METAlliance Academy Series, a new video tutorial series featuring the collective knowledge of the famed METAlliance members.

In the 16 videos encompassing this first course, titled *Al Schmitt on Using Microphones*, Groove3 subscribers can now learn directly from an engineer who has won 20 Grammys and has worked on over 150 gold and platinum records.

Groove3 subscribers can join Schmitt in the studio as he walks them through his miking process, helps them select proper equipment, and guides them in capturing the best possible sound. Viewers will learn to consider variables such as song style, instrumentation, and the



recording space itself when selecting and placing a microphone. They will also watch Schmitt demonstrate his favorite techniques and setups for a number of instruments including drums, bass, piano, guitars (both acoustic and electric), organs, and horns as played across many genres of music.

Applications for Yamaha Young Performing Artists Now Open

Yamaha has announced that the application process for the 2018 Yamaha Young Performing Artists (YYPA) competition is now open.

Between now and January 8, 2018, American musicians between the ages of 18 and 22 are invited to apply to the prestigious program, which has been recognizing outstanding young musicians from the worlds of classical, jazz and contemporary music for three decades.

Winners of the 2018 competition will be invited to attend an all-expense-paid trip to the YYPA Celebration Weekend at the Music for All Summer Symposium.

During the weekend, they will have the opportunity to perform in front of thousands of students and music educators, participate in workshops designed to launch a professional music career, and receive national press coverage along with a recording and photos of the live performance. Winners will also enjoy services and communication with Yamaha Artist Relations.

"The YYPA Program is one music competition where the prizes can last a lifetime," said John Wittmann, director, artist relations and education, Yamaha Artist Services Indianapolis. "Since the program began in 1988, Yamaha has set young artists on track toward long, successful careers as both performers and educators."

"I absolutely loved my time as a 2008 YYPA winner," added Conrad Jones, a principal trumpet of the Indianapolis Symphony. "Soloing for such a large and enthusiastic audience really helped me develop a sense of what it takes to handle the 'hot seat.' I'm also very grateful for my relationship with Yamaha. I still rely on my Yamaha instruments on a weekly basis with the ISO!"

"The YYPA weekend was truly, and unexpectedly, the most inspiring three days I've ever had," said Patrick Bartley, a Grammy-nominated saxophonist, composer and bandleader who won YYPA's saxophone category in 2015. "Coming into it, you think it's just going to be another 'camp'-like experience with some good players. But then you immediately realize just how serious everyone at Yamaha is about wanting to see you grow and flourish. They're like family. By the end of the weekend, I felt mentally prepared to build my career. People like John Wittmann and Jeff Coffin really helped me harness and internalize tools for being clear, confident

and motivated while moving through this whole process!"

Applications will be considered for piccolo, flute, oboe, bassoon, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, French horn, trombone, euphonium, tuba, mallet or concert percussion, drums, violin, viola, cello, upright bass and piano.

"We want as many students as possi-

ble to get involved," Wittmann added. "Of course, it's always hard to choose just 10 winners from so many gifted applicants, but we've seen that even the act of preparing their applications helps young musicians focus on their talent and their careers. For all who enter, the YYPA competition can be a step toward a promising musical future."



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D'Addario Hosts Instrument Collection Event

On November 2, 2017, the D'Addario Foundation partnered with Todd Rundgren's Spirit of Harmony, Instruments in the Cloud, and Lyft to host an instrument collection drive at the D'Addario & Company headquarters in Farmingdale, Long Island.

The D'Addario Foundation collected a grand total of 97 instruments, and ambassadors from Lyft were on-hand to engage

participants; for every new rider who signs up and uses the Lyft app entering code "IM-ACHAMPION," Lyft will dedicate \$5 of the ride to the D'Addario Foundation.

"Many of the programs that apply for support from the D'Addario Foundation have instrument needs. Lack of instruments equates to more children on waiting lists hoping for spots in these vital programs. So



donating an instrument is a very direct way to make an instant impact," said Suzanne D'Addario Brouder, executive director of the D'Addario Foundation. "We hope this was the first instrument collection event of many."

D'Addario Foundation's partner, Hungry for Music, is currently working on preparing the collected instruments, and together they will choose where they will be distributed. The goal is to have all instruments distributed to programs and students in need by the holidays.

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Photo by Josh Kessler

Lockett Named Endorser of Latin Percussion

Multi-instrumentalist and percussionist Pete Lockett has signed on as an official endorser of Latin Percussion.

Lockett is best known for his diverse body of work, including recording and touring with Björk, Peter Gabriel, Robert Plant, Dido, Bill Bruford, Jeff Beck, and Noel Gallagher, among others.

"The diversity and range of Latin Percussion's hand-crafted instruments will open up huge new worlds of possibilities in my playing. It is very exciting to begin creating music with these amazing instruments," said Lockett.

Lockett's body of work includes rock, pop, jazz, traditional Carnatic and Hindustani music of North and South India, and traditional Japanese Taiko drumming.



NAfME Works with Grammy Music Education Coalition and 'Coco' to Bring More Music to Schools

The National Association for Music Education (NAfME) will take part in a new initiative to broaden the musical resources available to schools.

The Grammy Music Education Coalition (GMEC) has brought together more than 30 of “the nation’s most forward-thinking music education organizations,” including NAfME, to bring about change in school music programs. Through strategic collaborations, the groups who are a part of GMEC will bring resources for teachers to use in their classrooms to reach more students with quality music education programs.

Soon-to-be-released new findings from a nationwide report on music education in U.S. public schools show that while “traditional ensemble-based music education [band, choir, orchestra] continues to be successful in bringing music to many students, scholars and leaders in the profession have suggested that music education for students would be improved if expanded to embrace additional types of engagement.”

“At NAfME we seek daily to advance music education by promoting the understanding and making of music by all—



**National Association
for Music Education**

and ‘all’ is the operative word here,” said Michael J. Blakeslee, NAfME executive director and CEO. “The unfortunate fact we endeavor to overcome is that not all students—or have any music program for that matter—due to decisions by district leaders regarding course schedules or the lack of available funding. Moreover, due to lack of professional development geared specifically for music educators that meets their needs to

reach the students they have in their programs with the music that resonates with them, many students are missing out on music-making opportunities.”

The coalition has also teamed up with Disney Pixar’s soon-to-be-released film “Coco” in order to “bring best-in-class music from the film and learning content to teachers and youth. . . . ‘Coco’ tells the story of 12-year-old Miguel, a self-taught guitarist who dreams of becoming a great musician.” The coalition is working with Berklee to provide teaching materials to music educators, to which NAfME has contributed as well.

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by **Ronnie Dungan**

Better Together?

There's a strong rumor doing the rounds in the toy market that Hasbro has made an offer for Mattel.

It may not be true, and even if it is it may come to nothing. It's probably not the first time that one or the other of them has kicked the tires of their nearest competitor. But here's the thing. Some toy industry commentators think it would be an absolute disaster if the two biggest toy brands in the world became one, arguing that it is the competition between the two which helps drive the market forward.

So, it got me a-wondering – what if Fender and Gibson became one? Would that be a similarly bad thing for the MI market? Consolidation, particularly in mature markets that have already undergone a sizeable amount of it, is certainly not a particularly positive thing for retailers when it comes to range, prices, T&Cs.

But the peculiarity of the instrument market, which we all recognize, is that customers don't like a whole lot of innovation anyway, so it's simply not the case that Fender and Gibson are driving the market in that regard. Maybe in terms of brand legacy and market share but, neither, despite continued efforts to find subtle improvements, are continually breaking the mold with product development.

Now, if Roland and Yamaha were to get hitched, that's a different matter altogether. THAT might qualify as a disaster for the market.

The two biggest guitar brands in the world getting together? Some might call it a relief.

German Exec Boosts D'Addario Europe

D'Addario Europe has bolstered its European expansion ambitions with the appointment of Fender's former European sales director to head up its German sales and marketing.

Starting on 1st December 1 2017, Oliver Schuetz will join D'Addario Europe's management team with responsibility for the German sales and marketing office. He joins from Fender where he was responsible for running the sales team across 26 countries. He boasts nearly 15 years' experience of sales and marketing in MI with the Fender brands in the EMEA market.

"I am delighted to welcome Oliver to the team. The experience, skills and industry knowledge he brings will be a significant asset to us. The D'Addario Europe team is very excited to begin working with him," said D'Addario Europe MD, Simon Turnbull.

Schuetz will be responsible for managing the team based in the Frankfurt office,



Oliver Schuetz

which will provide sales, marketing and customer service support to D'Addario customers in Germany, Austria, The Netherlands and Northern Belgium.

On January 19, 2018, D'Addario Europe will begin directly serving German and Austrian customers with guitar and percussion products sold under the D'Addario, Planet Waves, Evans, Puresound, and Promark brand names. More announcements will be made in the near future regarding additional brands in other countries.

Audio-Technica Heads to Dubai



Audio-Technica is opening a new sales support office in Dubai, aimed at increasing the level of service to its distributors, integrators, consultants and corporate end users in pro-audio across the region.

The office is located at Dubai Airport Freezone Authority (DAFZA) to do business throughout the Middle East. Technical product manager Ahmad Abuzannad (who began his Audio-Technica career in the company's EMEA applications and support team) will head up the office. Central to his activity will be increased levels of product training and demos – of particular importance to customers evaluating solutions in the conferencing market – in the Middle East and in

conjunction with Audio-Technica distributors across the region. Abuzannad will also support customers with the wireless frequency planning required for large-scale projects. In addition, the new facility allows for extended sales support in conjunction with John Dodson, Audio-Technica's long-standing local representative based in Dubai.

Matthias Exner, Audio-Technica director of sales and marketing EMEA Professional Audio said: "We're delighted to be extending our presence in the Middle East with the new office. The territory is a key market for Audio-Technica and it's of vital importance that we're able to deliver excellent customer service locally. Initially the scope will focus on support for our professional product ranges – from live sound to installation solutions – and expand into support for Audio-Technica consumer product portfolio in time. I look forward to working with Ahmad and John on many exciting projects with customers across region in the coming months."

Los Cabos Skewers Turkish Deal

Los Cabos Drumsticks has entered into a new partnership with Turkish distributor, Senkop Music.



Senkop Music was founded in 1984 and distributes a number of different brands throughout Turkey including Elixir, Yamaha, Electro Harmonix, Mapex, Meinl, and others.

"Partnering with such a well-established company was definitely key to breaking through in the Turkish market," said Curtis Jones, marketing coordinator for Los Cabos Drumsticks. "After partnering with Senkop Music Ltd., we are much more confident our brand will resonant better outside of the Canadian market."

European Promotions at American DJ

American DJ is bolstering its UK and European operations with a reshuffle of its management team, promoting purchasing manager Sebastian Mober and European sales manager, Kris Dawber.

Having worked for ADJ in Europe for almost 15 years, Mober most recently served as the company's European purchasing manager, having previously gained valuable experience in the sales department, and will now take on the role of EU sales manager. The role will involve supporting and overseeing ADJ's regional sales team throughout Europe.

Meanwhile Kris Dawber, who has been with the company for 11 years and previously held the position of European sales manager, will re-focus his efforts on the UK and Ireland. Having played a pivotal role in establishing ADJ in the UK, he is tasked with ensuring that the company retains its market position following the UK's departure from the EU.

Commenting of the redeployment, ADJ president, Toby Velazquez, said: "The UK is



Sebastian Mober

Kris Dawber

an important market for ADJ and we want to make sure that it is well supported during these uncertain times surrounding the Brexit negotiations. A long-standing member of the ADJ team, with an intimate knowledge of the UK market and our business in the country, Kris Dawber is ideally placed for this challenge. I think it is appropriate that Kris refocuses on his domestic market to ensure ADJ's continued growth and success in the UK and Ireland. Meanwhile, Sebastian Mober is one of our longest standing team members in Europe and I know that he will excel in the role of EU sales manager, ensuring the company continues to thrive in mainland Europe."



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Double Boost for JHS Pro-Audio Team

JHS has boosted its pro-audio sales capacity with two new appointments.

Chris Walton joins as Pro Audio Sales Specialist for the UK and Ireland, while Jack Irish is pro-audio area sales manager for the Southern UK and Ireland.

Walton is familiar to JHS customers from his tenure in the company's Sales Office, and will handle all things Pro Audio at JHS. Liaising with and supporting JHS customers and consumers/commercial end-users, in all aspects of the promotion, understanding, system design, configuration, sale and operation of JHS Pro Audio brands.

He will also be available to arrange and conduct product demonstrations, both off-site at locations within the UK/Ireland and on-site in the company's Pro Audio Demonstration Theatre and extensive site for outdoor demos of larger systems.

Walton has a long history in Pro Audio which covers all aspects of touring, live

sound and studio engineering, system configuration, installation and said of the appointment: "I look forward to the challenge of the new role supporting and expanding on relations with new and existing customers."

JHS managing director Dennis Drumm added: "Chris' experience of JHS and its Pro Audio Brands and his extensive knowledge, direct personal experience and ongoing engagement in touring and live sound brings a terrific asset to bear to support our Pro Audio activities."

Jack Irish joins after a short break from the industry, having previously spent six years as an ASM with Lamba.

He said: "I am incredibly excited and proud to be working with JHS. Being part of the team here will be a pleasure, because



Chris Walton



Jack Irish

they have so many respected brands that encompass an array of innovative and high quality products that can cater for almost everyone. I am very passionate about the industry and am looking forward to meeting with both old and new customers"

Drumm added: "We're looking forward to Jack joining the company very much. With a well-deserved reputation for excellence and a well-grounded knowledge of the industry and customer base, Jack will really hit the ground running"

Clark Promoted at Allen and Heath

Allen & Heath has promoted erstwhile R&D director Rob Clark to the role of managing director.

He takes over from the long-serving Glenn Rogers, who will remain as a director of the Audiotonix group, focusing on identifying market opportunities and helping to specify new products.

Clark joined Allen & Heath as a digital R&D engineer in 1993 and has played a key role in the development of the company's digital mixers, becoming R&D Director in 2008.

"It's an honor to take on this new challenge. Glenn has been a trusted friend and mentor for more than 20 years, and I know we can rely on his wise counsel in the future," said Clark. "It's a fantastic time to move into this role; the product range has never been stronger, we're blessed with an amazingly talented team, and we have the collective expertise of the Audiotonix group to draw upon. Together we will continue to grow the business with the passion and innovation that Glenn has always personified."

Rogers added: "Rob has a wealth of experience and the best team in the business behind him, so I know that Allen & Heath will continue to go from strength to strength under his leadership. I am excited to take up new challenges for the Audiotonix group and look forward to exploring the new ideas and technologies that will shape the next generation of mixers."

Tanglewood Expands to Vietnam



Tanglewood Guitars signed terms at Music China with Vietnamese distributor Viet Thuong Music to grant exclusive partner distribution rights for Vietnam.

The new partnership represents the 61st country to have direct access to Tanglewood guitars through a professional distribution partnership based on territory.

Based in Ho Ch Minh City, Viet Thuong Music have both distribution and retail interests in the country. Viet Thuong Music's spokesman, Dai Nguyen Quang reported that his initial attraction to the brand was drawn after viewing the recent growth of Tanglewood's profile in Thailand and Indonesia, and the success those partners have been having marketing Britain's biggest selling acoustic brand into their respective territories.

Recognizing an opportunity in his own country, Dai made arrangements to visit Tanglewood's Shanghai show booth and cement an exclusive distribution deal.

"Tanglewood recognize that Viet Thuong have a dedicated sales force visiting retailers all over Vietnam and are the absolute best company to grow the brand carefully and professionally over the coming years, building a long term foundation and partnership for many years to come," said the firm.

First container deliveries will arrive into the country in January 2018 and interested local parties are invited to contact Viet Thuong Music for stockist information.

ON THE MOVE

ADJ Products, LLC

has appointed Tom Freret as regional sales manager representing all ADJ brands (ADJ Lighting, American Audio, Accu-Cable, and Accu-Case) for the Pacific Northwest and Southwest regions encompassing Washington, Oregon, Wyoming, Montana, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado.



Freret's duties will entail working directly with ADJ dealers in Arizona, New Mexico, Utah and Colorado. Plus, he will work with ADJ's rep firm, Audio Source, in the Pacific Northwest.

Freret has over 33 years of experience in the entertainment lighting and audio industry in retail, audio sales and club lighting design. Plus, Tom has been with the ADJ Group of Companies for 13 years serving as American Audio sales manager and corporate event manager.

John Castelino has been appointed vice president of Global Marketing at Chauvet.



In his new position, Castelino will be responsible for Chauvet's entire brand portfolio, which includes: Chauvet Professional, Chauvet DJ, Iluminarc, Trusst, and ChamSys.

Castelino joins Chauvet after a distinguished career at Stanley Black & Decker, where he served as vice president of product management and marketing. During his time at Stanley Black & Decker, Castelino led some of the company's largest brand portfolios such as DEWALT and Mac Tools.

Castelino will report directly to Chauvet CEO Albert Chauvet and will work out of the company's global headquarters in Sunrise, Florida.

Zoom North America announced the appointment of Jim Cavanagh as art director to its marketing team.

Cavanagh brings over twenty years' experience to the role of art director, including tenures at Fortunoff Back-

yard Store and Samson Technologies. As the art director for Zoom North America, Cavanagh will oversee creative development for corporate initiatives, as well as overall brand execution. Cavanagh is well-versed at building brands and strengthening market position through innovative and creative design strategies, skills he will utilize in his newly appointed role.



Prior to joining Zoom North America, Cavanagh was senior art director for Fortunoff Backyard Store, where he was responsible for design strategy and instrumental in developing brand positioning and experience. In this role, he served as the creative lead spearheading the evolution of the FBYS brand through all forms of media, in-store display and promotion.

Loudspeaker manufacturer **RCF** has named Justin Brock as the company's new retail accounts manager. Brock joined RCF after a 10-year stint handling outside sales for a major industry retailer, as well as owning a recording studio. Brock will work with all RCF national retail accounts along with major independent retailers.



Floyd Rose Marketing and AP International have announced that they have hired industry veteran Lou Vito to handle artist relations at the company.



This move shows a continuing commitment by company president Andy Papiccio to continuing building the brand by growing and strengthening ties to both professional artists and consumers alike.

Previously, Vito has represented other companies such as Gibson Guitars, PRS Guitars, QSC Audio, Eastwood Guitars, and many others.

Reverb.com has hired former Braintree engineering manager Scott Parker as chief technology officer and added

longtime Grubhub chief financial officer Adam DeWitt to its board of directors.

Parker joins Reverb after more than four years at Chicago-based payments company Braintree. As he grew his team at Braintree from 6 to more than 60, Parker scaled back-office engineering and data efforts while also defining standards for interviewing, management, and onboarding of engineers. Prior to Braintree, Parker managed sales and marketing engineering at Groupon and consulted for a variety of Chicago companies.

As Parker joins the tech team, Grubhub's Adam DeWitt joins Reverb's board of directors. DeWitt, who has served as CFO of the nation's leading online and mobile food-ordering marketplace for six years, helped Grubhub's annual revenues grow from \$22 million to an expected \$675 million in 2017 and led the company through one of the most successful initial public offerings of 2014.

Reverb.com has also announced that Andy Martin has joined the team. As video producer, Martin will lead and support the continued production of the Pro Guitar Shop (PGS) and Tone Report videos, articles, and other content.

Trade Regrets

On November 13th, we received the following from NAMM's Dan Del Fiorentino:



Heartbreaking news. John Steirberg passed away on Saturday at the age of 66.

He was active in the music industry for decades and provided services as a consultant that he developed from his experience and relationships. Before establishing his consulting firm in 1993, John was a rep for an audio equipment company as well as a marketing manager. His goal to encourage passionate music makers to improve their business skills resulted in the book Succeeding In Music: Business Chops for Performers and Songwriters, published by Hal Leonard. Sadly for all of us, John passed away in the fall of 2017 at the age of 66. His legacy continues.

34th
Annual50 Dealer/50 State
Review & ForecastA Nationwide Survey of MI Retailers Suggests Things
Are Looking Up, While Internet Sales Remain a Threat

By Victoria Wasylak

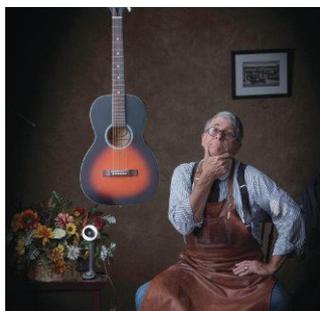
**ALABAMA****Homewood Music**
Homewood
Bob Tedrow, Owner

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? Considering a flood of sewage that completely took us out of the retail business for about six months in 2016 and a local real estate entrepreneur purchased our building and raised the rent so high we felt encouraged to relocate, pretty good! We managed the strife without borrowing money and are back up to speed.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? Gentrification and real estate prices! Here in Alabama the first to engage in business in sketchy neighborhoods are banjo salesmen. When the surroundings improve, high end donut shops replace us!

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? Staying in business for over 30 years and driving a 1928 Ford around town for the past 25 years has definitely helped our local presence. I have surrendered completely to social marketing and try to provide interesting content and good quality photography. We have a local annual music festival, monthly ukulele sessions and I have been on the board of our community Arts Council for several years.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? We are constantly busy with restorations, set ups and repairs here in Birmingham. Other than our own two hands, my favorite products are from Recording King and Loar, upon which we bestow adjustments and set ups that are WELL above average.

**ALASKA****Petr's Violin Shop & Anchorage**
Guitar Central
Anchorage
Petr Bucinsky, Owner

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? It's a little bit slower, but that's because Alaska has the highest unemployment rate of any state in the union right now. We're at 7% and we've lost over 1700 jobs since the same time last year, and that's because of oil prices.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? For us personally in Alaska, oil prices.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event

for your store in 2017? TV commercials work very, very well. If I run a couple hundred commercials a month, it actually doubles my business. We're also doing financing programs.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? Ukuleles are always very popular, and Taylor Guitars.

**ARIZONA****Milano Music Center**
Mesa
Jim Minch, Manager

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? Our sales have been about even in combo and band and orchestra. We have had a nice little uptick in our B+O rental dept.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? The internet continues to be a concern.... we can certainly compete with online stores but the sales tax is always an issue. We stopped stocking high end synths, et cetera because we were being showroomed so often.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? We have an open mic night a block from our store at a local microbrewery. The open mic nights are every Tuesday alternating acoustic nights with the band nights. These open mics are open to the public and we have discovered that giving people a place to play motivates them to upgrade their gear.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? We have good traction with Quilter amps and our B+O department is selling a lot of the Backun clarinets.

**ARKANSAS****Shuffield Music Company**
Arkadelphia
Paul Shuffield, Jr., Owner

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? 2017 has been a great year for us! We are currently 115% over the same period last year based on in-store sales alone. We have also experienced double-digit growth in our online and installation sales!

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? We have found that "getting the word out" with regard to our products and services is the most difficult issue we face on a daily basis. Traditional methods of marketing are not as successful as in years past. While we do utilize technology based outreach methods, we are always looking for new ways to acquire customers while continuing to serve the needs of our existing customer base.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional



event for your store in 2017? Being named a "Top 100 Dealer" by NAMM was extremely fortuitous for us this year. Our local and regional media outlets picked up the story and provided us with some really good coverage. That combined with the online marketing push we launched related to the "Top 100" honor helped us reach many new customers resulting in an expanded service area.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? Although it's not just one product, instructional books in general have been a hot item for us this year. We've notice growth in this category over the past couple of years, but this year the growth has been tremendous.



CALIFORNIA
Gottschalk Music Center
Merced
John Gottschalk, Owner
How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your

store? Thankfully, this year has continued the positive trend that started after the great recession hit hard in 2009. Most categories in the store are holding steady or showing an increase.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? Competition really seems to come from many different places: other independent local stores, large national stores, internet retailers, other areas of interest that compete for customer's discretionary income, i.e., video games, cell phones, tablets, etc. They are all areas of concern. While I think we've been able to compete successfully against all these competitors, I suspect the biggest threat comes from competition outside the music industry. Companies like Apple, Samsung, Verizon, AT&T Nintendo, Sony have the ability to advertise and pull in customers like no music company could ever hope.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? The most effective marketing strategy for this year started in 2016. It's an old strategy, but one that is proving effective. I made the investment in hiring a dedicated rep for my Clovis store. I hired an ed rep several years ago, but it just didn't work out as well as I had hoped. However, this time it's been a different story. There have been enough successes with that first ed rep that I've created another ed rep position for my Merced store. The result is that we're seeing more school business coming into the stores.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? I hadn't carried a house brand before and decided to work with Maple Leaf Strings and create orchestral string instrument brand, Giovanni Clemente. I've been very happy with the quality of the instruments, the turn and the margin.



COLORADO
Drum City Guitarland
Wheat Ridge
Jason Kae, Co-Owner
How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store?

It's better than last year. It's still a struggle but its definitely better.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? Amazon and online shopping.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? Instagram.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? Schecter Guitars.



CONNECTICUT
Connecticut Music
Stamford
Mike Rabuazzo, Co-Owner
How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your

store? In terms of sales, we were actually flat with last year.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? To me, it's really a threefold issue. The biggest challenge to me is getting the younger kids to want to play again. It's definitely the biggest issue, and then of course the online sales is still a huge concern, and the economy as well.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? I've never bought into that marketing 101 thing, I'm more into everyday low pricing and quality service.



I think you've got to be on your game 24/7.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? It's been an acoustic guitar year for us - there's been no really one hot brand or item.



DELAWARE

Accent Music

Wilmington

Steve Harkey, President

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store?

We have seen an increase in our repair department. Schools have cut their budgets and we have been repairing their old inventory as opposed to them buying new instruments. All school related sales from retail customers are up.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? Our customers buying online. The convenience, free shipping, online reviews and unlimited selection is hard to compete with at a brick and mortar level. We have a few online revenue streams and it is a challenge to keep up with the website maintenance.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? We have started up a new brand of our own which we have been selling online and so far the results are better than forecast.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? Herche band instruments.



FLORIDA

Allegro Music Center

Miami

Kerop Berberian, Manager

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? We've gone up a little bit. We've noticed there are a lot more schools that have integrating music programs into their schools. Overall, we're doing better.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? Not being online just yet.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017?

Probably social media.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? Emmanuel Berberian violins and string instruments.



GEORGIA

Ponce De Leon Music

Cumming

Shawn Rochester, Owner

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store?

I'm a new owner of the business - I took the business over in June, and I was an employee here in 2016, so it's been very different. It's been a big shift from student level and intermediate instruments to higher-end end professional level instruments.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? Online sales.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017?

We've been hosting live music concerts, getting musicians to come perform here, which essentially gets them to come buy here.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? Seagull acoustic guitars.

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- GREAT service to retailers
- Our system makes musical exploration easy and fun for all
- Educational resources supporting all levels and styles

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HAWAII

Easy Music Center

Honolulu

Peter Dods, President



How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? 2017 is way up. It's the strongest growth year we've had in a long time. **What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business?** Complacency.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? The most successful part of our marketing and advertising efforts this year was realizing they were not working to the tune of what they were costing us. This is the first year we dropped all advertising straight across the

board. It is also our best year to date in performance so our takeaway is that either the economy is stronger, or we were wasting a ton of resources on advertising.

“Product of the year” for your business in 2017? The product we couldn’t keep in stock were: QSC K.2 series, Akai MPClive, Akai MPKmini, and the Taylor GS Mini Koa.



IDAHO

Welch Music Center

Boise

Michael Welch, Owner

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store?

It’s been a pretty big year for us as far as growth. We’ve seen band and orchestra rentals up, grand pianos have been up for us.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? It really comes back to the economy. Musical instruments are one of those things where it’s not a necessity, so if the economy is good, people are more relaxed and will buy those kinds of things.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? A combination of different workshops we do - we have workshops for acoustic guitars, workshops for piano teachers, workshops for band and orchestra teachers. We see a lot of traffic from that.

“Product of the year” for your business in 2017? The Yamaha CSP.



ILLINOIS

The Music Shoppe

Normal

Randy Wood, President

How has 2017 compared to

2016 for your store?

Sales are up year-to-date over 2016. The increase is mainly in our band-orchestra rental income.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? The greatest threat, which is also a challenge, is keeping up with technology and making sure we continue to change as our customer’s expectations change regarding their shopping experience. The internet is our best friend and worst enemy at the same time.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? Our most successful promotional events are our step-up band and string instrument sales.

“Product of the year” for your business in 2017? Ukuleles! We are now selling more ukuleles to schools for classes than we are guitars.



INDIANA

Arthur’s Music Store

Indianapolis

Linda Osborne, Owner

How has 2017 compared

to 2016 for your store? We saw a very strong start to 2017, matching a solid increase in ‘16. We expect to end the year with continued growth.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? Supplier pressure.

The ever increasing volume of used/vintage business dictates that less of your budget goes to new product. This in turn makes it more difficult to satisfy specific product line requirements and re-upping every year.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? Our 65th Anniversary day in June. We solidify our brand with each event geared toward thanking the customer, making them the center of attention. The usual free food, music, games, contests, giveaways, sales presence and sales.

“Product of the year” for your business in 2017? Vintage gear is still our sweet spot. However, our product of the year would have to be the VHT Redline 20R amplifier.



IOWA

West Music

Cedar Falls

Robin Walenta,

President and CEO

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? 2017 has

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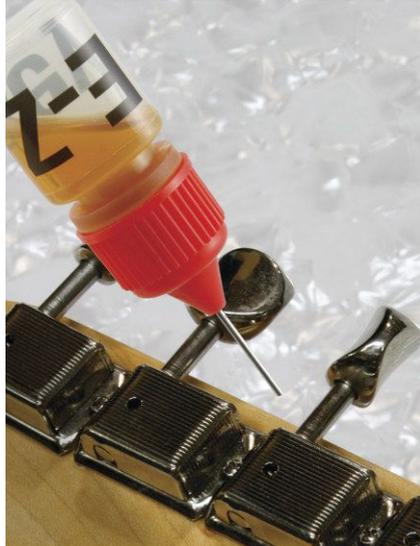
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remained relatively flat compared to 2016. Areas of growth continue in the school music business and ukulele categories. Acoustic pianos remain a challenged area.



What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? Our greatest threat is responding to customers' personalized needs for individual valued-added services, as well as differentiating West Music to provide an experience beyond the price of the product.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? Our most successful strategies have been those that were personalized and relevant to the customer with call to action initiatives directed at targeted customer groups.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? The lefreQue sound bridge has been a great addition to our product mix, encouraging add-on sales and building deeper relationships with our band instrument customers.



KANSAS
Damm Music Center Inc.
 Wichita
 Kevin Damm, President

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? We moved and doubled the size of our store in 2017, so a lot has changed for us. The move was completed in June and we're just getting settled in. We've seen an increase in traffic and sales since the move.



Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? Expanding the store. Most of our effort in the first half of the year was focused on relocating the store. Finding the right space, designing it, then building and moving.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? Our Product of the year is the Amahi UK210 Soprano Ukulele.



KENTUCKY
Allen Music
 Paducah
 Brandon Allen, Owner

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? The morale has been good. We've been really busy.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? The greatest threat, I guess, is if I stopped trying. I firmly believe that is God is for us, who can be against us?

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? We're getting ready to do a Taylor roadshow, that's usually a big deal.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? Ukuleles and acoustic guitars.



LOUISIANA
Zeagler Music
 Baton Rouge
 Fred Zeagler, Owner

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? 2017 has been an excellent year for us. Many of our customers (and employees) sustained substantial damage in the floods of August 2016 and it was many months before we saw the replacement of instruments.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? I believe the greatest threat to all the music industry is the lowering of MAP by many manufacturers to the point that their products are just no longer profitable.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? By far our most successful promotion was selling replacement cases to all flood victims for 1/2 of MAP price. Both Gator Cases and Yamaha were tremendously helpful and hundreds of customers were very appreciative. We, of course, did not make any money but certainly gained a lot of good will.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? It was also a very good year for us in PA equipment and installs in both churches and schools.



MAINE
Dube's Music
 Freeport
 Tom Dube, Owner

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? Sales have stayed level.

What do you consider to be the

greatest threat to your business? Internet. Too many sellers... From Facebook to Craigslist.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? Created a Summer camp program to get kids together and play music.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? Cort Acoustic Guitars



MARYLAND

Bill's Music
Catonsville

Brian Higgins, General Manager

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? So far this year has been more profitable for us than 2016.



What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? Amazon, Sweetwater, and the fact that there is no sales tax on purchases online as opposed to the 6% that we have here in Maryland.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? We host a number of music clinics with well-known, talented artists and clinicians. Just a few weeks ago we welcomed PRS endorser Mark Holcomb and he drew over 100 people. We have also been very aggressive working with the school band rental customers.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? We host a number of music clinics with well-known, talented artists and clinicians. Just a few weeks ago we welcomed PRS endorser Mark Holcomb and he drew over 100 people. We have also been very aggressive working with the school band rental customers.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? This year we started to carry a lot more "boutique" effect pedals than ever before, Earthquaker and Catalinbread to name just a few. Breedlove acoustics has been a great line for us this year and we did a nice Breedlove clinic just a few months ago to introduce these quality instruments to our customer base.



MASSACHUSETTS

Symphony Music
North Dartmouth

Bob Williamson, Owner

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? It is up considerably.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? Still the Internet, I would say.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? Showing up and working hard every

day - I don't run promotions.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? We're still riding the ukulele craze.



MICHIGAN

Huber Breese
Music Shop

Fraser

Paul Huber, Owner

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? I'm hoping for a 10 percent increase for 2017.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? The biggest threat to our business is our inability to display our Gibson guitars on the internet. Gibson is the only company that we deal with that limits our use of the internet. Our local customers are unable to see our inventory and often purchase instruments from out of state dealers when I've got what they want sitting here.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? Our best marketing strategy has to be our growth with sales on reverb. We received a platinum award for 1,000,000 in sales from reverb!

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? The Gibson autographed Slash Les Paul. I could have sold it ten times but only got one of fifty.



MINNESOTA

LaVonne Music
Savage

Pete Wagener,

Owner

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? 2017 was a far better year for us than 2016.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? The tax free loopholes that we give to internet sellers. As a business, we pay sales tax on all of the items that we sell. At the end of the year we end up giving away up an additional 7% in an industry where profit margins are already slim.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? We don't do big promotions because we try to give people the best deal we can every day. That being said, working hard at increasing our presence on social media has been a help.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? Quilter Amplifiers hands down. It's also worth mentioning CAD Audio.

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MISSISSIPPI
Lakeland Music
Flowood
Keith Ginn, Owner

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? As of September 1st 2016, we came under new ownership. These changes implemented by the new owner have led to an increase in traffic and a rejuvenated feel in the store itself.



What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? Online retailers would be the most monetary impact for small good sales aside from a declining interest in musical instruments as a whole.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? Due to other companies shying away from events for their customers, we are embracing them fully this year and for many years to come. We have had several fun days this year for children to come and check out instruments.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? Hands down it's been Orange Amplifiers. We are also Mississippi's Only Independent Taylor Guitar Dealer and Drums Workshop Dealer in the state, which we are extremely proud of!



MISSOURI
Big Dude's Music City
Kansas City
Mark Dodd, Owner

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? Up to October, they're pretty much the same.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? Externally, I'd have to tip my hat to Amazon – they've

done a fantastic job, but it's still not replacing knowledge or information.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? In the store, we had a clinic with Victor Wooten, we did have more people show up for that than anything [else this year]. We've been doing clinics all year long, but with regards to turnout, that was the most significant.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? Powered speakers in general, the QSC Speaker line. With regards to numbers of units sold overall, accessories and mainly cables.



MONTANA
Music Villa
Bozeman
Paul Decker, Owner

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? I would say we're tracking to be slightly up.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? The way people shop is different now.

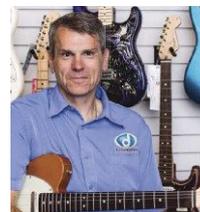
Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? We just did our "Rocktober" sale - we have kegs of beer and coffee and make it a fun day.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? Acoustic guitars.



NEBRASKA
Dietze Music
Omaha
Tim Pratt, President

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? We have seen about the same traffic pattern in 2017 as we did in 2016. The product types and buying patterns changed to some degree but relatively the same.



What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? I think a huge threat to any brick and mortar store is complacency. I am always trying to come up with ideas to keep things fresh.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? Hopefully we aren't done yet! We did do a commercial centering around the joy of getting your first band instrument. We tried to capture the excitement of that first time you own the case. I think that worked quite well and hopefully let people see the joy in the eyes of a first time band instrument student.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? Once again, the product type would have to be the ukulele.



NEVADA
Carpenter's Music World
Reno
Debra Forman, Office Manager

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? It has been comparable – they've both

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been about the same.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? Probably the big online giants that buy in bulk and then sell at a cheaper price.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? We have been linking up with Yamaha, doing some Yamaha and Costco events, and those seem to be a good generation of leads.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? Pianos and keyboards.



NEW HAMPSHIRE

Smash Music

Derry

Scott Graves, Owner

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? I would best characterize it as very much in a state of flux. From a financial standpoint - expect the unexpected.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? It's the lack of liquidity for the middle class. In a lot of microregions, people simply do not have the means for their children to engage in band and orchestra.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? For us it was networking directly with music educators and also taking advantage of some of our early adopters. As we have garnered new clients who are happy with the new business models, whether it be through social media or creating ensembles with out education department, it's in taking advantage of those relationships and building on them.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? I wouldn't say it's a product, I would say repair services.



NEW JERSEY

The Music Den

Randolph

Jason Pitt, General Manager and Buyer

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your

store? Sales are up, both in-store and online, and foot traffic is up.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? Probably Amazon and things of the like - in general, non-music stores and companies selling musical instruments.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? Our use of adwords.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? I would have to say used instruments in general.



NEW MEXICO

Hubbard's Music-N-More

Las Cruces

Dru Hubbard, Owner

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your

store? Great - more people are coming in and more people are spending money.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? Internet sales.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? Social media.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? Ukuleles in general, and QSC K Series Speakers.



NEW YORK

Main Drag Music

Brooklyn

Karl Myers, Partner

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? The second half of 2016 and all of 2017 have been the most volatile period we've seen in our 20 years in business. We've had to rearrange our approach on both the macro and micro levels but we're also seeing new opportunities arise in places we hadn't anticipated.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? As we're a business that grew out of a community of musicians, our greatest threat has always been the dissolution of that community. In New York City the main agent of that change is real-estate development but we're heartened that the city has recognized the worth of music production and has begun taking steps to support it.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? Instagram continues to be our most effective marketing tool.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? For the second year in a row the Korg Minilogue was our highest selling non-accessory item. The Critter & Guittari Organelle gets an honorable mention.



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NORTH CAROLINA
Fuller's Music
 New Bern
 David Rhodes,
 President



How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? We have seen a considerable increase in sales.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? There is always the threat and possibility of becoming complacent. Consumers can sense a retailer's passion or lack thereof.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? We promote a one day only, step up and professional band instrument sale. The event also includes inventory and representatives from our largest vendors. We call it "Fuller's Fest."

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? Yamaha YA-S200ADII Alto Saxophone.



NORTH DAKOTA
Kenny's Music
 Grand Forks
 Kenneth Holweger, Owner

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? We are holding about even with last year at this time.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? I would say the greatest threat to our business would be the internet. Another threat to our sales is our suppliers sell-

ing direct to our customers. Another threat is our manufacturers building special edition guitars, amps and keyboards that are exclusive to the big box stores with their name on them.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? I do a student recital 2 times a year and a battle of the bands 1 time a year. I have a prize drawing for customers if they sign up for our website. I do the Battle of Bands in conjunction with our county fair and they promote it for me.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? Bass Amps- Fender Rumble Series, Guitars- Fender Acoustics and FSR series guitar and amps.



OHIO
Prospect Music
 Cleveland
 Mike Rubin, Owner

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? It's actually been kind of flat- about the same.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? Amazon.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? I'd have to say local advertising and word of mouth.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? John Packer Band Instruments



OKLAHOMA
Rawson Music and Guitar Store
 Oklahoma City
 James Rawson,
 Owner

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? We're about even up to this point. The fourth quarter kind of tanked last year all through the fourth quarter, so we had a disappointing fourth quarter last year. We're looking for that to change this year.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? Internet sales. The fact that the state of Oklahoma is still not forcing all of the internet companies to collect sales tax puts us at a disadvantage.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? We do a lot of Google advertising. We also do Google adwords.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? Martin Guitars.



OREGON
Uptown Music
 Keizer
 Paul Elliott, Owner

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? Year to date, we are 11% up over 2016.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? Becoming complacent. We carry a lot of the same products as other music retailers, so we are always looking for ways to better ourselves in the way we

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Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? The Taylor Guitars Road Show and Food for Strings sponsored by D'Addario are always strong events for our store.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? The BOSS Acoustic Singer Live acoustic amp.



PENNSYLVANIA

Nazareth Music Center

**Nazareth
Scott Brodt, CEO**

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? Financially about a 14% increase in total sales. School rentals (B&O) are very strong, and repairs well above last year's numbers in quantity.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? We have lost accessories sales to the internet, but the rapidly escalating cost of quality band and orchestra instruments are difficult to manage. Trying to compete in an arena of inexpensive, low quality band instruments with durable, well made, repairable instruments is a serious strain.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? For the past two years we have more and more invitations to take over the rental/repair aspect of local school programs because of a very strong, competent repair shop. Having a repair shop on site that does a great job has done more for the business than TV and radio combined.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? Wood Stone sax mouthpieces and their full line of ligatures made by Ishimori, Japan.



RHODE ISLAND

**Wakefield Music
Wakefield**

Dennis Costa, Owner

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? We are down about 6% But will keep a positive attitude for the rest of the year.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? Internet sales and decreasing interest in playing musical instruments.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? Facebook and our online inventory site.

"Product of the year" for your busi-

ness in 2017? Taylor Academy and Mini Series.



SOUTH CAROLINA

Ye Olde Music Shop

**Hanahan
Michael Davis,
Owner**

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? 2016 was the biggest year that I ever had, and I thought it would be impossible to beat it, but we're beating it.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? I do not see a threat. The big box stores are certainly not a threat – they're filled with salespeople who have no business in the music business. I think if you see a threat, you're not doing the right thing.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017?

There's nothing like word of mouth.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? Martin Guitars.



SOUTH DAKOTA

Haggerty's Music

**Rapid City
Marcus Lavake,
Co-Owner**

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? We're probably overall up 20

percent.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? Complacency.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? In terms of dollars, I did a "not black Friday" Black Friday sale where we ran a radio ad with something like "we don't think you should have to wake up early to get a killer deal on Black Friday." That was easily two to three times more [popular] than any other promotional event.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? Taylor Academy Series Guitars.



TENNESSEE

Fanny's House of Music

**Nashville
Pamela Cole
Co-Owner**

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? 2017 has been another successful year here at Fanny's House of Music! Nashville has new people moving here every day, and East Nashville, where we are located, continues to be a hot spot for musicians and visitors.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? Theft! We are a small store and stolen merchandise can affect our bottom line

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momentously. We are having to up our security measures on every level.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? For the past three years we have proudly sponsored an event called "She's A Rebel." It's a concert of all women that celebrates the "girl groups" music of the 50's and 60's. It's a wonderful way for the women musicians from all genres to network with each other in Nashville.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? Our product of the year has to be our new Exclusive Fanny guitar strap by local strap company Original Fuzz!



TEXAS
Murphy's Music Center
Irving
Mike Murphy,
Co-Owner

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store?

It's been up.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? Amazon.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? Facebook blasts.

"Product of the year" for 2017? Electric guitars are trending up.



UTAH
Boothe Brothers Music
Spanish Fork
Dan Boothe, Owner
and General Manger

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? The easy answer to that question is that we are up. Sales have been steady even at times that have historically been slow seasons for us. I

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? Shrinking profit margins. It is the one thing that feels like is out of our hands at this point. I can sell X product for X amount because that is what the company/internet says it is worth. Even though historically, I have been able to sell the same product at a higher profit margin. Profit margin keeps me from opening up with several manufacturers. If a you are only offering a 30% margin, I am not impressed or tempted to even try to sell your stuff. The only other seri-

ous threat is just keeping the right stock in. I feel like this year has been better for most of the bread and butter items but it has been harder to order the step up instrument we really want because of CITES.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? Marketing through social media combined with giveaways where all a customer has to do to win is come in and actually try out three or more versions of the instrument they are interested in, have been well attended and profitable.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? The Krutz 250 series violin.



VERMONT
Ellis Music
Bethel
David Ellis,
President

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? We are primarily a school music store specializing in the rental, sales and servicing of band and orchestral instruments. All aspects of the business are up about 5% over 2016.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? We sell quality instruments and follow up with excellent support and service for which we don't charge. One threat is trying to compete with retailers (online or affiliates) that sell or rent cheap, inferior instruments and provide no follow up after the sale.

Another threat is the erosion of school music programs and decreasing school population in the northeast. This has inspired us to look for new and different markets.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? Our most successful marketing strategy has been to provide consistent, long term service to the school music programs with quality instruments, music, accessories, and repairs. We have been doing this for more than sixty years.

"Product of the year" for your business in 2017? The YBS-52 Yamaha baritone saxophone.



VIRGINIA
Dale City Music
Dale City
Stacy Armistead,
Owner

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? We're quite up - I've used social media a great deal, getting the word out there that we're still there.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? Nothing. I don't fear anything - I don't know if that sounds cocky! I am a strict, family-run store, and I don't have a threat from the big stores or anything of that aspect. My father and my family have been in the music industry since 1978. I have people that come in my store that have known him for 40 years. I am really not feeling any threat from a Guitar Center because customers come in and see the family aspect of my business.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? Social media, that's been a huge thing for us.

"Product of the year" for 2017? Fender is a big thing is my store. I am a premium showcase dealer and also a custom shop dealer.



WASHINGTON
Music World
Vancouver
Matt Gohlke,
Manager

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? Huge increase in acoustic guitar sales, moderate in band instrument sales, our school and repair services have been on an upward trend this year as well. Percussion/Drum sales are great too, along with our lesson studios consistently being full.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? Unregulated online sales. We have had a part in some 3rd-party marketplaces that have been decent for store exposure, but the largest obstacle we see commonly is the NO TAX effect from big online retailers. We deal with this often enough with Oregon being 5 minutes from our shop (NO SALES TAX in OREGON) but our local Washington customers are sometimes swayed by the lure of saving tax and it's often an obstacle in negotiating sales. With better regulations and tax laws we will likely see local customers stay with the local store.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? Facebook and Youtube reach the largest audience for us as both product demos and sponsored posts/events get great impressions. For events, our 1st Annual Breedlove Custom Acoustic Guitar Build Trip was a huge hit!

“Product of the year” for your business in 2017? Acoustic Guitars, specifically Breedlove guitars and the Concerto models have been popular.



WEST VIRGINIA
Route 60 Music Co.
 Barboursville
 Paul Callicot,
 Co-Owner

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? About even.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? There’s no doubt that internet sales are eventually destroying retail. If you don’t find a niche, I truly believe that online sales will be the demise of every brick and mortar retailer.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? What works best for us are community events. We tend to do a lot of songwriter nights and we have some charity events we put on for local food banks, city missions, animal rescue, so what works best for us seems to be public, community-supporting events.

“Product of the year” for your business in 2017? Ukuleles.



WISCONSIN
Mike’s Music & Sound
 Fond du Lac
 Andrew Johnson,
 Purchasing
 Manager

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? We were fortunate enough to have healthy years in both 2016 and so far in 2017. We saw 8% growth in 2016 and are on track to see about the same 8% growth this year.

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? Amazon is a very convenient way to shop. Knowing you can return almost anything, taking a trip the local indie store to get your hands and ears on a bunch of different guitars or pedals may lose its appeal.

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? A few years ago, we made a conscious decision to get out into the com-

munity, concerts, farmer’s markets, various annual city celebrations. The visibility and the ability to interact with people has proven more effective than other traditional advertising routes.

“Product of the year” for your business in 2017? Effects pedals!



WYOMING
Rockstar Music Store
 Casper
 Ryan Meyer, Owner

How has 2017 compared to 2016 for your store? 2017 has been a much busier year, Total sales are up over 35%!

What do you consider to be the greatest threat to your business? A down economy is the biggest threat to us!

Most successful marketing strategy or promotional event for your store in 2017? Offering financing options has been one of the best promotional things we’ve ever done.

“Product of the year” for your business in 2017? Elixir nanoweb Acoustic Strings!

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We are one of the leading suppliers of band and orchestra instruments to schools and music dealers throughout the United States. We offer a full line of brass, woodwind, orchestra and percussion instruments designed and crafted to educational standards.

For a list of dealers in your area, or a catalog contact: schools@huntermusical.com by email or call. We respond to all school bids through local dealers. Samples are available for evaluation.

Hunter Music Instruments
 3300 Northern Boulevard, Long Island City, NY 11101
 (718) 706-0828 Fax: (718) 706-0128
www.huntermusical.com

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English ← See Our Resource Guides! → Spanish

Patent. See Website.
WWW.ROVNERPRODUCTS.COM

36th Annual America's Top Music Chains

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

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

Guitar Center
 PO, P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, IN, PM
 (Including Music & Arts)
 Total Units 441
 Opened '17 19
 Closed '17 1
 Volume (est. '17) N/A, but often estimated to be in excess \$2 billion.
 5795 Lindero Canyon Rd., Westlake Village, Calif. 91362
 (818) 735-8800
 media@guitarcenter.com
 www.guitarcenter.com
 CEO: Ron Japinga

Sam Ash Music Corp.
 DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, PM
 Total Units 46
 Opened '17 1
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 278 Duffy Drive, Hicksville, N.Y. 11802
 (516) 932-6400
 sammy@samash.com
 www.samash.com
 CEO: Richard Ash

Music Go Round
 DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT
 Total Units 34
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) \$32 MM
 605 Hwy 169N #400, Minneapolis, Minn.
 (763) 520-8500
 tkletti@musicgoround.com
 www.musicgoround.com
 Director: Tim Kletti

Fletcher Music Centers PO
 Total Units 17
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 1
 Volume (est. '17) \$11 MM
 3966 Airway Circle, Clearwater, Fla. 33762
 (727) 571-1088
 jriley@fletchermusic.com
 www.fletchermusic.com
 CEO: John Riley

Schmitt Music Co.
 P, DP, SR, EK, PC, BO, FA, PM
 Total Units 14
 Opened '17 1
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 Butler Square, 2400 Freeway Blvd.,
 Brooklyn Center, Minn. 55430
 (763) 566-4560
 tom.schmitt@schmittmusic.com
 www.schmittmusic.com
 CEO: Tom Schmitt

Steinway Hall P
 Total Units 14
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 109 W. 57th St., New York, N.Y. 10019
 (212) 246-1100
 showrooms@steinway.com
 www.steinwayshowrooms.com
 CEO: Michael T. Sweeney

J.W. Pepper & Son PM
 Total Units 12
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 2480 Industrial Blvd., Paoli, Pa. 19301

(610) 648-0500
 valleyforge@jwpepper.com
 www.jwpepper.com
 CEO: John Riley

Piano Distributors PO, P, DP, EK, PM
 Total Units 9
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 2
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 1475 12th St. E., Palmetto, Fla. 34221
 (941) 729-5047
 sboyce@pianodistributors.com
 www.pianodistributors.com

Brook Mays Music BO, PC
 Total Units 9
 Opened '17 1
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) \$15.5 MM
 8605 Carpenter Frwy., Dallas, Texas 75247
 (214) 905-4950
 billeveritt@brookmays.com
 www.brookmays.com
 CEO: Bill Everitt

Quinlan & Fabish Music BO, PC, PM
 Total Units 8
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 6827 High Grove Blvd., Burr Ridge, Ill. 60527
 (630) 654-4111
 gqjr@qandf.com
 www.qandf.com
 CEO: George Quinlan, Jr.

Menchey Music Service
 P, DP, BO, FA, EK, PC, PM
 Total Units 8
 Opened '17 1
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 80 Wetzel Dr., Hanover, Pa. 17331
 (717) 637-2185
 jmenchey@menchey.com
 www.mencheymusic.com
 CEO: Joel Menchey

Palen Music Center PC, FA, SR, EK, PM
 Total Units 8
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0

Volume (est. '17) N/A
 1560 E. Raynell Pl., Springfield, Mo. 65804
 (417) 882-7000
 www.palenmusic.com

George's Music Stores

DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, PM
 Total Units 7
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 1
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 650 W. Swedesford Rd., Berwyn, Pa. 19312
 (610) 993-3110
 www.georgesmusic.com
 CEO: George Hines

Marshall Music Co.

PO, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, PM
 Total Units 7
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 3240 E. Saginaw St., Lansing, Mich. 48912
 (517) 337-9700
 info@marshallmusic.com
 www.marshallmusic.com
 CEO: Dan Marshall

West Music Co.

P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, IN, PM
 Total Units 7
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) \$45 MM
 5th Street, Coralville, Iowa 52241
 (319) 351-2000
 rwalenta@westmusic.com
 www.westmusic.com
 CEO: Robin Walenta

Jacobs Music

P, DP
 Total Units 6
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 1
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 1718 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19103
 (215) 568-7800
 chris@jacobsmusiccompany.com
 www.jacobsmusic.com
 CEO: Chris Rinaldi

Kennelly Keys DP, PC, BO, FA, SR, EK, PM

Total Units 6
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 4918 196th St., Lynwood, Wash. 98036
 (425) 771-7020
 info@kennellykeysmusic.com
 www.kennellykeysmusic.com
 CEO: William J. Kennelly

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

Total Units 6
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) \$9 MM
 2801 De La Vina St., Santa Barbara, Calif.
 (805) 569-5353
 nickrail@nickrailmusic.com
 www.nickrailmusic.com
 CEO: Nick Rail

Ted Brown Music Co.

DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT IN, PM
 Total Units 6
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) \$12.5 MM
 6228 Tacoma Mall Blvd., Tacoma, Wash.
 (253) 272-3211
 stephanie@tedbrownmusic.com
 www.tedbrownmusic.com
 CEO: Whitney Brown Grisaffi

Saied Music

PO, DP, BO, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, LT, PM
 Total Units 6
 Opened '17 1
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 3259 S. Yale Ave., Tulsa, Okla. 74135
 (918) 742-5541
 info@saiedmusic.com
 www.saiedmusic.com
 CEO: Bob Saied

Eckroth Music Co. P, DP, BO, FA, PC

Total Units 6
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) \$12 MM
 1655 N. Grandview Lane, Bismark, N.D.
 (701) 223-5320
 eckroth@eckroth.com
 www.eckroth.com
 CEO: Jeffrey Eckroth

Frank Rieman Music, Inc.

P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, LT, PM
 Total Units 6
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) \$10 MM
 4420 E. Broadway, Des Moines, Iowa 50317
 (515) 262-0365
 davek@riemans.com
 www.riemansmusic.com
 CEO: Pam Donahue

White House of Music

DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, PM
 Total Units 6

Opened '17 1

Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 2101 Springdale Rd., Waukesha, Wis. 53186
 (262) 798-9700
 chris@whitehouseofmusic.com
 www.whitehouseofmusic.com
 CEO: Christopher White

Bertrand's Music DP, BO, FA, EK, PM

Total Units 6
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 13179-5 Black Mountain Rd., San Diego,
 Calif. 92129
 (888) 780-1812
 www.bertrandsmusic.com
 CEO: John Bertrand, Sr.

C&M Music Center, LLC

DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, IN, PM
 Total Units 6
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 2515 Williams Blvd., Kenner, La. 70062
 (504) 468-8688
 cnail4cmmusic@yhoo.com
 www.candmmusic.com
 CEO: Chris Nail & Melvin Volz, Jr.

Keyboard Concepts

P, DP, PM
 Total Units 6
 Opened '17 2
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 5600 Van Nuys Blvd., Van Nuys, Calif. 91041
 (828) 787-0201
 Dennis.Hagerty@keyboardconcepts.com
 www.keyboardconcepts.com
 CEO: Dennis Hagerty

The Music Center, Inc. BO, FA, PM

Total Units 5
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 1
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 202 Harper Ave. NW, Lenoir, N.C. 28645
 (828) 758-5253
 www.themusiccenterinc.com

Rettig Music

BO, PM
 Total Units 5
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 1
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 6323 Sawmill Rd., Ohio 43017
 (614) 792-2100
 www.rettigmusic.com

Willis Music Co.
 P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, LT, IN, PM
 Total Units 5
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) \$6.95 MM
 7380 Industrial Road, Florence, Ky. 41042
 (859) 283-2050
 kevin@willismusic.com
 www.willismusic.com
 CEO: Kevin Cranley

Music Exchange PO, P, DP
 Total Units 5
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 1501 N. Main St., Walnut Creek, Calif. 95696
 (925) 933-6310
 www.muex.com

Ken Stanton Music
 DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, PM
 Total Units 5
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) \$12.6 MM
 119 Cobb Pkwy. N., Ste. A, Marietta, Ga.
 (770) 427-2491
 kenstantonmusic@kenstanton.com
 www.kenstanton.com
 CEO: Kenny Stanton

Heid Music P, DP, BO, FA, EK, PC, PM
 Total Units 5
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) \$12.5 MM
 308 E. College Ave., Appleton, Wis. 54911
 (920) 734-1969
 todd.heid@heidmusic.com
 www.heidmusic.com
 CEO: Todd Heid

Springfield Music BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, PM
 Total Units 5
 Opened '16 0
 Closed '16 0
 Volume (est. '16) \$7.0 MM
 1902 E. Meadowmere St., Ste. 1,
 Springfield, Missouri 65804
 (417) 832-1665
 donovan@springfield-music.com
 www.springfieldmusic.com
 CEO: Donovan Bankhead

Collins Music Center
 PO, P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, IN, PM
 Total Units 5
 Opened '16 0
 Closed '16 0

Volume (est. '16) N/A
 706 W. Jackson, El Campo, Texas 77437
 (979) 543-2928
 randy@collinsmusiccenter.com
 www.collinsmusiccenter.com
 CEO: Randy Collins

Robert M. Sides Family Music Centers
 PO, P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, LT, IN, PM
 Total Units 5
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) \$8.6 MM
 201 Mullberry St., Williamsport, Pa. 17701
 (570) 326-2094
 website@rmsides.com
 www.rmsides.com
 CEO: Peter Sides

Tarpley Music Co.
 P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, LT, IN, PM
 Total Units 5
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) \$9.4 MM
 2420 Commerce, Amarillo, Texas 79109
 (806) 355-0795
 john@tarpleymusic.com
 www.tarpleymusic.com
 CEOs: John & David Tarpley

Hermes Music BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, IN
 Total Units 4
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 1
 Volume (est. '17) \$22 MM
 830 N. Cage Blvd., Pharr, Texas 78577
 (956) 904-4400
 greg@hermes-music.com
 www.hermes-music.com
 CEO: Alberto Kreimerman

Dietze Music House
 P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, PM
 Total Units 4
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 6800 P. St., Lincoln, Neb. 68505
 (402) 476-6644
 tpratt@dietzemusic.com
 www.dietzemusic.com
 CEO: Tim Pratt

Portman's Music BO, PC, FA, SR, EK,
 Total Units 4
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 7650 Abercorn St., Savannah, Ga. 31406
 (912) 354-1500

www.portmansmusic.com
 CEO: Jerry Portman

Portland Music Co.
 DP, BO, PC, FA, SR, EK, PM
 Total Units 4
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 531 S.E. MLK Jr. Blvd., Portland, Ore. 97214
 (503) 226-3719
 mtaylor@spiritone.com
 www.portlandmusiccompany.com
 CEO: Mark Taylor

C.A. House Music P, DP, BO, FA, EK, PC, PM
 Total Units 4
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 3700 Cavalier Cir., Parkersburg, W. Va. 26104
 (304) 422-4676
 www.cahousemusic.com

Mississippi Music
 P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, IN, PM
 Total Units 4
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) \$8.5MM
 222 Main St., Hattiesburg, Miss. 39401
 (601) 544-5828
 rosij@missmusic.com
 www.mississippimusic.com
 CEO: Rosi K. Johnson

Evola Music Center PO, P, DP, BO, PM
 Total Units 4
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 2184 Telegraph Rd., Bloomfield Hills, Mich.
 (248) 334-0566
 www.evola.com
 CEO: Jim Evola

Jackson's Music P, DP, BO, FA, PC, EK, SR
 Total Units 4
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 1409 S. Stratford Rd., Winston-Salem, N.C.
 (336) 760-9635
 www.jacksonsmusic.com
 CEO: Douglas J. Dryden

Piano & Organ Center PO, P, DP, EK, PM
 Total Units 4
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) N/A

Box 2369 Great Northern Mall, Clay, N.Y.
 (315) 622-3926
 www.pianoandorgancenter.com
 President: David Constantino

The Clavier Group, Steinway Hall P
 Total Units 4
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 5301 N. Central Expressway, Dallas, Texas
 (214) 526-1853
 showrooms@steinwaypianos.com
 www.steinwaypianos.com
 CEO: Danny Saliba

N-Tune Music & Sound
 P, DP, BO, FA, EK, PC, DJ, LT, IN
 Total Units 4
 Opened '17 1
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) \$5.3 MM
 1141 E. 42nd St., Odessa, Texas 79762
 (432) 362-1164
 info@ntunemusic.com
 www.ntunemusic.com
 CEO: Tim Jones

Henderson Music Co. P, DP
 Total Units 4
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 4359 Dixie Hwy., Elsemere, Ky. 41018
 (859) 431-2111
 www.hendersonmusic.com
 CEO: Carl Henderson

Piano Gallery O, P, DP, EK, PM
 Total Units 3
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 3
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 5478 South Green Street, Murray, Utah
 (801) 266-9550
 info@pianogallery.com
 www.pianogallery.com
 CEO: Stan Beagley

Griggs Music BO, PC, FA, SR, PM
 Total Units 3
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 1
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 3849 N. Brady St., Davenport, Iowa 52806
 (563) 391-9000
 school@griggsmusic.com
 www.griggsmusic.com
 CEO: Steve Judge

Keyboard World PO, P, DP, FA, PM
 Total Units 3
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 14701 National Hwy., LaVale, Md. 21502
 (301) 729-1817
 rkleintob@atlanticbb.net
 www.keyboardworld.com
 CEO: Ronald B. Klinetob

Alto Music DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, PM
 Total Units 3
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) \$50 MM
 180 Carpenter Ave., Middletown, N.Y. 10940
 (845) 692-6922
 sales@altomusic.com
 www.altomusic.com
 CEO: John Haber

SoCal Pianos P, DP, EK
 Total Units 3
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) \$8.5 MM
 307 E. Carmel St., San Marcos, Calif. 92078
 (760) 744-9320
 dennisj@socalpianos.com
 www.socalpianos.com
 CEO: Dennis James

Instrumental Music
 BO, PC, FA, SR, EK, PM, LT
 Total Units 3
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 1501 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd., Thousand Oaks, Calif. 91362
 (805) 419-5055
 www.instrumentalmusic.biz
 CEO: Brian McCann

White's Music Box
 P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, PM
 Total Units 3
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 200 S. Downtown Mall, Las Cruces, N.M.
 (575) 526-6677
 www.whitemusicbox.com
 CEO: Mike White

Riverton Music, Inc.
 DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, IN, PM
 Total Units 3
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) N/A

4650 South 3740 West #2, West Valley City, Utah 84120
 (801) 969-4358
 leifn@rivertonmusic.com
 www.rivertonmusic.com
 CEO: Kevin Rindlisbacher

Pecknel Music Co.
 DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, IN, PM
 Total Units 3
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 1312 N. Pleasantburg Dr., Greenville, S.C.
 (864) 244-7881
 scott@pecknelmusic.com
 www.pecknelmusic.com
 CEO: Scott N. Peck

Dunkley Music P, DP
 Total Units 3
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 410 S. Capitol Blvd., Boise, Idaho 83702
 (208) 342-5549
 www.dunkleymusic.com

Meyer Music P, DP, BO, PM
 Total Units 3
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) N/A
 1512 W. Highway 40, Blue Springs, Mo.
 (816) 228-5656
 bettymeyer@meyermusic.com
 www.meyermusic.com
 CEOs: Ted Meyer, Betty Meyer

Kessler & Sons Music BO
 Total Units 3
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) \$3.9 MM
 3047 E. Charleston, Las Vegas, Nev. 89104
 (702) 385-2263
 music@kessler.com
 www.kesslermusic.com
 CEO: Charles Kessler

Art's Music Shop
 P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, PM
 Total Units 3
 Opened '17 0
 Closed '17 0
 Volume (est. '17) \$8 MM
 3030 East Blvd., Montgomery, Ala. 36116
 (334) 271-2787
 JessicaF@ArtsMusicShop.com
 www.artsmusicshop.com
 CEO: Paul Freehling

25th

Annual Dealers' Choice Awards

By Christian Wissmuller

A quarter-century of Dealers' Choice Awards (DCAs)! It's our "Silver Anniversary!" That's a pretty significant milestone and, boy, did voters come out in droves to celebrate. The 2017 process far eclipsed even last year's impressive, record-setting numbers with thousands upon thousands of registered MMR subscribers participating in both the nominations and final voting (for those of you who may be wondering, "Why isn't my brand represented in the _____ category?" or "How come I didn't get an opportunity to vote?" all I can say is: check your emails and "regular" mailings more closely in the coming year and, if you're not currently subscribing to MMR... sign up, already! If you're actually in the industry, we want to connect with you – and it's free!).

This annual event is incredibly meaningful because, unlike other awards which designate "best of" products or "best in show" brands,



the DCAs aren't determined by a single editor, or by some panel of self-appointed "experts" – MMR's Dealers' Choice Awards are bestowed upon the best instruments, gear, and companies *as determined by MI retailers*. Sure, I know what guitars I like to play and over here at *Musical Merchandise Review* we all do our best to follow and report upon trends in the industry, but I don't own a musical instrument dealership, I don't have a precise knowledge of what gear has been generating the most profit for the past 12 months. These trophies get handed out to the brands that MI retailers tell us are pushing the boundaries and driv-

ing the industry. To those organizations – and to all of the dealers who voted this year – we appreciate all that you do.

Our thanks to everyone who participated in the nomination process this past summer and who then cast their votes this fall. Read on to learn more about the 2017 Dealers' Choice Award winners...

PRODUCT OF THE YEAR: BOSS KATANA



Roland Corporation

With a range that includes versatile combos, powerful heads, and even a compact battery-powered unit (I have one – it's great!), BOSS' Katana amplifiers connect with players of all styles and budgets. Select functions derived from the celebrated Waza amp series, integrated access to a wide range of BOSS effects, Tone Setting memories, and inspired design that allows the units to

excel both on-stage and at lower volume, home settings all combine to make the Katana amps an across-the-board hit. Dealers pointed to the line's popularity with end-users and nice profit margins as reasons why these truly innovative products are the clear Product of the Year for 2017. These amps sound absolutely amazing, look boss (see what I did there?), and have reasonable price-points. Well, done BOSS!

ACCESSORY LINE OF THE YEAR: D'ADDARIO

**D'Addario & Company**

Industry go-to strings? Check. High-quality instrument and speaker cables? Check. Clip-on and stompbox tuners? Check. Drumheads, sticks, reeds... you get the point. D'Addario beat out the competition in a very hotly contested category this year – once again! A commitment to quality design and manufacture, coupled with a dedication to collaboration with their MI retail partners were all factors that 2017 Dealers' Choice Award voters pointed to as reasons why D'Addario & Co. are still tops when it comes to musical accessories.



daddario.com

ACOUSTIC GUITAR OF THE YEAR: MARTIN D-28

**C.F. Martin & Company**

Oh, Martin makes acoustic guitars that both pros and aficionados embrace and/or covet, you say? Shocking. The D-28 truly is the Dreadnought that set – and continues to set – the standard. When an instrument going for over \$3,000 is a clear winner in a Dealers' Choice Award category, that truly says something. Impeccable craftsmanship, high-quality materials (East Indian rosewood back and sides, Sitka spruce top, and mahogany neck), and a classic aesthetic have made the D-28 a favorite for decades. Hey, if Jimmy Page, Del McCoury, and Hank Williams Sr. choose/chose to play the thing, who am I to argue? Not a "new product," but this model continues to impress – and likely will for many decades to come. This one's been on my Christmas wish-list since I was 14...



martinguitar.com

ACOUSTIC PIANO LINE OF THE YEAR: HAILUN



HAILUN

Vienna International Inc. dba Hailun USA

An established and celebrated brand in China for over two decades, Hailun is continuing to make a positive impression on U.S. players and dealers. Since partnering with noted Austrian piano master-builder Peter Veletzky in 2003, the brand's reputation has soared and the quality and product excellence of these instruments has made them favorites of thousands of players, globally. Over 80 American authorized Hailun dealers have fully embraced these pianos – as have their customers. Hailun is no stranger to the MMR Dealers' Choice Awards winner's circle and 2017 represents yet another victory-lap for the company.

hailun-pianos.com

AMPLIFIER LINE OF THE YEAR: MARSHALL



Marshall

Marshall Amplification, PLC

With products that have helped shape the sound and legacy of The Who, Led Zeppelin, Jimi Hendrix, Cream, AC/DC, The Runaways, Slayer, Guns 'n Roses, Aerosmith, and Motörhead (RIP Lemmy. L) – among many, many, many others – it's really not a surprise that Marshall Amplification got the nod in this category. Frankly, it's surprising the brand hasn't won the DCA for "Amplifier Line

of the Year" more often in the past! The Mini Jubilee Series and Vintage Re-issue models were noted by voters in this year's ballot as being particularly impactful in 2017. Speaking of Marshall re-issues, the minute these guys put out a JCM800 Anniversary Series combo (white tolex, man!) I will be the first in line. Made in England, played all over the world – Marshall! I'm gonna go disturb the neighbors now, by cranking my JMP 100-watt...

marshallamps.com



HAILUN USA

Voted **2017 Acoustic Piano Line of the Year**



Made possible by the trust and confidence of our loyal dealers & tech dealers in the Hailun brand

Thank You!



Ask us about being a dealer. There's no market too big or small. Our goal is to be everywhere for everyone. Call us today for details.

509.946.8078
admin@vienna-pianos.com
hailun-pianos.com



BAND & ORCHESTRA LINE OF THE YEAR: YAMAHA



Yamaha Corporation of America

A commitment to superior design, customer service, and dealer support makes Yamaha a juggernaut across so many (so many!) instrument types. The brand was a near-win in multiple Dealers' Choice Awards categories this year, but when it came to Band & Orchestra instruments they were clearly the brand in 2017. Percussion, brass & woodwinds, strings, marching instruments – Yamaha does it all and, according to voters this year, they're doing it better than anyone out there.

usa.yamaha.com



DJ LINE OF THE YEAR: PIONEER DJ



Pioneer DJ Corporation

Fielding celebrated and essential gear for DJs of all types – players, turntables, mixers, monitors, and more – Pioneer DJ has long been a favorite with MI retailers and customers. The recently introduced DJS-1000 standalone DJ sampler and XDJ-RX2 all-in-one DJ system were singled out as a late-in-the-year hit by DCA voters, as Pioneer ultimately took the prize in this very competitive category. The "DJ world" shows no signs of slowing down and, as the name suggests, Pioneer is leading the way.

pioneerdj.com



ELECTRIC BASS OF THE YEAR: IBANEZ SOUNDGEAR SERIES



Ibanez



Hoshino Group

Ibanez's SR Series has been singled out as "Electric Bass of the Year" by Dealers' Choice Award voters in the past – and deservedly so – and this year saw the venerable line once again taking top honors in this category. For nearly three decades the Ibanez Soundgear series has resonated with bassists and retailers. Models vary from the "bare-bones" GSR and GSRM to pristine basses featuring exotic woods and hardware plated with precious metals, such as the SR Premium and SR Prestige. Soundgear basses are beloved by players for their fast, thin necks and smooth, elegantly contoured bodies – and by MI dealers for their ability to generate profits!

hoshinouse.com

ELECTRIC GUITAR OF THE YEAR: FENDER AMERICAN PROFESSIONAL STRATOCASTER



Fender Musical Instruments Corporation

Ah, the Fender Strat... Ask a non-musician to draw or envision an electric guitar and odds are that he or she would come up with a Stratocaster-shaped instrument. If there is a single, iconic "rock guitar" this is it. Fender recently upped the ante with the American Professional Series, offering new features such as a "Deep C" neck profile, Narrow-Tall frets, V-Mod and ShawBucker pickups,

and brand-new finishes – Candy Apple Red and Natural – that truly connected with customers. Virtually every MI retailer playing the electric guitar game wants to stock Fenders and nearly every guitarist, from beginners to seasoned pros, wants at least one Strat in their arsenal. It's not surprising that the American Professional Stratocaster was deemed "Electric Guitar of the Year" by DCA voters. "Fly on, little wing," indeed...

fender.com

HOME DIGITAL KEYBOARD OF THE YEAR: KAWAI CN SERIES

**Kawai America Corporation**

The CN27 and CN37 continue to meet the high standards set by the much-lauded CN Series of digital pianos from Kawai. Feature-rich, with authentic touch and resonant sound, these instruments – that are compact enough to fit into a small city apartment – have become favorites of players across the globe. Re-defining the concept of “value” in this category, Kawai’s CN line also includes the CN14 which features the Advanced Hammer Action IV-F keyboard action and Harmonic Imaging sound technology – all at a surprisingly affordable price. Dealers love them, customers love them – no wonder the CN Series was chosen as the “Home Digital Keyboard of the Year” for 2017 by voters.



KAWAI

THE FUTURE OF THE PIANO

kawaius.com

LIGHTING LINE OF THE YEAR: CHAUVET DJ



CHAUVET³

Chauvet DJ

For the past few years, Chauvet DJ has had a virtual lock on this category – and it’s easy to see why. One of the world’s premier lines of entertainment lighting, controllers, and accessories, the company offers any number of products invaluable to working DJs, clubs, and other venues. Innovative designs and value-oriented prices



make Chauvet a leader in luminaries, controllers, atmospherics, and trussing. “Lighting Line of the Year” is always a tight race in the annual DCA voting, but Chauvet DJ once again rose to the top of the heap in 2017. These guys (and gals!) know what they’re doing and it’s going to be difficult to unseat them as winners in this category anytime soon.

chauvetdj.com

THANK YOU MMR READERS

for our 18th Dealers' Choice Award



Kawai CN Series Digital Pianos
2017 Home Digital Keyboard of the Year

KAWAI
THE FUTURE OF THE PIANO

KAWAIUS.COM

MICROPHONE LINE OF THE YEAR: SENNHEISER



Sennheiser Electronic GmbH & Co. KG|USA

For over 70 years, Sennheiser has been producing innovative, industry-leading microphones and related products. The MD421, MD 441, e609, and e602 are legendary and newer introductions such as the AVX Digital Wireless system continue to push the brand forward, making it the choice for performers and recording engineers the world over. Fun (well, not at the time) story: I accidentally spilled an iced coffee on a vintage 441 while I was a student at Berklee, and I legitimately thought my professor was going to strangle me.



SENNHEISER

en-us.sennheiser.com

PERCUSSION LINE OF THE YEAR: LUDWIG



Ludwig



Ludwig Drums

Since 1909, Ludwig has been one of the premier names in percussion. Counting the likes of Ringo Starr, Bill Ward, John Bonham, and Alex Van Halen among the many who have embraced the brand over the years, Ludwig Drums is truly iconic. From the Vistalite kits to the Black Beauty snare drum, this company continues to field instruments embraced by drummers of all stripes. This is always a very tight category, but the dealers made their voices heard – 2017 was Ludwig's year!

ludwig-drums.com

PRINT MUSIC PUBLISHER OF THE YEAR: HAL LEONARD

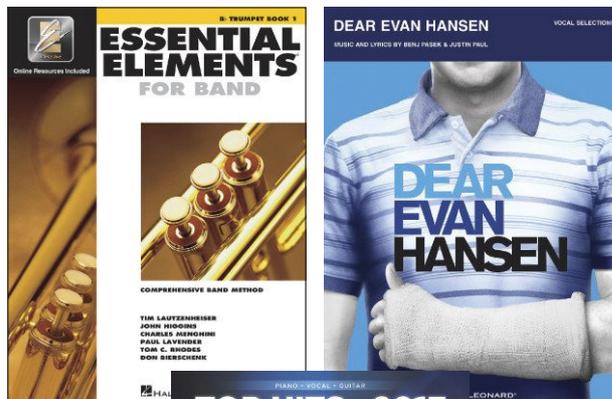


HAL LEONARD®

Hal Leonard

Hal Leonard... What's there to say, really? The company has such a stranglehold on the "Print Music Publisher of the Year" one would be tempted to say it's getting to be unfair – except for the fact that it's easy to see why retailers continue to point to these guys as the most deserving. An exhaustive catalog of titles, coupled with industry leading customer service and dealer support continue to make Hal Leonard the brand to beat when it comes to print. Oh, and it bears mentioning that they're all super nice folks over there!

halleonard.com



PRO DIGITAL KEYBOARD LINE OF THE YEAR: CASIO



Casio America, Inc.

Another tight race here – Casio snuck by the competition, though, and dealers cited the company's commitment to innovation and value as the main reasons. If you still think of those fun/funny little keyboards from the '80s when someone says "Casio," it's time to update your reality. These days the company is producing some of the finest, feature-rich keyboard consoles out there and both consumers and MI retailers have been taking notice for years.



CASIO®

casio-usa.com

RECORDING LINE OF THE YEAR: PRESONUS



PreSonus Audio Electronics, Inc.

A real and genuine feel-good legacy of homegrown ingenuity and drive, the PreSonus story is one that inspires those of us who give a damn about making music. Co-founder and the company's current CSO Jim Odum is a legit gigging musician (the dude has RIAA-certified gold- and platinum records – do you?) and also, y'know, a frickin' genius. Drawing upon his background in electrical engineering (Jim designed military spec. surface-mount

technology-based sonar equipment. What did you do after graduating college?), Odum and his partners have forged a company culture that speaks to – and for – actual musicians, dealing with real-world budgets. Great gear at attainable prices. It comes as a surprise to nobody around here that PreSonus absolutely decimated any competition in this category. A well-deserved win for an amazing company.

presonus.com

SOUND REINFORCEMENT LINE OF THE YEAR: JBL



Harman International Industries, Inc.

While JBL is fairly ubiquitous when it comes to sound reinforcement, it's likely that James Bullough Lansing had little notion of what a legendary brand he was founding way back in 1946 when he departed his former position at Altec Lansing. If you've gone to a stadium concert, a major sports event, a local rock club, or a church event, chances are you've heard words and music projected through JBL loudspeakers, mixers, and

associated gear. This is a case of, "Oh... I guess there's a reason why they're the biggest name in the game." There are plenty of quality players in sound reinforcement – the votes in this category spoke to a number of deserving candidates – but JBL is JBL, man. Sometimes the big dog is big for a reason. Arf! Hats off to Harman's crown jewel.

jblpro.com

CASIO®

PRO DIGITAL PIANO LINE OF THE YEAR

Casio America thanks all of its independent music dealers for recognizing its recent achievements, and is honored to have been voted MMR's 2017 Pro Digital Piano Line of the Year. We look forward to shared success in 2018 and beyond.



WWW.CASIOMUSICGEAR.COM

PRIVIA PRO PX-5S



CELVIANO
GRAND HYBRID



PRIVIA PRO PX-560





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Note From Joe

If You Want to Win, It Starts by Placing a Bet.

Remember that old joke about the man who pleads with God to win the lottery? Day after day he doesn't win, which only increases his urgent cries until finally the clouds part and a booming voice says, "Can you at least meet me half way and buy a ticket?!"

As we look towards a brand-new year and all the opportunities that a fresh start brings, I'm reminded of the choices that each NAMM member must make on a daily basis. And with the accelerated pace of change, the decision on which bets to make can lead to some sleepless nights.

Risk is inherent in the choices we make, but in business, hedging our bets with calculated risk is critical to success. It's human nature to look at successful businesses and think that it must have been easier for them or that they got a lucky break. The reality is, behind each of these success stories is someone who made a bet and took the chance to try something new. Many probably had to go long periods of time doubting their decisions and perhaps even experiencing the ridicule of others.

How willing are you to take some risks in 2018? If you seek better results from your business, what will you change? New product lines? Expanded services? Remodeled stores and websites? Or perhaps a new hire or two? With so many possibilities and questions, where can you look for answers?

In my opinion, The NAMM Show is the number one place any industry member can go to truly get a sense of clarity and direction. When planning a successful strategy, it is critically important to gather all the information you can to make wise decisions. While not trying to be overly dramatic, I imagine many NAMM members feel like they are "betting the farm" with each new move.

The key areas where The NAMM Show can help you grow your business include: expanding your product selection, improving your skills with continuing education and connecting you to the passion and camaraderie that gets us all through the tough times.

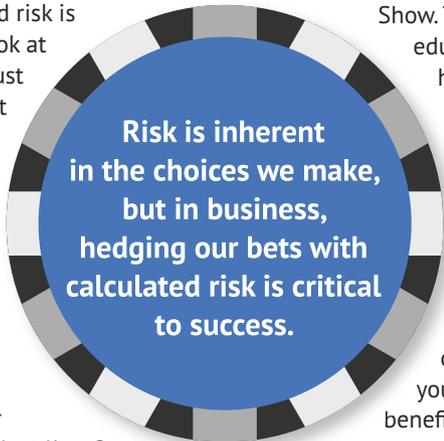
So now we are just weeks away from The 2018 NAMM Show. The trade show team is ready to load in, the educational sessions are scheduled, the exhibitors have worked all year to create new products that your customers will want to use, the Anaheim community is geared up for the influx of NAMM members and their guests, and the best and brightest members in the industry are already booked to attend.

Remember, taking risks is an essential part of being an entrepreneur and has been at the root of every innovation and advancement in history. If you're still unsure about how a trip to NAMM might benefit you and your business, yet you earnestly desire to be successful in the year ahead, then may I suggest following the guidance from above and buy a ticket? (Actually, they're free for NAMM members!)

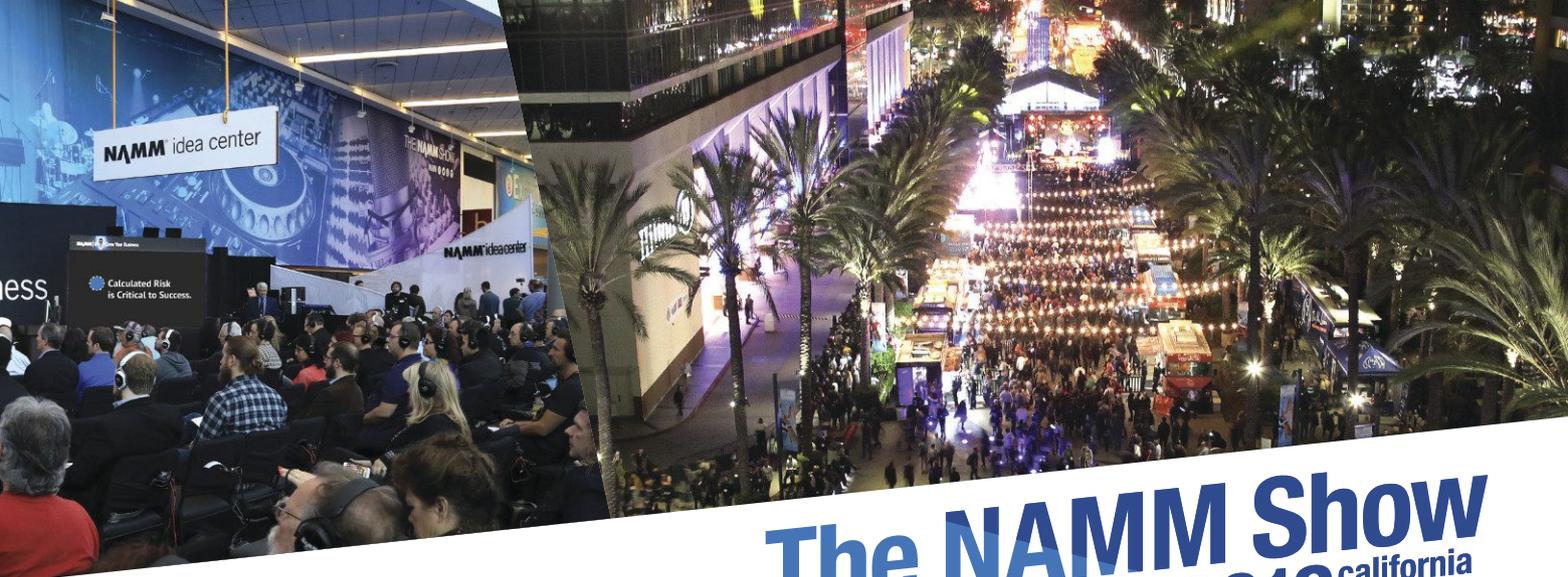
We look forward to seeing you next month in Anaheim. On behalf of the NAMM Board and staff here in Carlsbad, we wish you and your families a safe and happy holiday season.



Joe Lamond
NAMM PRESIDENT AND CEO



Risk is inherent
in the choices we make,
but in business,
hedging our bets with
calculated risk is critical
to success.



The NAMM Show

January 25/28 2018 ^{california}



Find New Products

New products drive the growth of any industry, and our exhibiting members have taken great risks in bringing new products to market. Our retail buyers, key influencers, bloggers and professional end users, like engineers, artists and educators, will ultimately weigh in and shape what is sold in the year ahead. Having the right mix of products on your floor will be critical for success in 2018, and you'll find them all here.



Improve Your Skills

With the expanded campus and new partnerships with the Audio Engineering Society (AES) and the Entertainment Services and Technology Association (ESTA), alongside our anchor programs NAMM U and TEC Tracks, we are virtually tripling the education at this year's show. Want to become a better online retailer? Or want to expand into the live sound rental and event production market? All of this and so much more can be found at NAMM.



Spark Your Passion

Whether you are new to the market or an industry veteran, you are part of a passionate group of pros who have dedicated their lives to music. The NAMM Show is the perfect time to connect. Interacting with your friends and peers on the show floor, in the hotel lobbies, and at countless parties and concerts is a proven remedy for the day-to-day grind that will leave you reinvigorated for the future.



NAMM[®] U
Grow Your Business

AES
AUDIO ENGINEERING SOCIETY

TEC TRACKS
sound | studio | stage

ESTA

Dante
SPOKEN HERE



Register for your badge today! Visit namm.org/attend to get started.

ACCESSORIES

Foundations Bass Strings from S.I.T. Strings



The Foundations line of electric bass strings are built with a newer, stronger core material to create a string that very bright and flexible. The Foundations were designed to be a lower tension string and are therefore very responsive to the touch. These strings will not replace the current lineup of S.I.T. bass strings, but rather complement the line. In addition, the strings inside the Foundations bass sets are also sealed in an airtight VCI corrosion resistant pouch to keep the strings fresh. The Foundations are available in both nickel and stainless in the following gauges: 40-100, 45-105, 40-120 (5-String) and 45- 125 (5 String). 6-string sets and additional gauges will be available early 2018.

www.sitstrings.com

Fret Butter Fretboard Cleaner

The new Fret Butter fretboard cleaner from DMI Guitar Labs is the newest product offered by AP International. Fret Butter is solution for stringed instrument fingerboards, that hydrates the wood and removes grime and oxidation from frets in one simple application. The result is a clean hydrated fingerboard with shiny frets and a satin smooth finish protecting against sweat, acids, metal corrosion, and string abrasion. The cloth is used to apply the Fret Butter to the fingerboard and frets. Fret Butter contains no harmful chemicals and is entirely free of lemon oil. The re-sealable package allows for multiple uses per package.



www.apintl.com

1 SPOT Pro CS6 from Truetone

Truetone has released the 1 SPOT Pro CS6, the most powerful slim line power supply in its class. Utilizing the energy efficient technology found in all 1 SPOT's, the CS6 is the first low-profile power brick to be able to put out up to 1600mA of silent power. The CS6 has a variety of DC voltages available to power almost any pedal, and each output is completely isolated, regulated and filtered, eliminating crosstalk and noise. The low-profile design of the 1 SPOT Pro CS6 allows it to be mounted under flat pedalboards, but the compact design is also perfect for mounting on top of pedalboards, serving the dual role of power supply and pedal riser. The device weighs only 1.3 pounds and features galvanized steel housing.



www.truetone.com



Brass and Woodwind Care Kits from On-Stage

These Brass and Woodwind Care Kits contain everything needed for care of the instrument. The BSK5600 and OBK5600, for bassoon and oboe respectively, come complete with key oil, duster brush, cork grease, cotton or hanky swabs and finish-specific polishing cloths. The BCK5600, for bass clarinet, features cork grease, key oil, polishing cloth, chamois clarinet neck swab and rainbow body swab, while the FHK5600, for French horn, includes rotor oil, lacquer cloth, synthetic five-foot snake, mouthpiece brush, tuning slide grease, duster brush and replacement rotor strings.

www.on-stage.com

Keith Urban Signature Picks

D'Addario Accessories has partnered with Keith Urban on his brand-new series of signature picks. These picks are designed to capture superior and versatile tone, and are made from a custom Ultem blend. The picks feature three distinct playing surfaces: a standard, pointed tip; a rounded smooth tip for warmer tone; and a textured rounded tip for a harmonically edgier tone. They are sold in sold in 5-packs and are available in three gauges.



www.daddario.com

D'Addario Accessories Maintenance Kits

D'Addario Accessories has debuted tool kits available for guitar and bass maintenance and a general care & cleaning kit. D'Addario Tool Kits are the convenient way to keep your instrument maintenance gear in one portable location. Each case contains individual component compartments, pockets for extra strings (not included), and magnet to hold screws, nuts, washers, and other hardware pieces.



www.daddario.com

DRUMS & PERCUSSION

Roland SPD::ONE series

The Roland SPD::ONE series is a line of compact electronic percussion pads that can be played with drumsticks, hands, or feet. Offering features like built-in sounds, user sample import, intuitive operation, and more, the SPD::ONE series enables any musician to enhance their performances and expand their creativity with Roland's leading digital percussion technology. The four models run on batteries or AC power and offer feature sets tailored for different musical needs. Common features include a versatile, highly responsive pad surface that can be played like a drum, hand percussion instrument, or foot-triggered stomp box. A knob-based interface provides quick access to sound selection, volume level, and other parameters, while side-mounted controls offer easy adjustment of the playing response. Each model also includes separate main and headphones outputs.



www.roland.com

Tollspire Chimes from Sabian

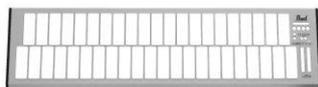
The Tollspire Chimes are a set of 5 conical-shaped micro-splashes, sized in quarter-inch increments from 4.75" to 5.75". Crafted from Sabian B20 Bronze, they are rolled and tempered from splashthickness blanks, then formed into a cupless, conical shape. Sabian Tollspire Chimes include a mini-tree mount with universal multi-clamp to fit most common cymbal and percussion stands.



www.sabian.com

MalletSTATION Controller from Pearl

The MalletSTATION Adjustable Range Electronic Mallet Controller is a full sized 3.0 octave adjustable range electronic mallet controller designed for all players in any genre, from the beginning student through the gigging professional. The adjustable low note range function allows you to set the fundamental diatonic note of the instrument to what you need. The malletSTATION is powered exclusively by Mac, PC, iPad, iPhone, and Android devices through USB Bus Power, allowing performance almost anywhere with minimal set-up and equipment. MalletSTATION's tech-forward design features KMI's Smart Fabric Sensor technology allowing the silicone bar material to have an extremely sensitive, natural response, including mallet dampening and aftertouch control, and all can be easily tailored to your individual playing style.

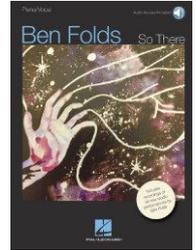


www.pearldrums.com

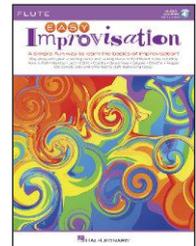
PRINT & DIGITAL

New Releases from Hal Leonard

Hal Leonard now offers the *So There* songbook, which breaks down the eight chamber pop songs and a 21 minute piano concerto by Ben Folds. The audio files include PLAYBACK+, a multi-functional audio player that allows you to slow down audio without changing pitch, set loop points, change keys, and pan left or right. Price: \$19.99.



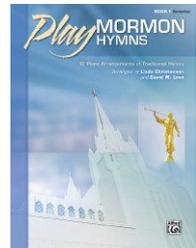
Easy Improvisation was designed as a simple introduction to improvisation. Students play along with great-sounding demo and backing tracks in thirty different styles including rock, jazz, EDM, and more. The book includes exercises for each musical style with helpful tips and suggested notes to be used while improvising and even four sample solos using those notes. Price: \$9.99.



www.halleonard.com

Play Mormon Hymns from Alfred Music

Alfred Music has released a new series of books, *Play Mormon Hymns, Books 1-3*. The attractive solo arrangements include rich-sounding accompaniments that can be played by a teacher, a parent, or an older sibling. Book 1 consists of 12 elementary level piano arrangements, Book 2 includes 12 arrangements for late elementary pianists, and Book 3 features 16 piano arrangements of traditional hymns. Each is available for \$8.99.



www.alfred.com

PRO AUDIO

Whirlwind: Catdusa RJ45 Breakout Box

The Whirlwind Catdusa provides a convenient way to use Cat5 or Cat6 Ethernet cable for transmitting analog audio, AES/EBU digital audio, or DMX lighting control. Catdusa is a four-channel analog snake box that uses shielded Cat5 cable instead of traditional multipair cable. Each channel has paralleled male and female XLRs, allowing for greater flexibility. The two Neutrik etherCON RJ45s (In/Thru), lets users daisy chain multiple boxes. If shielded Cat5 cable is used, Catdusa can pass phantom power and DMX.



www.whirlwindusa.com

The Real Value in Telling a True Story

By Menzie **Pittman**

Anyone who reads *MMR's* "Small Business Matters" already knows that I believe a special and unique character trait about the music industry is that our industry produces the best storytellers. After all, we are songwriters, creators, and expressionists. Who better to tell a captivating story than a musician? Truthfully, some of the most entertaining storytellers I've ever met were in music retail.

Growing up in the Washington Metropolitan area, better known as the DMV, I had the amazing opportunity of being exposed to the only music retailer to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame: Chuck Levin. He was one of the very best and certainly one of the most entertaining storytellers around. He kept you entertained while you shopped, and if he called you into his office, you knew you were anointed as a musician. I cut my teeth on Chuck as well as a few other great regional retailers. And like most musicians in the DMV, we have grown up knowing that we are good and honest storytellers. It is our way of interacting with our customers and fellow musicians.

"The New Way" May Not Always Be Better

In today's market we have graduated to big boxes, chains, and franchises, and a philosophy where ethics have become inconvenient. Enter the customer, and of course, the rest of the story. Imagine being a parent and having a daughter who shows an interest in learning to play piano. We all know in today's world the first thing all parents do is their research. We all go on line scanning reviews, and we also talk to neighbors to determine whether anyone has a good recommendation for music instruction. If you fail the recommendation test, you won't last long in any faction of the music business. You must prove your worth every day and every time. There is never an exception to this rule... EVER!

So, to continue our story: the phone rings, our staff considers the customer's request, reviews with him all possible considerations, and then after doing his due diligence, the customer decides if we and our educators are a good fit for his child. The appointment is set, the child is excited, and we look forward to the day when the student begins lessons.

Houston, We Have a Problem

The lesson day arrives, but oddly the student is a no show. As a good business, we also do our own due diligence and at the 10-minute mark, we call the student's family. The father answers and is surprised by our news because the family's nanny left over thirty minutes ago and should be at our music store by now. The father obviously becomes very concerned and informs us that he will call back once he has figured out why his daughter and the nanny have missed the appointment.

So Here's Your First Plot Twist

A new competitor has decided to open in town, and the nanny, who is young and from a foreign country, has driven the student to the wrong business. The father calls us back, obviously relieved

that his daughter is fine, and he informs us that he will make sure to have the nanny drive his daughter to the right location the next week.

As he hangs up, he makes mention that he found it odd that the other store had not redirected the nanny to where they were supposed to go. Clearly, the student was not on the schedule at the other place, and that business knew that. The father was completely put off by the dishonesty.

Fast Forward to Week Number Two: Rinse, Wash, Repeat

Week two. The nanny strikes again. It might be hard to believe, but copy and paste everything you just read, word for word. However, this time the father is completely livid, and so he makes the decision to have the grandfather drive the student on week three. He adamantly verbalizes that he is disgusted by the lack of integrity from our competitor trying to coerce his family into their system, and he intends to let people know it.

Week three arrives, Granddad does his part, and finally the music student is where the parent intends her to be. But there is an unintended consequence and plot twist again; all anybody wants to talk about is what has been going on. As the grandfather sits in our lobby, we share laughter about the absurdity of what has been happening, and he is a very charming storyteller. Now this tale has become a local story that has gone viral, so it is repeated often.

A Good Story has Intrigue, Drama, and Generally Resolves at the End, and a Good Storyteller Engages his Audience

The true fall out from this story is that it will linger for a long time because so many people are now sharing it. In a small town the ramifications of dishonesty echo like Carnegie Hall. I love telling stories, and anyone who walks in either of our stores knows that. In our towns we chat. The best asset any independent music store has is its charm. You only have a few weapons against a box or a franchise, and your best weapon is integrity.

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

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By Dan Daley

'Tis the Season to be Optimistic

As we head into the holiday selling season, one riddled with stories about how Amazon will soon be getting access to our homes, it's worth remembering a couple of things: streaming may have become the primary distribution format for music, but most Americans still use the radio for listening and discovery, and they still overwhelmingly go to brick-and-mortar stores to buy things.

Retail, which has been taking a licking on Wall Street and in both the consumer and trade press, seems to have gotten the message. According to the latest American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) report, retailers scored 78 out of 100 points, up 4.7 percent and an all-time high for the sector. The report covered six categories, including specialty retail stores, the cohort that MI retail would fall under. Online retail still polled better, with an ACSI

score of 83, up 3.8 percent from a year earlier (this survey was done during last year's holiday sales season). And online got high marks for the usual reasons, including lower prices, ease of use and endless variety. However, a Pew Research Center poll last year discovered that while 79 percent of respondents have bought something online, a majority of Americans (64 percent) prefer making purchases at physical stores rather than buying online, when all things are equal (i.e., when prices and features match the ones online).

The Fittest Have Survived

However, surveys that reflect a more positive sense of brick-and-mortar retail may reveal something else, something more Darwinian. After several years of store closings and consolidations, including in the MI market, we may have reached a point where the best stores have already survived the winnowing effects of the survival of the fittest and are enjoying some breathing room around them.

That might be part of what's behind the National Retail Federation's forecast projecting 2017 holiday sales to rise 3.6 and 4 percent. Market re-

search firm Deloitte said it predicts retailers to see holiday sales growth of as much as 4.5 percent, nearly a full point better than last year at this time.

The optimism is being attributed to a number of things, not least of which is having gotten through last season's turbulent presidential election cycle, and this being an off year for elections. In addition, there's been blowback against the ever-ear-

lier arrival of Black Friday-type sales events. This year, more than 60 national-brand stores had announced back in October that they would not open on Thanksgiving this year. That will have had several positive effects, including bringing some additional good will towards merchants for at least appearing to be less aggressive around a holiday (and letting their Bob Cratchits be home to carve their turkeys) and funneling more sales activity into a slightly narrower window.



“This year, more than 60 national-brand stores had announced back in October that they would not open on Thanksgiving this year.”

The holiday season will offer an opportunity for MI retailers to leverage these market trend shifts. If you were one of the businesses that shuttered for Thanksgiving, use Christmas, Kwanzaa and New Year's to remind customers that you did and why you did it, as you post your own holiday hours. The spirit of the season is also a chance to thank customers for their business the rest of the year. And all of this reflects the spirit of the economic times, as retail's perception of itself improves. Merry Christmas. **MMR**



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