

# M M M R

## MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW



# 2021 Dealers' Choice Awards

The Winners of the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual MI Retailer-Determined Honors

**THANKS AGAIN.**  
(again and again and again)



**ALLEN & HEATH**

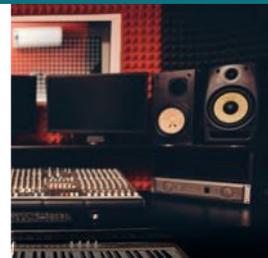
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Sweetwater CEO  
John Hopkins



**40<sup>th</sup> Annual America's  
Top Chains**



**Dealer Survey  
Studio Monitors**

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# C O N T E N T S

# MMR

MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

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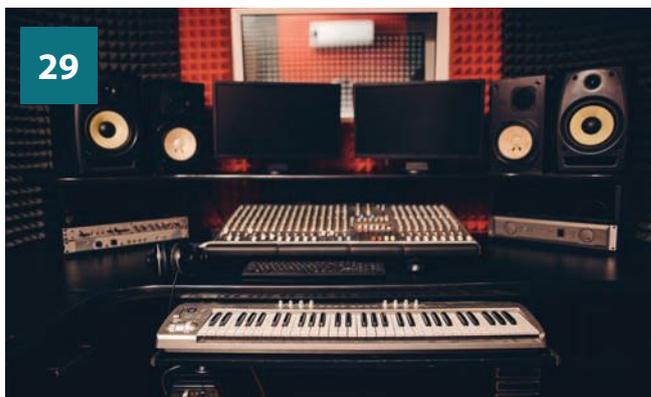
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## Better than '20, but Still Not Back to 'Normal.' Bring on 2022...

*As is tradition, I yield this space to allow for a handful of officers from some of the largest MI retailers in the land to comment on the past calendar year. – Christian Wissmuller*

By  
**Christian  
Wissmuller**

"We are seeing great gains over 2020. All of our KPIs are showing solid gains. We are seeing more customers using online channels to purchase from us, which we expected based on COVID-influenced shopping behaviors... With logistic and manufacturing challenges, the demand for used will only grow [in 2022]." – **Tim Kletti, Music Go Round**

"We should be able to beat 2020 without breaking a sweat... Some schools wanted only orchestral strings or guitars. Where are we going to get the guitars?" – **Stephanie Howe, Ted Brown Music Company**

"Very excited to see back to school season in 2021 bounce back to pre-COVID participation levels. Overall cost increases and product availability continue to be major concerns. Consumer confidence appears to be high going into the holiday season, though." – **Peter Sides, Robert M. Sides Family Music Center**

"2021 was still strong and the educational market was much better. The disrupted supply chain is my biggest concern. I believe not all of that is bad, though. It has created an interest in things that we aren't able to get and people are becoming more willing to wait for things." – **Tim Pratt, Dietze Music**

"School music business almost returned to normal. Inflation, COGs, staffing, and delivery delays [are concerns]. I think we will see an increase in sales and an increase in expenses in 2022." – **Bill Everitt, Brook Mays/HH Music**

"What COVID? Attitude is everything. Our ability to look for the positive, define what we can do, and support dynamic innovation across the entire company was magical." – **Jeffrey Eckroth, Eckroth Music Co.**

"If we don't get this virus under control, brick and mortar has to change its time-honored philosophy that bigger is better. Now, bigger just means more overhead." – **Sammy Ash, Sam Ash Music Corp.**

"Varying timelines of store closures (us included), distribution disruption, and manufacturing shutdowns presented great opportunities... This isn't the first big thing we have been through as a company and that has become clearly evident with the companies and customers we do business with." – **Chris Nail, C&M Music Center**

"I think my biggest concern is all of the kids that might not be able to try music in school because of the shutdowns in some states... If we have to go very long without kids learning music, we could lose a few years of those benefits that music is proven to enhance in young minds." – **Tim Jones, N Tune Music & Sound**

"With our focus in the school music market, our efforts of staying connected with educators and students during the virtual year of 2020 definitely paid off. 2021 showed a strong rebound in school music and lessons." – **Chris White, White House of Music**

"2021 has rebounded and then some, but not in all areas... Regardless of that, however, 2021 will finish as the best year in our company's 32-year history." – **Dave Kessler, Kessler & Sons Music, Inc.**

"The people who came back to music or started in 2020, based on 'more time,' are wanting to continue... We are fortunate to be in a line of business that has staying power, that gives back, and is an investment in multiple ways." – **DeDe Heid, Heid Music**

"2021 was better than 2020, but we're not out of the deep end yet... The current government mandates and restrictions are growth prohibitive and continue to create disadvantages to small, privately owned businesses." – **Laura Penrose, Nick Rail Music**

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## GC Expands with Store Grand Openings in Savannah, Georgia, and Mayfield Heights, Ohio

Guitar Center announces a re-engagement of its expansion itinerary with the grand openings of two new stores: a brand-new GC location in Savannah, Georgia, and a relocated store in Mayfield Heights, Ohio. Both stores marked their grand openings on Thursday, November 4, 2021. The announcement was made by Wayne Cowell, Guitar Center EVP of stores. These grand openings further underscore Guitar Center's ongoing expansion and its commitment to serving growing music communities across the country.

These new locations offer an expansive set of services and gear to serve the music needs of their communities. Notably, the opening of the new Mayfield Heights location adds Guitar Center Lessons services, while the Savannah store offers a Hands-on DJ Experience where shoppers can try their hand at modern DJ techniques using the latest gear. These services will be offered alongside repairs, rentals and more.



The Savannah store is a 13,920-square-foot facility, while the relocated Mayfield Heights store is a 15,078-square-foot facility – both feature modern showrooms equipped with the latest products for musicians — from guitars, amplifiers, percussion instruments and keyboards to live sound, DJ, lighting and recording equipment. Area shoppers are also able to enjoy Guitar Center's multi-channel "endless aisle," which gives customers the ability to combine in-store, online and phone options to purchase music equipment from anywhere.

## Audio-Technica Honors Mavric Inc. with Its Samurai Award

Audio-Technica has recognized Mavric Incorporated with its Samurai Award for the 2020/2021 fiscal year, for representing Audio-Technica in the U.S. Southeast, covering Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, and Alabama.

Audio-Technica held an online awards ceremony to honor its manufacturer's representatives on November 1, 2021, on a dedicated Zoom conference. The A-T Samurai Award recipient was congratulated for outstanding sales performance and bestowed with Audio-Technica's beloved Samurai doll, which has since been sent to Mavric's corporate HQ. Mavric principal Pete Petty accepted the award, which was presented by Reid Peterson, Audio-Technica U.S. director of sales, professional markets.



Audio-Technica held an online awards ceremony to honor its manufacturer's representatives on November 1, 2021, on a dedicated Zoom conference. Pictured L-R: Jeff Beck (Audio-Technica U.S. Territory Manager), Pete Petty (Mavric principal, on screen) and Reid Peterson (Audio-Technica U.S. Director of Sales, Professional Markets). Mavric Incorporated was the recipient of the Audio-Technica Samurai Award for the 2020/2021 fiscal year

## Music China Postponed to October 2022

In light of the current pandemic situation in China, Music China, originally scheduled to take place in January 2022, has been postponed to October 26 – 29, 2022 at the same venue, the Shanghai New International Expo Centre. The move is in support of the government's anti-pandemic measures and will allow exhibitors and visitors to concentrate their resources more efficiently.

Due to recent COVID-19 cases in various provinces and cities around the country, the Chinese government has extended its pandemic containment measures. To support the government's prevention and control initiatives, the organizers have come to the decision to defer the show. The change will ensure that all participants can enjoy a safe trade fair, while it will also help exhibitors to channel their manpower and marketing resources into the October show, which is traditionally the annual timeslot for Music China.

## Musikmesse 2022: A Restart Featuring New Approaches

After an enforced absence due to the coronavirus pandemic, Musikmesse is scheduled to take place between April 29 April and May 1, 2022. A number of Musikmesse spin-offs will be taking place at the same time, some forming part of the supporting program: the Musikmesse Festival (April 28 to May 1), the Musikmesse Congress (April 28 to 29), Musikmesse Education (April 29 to May 1) and the B2C event Musikmesse Plaza (April 30 April to May 1). In response to requests from the sector, the schedule now overlaps with that of its sister event Prolight + Sound (April 26 to 29).

A restart like this is an ideal opportunity for change. As a result, Musikmesse 2022 is geared towards both B2B and B2C – an event that covers all aspects of making and consuming music. Wolfgang Weyand, director of Musikmesse and Musikmesse Festival: "As well as presenting all aspects of making music, it is an event that will appeal to anyone who is interested in music. No other show in Europe covers such a broad spectrum."

## Letter to the Editor

Just wanted to say FANTASTIC Editor's Note in the November edition of *MMR*. Great read for sure, and so true! I remember my first time in an actual studio with my bandmates. It was in 1994 at Out There Studio's in Belmont, California, which doesn't exist. It seems like a lifetime ago, and those recordings don't sound very good anymore. Like you, I "creak into old-age" as well, and with some degree of apprehension. And with some new toys similar to what you mentioned, right in my home, that are absolutely jaw dropping for music creation, re-

recording, and mixing. And they come with manuals that are ten times the size, and no longer printed on paper (honestly, I miss the paper manuals). I'll tell you what really has me spinning more than anything, though – spatial audio and Dolby Atmos. Seems like a whole new ball of wax for recording and mixing, and I haven't come close to mastering stereo. At least I can still play guitar, and I know you can too Mr. Wissmuller – that's the one constant that will never change!

Ian Cohen, President  
IGC Public Relations

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**ALLEN & HEATH**

## KHS America Donates \$100,000 in Instruments to Waverly, Tenn. School Bands Following Devastating Flooding

As recovery efforts in Humphreys County surpass the three-month mark following devastating flooding that killed 20 and destroyed hundreds of homes, 22-time Grammy Award winner Vince Gill and singer/songwriter Alex Hall were on hand at Waverly Central High School earlier this week to announce an uplifting surprise.

As Gill and Hall surprised a Monday morning student assembly with the news, KHS America revealed donation of

\$100,000 worth of musical instruments to completely replace and upgrade everything that the Waverly high school and junior high school bands lost in the recent flood.

KHS America, which was connected with band director Joseph Bullington as well as Gill and Hall via the CMA Foundation, donated over 40 instruments from their brands: Jupiter wind instruments, Majestic concert percussion (including



Vince Gill poses for a group photo with the students

concert toms, a concert bass drum and a concert snare drum, as well as a marimba and a xylophone), three XO Brass professional trombones and a Mapex drum set. Percussion tables and a bell stand from Hercules were also included.

The donation offered a moment of hope for a community still rebuilding from the tragedy that struck on August 21, with many residents still displaced from their homes. To contribute to ongoing recovery efforts via the United Way of Humphreys County, text 44321 to TNFLOODRELIEF.



### Neil Peart's Family Accepts 'Lifetime Achievement Award' on his Behalf at PASIC

Rush drummer Neil Peart was posthumously honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award at this year's Percussive Arts Society International Convention (PASIC) in Indianapolis on Thursday, November 11.

Peart's wife Carrie Nuttall and daughter Olivia accepted the award on his behalf at the event, where they were joined Chris Stankee, global director of artist relations for Sabian.

Peart died on January 7, 2020 in Santa Monica, California after a three-year battle with glioblastoma, an aggressive form of brain cancer. He was 67 years old.

Rush announced Peart's passing three days later, setting off shockwaves and an outpouring of grief from fans and musicians all over the world.

Rush's final show took place at the Forum in Los Angeles on August 1, 2015. Peart indicated at the time that he wanted to retire while he was still able to play well, along with a desire to spend more time at home with his young daughter.



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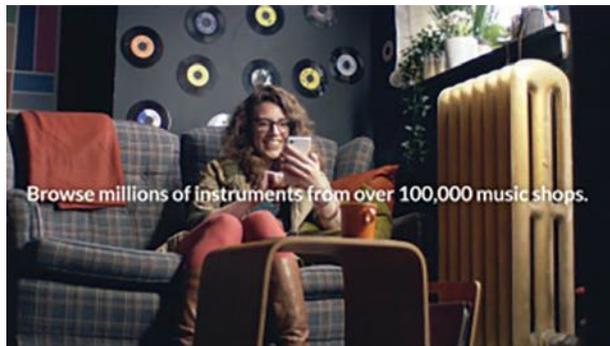


## Reverb Celebrates Sellers in First-ever Connected TV Campaign

In early November, Reverb announced that it launched its first-ever connected TV campaign in select markets, aimed at driving more buyers to Reverb sellers ahead of and during the busy holiday season. The “World’s Local Music Store” video campaign celebrates the Reverb seller community, which continued to see high demand for musical instruments online through the third quarter.

The “World’s Local Music Store” cam-

paign highlights how Reverb’s sellers help musicians find the perfect instrument, no matter where they’re located. Featuring Reverb sellers Evolution Music and Modern Music, the video underscores how Reverb helps sellers get their inventory in front of buyers all over the world.



Since the beginning of the year, music gear across categories has remained in demand on Reverb. When looking at January through September 2021, searches for synths and keyboards are up 34 percent year-over-year, which is notable given the popularity of all types of gear in 2020. During the same period, searches for pro audio equipment, recording gear, and guitars remained high. In fact, Reverb recorded over 4,500 searches for guitars for every hour from January to September of this year.

Last year, Reverb reported its most successful holiday season for sellers to date. As the 2021 holiday season approaches, Cho encourages sellers to get all of their inventory listed online now and to dedicate resources to communicating with customers early and often about the status of their orders. Offering “free shipping” and participating in Reverb’s upcoming holiday sales are also great ways to build customer loyalty, according to Cho. To add inventory to upcoming sales, head to the “selling” section of your Reverb dashboard and click “sales.”

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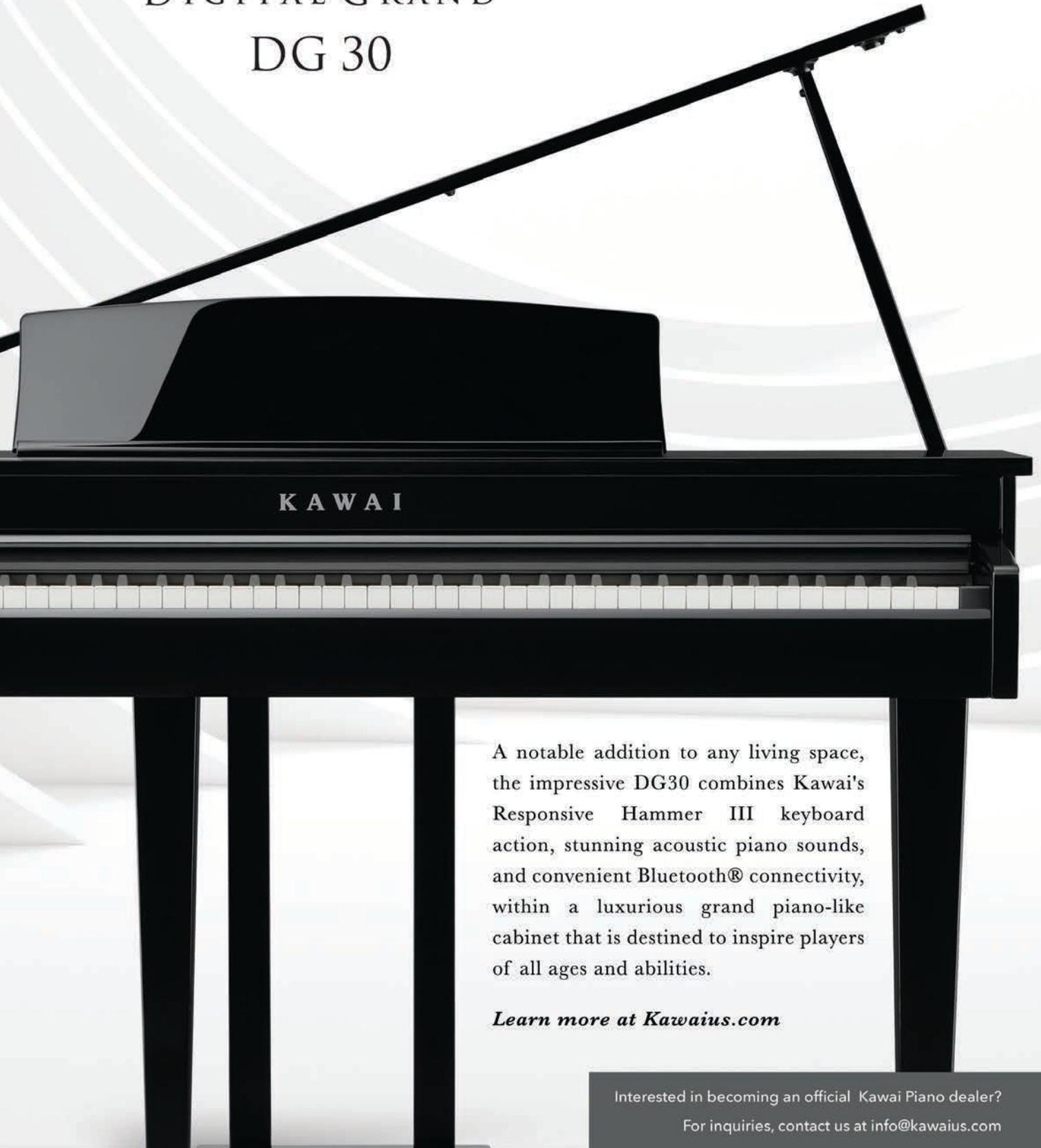


### NAMM Oral History Spotlight: Mike Lawson

Mike Lawson, publisher and owner of *MMR* and sister titles *School Band & Orchestra*, *JAZZed*, and *Choral Director* was recently interviewed for NAMM’s Oral History program. View the conversation by visiting <https://tinyurl.com/y9pye6>

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## TRADE REGRETS

On December 1, NAMM's Dan Del Fiorentino shared the following: We were informed by our dear friend Norm Zimmerman that **Dave Gantz** passed away yesterday after a battle with cancer. He was 69 years old.



Dave watched the Beatles on television and instantly he knew that he wanted

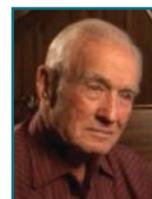
to play bass. Dave had many interesting adventures in music throughout the 1960s, including attending Woodstock. He later found a job at Steve's Music in Canada which resulted in a fulfilling career in music retail. One of the factors of this success was Dave's friendship with the founder, Steve Kirman. Steve was more than a boss and mentor to most of the staff, he was a friend. When Steve passed away, Dave, like so many in the store, took it upon themselves to grow and develop the store using the same attention to customer service and integrity as Steve had exemplified.

NAMM's Dan Del Fiorentino sent the following message on November 28: Long-time piano and organ saleswomen **Joy Collins** passed away. She was 86 years old.



Joy had a very successful career selling pianos and organs! In fact she may very well be the person who sold the most Allen Organs ever. Joy was hired by Glenn Davis, who owned a piano and organ store in Chicago, originally as a secretary but soon discovered selling was in her blood. She would take home her tasks as a secretary, such as letters and reports, and completed them over the weekend so she had time to sell instruments during the week days. She soon became a top salesperson for Mr. Davis. The company changed its name to The Beautiful Sound in 1978 when Mr. Davis passed away and Joy purchased the company. Under Joy's direction the company became the Steinway dealer for Chicago in the 1980s.

On November 28, NAMM's Dan Del Fiorentino posted the following: Texas piano retailer **Joe D McBrayer** passed away. He was 91 years old.



Joe D always took great pride in the craftsmanship he put into the servicing and restoration of pianos. In a career that began when he was a kid sweeping up the store, Joe D managed to do every job related to the buying, hauling, restoring and selling of pianos and organs. Ultimately, it was the piano technician element of the process that he enjoyed the most and he found the most fulfilling. Joe D brought in new product lines such as Baldwin into the store that his grandfather established in 1903 in west Texas. The skills his grandfather and father taught him, Joe D proudly passed along to his son, Eddie. While the industry changed and competition was much different from when he started, Joe D always felt customer care and providing a quality instrument was the key to his business and his way of life.

“

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# We did it!



Thank you.

**QSC**

## PEOPLE

**Universal Audio (UA)**, a worldwide leader in audio and music production products, today announced the hiring of Sandeep Gupta as chief operating officer. In this role, Gupta will oversee all aspects of UA's rapidly growing business, including its engineering, product, financial, sales, and marketing efforts. Reporting directly to CEO Bill Putnam Jr., Gupta brings 30 years of experience delivering industry-changing consumer and professional products to UA. For the last decade, Gupta worked at Amazon (AMZN) and most recently served as vice president and general manager for Amazon Fire TV.



To foster continued expansion, strengthen existing relationships and develop new markets, **L-Acoustics** has appointed industry veteran Timothy Zhou as CEO of L-Acoustics Asia Pacific and, this month, inaugurates a new regional office in Singapore. In addition to the creation of a new APAC hub, Zhou will also manage a growing team that is dedicated to serving local partners as well as building awareness of the brand's innovative technologies in key vertical markets, including those in residential and architectural applications. To accompany Zhou in his mission, L-Acoustics has named two key team members to director roles. Alvin Koh has been named director of application project, APAC supporting clients and projects across the region while David Cooper takes on the director of sales, APAC role and will relocate to Singapore to provide elevated support to clients. The team will nurture existing relationships with L-Acoustics partners while also developing business by creating new partnerships in key vertical and geographical markets.



The new regional office is located just a few kilometers away from Singapore's central business district, close to local partners in the nearby Lavender and Kallang areas, but also centrally located for partners and clients across Southeast Asia, where demand for L-Acoustics products is strong and growing. The L-Acoustics APAC office, located in the Lavender district in Singapore, opened on November 1st.

Austin Freshwater has been appointed as the next managing director of digital audio mixing console specialist, **DiGiCo**, effective immediately. The directors of DiGiCo's parent company, Audiotonix – which also oversees entertainment technology brands Allen & Heath, Calrec, DiGi-Grid, Group One Limited, KLANG:technologies, Solid State Logic, and newly-acquired Sound Devices LLC – made this decision thanks to Freshwater's unprecedented performance against the unpredictable landscape of the COVID-19 pandemic.



"We were talking about Austin moving into the MD position just before COVID-19 hit, by which time it didn't feel right for me to run off into the hills," says Audiotonix CEO James Gordon, who had made the role his own over the past 14 years. "I don't think it would have sent the right message to our customers and teams."

During the past 18 months, Freshwater stepped up behind the scenes when the unforeseen impact on live events took hold, presenting him with a huge challenge far sooner than anyone was expecting. "His performance and behavior over the last 18 months have been nothing short of phenomenal," continues Gordon. "He's done an amazing job in a company that, to be very honest, is used to winning all of the time."

### The Music People (TMP)

has announced the promotion of longtime employee Tom Tedesco to president and CEO. Sharon Hennessey and John Hennessey, current co-presidents, will be appointed chairwoman and chairman. Jam Industries, a leading value-added pro-AVL distributor in the US and global accessories supplier, which recently rebranded as Exertis | Jam, acquired TMP in 2020 and has facilitated TMP's continued growth and this opportunity. Over the years, Tom has worked his way up in the company, and in his most recent position of vice president of Sales and Business Development, led the company's continued growth in all the markets it serves domestically and globally.



John Hennessey, Sharon Hennessey, and Tom Tedesco

## TRADE REGRETS

On November 23, we received the following sad news from NAMM's Dan Del Fiorentino:



*I am sad to note the passing of music retailer **Ida Eleck**, who passed away on November 20.*

*Eleck worked alongside her husband who was a big band musician and band director who had the idea of opening a music store. Ida was thrilled with the idea as it gave her more time to be with her husband. They called it Royalton Music Center, which is located in North Royalton, Ohio. She soon ran the store while he was on the road and focused on the bookkeeping. Their daughter took over the business as Ida continued to focus on the books and watching her granddaughter, who grew up in the business. The company expanded to a second store and was able to cover a larger school program base. When Ida's husband and later her daughter passed away, she trained her granddaughter to help her run the store.*

On November 9, NAMM's Dan Del Fiorentino shared the following:



*The piano world lost a dear friend yesterday. **Cecil Ramirez** passed away from pancreatic cancer that he fought so hard against. He was just 60 years old.*

*Cecil started in the music industry in retail, working at the Music Box in Lodi, California. He created a keyboard studio feel within the store in 1983, which was an exciting time of technological advances in electronic instrumentation. Cecil remembered the early days of MIDI and the synthesizer boom. He later worked as a film composer before landing a sales position in a piano store in the Sacramento area, which brought him back to the instrument he most identified with. While at the store he began selling the PianoDisc products, which were owned by the same company that owns Mason & Hamlin Pianos. Cecil was hired by PianoDisc in 1996 and grew within the company to become the national sales rep for Mason & Hamlin. Throughout his life, Cecil created countless friendship with those drawn to his integrity, humor and passion for all things music.*

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PearlRiverUSA.com



John Hopkins

# A Conversation with Sweetwater's New CEO, John Hopkins

By Christian Wissmuller

This past July, it was announced that Sweetwater's founder and longtime CEO Chuck Surack would be stepping down from his position. As Surack pivoted to the role of chairman of the Sweetwater board, the organization's former vice president and COO, John Hopkins, assumed the role of CEO. These moves followed Providence Equity Partners, an investment firm based in Providence, Rhode Island, having become majority owner of Sweetwater earlier in the summer.

MMR had the opportunity to chat with Hopkins about the recent developments at the Fort Wayne, Indiana-based MI retail giant, how the changes have (or, more accurately, haven't) impacted those doing business with the company, and his expectations for the coming months.

**Can you talk a little about your own background prior to Sweetwater? What was your background in MI retail?**

I was in the heating and air conditioning business in the state of Delaware for about 15 years. In the late '80s I started buying gear from Chuck for my wife who is a pianist and teacher with a Masters in Piano Pedagogy. I sold the HVAC business in 1992 and my family and I moved to Fort Wayne in order to join Sweetwater as a sales engineer. A few years later I became COO and worked alongside Chuck until he became chairman of the board this past summer. It has been an amazing 30 years here in the MI retail world!

**Both you and Chuck were – and remain – senior officers in Sweetwater management. In practical terms, how has the change in leadership and new ownership impacted things over at Sweetwater? Is this a seismic shift or more of a barely noticeable wrinkle?**

I really doubt anyone – customers, vendors, or employees – has noticed any change at all. The "shift" in leadership has been so mi-

nor because of my, and the entire leadership team's, long tenure here. There have been no changes in leadership at all, other than Chuck stepping up to chairman and my title changing. Our commitment to customers has always been foundational to Sweetwater's business model and that certainly isn't changing.

**During pandemic-related lockdowns and for other reasons, certain market segments within MI – fretted instruments, home recording and live-streaming equipment, et cetera – have seen soaring sales, particularly via online commerce. As the nation's largest online MI retailer, how has Sweetwater been faring in the past 20 or so months?**

The last 18 to 20 months have been tumultuous, for sure. Fortunately, we were uniquely positioned to handle some of the challenges that the pandemic introduced. For one, our new 500,000 square foot distribution center opened in mid-February of 2020, and we had been building inventory to fill the facility. When sales skyrocketed, we were able to keep up with the increased demand. Since then, we have experienced year-over-year growth every month. During these challenging and uncertain times, we are thrilled that we've been able to be a stabilizing force for our employees, our vendors, and our customers.

**Sweetwater hosted a job fair on October 21 with the goal of filling nearly 100 positions. Is this a byproduct of the company's ongoing growth, the widely reported difficulty many organizations are currently having with respect to attracting and retaining employees, or both?**

The most recent job fair was a byproduct of continued growth. We have experienced little turnover and good employee retention rates, so the new jobs are just an effort to keep up with growing demand, especially as we headed into Black Friday, Cyber Monday, and the holiday shopping season.

“During these challenging and uncertain times, we are thrilled that we’ve been able to be a stabilizing force for our employees, our vendors, and our customers.”



**Are there any other developments on the horizon at Sweetwater that you’d like to draw MMR readers’ attention to?**

We are very excited about our new relationship with Providence Equity Partners and how it will allow us to accelerate some growth initiatives that we have been working on for quite some time. It’s been great to see so many people explore or reconnect with music during the pandemic, and we want to do everything we can to continue to help those people realize their musical dreams, whatever they are.

One of the ways we’re doing that was with the November 1 launch of band & orchestra instrument sales nationwide. Our customers can already purchase guitars, drums, audio interfaces, microphones, and much more by going to our website or working with our highly trained sales engineers. Now, they’re also able to get their band & orchestra needs met by a company they already know and trust.

**Expectations for 2022 – for both the MI industry, at large, and Sweetwater?**

Six months ago, I would have said that I think the current supply chain disruptions will be resolved by the end of the first quarter of 2022, but now my belief is that we’ll continue to see constraints through the end of next year. That will be one of the big challenges for all of us in the retail industry. We’ll do everything we can to mitigate those issues, but I expect there to be a strain for the foreseeable future. That said, I think the future for our industry – and Sweetwater – is very bright. I’m so thrilled that such a huge number of people have turned to music during this time and I’ve had so many conversations with people for whom making music has truly helped through difficult situations in deep, emotional ways. It is a blessing to be in an industry that can have such a profound impact on people’s lives. 🎸🎹



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[km-america.com](http://km-america.com)

# 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Dealers' Choice Awards

By Christian Wissmuller

## PRODUCT OF THE YEAR: ALLEN & HEATH AVANTIS



### ALLEN & HEATH

With a fourth consecutive lap around the winner's circle for Allen & Heath's wildly popular mixers, it's looking more and more like a decisive stranglehold in this most sought-after DCA category. Drawing upon horsepower provided by the XCVI Core (25 billion operations per second), developed by Allen & Heath using next-gen FPGA, Avantis delivers 64 full processing inputs and 12 stereo FX returns, 42 bus with configurable mix architecture, a nearly limitless mix headroom courtesy of a 96bit accumulator, variable bit depth, and unbeaten latency (.7ms) – all at a price-point well below most of the competition.

Whether serving as the sound reinforcement backbone of major live performing acts, network television broadcasts, theater productions around the globe, or the local high school, Allen & Heath's Avantis is the go-to product for many industry professionals. Mid-2021 saw the release of Avantis firmware V1.1, a major upgrade featuring Avantis Director software, new dPack processors, and workflow improvements. To borrow a phrase from the company, itself: with all these features at a reasonable retail price and boasting impeccable build quality, the Allen & Heath Avantis truly does represent "a small step to a giant leap."

[allen-heath.com](http://allen-heath.com)

## ACCESSORY LINE OF THE YEAR: GATOR CASES



### GATORCASES

It takes a lot to unseat a long-running winner in any category, but Gator had the goods (literally!) to do so in 2021 and MI retailers handed the company a decisive win in this crowded group. In addition to offering what you'd likely expect – cases, stands, pedalboards, power supplies, and the like – Gator has also emerged as

a pioneer in the development of face masks and instrument bell covers, allowing both student musicians and professional performers to continue to hone and share their craft during these challenging times.

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

## ACOUSTIC GUITAR OF THE YEAR: MARTIN D-35



Versatile, powerful, gorgeous – the classic Martin D-35 took home top honors this year as “Acoustic Guitar of the Year,” according to MI retailers who took part in the 2021 DCA voting. The iconic Dreadnaught shape, expressive East Indian rosewood, Sitka spruce, and antique white binding combine to make this looker an icon (Hey, are you going to take issue with Johnny Cash’s guitar of choice?), plus the quarter-inch straight bracing gives the D-35 balance and potency that owners of other acoustic six-strings can only dream of.



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

## ACOUSTIC PIANO LINE OF THE YEAR: STEINWAY & SONS



STEINWAY & SONS

Once more, retailers singled out what is, for many, the only high-end piano brand worth discussing. While the flagship Steinway line gets the majority of the spotlight, the company also offers the popular Boston and Essex lines, providing lower-cost options for discerning customers.

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

## AMPLIFIER OF THE YEAR: FENDER



# Fender®

Another repeat winner, as we noted last year, "Fender amps are tough to beat." While you can't go wrong with the classics – Princeton, '68 Custom Deluxe Reverb, Twin, Hot Rod Deluxe, Blues Junior IV, et cetera – FMIC also produces impressively cutting-edge models such as the Mustang LT-25, Mustang Micro (what a fantastic headphone amp!), Acoustasonic, and others that appeal to players of all experience levels and budgets.

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

## BAND &amp; ORCHESTRA LINE OF THE YEAR: BUFFET CRAMPON



## BUFFET CRAMPON

With an impressive line of finely crafted clarinets (global market leader in the production of clarinets of the Boehm system), saxophones, oboes, bassoon, and English horn, as well as a highly regarded selection of accessories, it's no surprise that Buffet Crampon walked away with a commanding win in this group. Add to that a number of other sought-after brands that exist under the "Buffet Crampon umbrella" – Verne Q. Powell, Besson, and Rigoutat, to name just a few – and it becomes even more clear why this brand was the top B&O vote-getter in 2021.



[www.buffet-crampon.com](http://www.buffet-crampon.com)

## DJ LINE OF THE YEAR: PIONEER DJ



**Pioneer Dj**

"DJ Line of the Year" is consistently an extremely tight race and 2021 was no exception. In the end, though, Pioneer DJ's extensive line of popular mixers, decks, all-in-one consoles, software controllers, effects, headphones, and accessories tipped the scales in the brand's favor. In particular, retailers pointed to recent introductions such as the XDJ-RX3 and DJM-S11 as resonating with end-users.



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

## ELECTRIC BASS OF THE YEAR: FENDER PLAYER SERIES



**Fender**



About six years ago, we started seeing some major shakeups at Fender. Gone was the long-running American Standard Series in favor of the newly minted American Professional and, a couple years later, we all said via con Dios to what had been "Mexican Standards" and greeted the Player Series. While these instruments represent an entry-point to the Fender brand, they are

no cheap-o "beginner" instruments. Fender Player Series basses connect with less experienced (or well-heeled) players, sure, but these are quality products that also tick the boxes for pros seeking a solid backup model, modders who want a good starting point to jump off from, or anyone interested in expanding their sonic palette by adding another killer axe to the arsenal.

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

## ELECTRIC GUITAR OF THE YEAR: GIBSON LES PAUL SPECIAL TRIBUTE



The iconic Gibson logo, featuring the brand name in a large, black, cursive script font.



In case there had been any question (there really hadn't been), with this DCA win for "Electric Guitar of the Year," it's official: Gibson's back! Since the fall of 2018, the storied brand has aggressively embraced a commitment to quality control and a renewed enthusiasm for working hand-in-hand with dealers. Retailers have taken note and, this year, singled out the Les Paul Special Tribute

as being top of its class. With a classic silhouette, four elegant finishes, growling P-90s or rich open-coil humbuckers, a rounded profile maple neck (speedy!), and rosewood fingerboard – and an impressive MRSP (\$999) – it's no surprise this gorgeous gal walked away with the trophy.

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

## HOME DIGITAL KEYBOARD OF THE YEAR: CASIO PX-S SERIES



The Casio logo, featuring the brand name in a large, bold, blue, sans-serif font with a registered trademark symbol.

A clean and stylish design, rich and versatile sound library, Bluetooth® connectivity, use with the Chordana Play for Piano app, and other popular features, it's easy to see why MI dealers rallied behind Casio's impressive PX-S Series. But the voters weren't done handing out accolades to the brand...



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

## PRO DIGITAL KEYBOARD LINE OF THE YEAR: CASIO PRIVIA SERIES



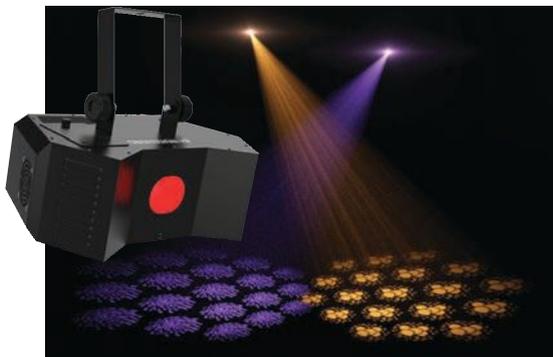
# CASIO®

2021 was a big year for Casio, with retailers stepping up in record numbers to sing the brand's praises in the Dealers' Choice Awards voting. From "world's slimmest" 88-key digital keyboards (PX-S3100 and PX-S1100) to more traditional consoles (PX-870 and PX-770) and beyond, the Privia Series truly offers

something for every performer. Need a touch panel? The PX-560's got you covered. How about 370 tones, including Hex Layer Sounds? Casio's PX-55 can provide in that department. Traditionally, "Pro Digital Keyboard Line of the Year" is hotly contested, but the Casio Privia Series was absolutely the clear winner this year.

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

## LIGHTING LINE OF THE YEAR: CHAUVET DJ



# CHAUVET®

This 2021 win means that Chauvet DJ is only one year away from a solid decade of dominance in this category. While the world of live performance and entertainment still struggles to navigate an ever-changing landscape of partial lockdowns, attendance restrictions, and mandates, the folks at Chauvet DJ continue to provide unique and creative solutions that are helping to keep the lights on – no joke! – at venues of all sizes across the nation and the globe.



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

## MICROPHONE LINE OF THE YEAR: SHURE



**SHURE**

You'll find SM57s and SM58s on pretty much every stage and in nearly every recording studio in the world. Back in the middle of the last century, the Unidyne series defined an entire generation – both sonically and visually – while, more recently, the MV7 is one of the go-to pieces of gear for nearly everyone who hosts a podcast. "Microphone Line of the Year" is a competitive field, no question, but nobody's surprised whenever Shure gets the nod from DCA voters.



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

## PERCUSSION LINE OF THE YEAR: DW



**drums**  
**dw**



In what's looking more and more like an authoritative streak, DW once again wins in this competitive category for the third year in a row. Interestingly, their closest competition in the 2021 Dealers' Choice Awards voting was Gretsch Drums – also within the larger "Drum Workshop family." It sure seems like they're doing

something right over in Oxnard, California. Heck, it's certainly no coincidence that the likes of Dave Grohl, Chad Smith, and Sheila E. have embraced the DW brand. We'll have to wait until next year to see if anyone has the goods to unseat the reigning champion, or whether DW lands in the winner's circle once again in 2022.

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

## PRINT MUSIC PUBLISHER OF THE YEAR: HAL LEONARD



What's there to say (or write) that hasn't already been said/written? Seriously – help a brother out, here. I've been cobbling together similar “blurbs” about this company winning “Print Music Publisher of the Year” for 20(!) years now and, I gotta be honest: I'm running out of synonyms and (vaguely) creative re-wordings. In addition to fielding a staggeringly huge

library of print titles, Hal Leonard also embraces streaming, digital books, interactive learning tools, and more. As they're the only brand to win this category in the entire history of the Dealers' Choice Awards, it'd be easy to become cynical or even bored by yet another victory lap – except they're so obviously deserving. Congrats once again, Hal Leonard.

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

## RECORDING PRODUCT LINE OF THE YEAR: PRESONUS



While the big news, of late, has been the announcement that Fender would be acquiring PreSonus Audio Electronics, the “other” big news is that PreSonus is once again a DCA winner. Offerings such as the Quantum 2626 provide superior sound, enviable speed, and unmatched round-trip latency (<1 ms) of any available audio interface, while products such as the Revelator USB microphone provide intuitive, professional solutions for the burgeoning livestreaming/podcasting market.

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

## SOUND REINFORCEMENT LINE OF THE YEAR: QSC



**QSC**™



Live performance and entertainment may not have rebounded *quite* to the degree that many had hoped in 2021, but this past year unquestionably represented an improved landscape for those endeavors. While booking agents, club managers, touring acts, and fans wrestled with changing realities and restric-

tions from region to region, QSC was there to provide some consistency amidst the chaos. With battle-tested loudspeakers, power amps, digital mixers, signal processors, software, and more, the brand sets the bar for empowering in-person audio experiences.

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

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# We're Monitoring the Situation

Studio Monitor Sales in 2021 By Christian Wissmuller

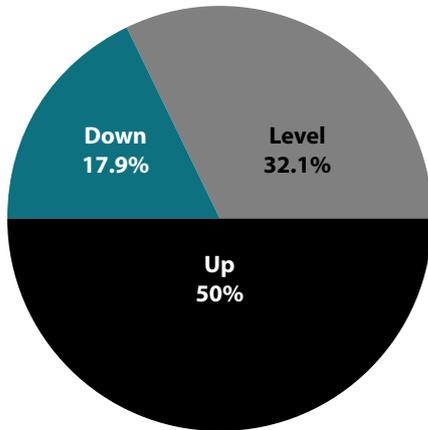
The surge in home recording that began in the very early days of the pandemic continues unabated. Naturally, independent music creators – of all experience levels and budgets – need to actually hear what they're producing and most very quickly come to the conclusion that relying on headphones, alone, simply won't cut it when crafting a mix.

Whether small nearfield models, larger tri-amped models, or anywhere in between, studio monitors are an essential tool for home studios or upscale production houses, alike. Smaller reference monitors allow users to get a quick take on what the average consumer's perspective might be, but the general goal of monitors is to provide as flat, uncolored, and "unaided" a sound as possible. You want to hear everything in the mix, warts and all, so that you're getting a true perspective of the performances and sounds you've captured and you can work accordingly.

MMR recently polled over 400 MI retailers on the topic of studio monitors and, not surprisingly, almost 85 percent (82.1%) reported that sales of such items are either up or level when compared to this same time of year in 2020. Also unsurprisingly, nearly all observe that their customers prefer powered units (or "active" monitors) to unpowered studio monitors. The latter are something of an anachronism these days, although "passive" monitors do present some advantages: because they require a separate power amp, they allow for some flexibility in choosing components and setting up multi-speaker arrays; unpowered monitors usually have crossover circuitry for splitting high and low frequencies; and for those who already own a power amplifier for their studio, these models typically represent a price advantage.

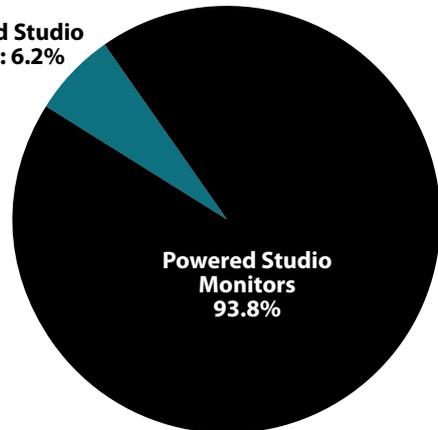
Read on to see what brands are ringing the registers across the land.

When compared to fall of 2020, sales of studio monitors at your store are...

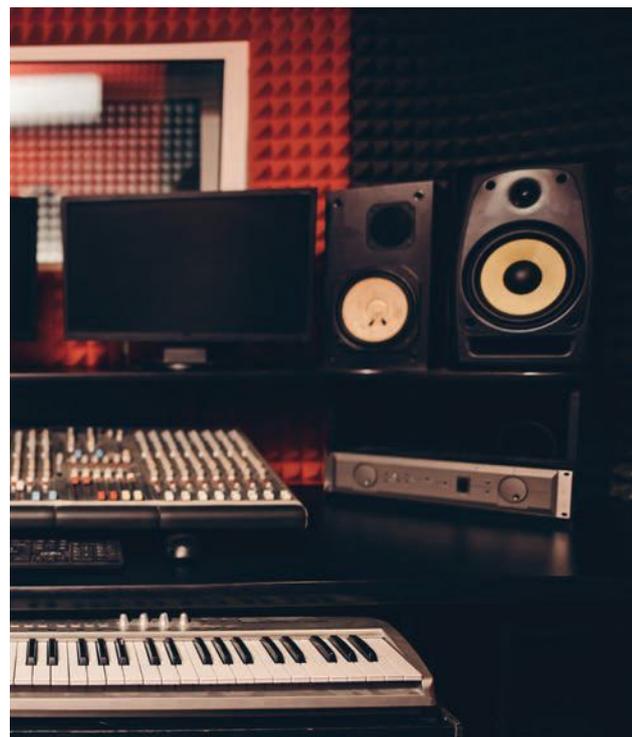
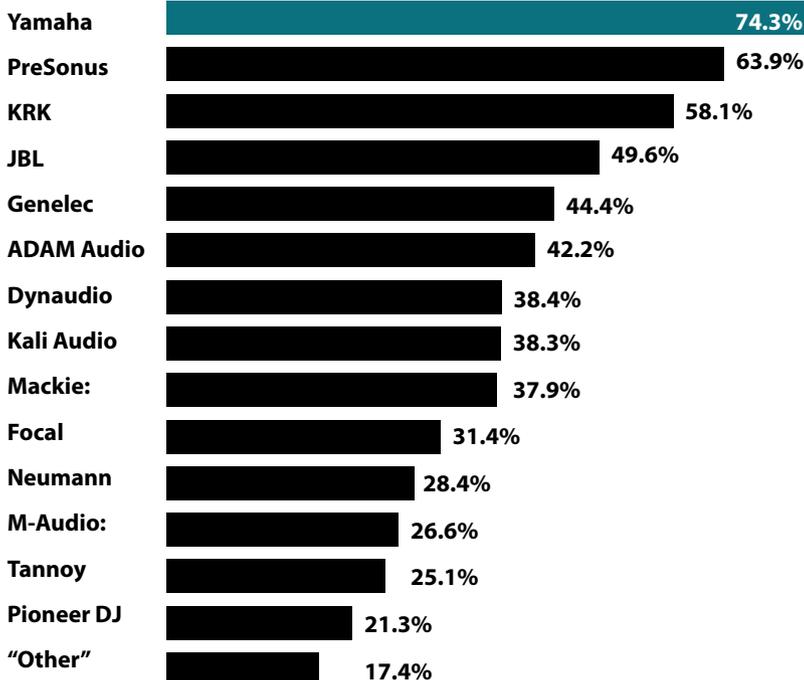


What types of monitors are most popular with your customers?

Unpowered Studio Monitors: 6.2%



Which brands are generating the most profit for your operation?



40<sup>th</sup>Annual America's  
Top Music Chains

<b>PO</b>	Piano/Organ
<b>P</b>	Piano
<b>DP</b>	Digital Piano
<b>BO</b>	Band & Orchestra
<b>PC</b>	Percussion
<b>FA</b>	Fretted Instruments/ Amplification
<b>SR</b>	Sound Reinforcement/ Recording Equipment
<b>EK</b>	Electronic Keyboard
<b>PM</b>	Print Music
<b>DJ</b>	DJ Equipment
<b>LT</b>	Lighting
<b>IN</b>	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 filled in contact information and store-counts based on data available to our research team.

**The Guitar Center Company**

PO, P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, IN, PM  
(Including Music & Arts)

Total Units	530
Opened '21	N/A
Closed '21	N/A
Volume (est. '21)	N/A
5795 Lindero Canyon Rd., Westlake Village, Calif. 91362	
(818) 735-8800	
media@guitarcenter.com	
www.guitarcenter.com	
CEO: Ron Japinga	

**Sam Ash Music Corp.**

DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, PM

Total Units	47
Opened '21	0
Closed '21	0
Volume (est. '21)	N/A
278 Duffy Drive, Hicksville, N.Y. 11802	
(516) 932-6400	
sammy@samash.com	
www.samash.com	
CEO: Richard Ash	

**Music Go Round**

DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT

Total Units	37
Opened '21	0
Closed '21	0
Volume (est. '21)	\$38 MM
605 Hwy 169 N #400, Minneapolis, Minn.	

55441  
(763) 520-8500  
tkletti@musicgoround.com  
www.musicgoround.com  
Brand Director: Tim Kletti

<b>Steinway &amp; Sons</b>	P
Total Units	15
Opened '21	N/A
Closed '21	N/A
Volume (est. '21)	N/A
One Steinway Place, Astoria, N.Y. 11105	
(718) 721-2600	
info@steinway.com	
www.steinway.com	
CEO: Ben Steiner	

**Schmitt Music Co.**

P, DP, SR, EK, PC, BO, FA, PM

Total Units	13
Opened '21	1
Closed '21	0
Volume (est. '21)	N/A
Butler Square, 2400 Freeway Blvd., Brook- lyn Center, Minn. 55430	
(763) 566-4560	
tom.schmitt@schmittmusic.com	
www.schmittmusic.com	
CEO: Tom Schmitt	

<b>J.W. Pepper &amp; Son, Inc.</b>	PM
Total Units	12
Opened '21	0
Closed '21	1
Volume (est. '21)	N/A
191 Sheree Blvd., Exton, PA 19341	
(610) 648-0500	
lpaynter@jwpepper.com	
www.jwpepper.com	
CEO: Glenn Burtch	

<b>Brook Mays/H&amp;H Music</b>	BO, PC
Total Units	9
Opened '21	0
Closed '21	0
Volume (est. '21)	\$19+ MM
8605 John Carpenter Frwy., Dallas, Texas	
75247	
(214) 498-8981	
billeveritt@brookmays.com	
www.brookmays.com	
CEO: Bill Everitt	

<b>Piano Distributors</b>	P, DP
Total Units	9
Opened '21	0
Closed '21	0
Volume (est. '21)	N/A
1475 12th St. E., Palmetto, Fla. 34221	
(941) 729-5047	

fharvey@pianodistributors.com  
www.pianodistributors.com  
CEO: Sandy Boyce

<b>Eckroth Music Co.</b>	P, DP, BO, FA, PC
Total Units	9
Opened '21	0
Closed '21	0
Volume (est. '21)	\$15 MM
1655 N. Grandview Lane, 102, Bismarck, N.D. 58503	
(701) 223-5320	
jeff@eckroth.com	
www.eckroth.com	
CEO: Jeffrey Eckroth	

**Menchey Music Service**

P, DP, BO, FA, EK, PM

Total Units	9
Opened '21	0
Closed '21	0
Volume (est. '21)	N/A
PO Box 474, 9 Barnhart Drive, Hanover, Pa. 17331	
(717) 637-2185	
jmenchey@menchey.com	
www.mencheymusic.com	
President: Joel Menchey	

<b>Quinlan &amp; Fabish Music</b>	BO, PC, PM
Total Units	9
Opened '21	0
Closed '21	0
Volume (est. '21)	N/A
6827 High Grove Blvd., Burr Ridge, Ill. 60527	
(630) 654-4111	
ggjr@qandf.com www.qandf.com	
CEO: George Quinlan, Jr.	

<b>Bertrand's Music</b>	DP, BO, FA, EK, PM
Total Units	8
Opened '21	0
Closed '21	0
Volume (est. '21)	N/A
9906 Carmel Mountain Rd., Rancho Penas- quitos, Calif. 92129	
(888) 780-1812	
www.bertrandmusic.com	
CEO: John Bertrand, Sr.	

<b>Palen Music Center</b>	PC, FA, SR, EK, PM
Total Units	8
Opened '21	0
Closed '21	0
Volume (est. '21)	N/A
1560 E. Raynell Pl., Springfield, Mo. 65804	
(417) 882-7000	
www.palenmusic.com	
CEO: Brett Palen	

**George's Music Stores**

DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, PM  
 Total Units 7  
 Opened '21 0  
 Closed '21 1  
 Volume (est. '21) N/A  
 650 W. Swedesford Rd., Berwyn, Pa. 19312  
 (610) 993-3110  
 www.georgesmusic.com  
 CEO: George Hines

**Fletcher Music Centers**

PO  
 Total Units 7  
 Opened '21 0  
 Closed '21 0  
 Volume (est. '21) N/A  
 12717 59th Way N., Clearwater, Fla. 33760  
 (727) 571-1088  
 Jriley@fletchermusic.com  
 www.fletchermusic.com  
 CEO: John K. Riley

**Marshall Music Co.**

PO, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, PM  
 Total Units 7  
 Opened '21 0  
 Closed '21 0  
 Volume (est. '21) N/A  
 3240 E. Saginaw St., Lansing, Mich. 48912  
 (517) 337-9700  
 info@marshallmusic.com  
 www.marshallmusic.com  
 CEO: Dan Marshall

**Jacobs Music**

P, DP  
 Total Units 7  
 Opened '21 0  
 Closed '21 0  
 Volume (est. '21) N/A  
 1718 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19103  
 (215) 568-7800  
 chris@jacobsmusiccompany.com  
 www.jacobsmusic.com  
 President: Chris Rinaldi

**Nick Rail Music**

DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, PM  
 Total Units 7  
 Opened '21 0  
 Closed '21 0  
 Volume (est. '21) N/A  
 2801 De La Vina St., Santa Barbara, Calif.  
 93105  
 (805) 569-5353  
 laura@nickrailmusic.com  
 www.nickrailmusic.com  
 CEO: Laura Penrose

**Ted Brown Music Co.**

BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT IN, PM  
 Total Units 6  
 Opened '21 0  
 Closed '21 0  
 Volume (est. '21) \$13 MM  
 6228 Tacoma Mall Blvd., Tacoma, Wash.  
 98409  
 (253) 272-3211  
 stephanie@tedbrownmusic.com  
 www.tedbrownmusic.com  
 CEO: Whitney B. Grisaffi

**Saied Music**

P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, PM  
 Total Units 6  
 Opened '21 0  
 Closed '21 0  
 Volume (est. '21) N/A  
 3259 S. Yale Ave., Tulsa, Okla. 74135  
 (918) 742-5541  
 info@saiedmusic.com  
 www.saiedmusic.com  
 CEO: Bob Saied

**Frank Rieman, Inc.**

P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, PM  
 Total Units 6  
 Opened '21 0  
 Closed '21 0  
 Volume (est. '21) \$10 MM  
 4420 E. Broadway, Des Moines, Iowa 50317  
 (515) 262-0365  
 davek@riemans.com  
 www.riemanmusic.com  
 CEO: Pam Donahue

**Tarpley Music Co.**

P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, LT, IN, PM  
 Total Units 6  
 Opened '21 0  
 Closed '21 0  
 Volume (est. '21) \$11 MM  
 2420 Commerce, Amarillo, Texas 79109  
 (806) 355-0795  
 john@tarpleymusic.com  
 www.tarpleymusic.com  
 CEOs: David Tarpley & John Tarpley

**Rettig Music**

BO, PM  
 Total Units 6  
 Opened '21 0  
 Closed '21 0  
 Volume (est. '21) N/A  
 6323 Sawmill Rd., Dublin, Ohio 43017  
 (614) 792-2100  
 www.rettigmusic.com

**White House of Music**

DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, PM  
 Total Units 5  
 Opened '21 0  
 Closed '21 1  
 Volume (est. '21) N/A  
 2101 Springdale Rd., Waukesha, Wis.  
 53186  
 (262) 798-9700  
 chris@whitehouseofmusic.com  
 www.whitehouseofmusic.com  
 CEO: Christopher White

**Music Exchange**

PO, P, DP  
 Total Units 5  
 Opened '21 0  
 Closed '21 0  
 Volume (est. '21) 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 '21 0  
 Closed '21 0  
 Volume (est. '21) N/A  
 119 Cobb Pkwy. N., Ste. A, Marietta, Ga.  
 30062  
 (770) 427-2491  
 kenstantonmusic@kenstanton.com  
 www.kenstanton.com  
 CEO: Kenny Stanton

**Heid Music**

P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, PM  
 Total Units 5  
 Opened '21 0  
 Closed '21 0  
 Volume (est. '21) \$11 MM  
 308 E. College Ave., Appleton, Wis. 54911  
 (920) 734-1969  
 dede.heid@heidmusic.com  
 www.heidmusic.com  
 CEO: Todd Heid

**Springfield Music**

BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, LT, PM  
 Total Units 5  
 Opened '21 0  
 Closed '21 0  
 Volume (est. '21) \$8 MM  
 1902 E. Meadowmere, Springfield, Missouri  
 65804  
 (417) 832-1665  
 amanda@springfield-music.com  
 www.springfieldmusic.com  
 President: Donovan Bankhead

**Willis Music Co.**

P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, LT, PM  
 Total Units 5  
 Opened '21 0  
 Closed '21 0  
 Volume (est. '21) N/A  
 7380 Industrial Road, Florence, Ky. 41042  
 (859) 283-2050  
 kevinc@willismusic.com  
 www.willismusic.com  
 CEO: Kevin Cranley

**Portland Music Co.**

DP, BO, PC, FA, SR, EK, PM  
 Total Units 5  
 Opened '21 0  
 Closed '21 0  
 Volume (est. '21) N/A  
 16610 SE McLoughlin Blvd., Milwaukie,  
 Ore. 97267  
 (503) 226-3719  
 mtaylor@spiritone.com  
 www.portlandmusiccompany.com  
 CEO: Mark Taylor

**West Music Co.**

P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, IN, PM  
 Total Units 4  
 Opened '21 0  
 Closed '21 2  
 Volume (est. '21) \$45 MM  
 1212 5th Street, Coralville, Iowa 52241  
 (319) 351-2000

# topchains

rwalenta@westmusic.com  
www.westmusic.com  
CEO: Robin Walenta

**Kennelly Keys** DP, PC, BO, FA, SR, EK, PM  
Total Units 4  
Opened '21 0  
Closed '21 1  
Volume (est. '21) N/A  
4918 196th St. SW, Lynwood, Wash. 98036  
(425) 771-7020 info@kennellykeysmusic.com  
www.kennellykeysmusic.com  
CEO: William J. Kennelly

**Collins Music Center**  
PO, P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, IN, PM  
Total Units 4  
Opened '21 0  
Closed '21 0  
Volume (est. '21) N/A  
706 W. Jackson, El Campo, Texas 77437  
(800) 365-9815 randy@collinsmusiccenter.com  
www.collinsmusiccenter.com  
CEO: Randy Collins

**Robert M. Sides Family Music Center**  
PO, P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, IN, PM  
Total Units 4  
Opened '21 0  
Closed '21 0  
Volume (est. '21) \$8 MM  
201 Mullberry St., Williamsport, Pa. 17701  
(570) 326-2094  
psides@rmsides.com  
www.rmsides.com  
President: Peter Sides

**C&M Music Center**  
DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, IN, PM  
Total Units 4  
Opened '21 0  
Closed '21 0  
Volume (est. '21) N/A  
2515 Williams Blvd., Kenner, La. 70062  
(504) 468-8688  
cnaill4cmmusic@yahoo.com  
www.candmmusic.com  
CEO: Chris Nail & Melvin Volz, Jr.

**Dietze Music** P, DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, PM  
Total Units 4  
Opened '21 0  
Closed '21 0  
Volume (est. '21) \$8 MM  
5555 S 48th St., Lincoln, Neb. 68516  
(402) 434-7454  
tp Pratt@dietzemusic.com  
www.dietzemusic.com  
CEO: Tim Pratt

**Keyboard Concepts** P, DP, PM  
Total Units 4  
Opened '21 0  
Closed '21 0  
Volume (est. '21) N/A  
5539 Van Nuys Blvd., Sherman Oaks, Calif. 91041  
(818) 787-0201  
Dennis.Hagerty@keyboardconcepts.com  
www.keyboardconcepts.com  
CEO: Dennis Hagerty

**Portman's Music** BO, PC, FA, SR, EK,  
Total Units 4  
Opened '21 0  
Closed '21 0  
Volume (est. '21) N/A  
7650 Abercorn St., Savannah, Ga. 31406  
(912) 354-1500  
www.portmansmusic.com  
CEO: Jerry Portman

**C.A. House Music** P, DP, BO, FA, EK, PC, PM  
Total Units 4  
Opened '21 0  
Closed '21 0  
Volume (est. '21) N/A  
3700 Cavalier Cir., Parkersburg, W. Va. 26104  
(304) 422-4676  
www.cahousemusic.com  
General Manager: Steve Ceo

**Jackson's Music** P, DP, BO, FA, PC, EK, SR  
Total Units 4  
Opened '21 0  
Closed '21 0  
Volume (est. '21) N/A  
1409 S. Stratford Rd., Winston-Salem, N.C. 27103  
(336) 760-9635  
www.jacksonsmusic.com  
CEO: Douglas J. Dryden

**Steinway Hall - Dallas** P  
Total Units 4  
Opened '21 0  
Closed '21 0  
Volume (est. '21) N/A  
5301 N. Central Expressway, Dallas, Texas 75205  
(214) 526-1853  
showrooms@steinwaypianos.com  
www.steinwaypianos.com  
CEO: Danny Saliba

**N Tune Music & Sound**  
P, DP, BO, FA, EK, PC, LT, IN  
Total Units 4  
Opened '21 0  
Closed '21 0  
Volume (est. '21) \$6.8 MM  
1141 E. 42nd St., Odessa, Texas 79762  
(432) 362-1164  
tjones@ntunemusic.com  
www.ntunemusic.com  
CEO: Tim Jones

**Riverton Music, Inc.**  
DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, IN, PM  
Total Units 4  
Opened '21 0  
Closed '21 0  
Volume (est. '21) N/A  
7742 S Campus View Dr., Ste. B-110, West Jordan, Utah 84120  
(801) 969-4358  
leifn@rivertonmusic.com  
www.rivertonmusic.com  
CEO: Kevin Rindlisbacher

**Evola Music Center** PO, P, DP, BO, PM  
Total Units 3  
Opened '21 0  
Closed '21 1  
Volume (est. '21) N/A  
2184 S. Telegraph Rd., Bloomfield Hills, Mich. 48302  
(248) 334-0566  
www.evola.com  
CEO: Jim Evola

**Williamson Music 1st** BO, PC, FA  
Total Units 3  
Opened '21 0  
Closed '21 0  
Volume (est. '21) N/A  
1301 K Ave., Plano, Texas 75074  
(972) 516-1331  
www.wm1st.com  
CEO: Brian Henderson

**Piano Gallery** PO, P, DP, EK, PM  
Total Units 3  
Opened '21 0  
Closed '21 0  
Volume (est. '21) N/A  
5478 South Green Street, Murray, Utah 84123  
(801) 266-9550  
info@pianogallery.com  
www.pianogallery.com  
CEO: Stan Beagley

**Henderson Music Co.** P, DP  
Total Units 3  
Opened '21 0  
Closed '21 0  
Volume (est. '21) N/A  
10869 Montgomery Rd., Cincinnati, Ohio 45242  
(513) 477-2224  
www.hendersonmusic.com

**Hermes Music** BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, DJ, LT, IN  
Total Units 3  
Opened '21 0  
Closed '21 0  
Volume (est. '21) N/A  
830 N. Cage Blvd., Pharr, Texas 78577  
(956) 904-4450  
greg@hermes-music.com  
www.hermes-music.com  
CEO: Alberto Kreimerman

**Playground Music Center**  
BO, P, DP, BO, PC, FA, SR, EK  
Total Units 3  
Opened '21 0  
Closed '21 0  
Volume (est. '21) N/A  
429 Mary Esther Cut-Off NW, Fort Walton Beach, Fla. 32548  
(850) 243-2514  
www.playgroundmusiccenter.com

**Gadsden Music** BO, PM  
Total Units 3  
Opened '21 0  
Closed '21 0  
Volume (est. '21) N/A  
607 Broad Street, PO Box 132, Gadsden,

Ala. 35901  
 (800) 264-7228  
 www.gadsdenmusic.com

**Dunkley Music** P, DP  
 Total Units 3  
 Opened '21 0  
 Closed '21 0  
 Volume (est. '21) N/A  
 3410 Eagle Rd., Ste. 150, Meridian, Idaho  
 83646  
 (208) 342-5549  
 info@dunkleymusic.com  
 www.dunkleymusic.com  
 CEO: Mark Dunkley

**Meyer Music** P, DP, BO, PM  
 Total Units 3  
 Opened '21 0  
 Closed '21 0  
 Volume (est. '21) N/A  
 1512 W. Highway 40, Blue Springs, Mo.  
 64015  
 (816) 228-5656  
 bettymeyer@meyermusic.com  
 www.meyermusic.com  
 CEOs: Ted Meyer, Betty Meyer

**Kessler & Sons Music** BO  
 Total Units 3  
 Opened '21 0  
 Closed '21 0  
 Volume (est. '21) \$5 MM  
 3047 E. Charleston Blvd. #C, Las Vegas,  
 Nev. 89104  
 (702) 385-2263  
 dave.k@kesslerandsons.com  
 www.kessleandsons.com  
 CEO: Charles Kessler

**Art's Music Shop, Inc.** DP, BO, FA, SR, EK, PC, PM  
 Total Units 3  
 Opened '21 0  
 Closed '21 0  
 Volume (est. '21) N/A  
 3030 East Blvd., Montgomery, Ala. 36116  
 (133) 427-1278  
 paulf@artsmusicshop.com  
 www.artsmusicshop.com  
 CEO: Paul Freehling

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# TOP PRINT TITLES of 2021

By Christian **Wissmuller**

As 2021 saw the continuation of increased learning and playing music at home that began in 2020, sales of print folios also enjoyed an uptick. We reached out to five of the biggest players in this market segment to learn what collections were flying off of the shelves in the past calendar year. Below are those company's lists (in no particular order) of the top print titles for 2021.

**EXCELCIA  
MUSIC PUBLISHING**

- *Ancient Fires* – Carol Brittin Chambers
- *Repeat the Sounding Joy* – Steve Parsons
- *Poor Wayfarin' Stranger* – Jamey Ray
- *Oblivion* – Larry Clark
- *Groovin Kings Three* – Jon Bubbett
- *Visceral Chase* – Sean O'Loughlin
- *Reamo Leboga* – arr. Duncan Miano Wambugu & Russell Robinson
- *Acidic* – Tyler Arcari
- *S'vivo* – arr. Laura Estes
- *Click, Click, Click* – arr. Amy Riebs Mills

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



- *ABC's of Violin*
- *Solos for Flute*
- *Guitar Grimoire – Scales & Modes*
- *Melodious Etudes for Trombone, Book 1*
- *Arbans Trumpet Method*

- *Technical Studies* – Cornet
- *170 Foundational Studies* – Vol. 1
- *New Method for the Doublebass*
- *Scale System*
- *Prog Rep* – Vol 1 – Str Bass



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- *Sonatas and Fantasies*
- *Slap It!*
- *Orchestral Excerpts for Flute*

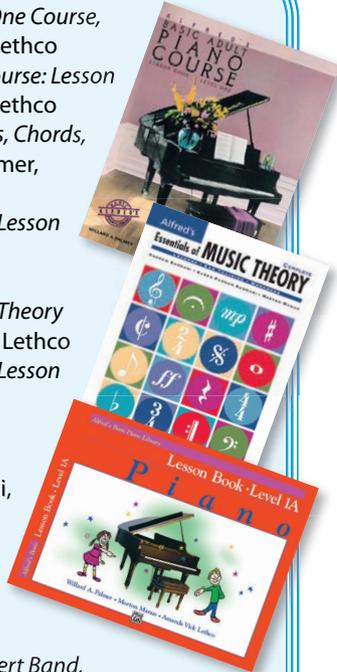
[www.presser.com](http://www.presser.com)



- *Flute 101: Mastering the Basic*
- *Mazzanti Method*
- *The Richtmeyer Saxophone Method, Vol. 1*
- *6 Weeks to Finals*
- *Melodia, Complete*

# ALFRED MUSIC

- *Alfred's Basic Adult All-in-One Course, Book 1* – Palmer, Manus & Lethco
- *Alfred's Basic Adult Piano Course: Lesson Book 1* – Palmer, Manus & Lethco
- *The Complete Book of Scales, Chords, Arpeggios & Cadences* – Palmer, Manus & Lethco
- *Alfred's Basic Piano Library: Lesson Book 1A* – Palmer, Manus & Lethco
- *Alfred's Basic Piano Library: Theory Book 1A* – Palmer, Manus & Lethco
- *Alfred's Basic Piano Library: Lesson Book 2* – Palmer, Manus & Lethco
- *Alfred's Essentials of Music Theory: Complete* – Surmani, Surmani & Manus
- *Sound Innovations for Concert Band, Book 1* – Sheldon, Boonshaft, Black & Phillips
- *Sound Innovations for Concert Band, Book 1* – Sheldon, Boonshaft, Black & Phillips
- *Progressive Steps to Syncopation for the Modern Drummer* – Reed



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

# HAL LEONARD

- *Essential Elements Method Books*
- *Faber Piano Adventures Method Books*
- *Hal Leonard Guitar Method*
- *The Real Book*
- *Disney – Super Easy Songbook*
- *Taylor Swift – Evermore*
- *First 50 Songs You Should Play on Ukulele*
- *Olivia Rodrigo – Sour*
- *First 50 Popular Songs You Should Play on Piano*
- *Hanon – The Virtuoso Pianist*



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# Trick or Treat: The Courage to Say 'No'



By  
Jaimie  
Blackman

Each Halloween I conduct an ad hoc behavioral experiment.

I fill a bag of coins in a canvas bag. Let's call this bag a "moneybag." As the children approach my home for candy, I yell out to the group, "Who likes money?" The kids giggle. The parents who are accompanying them are paying special attention. The word "money" is the ultimate attention-getter. I observe the children very carefully. Some kids are thinking that I, who have the coins, gets to decide how many coins children will receive. Other children stick their hands in the moneybag and take as much as they are physically able to. And other children ask if they can pour all of the money in the moneybag into *their* bag.

Now imagine the coins in the moneybag represent your cash flow, and the child represents the vendor. Sorry vendors – just trying to make this interesting.

The very best of vendors are going to understand the retailer's cash flow, and work with the retailer to decide on cost and time for payment – if it makes sense, even going out to 90 days. Let's call this vendor mindset "thrival" mode, which embodies safety, love, and life flow.

Now the very worst vendors are taking orders from their accountants, and are demanding COD, or net 30. These vendors are clearly not in a collaborative spirit. They are clearly in "survival" mode: fight, flight, or freeze. In survival mode, stress is the primary experience. It worked well for our ancestors to avoid being eaten by a lion. Doesn't work so well today. According to *Psychology Today*, "Survival mode involves adaptive physiological changes in our body that help us respond to the stressors that we are faced with. This is especially bad for music retailers, whose mission is to promote harmony to the world. Hard to do if the retailer is stressed out.

Anthony Mantova, owner of Mantova's Two Street Music, (read Mantova's column "Net 30 Terms Need to Go" from the January 2020 issue of *MRR*) sees the solution as follows: When asked what strategy he uses to decide who gets most of his business. He says, "My strategy is to create three groups:

1. Critically important vendors
2. Vendors who can wait 45 days without squealing
3. Mature vendors who can handle 45-80 days without an issue, with no predatory flooring fees."

According to Mantova, groups 1 and 3 get most of his business!

It is the focus of this column to explore one's relationship with money in all stages of business life – from start-up to your exit. In every stage, there's a temptation to let the numbers overrule one's heart. One must ask, at what expense do we continue to compound the stress of money? Heart disease, cancer, chronic pain, depression, anxiety. The list goes on. When is enough, enough? I personally fell into this trap when I thought more was better. In the 1980s I ruined a beautiful music education program by turning it into a high technology retail shop. Our cash flow wasn't financially



sustainable and, in the end, I needed to create a new calling. Now I approach every decision as follows: Will this decision bring me harmony? If the answer is yes, I move ahead. If the decision will bring me dissonance, I say *no*.

It doesn't really matter how much money you have or don't have; if you are not in harmony with your deepest values you will suffer emotionally, physically, or both.

If you're at peace with your financial decisions, inner harmony prevails. I wrote the lyrics below to the "Itsy-bitsy Spider" melody, my grandchildren's favorite song.

Go ahead and sing it.

*The higher quiet self is waiting to be heard.*

*Then comes the noise, that silenced your voice.*

*Outcomes the sun, and brought light to the surface.*

*The higher-quiet self, can finally... Be heard.*

When vendors arrive at your door, reward the ones that are able and willing to listen to your voice.

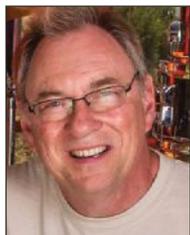
I invite you to conduct your own experiment. Before you strike a deal with your vendors, be honest with yourself. Listen to your higher-quiet self. In a net 30 transaction, unless you can move the inventory profitably in 30 days don't take it on, unless the vendor can create acceptable terms.

Remember, when vendors dictate the timing and amount of coins they take out of your moneybag, pause and evaluate to determine if the transaction is in your best interest and if it's not, have the courage to say "no" and if the vendor values the relationship, the *trick* will quickly turn into a *treat* for both vendor and retailer to enjoy. 🍪🍪

*Jaimie Blackman – a former music educator & retailer – is co-founder of BH Wealth Management. The organization offers 401(k), insurance, and succession planning services. Download your complimentary copy of End Your War With Money at [bhwealth.com/moneycapsules](http://bhwealth.com/moneycapsules) Registered Representative, First Allied Securities, Inc. Member FINRA/SIPC*

“In a net 30 transaction, unless you can move the inventory profitably in 30 days, don't take it on, unless the vendor can create acceptable terms.”

# Rebuilding Your Business Post-COVID



By  
**Menzie  
Pittman**

**N**ot for a second did I ever think, in my 30-plus years as a small business owner, that I would be focusing on completely rebuilding my business as if it were a brand-new venture. However, post-COVID, that is exactly what I'm doing, and I believe that is most likely the case with everyone who owns or manages a small business.

As owners and managers, we are always working on our businesses, but this time the circumstances are uniquely different, and it's not just because of COVID. This time, in addition to crawling back from the COVID calamity, small businesses and consumers have also been kicked in the teeth by the direct consequences of COVID: inflation, supply-chain shortages, and multiple issues that interrupt the "normal flow" of business. Just when we felt it was safe to go back into the water...

When circumstances beyond our control create a multi-tiered challenge, what are the best practices to employ? History has shown us that successful managers and owners continually observe and re-examine the reasons customers elect to engage with their businesses. Fortunately, most established businesses have a successful history, and a reputation on which the business stands. But the truth is, historical success doesn't guarantee future success.

No matter what current circumstances we face, customers always expect a consistent level of quality. That might be salvaging the wreckage caused by COVID or developing new programs because of the renewed appetite for in-person activities. The big question is what effect has COVID had on the behaviors and engagement habits of customers? The answer may surprise you.

Emerging from our recent challenges, the advantage goes to small businesses. Large businesses have the advantage of more product availability and, oftentimes, pricing. But smaller businesses have the unique advantage of providing quick, personalized service to their customers, as opposed to the "automated style" of larger businesses.

Small shops also have the advantage of individuality and uniqueness in "personalized design." And in this marketplace, that is what is sought by the post-COVID customer.

The pandemic has left the door open for boutique businesses to embrace an important shift in customer behavior. Have you noticed the new kid in town? Well, maybe he's the new kid, but he's wearing retro clothes. The new customer attitude is "Mad Men"-like. It's tail fins and bouffant hairdos all over again. To survive, we, as small businesses, must get on the same page with the customer's desire for engagement.

Before COVID, we had completely turned into a "faster is better" culture. But that way has now become like frozen food to the new granola gang. It is *OUT!* Society is currently composed of the

experience seekers, and businesses must discern the difference between an "experiential" and a "transactional" model.

## Experiential vs. Transactional

Experiential marketing enables the customer to engage in the experience of purchasing the product or service. To embrace this strategy, you must interact with your customers and help them understand how they would use your service or product. Expand the experience. Show them possibilities. Most importantly, find creative ways for the customer to interact with your product or service. That way, the consumer becomes engaged with your business and enjoys the actual process of his purchase.

Transactional marketing involves little customer engagement. Rather than establishing a rapport with the patron, the emphasis is on the sale. The key factor is best price, greatest availability, biggest volume, or just the best deal. Obviously, there are those customers who intend to buy products this way. They only consider price, availability, timeliness of delivery, et cetera and are simply interested in the product that meets their every requirement. These customers tend to have a limited engagement with your business.

COVID definitely took experiential off the table, and because of that, most people want it back more than ever. Post-COVID customers have a rekindled passion for experience. They have become more rogue in their thinking, and they have become more inventive. The real gift of the past many difficult months has been the opportunity for personal renaissance.

Along with revitalizing customer service, we now have the chance to revert to an experiential model and to move away from the mind-numbing "transactional" model that is so readily embraced by large companies. The advantage here goes to smaller businesses because smaller businesses are quicker to make adjustments. Small businesses take more risks; they are less afraid to think in a "boutique fashion," and they are not afraid to be inventive or to invite customers to join them on the journey.

## In Closing

The bottom line is to stay relevant and unique. We will have to do more with making every experience within our businesses feel fresh and inspiring. In many ways, we are truly starting over and the good news is it gives us the chance to rekindle, refresh, and rebuild. Importantly, we now have the opportunity to reexamine the principles that our businesses were originally built on and to realign what has gone stale and emotionless. We can now start over from scratch, or at the very least, take a mulligan. We have a chance to make "experiential" our first priority, and let the big boxes own the transactional model. 

*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."*

“As owners and managers, we are always working on our businesses, but this time the circumstances are uniquely different, and it's not just because of COVID.”

## ACCESSORIES

### Gator Adds New Flute-Piccolo Mask to Instrument Mask and Bell Cover Offerings

In its continued commitment to protecting musicians, bands, singers, music educators, and students, Gator has released the flute and piccolo mask to help stop the spread of aerosols during performances. All of Gator's PPE offerings are specifically designed to follow recommendations from the NFHS' (National Federation of State High Schools) performing arts aerosol study.



"We wanted to be very thorough and thoughtful in our research and development, so we connected directly with NFHS on their scientific studies to ensure our product adhered to data-driven recommendations," says Crystal Morris, CEO of Gator Co.,

"Gator was attentive to our recommendations from the International Performing Arts Aerosol Study," adds James Weaver, NFHS director of performing arts and sports and study chair. "They took a listen-test-and-learn approach to create products that effectively address the findings of the study."

The wind instrument double-layer face mask by Gator allows you to play your flute or piccolo comfortably, without having to remove your face covering. It features a convenient slot for inserting the instrument, along with adjustable, elastic ear straps and a bending nose wire to ensure maximum comfort and proper fitment. Whether you're playing in a school performance, concert hall, or event venue, Gator has the perfect solution to ensure you're performing in a protected environment.

The wind instrument face mask is added to Gator's growing PPE offerings including the singer mask. The aerosol filtering singer masks include triple-layered protection while keeping space between the mouth and interior front wall of the mask for proper breathing and clear enunciation.

Additional offerings include instrument bell covers that come with a pocket for a replaceable MERV 13 filter (included) that is made from a breathable fabric. The material allows for little to no back pressure or acoustic loss during play, keeping your performance quality top-notch. The GBELL Cover Series fits a wide variety of wind and brass instruments from clarinets to large tubas and range in size between 2 and 32-inches. The double-layer French horn bell covers range from 11 to 13 inches in diameter and are made of a reusable, hand washable lycra fabric with an elastic closure to keep the cover secured to the bell opening while in use.

- Double-layer instrument face mask for flutes and piccolos
- Universal sizing – fits most faces
- Reusable & hand washable
- Available in black
- Triple-layer Singer Mask
- Contains integrated filter with a higher rating than MERV-13
- Reusable & hand washable
- Available in black
- Available in various sizes
- French horn bell cover with hand access
- Fits bell sizes ranging from 11 to 13" in diameter
- Double-layered and washable
- Available in black
- Instrument (brass bell) covers with pocket for MERV 13 filter (filter included) – 26 SKUs
- 13 sizes available ranging from 4"-32" in diameter

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

### Légère Reeds American Cut for Soprano and Baritone Saxophone

Légère recently announced the expansion of the American Cut reed range to include soprano and baritone sax. Since the release of the American Cut for alto and tenor saxophones in late 2020 the medium-bright, crisp sounding jazz reed has gone on to become one of our most popular cuts. Like the alto and tenor reeds, soprano and baritone players can expect stability, easy response, and a clear, even tone from the low register to altissimo range.

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



## FRETTED

### Luna Guitars Adds Bamboo Parlor Acoustic Electric Guitar to Exotic Woodland Series

Luna Guitars is pleased to announce the addition of the Bamboo Parlor A/E to the exotic Woodland Series. The guitar features the popular parlor body style; bamboo top, back and sides; and Luna SL3 preamp with tuner and built-in EQ. In addition, the Bamboo Parlor A/E guitar features a mahogany "C"-shape neck with a 20-fret 15"-radius pau ferro fretboard and pearloid "Moon Phase" inlays. It also has a satin natural finish, a laser-etched leaf design around the sound hole, pau ferro bridge, sealed die-cast chrome tuners, dual-action truss rod and D'Addario EXP16 (.012-.053) coated strings.



"By pairing the warmth and exotic beauty of bamboo with a popular parlor-size guitar, we've created an extremely unique and inspiring instrument," said Adam Gomes, brand director & artist relations at Luna Guitars. "The Bamboo Acoustic-Electric brings a distinctive natural beauty that evokes a whole different song." The Luna Bamboo Parlor A/E sells for \$299 at authorized dealers.

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

### Fender Introduces the New Hybrid: Acoustasonic Player Telecaster

Fender Musical Instruments Corporation (FMIC) recently continued its expansion of the Acoustasonic series with the launch of the Acoustasonic Player Telecaster® guitar. As the latest addition to the line, the Acoustasonic Player Telecaster embodies the spirit of ambitious innovation that Fender was built on over 75 years ago. Combining pristine acoustic and electric tones with legendary Fender feel, it is a powerful tool for guitar players from the studio to the stage. Handcrafted in Ensenada, Mexico, the Acoustasonic Player Telecaster represents a new era in Fender craftsmanship and innovation – designed for the next generation of musicians who want an inspiring instrument with a diverse set of sounds at an accessible price.



After five years of planning, building and refining the model, the Acoustasonic Player Telecaster is designed to inspire and invoke creativity like its American-made predecessor. With a simplified set of features consisting of a 3-way Voice Selector and one powerful Blend Knob, the Acoustasonic Player Telecaster is Fender's most streamlined hybrid model yet. A powerful pickup system designed in collaboration with Fishman allows players to flip seamlessly between big electric tones and iconic acoustic voicings, while the fully hollow, naturally-resonant Telecaster body offers rich acoustic

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# newproducts

warmth when unplugged. Priced at \$1,199, the Acoustasonic Player Telecaster is the most accessible Acoustasonic guitar yet, specifically designed to reach younger demographics and make musical creativity more obtainable from live performances to studio sessions and songwriting.

## Top highlights include:

- A simplified feature set consisting of a 3-way Voice Selector and a powerful Blend Knob, the Acoustasonic Player Telecaster (APT) is Fender's most streamlined Acoustasonic model yet.
- A powerful Fender and Fishman-designed pickup system allows you to flip seamlessly between electric and acoustic voicings, while the fully-hollow, naturally-resonant Telecaster body offers rich acoustic warmth when unplugged. The guitar's body feeds the Acoustic Engine with its naturally loud and resonant design. It also makes plenty of sound unplugged – perfect for a couch jam or songwriting session.
- Modern N4 noiseless pickup provides authentic Fender electric tones without the hum.
- Features 3 unique voice pairs for a total of 6 “best-of” acoustic and electric voicings that can be played solo or blended to create all-new sounds.
- Premium construction elements like the waterfall sound hole, forearm contour, scalloped heel and recessed back-plates are designed for sound, comfort and visual appeal.
- New colors like butterscotch blonde, shadow burst and arctic white – plus more neutral tones like brushed black.

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

## Billie Joe Armstrong Les Paul Junior from Epiphone

Epiphone is proud to present the new Billie Joe Armstrong Les Paul Junior, an outstanding guitar choice for beginners and pros alike. The Billie Joe Armstrong Les Paul Junior features a slab mahogany body, a mahogany neck with an Indian laurel fretboard and 22 medium jumbo frets, a powerful PRO P-90 pickup, and master volume and master tone controls with CTS potentiometers. Rock-solid tuning stability is assured with the Epiphone Vintage Deluxe tuners, Graph Tech nut, and the wrap-around Lightning Bar bridge. A custom hardshell case is also included. MSRP: \$549



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

## CASES & BAGS

### MONO Introduces the M80 Vertigo Ultra Electric Guitar Case

MONO has introduced the M80 Vertigo Ultra Electric Guitar Case – the ultimate protective case upgraded for players on the move. MONO's original M80 Vertigo revolutionized the way creators traveled with guitars worldwide. The Vertigo Ultra amplifies this concept with a range of ultra-premium design upgrades, including a new patent-pending attachable Freeride Wheel System, water-resistant and reflective materials, shockproof gear protection and improved ergonomic features. The Vertigo Ultra is a game-changer for any guitarist who wants the ultimate touring experience.



## New features include:

- Patent-pending Freeride Wheel System that allows for wheels to be attached on the case in no time, giving you the option to travel with it seamlessly
- Upgraded materials, including a water-resistant 1680D Ballistic Nylon outer shell, plush inner lining and new reflective trim for maximum backstage and night visibility
- Enhanced protection with a shockproof shell structure and heavy-duty water-resistant YKK zippers for protection from the elements
- Improved ergonomics and functionality including added back support and load lifting detachable shoulder straps with side release buckles
- Flexible storage options with added space for touring essentials

The MONO M80 Vertigo Ultra Electric Guitar Case is available at \$349.99 (U.S. MAP) via select dealers.

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

## DRUMS & PERCUSSION

### Mapex Celebrates the Late Ralph Peterson with the Release of the Black Panther 'Onyx' Snare Drum

On March 1, 2021, the jazz community lost the fearless Ralph Peterson Jr. following a six-year battle with cancer. Peterson's fierce advocacy for maintaining the Blakey-esque hard bop traditions was evident in his drumming and in his life with seemingly unstoppable energy and drive to play, promote, and preserve the language of America's original improvised musical art form known as jazz. The spirit of Ralph Peterson Jr. carries on through his students, colleagues, band members, recordings, family, friends, and the legacy of his music that he played with undeniable conviction.

Mapex celebrates this spirit and legacy with the special limited release of the Black Panther “ONYX” snare drum, an instrument designed to Ralph's preferred specs in both looks and sound and representing a style and personality missed by all who knew him. Peterson was Mapex's longest-running artist endorser, playing Mapex Drums for 30 of his esteemed 35-year career.



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

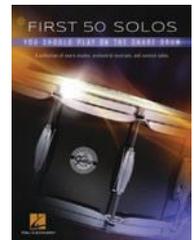
## PRINT & DIGITAL

### Hal Leonard's First 50 Solos You Should Play on Snare Drum

Hal Leonard has released *The First 50 Solos You Should Play on Snare Drum*. This comprehensive resource includes 50 snare etudes, orchestra excerpts, and contest solos highlighting a variety of skills, stickings, and rudiments. The selections are presented in progressive order, from simple to more challenging. Includes: “Boléro” • “Echoing Sticks” • “Farfel's Gavotte” • “Grandfather's Clock” • “March for Two Drums” • “Rolling Accents” • “Soldier's March” • “Standing on the Shoulders of Giants” • “Tijuana Tap” • “William Tell Overture” • and more.

Designed to be an all-inclusive collection for beginning through advanced snare students, *The First 50 Solos You Should Play on Snare Drum* retails for \$16.99. Interested retailers should contact the Hal Leonard E-Z Order Line at 1-800-554-0626.

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





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A man is shown from the side, sitting at a desk in a music studio. He is playing a Korg Nautilus synthesizer. On the desk, there is a computer monitor displaying a digital audio workstation (DAW) interface, a keyboard, and a mouse. Two Korg studio monitors are positioned on either side of the computer. The background features a wall with various posters and a large potted plant. The lighting is dim, creating a focused and creative atmosphere.

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