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Steve West

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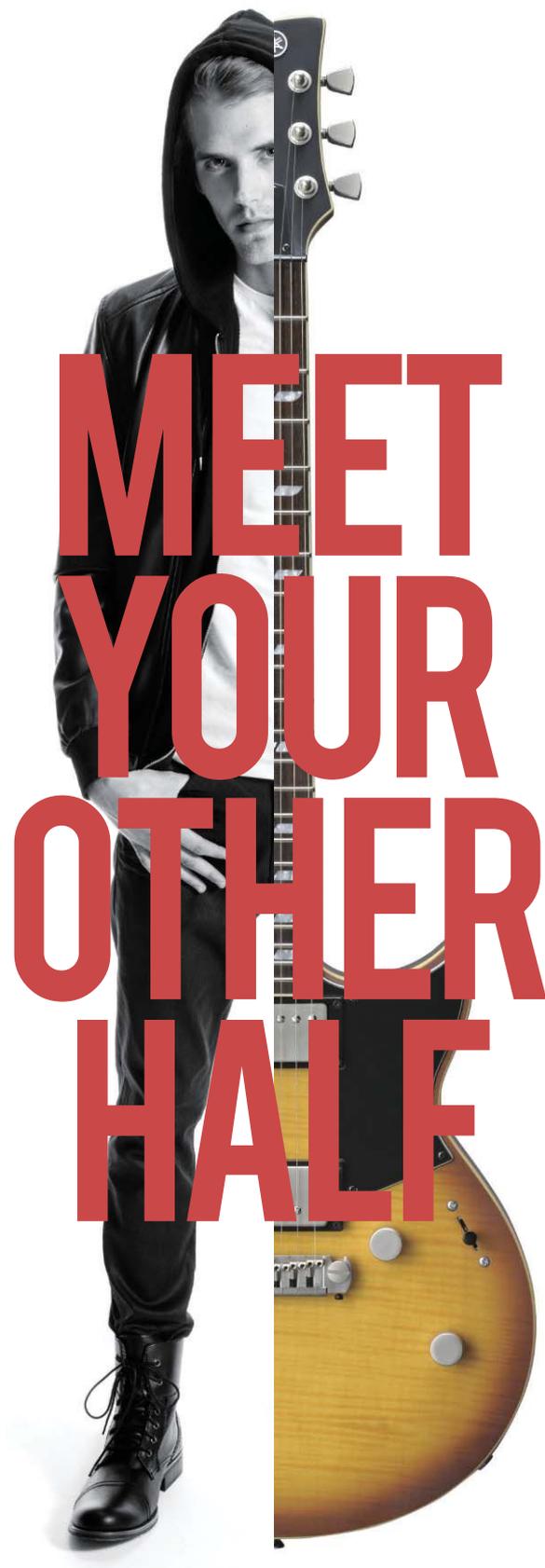
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C O N T E N T S

MMR

MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

Vol.175

JANUARY 2016

No.1

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Leading By Example

"Puff pieces" (or, as a close friend and editor at a popular entertainment/lifestyle magazine pegs them, "works of shameless ass-kissery") are articles wherein the subject – be it person, place, or thing – is treated to exuberant praise, un-diminished by any true, critical examination.

Virtually all publications – print, online, wherever – run such pieces, including *MMR*, our competing MI trade magazines, and your own favorite periodicals. This isn't a bad thing. If I'm reviewing the newest issue of *People* (as it so happens, I don't, in fact, read *People*, but bear with me...) and skimming over a profile on Scarlett Johansson, I don't necessarily need or want for the journalist to have delved into Johansson's academic records or dug deep to find out whether her former personal assistants enjoyed working for her. Tell me about her new movie, why she's a beautiful, engaging, philanthropic, and talented actress, and that's just fine. Mission accomplished. By the same token, I see nothing wrong with a brief profile of an MI supplier or retailer that focuses on the positive, without attempting to shine harsh light on potentially unpleasant elements.

Paige Tutt's excellent cover feature on Steve West on page 52 of this issue – this year's highly deserving recipient of the Don Johnson Industry Service Award – is not a puff piece. It bears many of the key elements of such articles as outlined above, true, but Tutt is not to be faulted if the man she profiled is simply *that* good.

Since passing the family business' torch to Robin Walenta (CEO) and his son Ryan (senior vice president), Steve has only increased his efforts, starting the New Horizons Band, establishing the Iowa Alliance for Arts Education, co-founding the Music Achievement council, helping to launch SupportMusic...

Retirement? Hardly. What Steve has achieved and what he continues to do is inspiring – and more than a little intimidating. When considering his accomplishments and ongoing activities, I know I find my own modest achievements to be sorely lacking and I'm motivated to get off my... well, for the sake of decorum, let's go with "chair," and *do* more.

Folks often talk of "leading by example." You'd be hard-pressed to find a leader who fits that bill more so than Steve West.

Just two days ago, in early January, I was at the Jazz Education Network conference in Louisville. The keynote speaker, bassist Victor Wooten, closed with the following observation: "There are plenty of good musicians out there. What we need are more good *people*."

To borrow (fine – steal) from Mr. Wooten's speech, I'll observe that there are plenty of good businessmen and women in MI *and* plenty of good people – but it couldn't hurt to have more of each. Thank you Steve, for the example you set, and many congratulations on being named this year's Don Johnson Industry Service Award winner.

On a (mostly) unrelated final note: to those of you out there who will be joining your colleagues in Anaheim this year, please drop by *MMR's* booth (#4607) and say hello – we'd love to see you!



by Christian Wissmuller

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Industry News

Sweetwater's Surack Purchases Mynett Music

Chuck Surack, founder and president of Sweetwater, has purchased Mynett Music Company, which will become a part of the Sweetwater family of companies.

Mynett Music will retain its name and location at 3710 Hobson Road, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Surack said, "Mynett Music is a true Fort Wayne institution. As a saxophone player, I have been a devoted customer for decades and have always been impressed with their first-rate customer service, the quality of their instruments, and their excellent repair work

The purchase will not only retain seven jobs, but will guarantee the future of one of only two music stores in Fort Wayne that sell and repair band and orchestra instruments.

Sweetwater and Mynett Music, though both music retailers, are complimentary businesses, not competitors, since what the two companies sell and service do not overlap.

Chuck Mynett remarked, "Mynett Music has proudly served local school bands and orchestras, as well as individual musicians and performing groups, for more than 80 years. I'm extremely pleased that Chuck Surack has stepped in to make sure that our service to the music community continues."

Chuck Mynett decided to begin looking for someone to purchase his company having undergone double lung replacement surgery earlier this year.

Mynett Music was established by Chuck Mynett's father Milt Mynett in downtown



Chuck Surack (left) received a baton from Chuck Mynett symbolizing the transfer of ownership of Mynett Music Company

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NAMM Applauds Congress for Passage of 'Every Student Succeeds Act' Including Music as Part of a Well-Rounded Education

More school-aged children nationwide will have access to music and the arts, thanks to Congress' inclusion of both subject areas as part of a well-rounded education in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

The Senate passed the bill on Wednesday, December 9, 2015, with a vote of 85 to 12 as it now heads to the President's desk.

"The efforts of hundreds of NAMM members have helped to influence this important shift in federal policy," said Joe Lamond president and CEO of NAMM. "Today's passage of the 'Every Student Succeeds Act' provides a path for students across the country to access a well-rounded education that includes music and the arts."

In addition to explicitly listing music in the components of a well-rounded education, "Every Student Succeeds Act" also protects students' "music" and "arts" class time and provides new opportunities for music and arts education through formula funding grants. Hundreds of NAMM Members and music industry leaders have spent years meeting with Congressional leaders on the importance that every child has access to music in schools. Today Congress has shown that it too believes in music as part of a well-rounded education that should be available to all students.

"We are grateful for the army of NAMM member advocates who have contributed to thousands of meetings with Members of Congress over the years. They successfully drove the point home that music education is a vital element in a complete education for all children," said Mary Luhrs, director of government affairs for NAMM. "With this new legislation, we will expand our advocacy efforts around the belief that indeed, every child succeeds with an opportunity to learn and grow with music."

NAMM specifically commends members of the ESEA conference committee, members of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, and the House Education and the Workforce Committee, for advancing legislation



that will create new opportunities for a well-rounded education for all students. The reauthorization of the "Every Student Succeeds Act," will replace 2002's "No Child Left Behind Act."

The new bill's inclusion of "music" and "arts" in the definition of a "Well-Rounded Education" marks an unprecedented step forward for music education, as it connects to a variety of significant other provisions in "Every Student Succeeds Act."

Protecting Students' Class Time: protection for students struggling in other academic areas from being pulled from music and arts courses in favor of remedial education. The bill emphasizes the importance of classroom time within these courses, helping to ensure that students are provided with an equally meaningful learning opportunity.

Federal Grant Opportunities: opportunities for music and arts education through formula funding grants in Title IV. States receiving formula grants must use those funds for purposes of carrying out particular state activities, including offering "Well-Rounded" educational experiences, such as music, to under-represented, disadvantaged, or minority students. The bill specifically notes activities and programs in "music" and "arts" as appropriate uses of formula grants.

For the last decade, NAMM members have invested their time on Capitol Hill with U.S. Senators and Representatives to advocate for music education. As the bill began to work through both houses of Congress, NAMM mobilized its membership and the SupportMusic Coalition to call, tweet and write to their legislators, supporting music education's inclusion in passage of the final version.

NAMM will continue to work to monitor and advocate for equity and access to music education as the new federal policy is implemented. Follow www.namm.org/public-affairs/articles/track-esea-reauthorization-bill for the latest.

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Hoshino USA Announces New Distribution Deal with Hardcase

Effective January 1st, 2016, Hoshino U.S.A., Inc. has announced that it has finalized an exclusive distribution agreement with Hardcase International Limited, makers of Hardcase drum cases.

Hoshino U.S.A. will distribute Hardcase drum, cymbal, and hardware road cases for the entire U.S. market, including Puerto Rico.

The British-based manufacturer of rigid, plastic drum cases was established in England in 1992, and currently supplies 35 international markets as well as a network of established British High Street retailers. Known for pioneering advanced rotational molding techniques, Hardcase manufactures all

of its case products using virgin polymers (plastics) for superior strength and durability. Hardcase appoints its cases with high tensile straps with quick-release clips, rugged carrier handles, foam grip pads, an ID badge, and extra heavy duty wheels. Customers may choose from a range of vibrant colors, as well as optional full foam lining. Hardcase also



offers a Lifetime Warranty on all 190 of their case specifications.

"Hardcase has built a great reputation in Europe and we're very proud to be distributing their products here in the U.S.," said Hoshino U.S.A. product manager, Charlie Hayashi. Hayashi went on to comment: "Hardcase will, of course, be available through our established Hoshino brand dealer network here in the U.S., but we welcome inquiries from other interested U.S. dealers as well."

"What a huge honor and pleasure to both welcome and introduce Hoshino U.S.A. as our new distribution partners for the U.S. market. We are so excited with this fantastic new partnership and opportunity for the brand," said Hardcase Sales Manager Dave Eyre. "Interest from the U.S. market for our case products has been overwhelming in recent years, so we knew a route had to be found to meet this growing demand. After meeting with both Charlie Hayashi and Shogo Hayashi (Hoshino U.S.A. president) at NAMM 2015 and Musikmesse 2015, their interest and enthusiasm for the brand was evident and the rest, as they say, is history."

The armored roadworthiness of Hardcase has made them the professional's choice for protecting instruments from the harsh realities of gigging and touring. Once a well-kept secret among a small circle of British touring drummers, the company's artist endorser list has expanded to include recording/touring giants: Will Calhoun, Omar Hakim, Gavin Harrison, Nicko McBrien, and Ian Paice.

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Sweetwater's Surack Purchases Mynett Music

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Fort Wayne in 1933 and has been a mainstay of the northeast Indiana school music community every since.

From the beginning, Mynett Music put a strong emphasis on instrument repairs. That reputation continued as his son, Chuck Mynett, virtually "grew up" in the business. Chuck Mynett became owner in 1980 and expanded services to deepen partnerships with the community and schools, providing top-notch musical instruments and accessories for students, and maintaining

and repairing their instruments, so that the teacher's focus could be on the recruitment and musical growth of students.

Mynett Music provides a full musical service department, music lessons, instrument rental programs, and a large selection of new and used woodwind, brass, string, and percussion instruments and accessories. In addition to schools, its customers include individual musicians of all ages, ensembles, and small bands.

B&J Music to Distribute Peavey in Canada

Peavey Electronics® has announced it will utilize a new distributor for the Canadian market.

B&J Music, a division of JAM, will be the new Canadian distributor for the Peavey®, Composite Acoustics®, Trace Elliot®, and Budda® lines. The agreement was confirmed recently after discussions amongst JAM president, Martin Szpiro, VP Jeff Carman, B&J VP David McAllister and Peavey C.O.O., Courtland Gray, GM of North American Sales, Fred Poole, and Hartley Peavey, Peavey Electronics' founder.

"The decision to partner with B&J was given great consideration. After looking at other opportunities and initiatives, we realized that the JAM organization is best positioned to enhance Peavey and grow its presence in Canada," said Gray.

"This giant U.S. amplification and instrument brand is a welcome



addition to B&J's existing catalogue of exclusive products and we believe that B&J aligns well with Peavey's decision to transition to full distribution in Canada. To know we will be working with a company able to recognize and address the big changes and challenges in our industry fills me with great confidence. For musicians around the world Peavey is recognized as a truly iconic brand and I can't wait for us to start playing our part in the continuation of Peavey's success," said Szpiro.

McAllister of B&J concurred, "Peavey is a key part of our growing portfolio of top-line professional brands, and we are looking forward to getting our dealers stocked up again. The Peavey line will further enhance our reputation as one of the foremost suppliers of quality sound and amplification in Canada."

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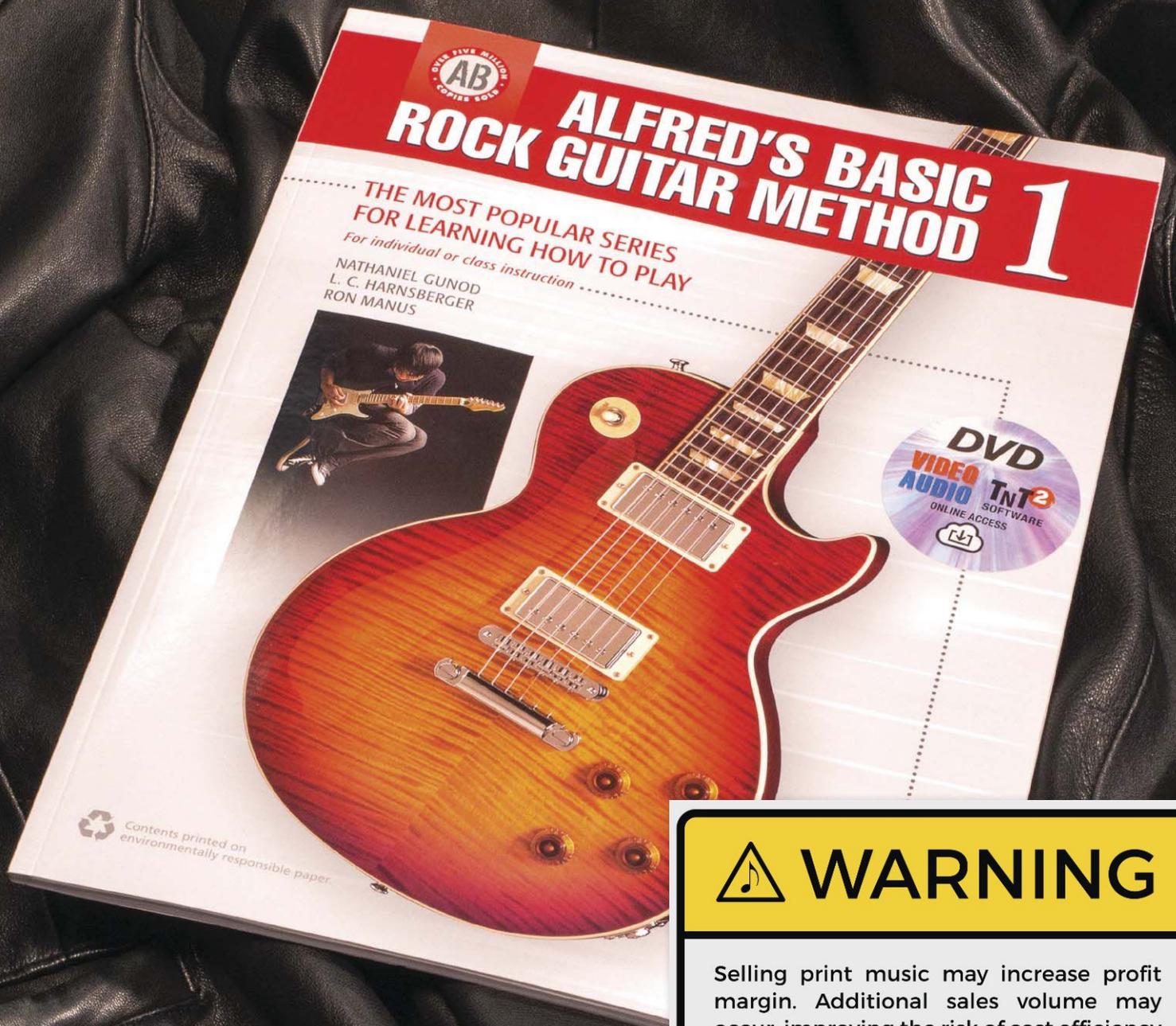
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Radial Names Polar Audio UK Distributor for Tonebone

Radial Engineering Ltd. has announced that Polar Audio has been appointed as exclusive distributor for the Tonebone range of products in the United Kingdom.

According to Radial sales manager Roc Bubel, "Ever since the British Invasion, the UK has established itself as a beacon for the sales and marketing of musical gear. This strategically important country plays a critical role in how music is played and sets the trend as to which equipment is used to create the performance. This is eventually echoed in countries around the globe. With the global economy slowly improving, we are following suit with a number of new Tonebone products along with this important appointment."

Polar Audio is well positioned in the UK market to take on the Tonebone line of distortion and effects pedals, switchers, preamps and buffers. Tonebone products are carefully de-



signed and manufactured for the professional musician who is looking for high quality, virtually indestructible 'road ready' gear. Tonebone products are used by a vast array of professionals including James Taylor, Joe Bonamassa, Marcus Miller, John Patitucci, Antoine Dufour, and

Zac Brown.

John Midgley, managing director of Polar Audio notes, "The Tonebone range is an excellent addition to our MI product offering and combines the best of traditional analogue tone-shaping circuitry with the most modern features, routing, and flexibility. We look forward to spreading the word about these top-notch pedals, preamps and switchers."

Please note that this new distribution agreement applies only to the Tonebone brand. Radial Engineering branded products are supplied to the UK via Shure Distribution.

Heil Sound Celebrates '50 Years of Maximum Rock & Roll'

Heil Sound is marking 2016 as "50 Years of Maximum Rock & Roll."

The yearlong celebration will kick off at the Winter NAMM Show. A commemorative podcast series of interviews with company founder Bob Heil is also scheduled to debut in January. This series will highlight the history of Heil Sound as well as the many innovations in live sound that Heil brought to the industry.

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The Mic Stand Tablet Holder is the latest addition to the String Swing product line. As portable electronic devices prove themselves useful in nearly every situation, one will surely find its way on stage with you.

With this holder, you will have approximately 1,215 degrees of freedom to position your tablet exactly where you want it. Wing screws allow the assembly to move easily when you want it to and lock it in place when you don't.

The Mic Stand Tablet Holder utilizes a low-profile adhesive coupler which remains attached to the back of your device or its cover. The coupler creates a surprisingly strong magnetic attachment point that will not affect the functionality of the device. While only 0.2" thick, the coupler provides a secure hold on even the largest tablets, and yet still works great with smartphones.

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As with all of String Swing's products, the Mic Stand Tablet Holder is covered by a lifetime structural warranty.

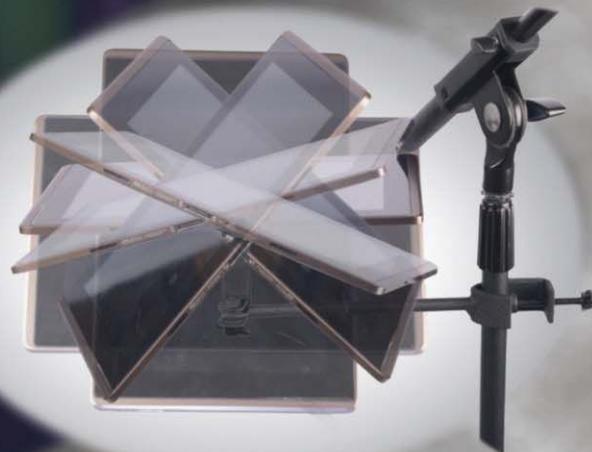
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Quilter Receives 2016 Beryllium Lifetime Achievement Award from ALMA International

QSC recently announced that company founder Pat Quilter is the 2016 recipient of the Beryllium Lifetime Achievement Award from ALMA International, the professional association that is the source of standards, news, networking, and education for tech-

nical and business professionals in the acoustics, audio, and loudspeaker industry. The Beryllium Lifetime Achievement Award is given by the ALMA Board of Directors in recognition of significant and sustained contributions to the loudspeaker industry

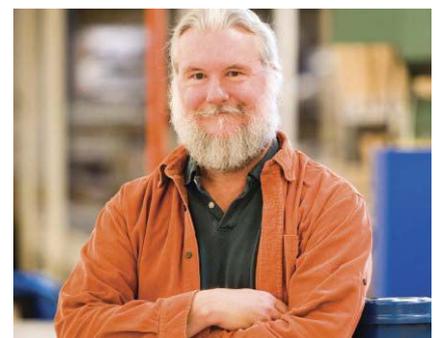
over the lifetime of a career.

Pat Quilter, along with business partners Barry Andrews and John Andrews, formed Quilter Sound Company in 1968 and began building power amplifiers and guitar amplifiers for local musicians and artists. Today that company is QSC – one of the leading global manufacturers of professional audio products, with a staff of over 400 skilled professionals and offices worldwide. In 2011, Pat Quilter founded Quilter Labs, where he designs and manufactures premiere guitar and musical instrument amplifiers for some of the leading artists and performers in the music industry.

“We are thrilled to see Pat Quilter receive this Lifetime Achievement Award from ALMA International,” says Joe Pham, QSC CEO. “Pat is a true innovator and continues to inspire all of us at QSC.”

“I’m extremely honored to be recognized by ALMA International and humbled to receive the Beryllium Lifetime Achievement Award,” says Pat Quilter. “In my years at QSC and at Quilter Labs, I have had one main focus – developing products that enrich the lives of our customers. I’m gratified to see that the ALMA members share this passion for improving audio, and so this award is especially meaningful. I’m also pleased to note that I made some very interesting professional contacts while attending the convention, which I hope to work into future product developments in the years ahead. So as we like to say in the music business ‘please stay tuned!’”

The Beryllium Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Pat Quilter as part of ALMA’s Driver Awards ceremony, which is held to recognize those individuals who have had a positive impact upon the loudspeaker industry, at the annual ALMA Banquet held during the ALMA International Symposium & Expo. (AISE) in Las Vegas, Nevada on January 3, 2016.



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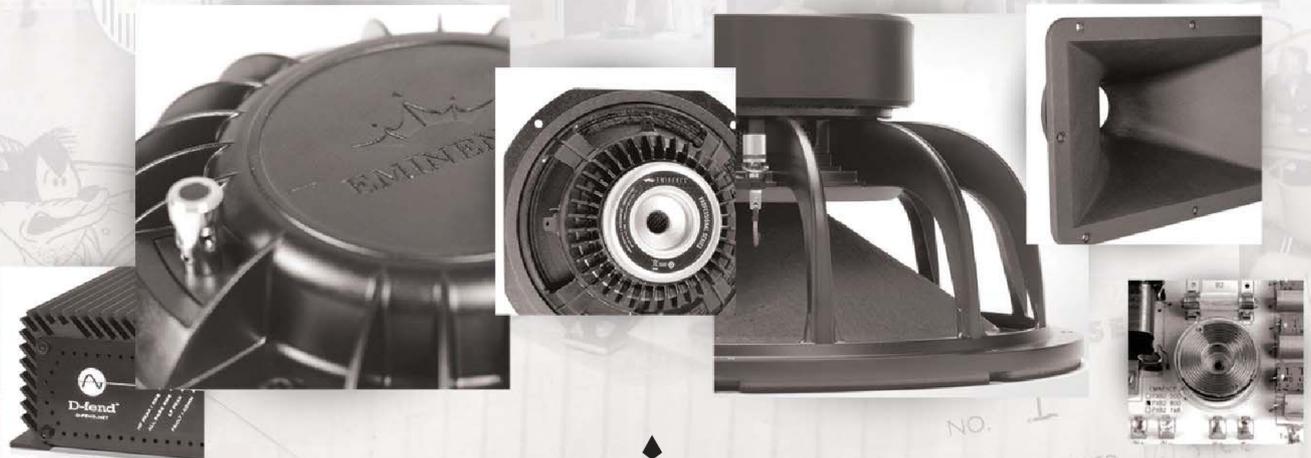


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Willcox Guitars Streamlines Manufacturing and Offers Lower Pricing

Willcox Guitars recently streamlined the manufacturing process at its facility, allowing the company to offer lower pricing on its Atlantis guitars and Saber basses. This pricing shift will make these instruments more attractive to consumers



Chris Willcox, pictured with a Willcox Saber Bass, at the company's Carpinteria, California headquarters.

and more profitable for dealers. The changes in manufacturing at the company's Carpinteria, California headquarters were the result of a yearlong R&D effort spearheaded by company founder Christopher Willcox. Company personnel will be available to discuss these developments at the upcoming NAMM Show, January 21-24, 2016 (Booth 2683/Hall D).

Willcox Guitars are all powered by the LightWave Optical Pickup System, described by the company as "the most advanced string transducer available today." The optical pickup system uses infrared light to sense string vibration, precisely capturing the rich and powerful sound of the instrument, and which is also ideally suited for individual string processing and synth access. Aside from the new product being introduced at the NAMM Show, Willcox's product offerings on display include Atlantis ElectroAcoustic Guitars and Saber Bases, as well as HexFX editions of both.

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Sweetwater Announces Another Year of Sales Growth and Campus Expansion

Sweetwater has announced another record year in total sales and job creation, plus additional expansion of its campus in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Total sales in 2015 were \$433.1 million, up 22.3 percent over \$354 million in 2014,

which was also a record-breaking year. December 2015 sales were just over \$50 million, up 21 percent over December 2014. Black Friday and Cyber Monday both shattered all previous records.

The company sold more than 80,000 gui-

tars in 2015. Pro Audio, Microphones, Keyboards, Guitar Amps & Effects, and Drums were some of the many product categories that saw very significant growth.

Sweetwater founder and president Chuck Surack says, "I started Sweetwater 37 years ago with a commitment to helping my friends pursue their dreams. I'm incredibly proud that last year our amazing employees helped over 265,000 brand-new, first-time customers purchase the gear to help them live out their musical passions. It's gratifying to see how our commitment to doing the right thing and always taking care of every customer continues to help us make thousands of new friends every day."

In all, Sweetwater employees, primarily the sales force, handled more than 3.5 million phone calls.

Employment growth is ongoing at Sweetwater as the company aggressively continues to hire the best-qualified people in the business. On January 1 of 2015, Sweetwater boasted 781 employees. As of January 1 of 2016, the number had increased by 21 percent to 946 employees, and is steadily growing.

In June, Sweetwater completed a total redesign and expansion of its Music Store in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Now four times the original size and one of the largest in the Midwest, the Sweetwater Music store is backed by the largest on-site inventory of musical instruments and audio gear of any music store in the country.

Sweetwater's campus will continue to grow in 2016, with the completion in February of a 16,000 square foot building to house the marketing and merchandising staffs, as well as a new state-of-the-art video studio. Further expansion of employee amenity areas, including the health club and salon and spa, will also be completed in 2016.

A comprehensive "virtual tour" of the Sweetwater campus is available at: www.sweetwater.com/tour/

Ten Reasons Why Dakota and Phaeton Are These Artists' #1 Choices

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We're ready to show you why Dakota and Phaeton should be your next line of pro saxes and trumpets. Stop by our booth 3414 for a personal demo session and get the facts.

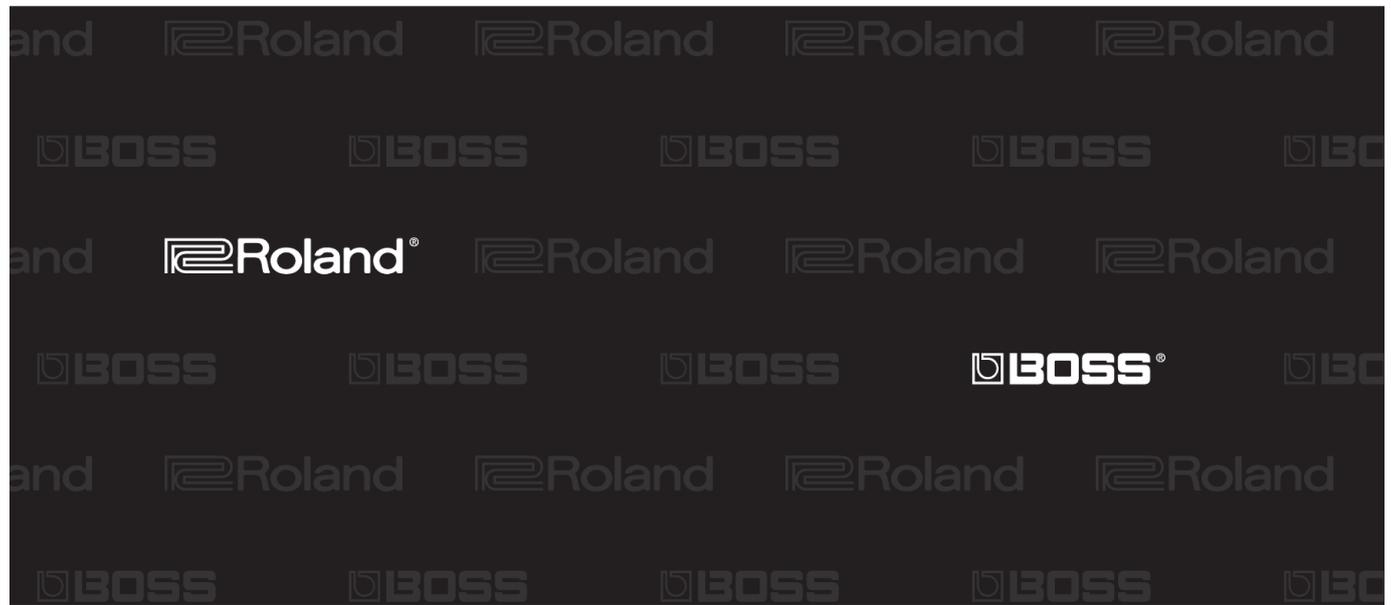
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CORRECTION

On the cover of the December 2015 issue of *MMR* the Pearl Drums logo ran beneath the graphic for the Dealers' Choice Awards feature. It should have been the Pearl River logo.



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Supplier Scene

Thomas Joins Pearl Drums Artist Roster

Pearl Drums is proud to welcome a new member to their artist roster – percussionist Dominique Thomas.

Hailing from drumming hot-spot Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Thomas is currently supporting the three-time Grammy Award-winning singer/songwriter and soul sensation, Jill Scott, on her ongoing world tour, which is scheduled to continue throughout 2016. Leading up to his full-time position providing the percussion behind Jill Scott, Thomas has also toured and performed with Mos Def, Raheem DeVaughn, Maxwell, K'Jon, Syleena Johnson, and Questlove & Black Thought from the Legendary Roots Crew. He has also performed on *Jimmy Kimmel Live*, *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*, *Dancing with the Stars*, and more. Most recently, Thomas joined Scott for a performance of the single "Back Together" live on *The Steve Harvey Show*, which can be viewed online.

For the first leg of the *Woman* world tour, Thomas relied on the deep tones of Pearl's Havana Series Congas and Bongos, paired with a set of Elite Brass Timbales, and surrounded with a plethora of Pearl Percussion bells, blocks, toys, and accessories. More information on Thomas can be found online.



Chauvet Professional STRIKE 4 and Legends Greet 2016 At Large South African NYE Celebration

With balmy temperatures (28° Celsius) and clear skies, the weather in this seaside town located a two-hour drive from Durban isn't what comes to mind when people in the Northern Hemisphere think of New Year's Eve.

That is undeniably part of its charm, since the Uthungulu Last Dance festival includes picnicking and partying on the beach on January 1, after enjoying a sizzling series of concerts to ring in the New Year the night before. This year, in addition to enjoying the South African summer sun, visitors to the festival got to bask in the warm white light of STRIKE 4 fixtures from Chauvet Professional.

Lighting designer Shaniel Laloo of Sounds Ideal (Pietermaritzburg, South Africa) used the STRIKE 4s and a collection of Legend 230SR Beam moving fixtures to engage the massive crowd at the celebration. The high output of both fixtures was essential to the designer achieving this goal, given the large size of the outdoor uMhlatuze Multi-Purpose Sports Complex, where the festival performances took place -- and the size of the crowd, estimated at 40,000.

"The STRIKEs are nice for eye candy effects," said Laloo. "At Richards Bay I used them to light up the artists from the back, while blinding the audience at the same time. I appreciated being able to have 10 STRIKEs on one 16a power source."



Laloo positioned the 10 STRIKE 4 fixtures in his rig on the internal truss grid of the sport center's outdoor stage roof. The STRIKE 4s were divided into groups of four and six, with the smaller group flying on truss at mid-stage and the larger arranged on the upstage overhead truss. Mixed in on the rig with the STRIKE 4 units was a collection of moving washes and beams. The 16-bit dimming control of the STRIKE 4s allowed incandescent style fades, which, together with the warm white LED fixture's strobe effects, provided attention-grabbing eye candy, especially when worked with the moving effects on the rig.

The eight Legend 230SR Beams in Laloo's New Year's Eve rig were arranged on the downstage deck. Positioned four each on either side of the stage, the high-output fixtures (96,000 lux at 15 meters) provided eye-popping aerial looks in a rainbow of colors. They were also used for overhead audience lighting.

Bose FreeSpace DS 16F Loudspeakers Distribute Sound Throughout New Harbour Town Golf Links Clubhouse

Avid fans of professional golf know the Sea Pines Resort's famed Harbour Town Golf Links in Hilton Head, South Carolina, as the home, since 1969, of the annual RBC Heritage Presented by Boeing.

This year's event, which took place April 13-19, was the first to enjoy access to the newly rebuilt Harbour Town Golf Links Clubhouse. Located within the 5,000-acre Sea Pines community and overlooking the course's ninth green, the new facility offers state-of-the-art conference facilities, remote-controlled adjustable lighting, the 4,600-square-foot Champions Ballroom, and technologically advanced audio/visual equipment – the centerpiece

of which is an extensive new background music system consisting of components from Bose® Professional.

This new sound system utilizes 98 Bose FreeSpace® DS 16F loudspeakers throughout the facility, as well as nine FreeSpace 51 environmental speakers, powered by four Bose PowerMatch® PM8250 configurable multichannel amplifiers and controlled via two Bose ControlSpace® ESP-00 system controllers. This sound system matches the Sea Pines Resort's and Harbour Town Golf Links' reputation, which sees it consistently ranked among top courses by *Golf Digest*, *Golfweek*, and *Travel & Leisure*.



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Andres Patrick Forero Joins the SONOR Artist Roster

SONOR drums is proud to welcome Andres Patrick Forero to their artist roster.

“Over the past 18 years, I have had the same sound,” said Forero. “When I was asked to be a part of the Broadway show *Hamilton* earlier this year, I knew it was time to explore all of my options. I had the opportunity to host Steve Smith during one of the off-Broadway perfor-

mances and he provided me with a lot of insight on the intricacies of the SONOR line and the quality of their instruments. I spent the next month trying different drums and it did not take long to realize that Steve’s recommendation to move to SONOR made perfect sense. The drums offer me a whole new way to express myself, making them the perfect fit for

my work on *Hamilton* and studio work.” Andres currently uses SONOR ProLite drums for the Broadway show *Hamilton* and SQ2 series drums for his studio work. “I am looking forward to a long relationship with the entire SONOR team,” said Forero.

Forero is one of the most sought after drummers on Broadway. He has performed and recorded on the Tony Award winning musical *In the Heights*, the Tony nominated *Bring It On*, and spent fifteen months touring with the Broadway hit *The Book of Mormon*. Andres is currently playing eight shows per week at the Richard Rogers Theater for the Broadway smash hit *Hamilton*. The original cast recording for *Hamilton* was number one on iTunes Canada and has held its place at number five in America.

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SLM Launches Dealer Promo: Win A Dream Vacation

St. Louis Music is celebrating a very successful 2015 with a special promotion for dealers, giving away a dream vacation to five lucky winners.

“Giving back to our dealers in this way is something we’ve always wanted to do,” says Robert E. Lee, vice president of sales at St. Louis Music. “We’ve offered incentives before, but because SLM has seen such extraordinary growth, we thought the time was right to give away something extra special.”

Retailers may enter the giveaway drawing by becoming an authorized dealer of any SLM instrument brand, such as Alvarez, Dixon, Blessing, and Knilling, or by signing up for their Advantage Accessory program. Becoming an authorized dealer on a Gold Level will count towards one ticket in the drawing per brand. Becoming an authorized dealer on a Platinum Level will count towards two tickets per brand. The five winners will be chosen at the end of March and will have their pick of vacation packages, with destinations around the world.

Dealers are encouraged to stop by the SLM booth (#4000) at NAMM 2016 for more information or call your St. Louis Music Representative at 800-727-4512 or email at info@stlouismusic.com.





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Boston Crusaders Drum and Bugle Corps Choose Yamaha

Yamaha announced that the 75-year-old Boston Crusaders Drum & Bugle Corps are the ninth corps in the World Class division of Drum Corps International (DCI) to perform exclusively with Yamaha brass and percussion instruments.

They will also incorporate a Yamaha synthesizer, an acoustic drum set, and an array of Yamaha professional audio equipment into their show design.

“Yamaha and Boston Crusaders make a great fit because we share the same philosophical alignment,” said Chris Holland, executive director, Boston Crusaders. “We both have a rich history of tradition and excellence, yet we strive to introduce fresh and innovative thinking. Yamaha instruments have a great reputation for quality and consistency and the brand recognition will help us in our recruiting and educational efforts.”

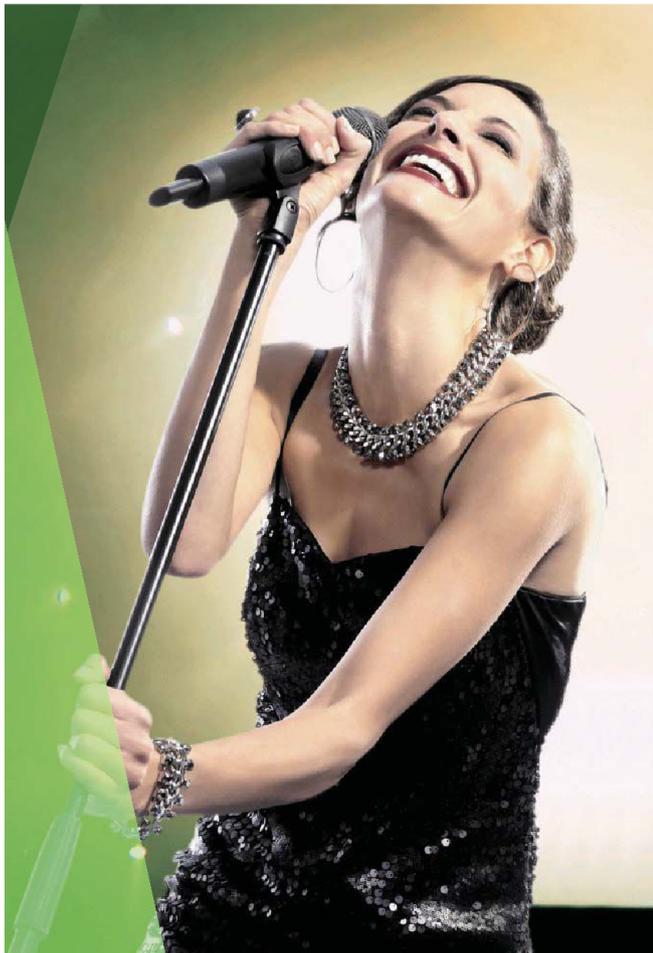
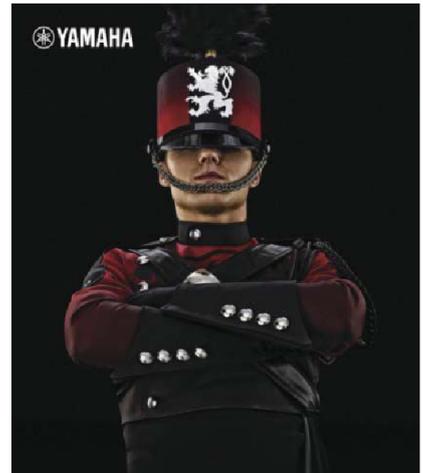
Established in 1940, Boston Crusaders are the third oldest junior drum and bugle corps in the United States and represent one of the founding 13 corps of DCI. While six of those organizations are no longer in operation, the remaining seven drum corps all use Yamaha instruments. They are the second World Class level corps in DCI to switch to Yamaha this year.

“Switching to Yamaha lets Boston Crusaders focus solely on perfecting their performance rather than worry about whether or not their instruments will allow them to perform at their highest level,” said Troy C. Wollwage, marketing manager, percussion instruments, Yamaha Corporation of America.

Yamaha initiated its support of DCI – Marching Music’s Major League – in 1985. Since then, Yamaha affiliate drum and bugle corps have compiled an enviable record of accomplishments, including 16 DCI World Championships, 15 Fred Sanford High Percussion Awards and nine Jim Ott High Brass Awards – all more than any other music instrument manufacturer.

In addition, corps that rely on Yamaha have won a third of all gold, silver, and bronze medals bestowed in DCI competition since 1985. Above all else, DCI and its affiliated drum and bugle corps promote music education and corps that play on Yamaha instruments have launched the careers of thousands of educators and band directors in the United States and around the world.

For more information, please visit 4wrdr.it/usayamaha.



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Vandoren Introduces V21 Saxophone Reeds



After experiencing the success of the V21 B \flat clarinet reed, Vandoren has expanded the line to include alto and tenor saxophone as well.

Utilizing a unique conical design, the V21 provides players with a dark, focused sound with an easy yet full-bodied response in all registers, including altissimo. These qualities make it a great reed for students and professionals currently on traditional reeds that are searching for more depth and warmth in their sound without sacrificing reed-response.

"For musicians looking for something darker than traditional reeds but with slightly less resistance than V12s, the V21 could be the reed they've been searching for," adds Michael Fenoglio, Vandoren product specialist. "With its warm, even tone and incredible response, the V21 will be a game-changer for saxophonists of all levels across the country."

For more information on Vandoren reeds, contact DANSR, Inc. at information@dansr.com or 888-707-4455.

AP International Named TiSonix Distributor

AP International, distributors of Floyd Rose, Babicz Full Contact Hardware, KTS, and ProRockGear, has become the exclusive distributor of TiSonix Titanium Hardware. TiSonix's entire product line will be available from AP in 2016, including an entirely titanium strat tremolo, Tune-O-Matic bridge, and acoustic bridge pins.

TiSonix is dedicated to applying the unique acoustical characteristics of titanium to create precision guitar components that produce superior sound. TiSonix manufactures the products they design themselves "in order to ensure that the quality of each guitar component is maintained." The TiSonix design staff is comprised of professional musicians, luthiers, and engineers with decades of experience in titanium research.

See the new TiSonix line at NAMM 2016 in Booth #4860, Hall C



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Vans Welcomes 2015 Recipient of the Off the Wall Berklee Scholarship

The Vans Berklee Off the Wall Scholarship is a four-year award covering tuition, room, and board for a talented, young musician. Vans is happy to welcome Leila Goodrum, an 18-year-old singer-songwriter from Brookfield, Wisconsin, as the 2015 recipient.

Vans is a brand rich in music history with deep roots in movements ranging from punk and metal to indie rock and hip-hop. Since 1966, Vans has remained committed to supporting the communities, environments and creative platforms of action sports, art, youth development and music through a variety of initiatives including the Vans Custom Culture art competition and the brand's cultural hub, House of Vans. Vans strives to empower creative expression by giving back to the communities that have defined its history for almost 50 years. With this ongoing Berklee scholarship, Vans further expands its music outreach into education.

Vans and Berklee instituted the partnership in 2014 and awarded the first scholarship last fall to singer-songwriter Miette Hope Goldman. The scholarship has been life changing for both recipients. "Vans is so proud to once again celebrate the Off The Wall scholarship and partner with Berklee, an institution that for 70 years has the same dedication to inspiring creative expression among youth," said Kevin Bailey, president of VF Actions Sports and Vans. "Miette Hope is a beautiful example of the raw talent that can continue to flourish from these types of initiatives and we are so excited to support Leila on this truly Off the Wall journey."

Leila Goodrum has been composing, performing, and recording

her own songs since she realized she had a passion for songwriting. "I've never done anything in my life that I love more," said Goodrum. She performs at local venues, records in a home studio, and self-produced an album of original songs titled *Magic*. During high school, Goodrum studied vocal and piano performance, participated in extra-curricular choir and was a musical theater devotee.

At Berklee, Goodrum is studying songwriting and vocal performance. "I didn't honestly expect to be able to attend Berklee for financial reasons, but I applied anyway because it is my dream school and even just to be accepted would have been amazing," said Goodrum. "This scholarship is making a pretty big difference in my life. I'm looking forward to learning and developing my musicianship at Berklee."

"I'm honored to have worked with Vans to develop this scholarship. When an adolescent laces up their first pair of Vans, it's a right of passage to becoming a teenager. Now, Vans is helping these teenagers meet their dream of graduating from Berklee," said Jeffrey Dorenfeld, professor of music business/management. "It was an incredibly rewarding experience meeting the recipients. Knowing that Miette Hope had a great first year, and seeing how fast Leila Goodrum has acclimated, is validation that this scholarship truly changes lives. I look forward to watching Miette and Leila grow and succeed at Berklee – something that couldn't have happened without Vans' belief in the value of music education."



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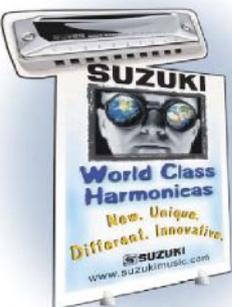
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Eminence Celebrates 50 Years

Eminence Speaker, a manufacturer of professional audio and musical instrument loudspeakers, high frequency devices, and components, is celebrating 50 years.

In 1966, Bob Gault founded what was to become the world's largest loudspeaker manufacturing company after working as an engineer for Magnavox and CTS (Chicago Telephone Supply). Gault started Eminence building only three 18" speakers per day, based on a commitment from Ampeg's Everett Hull. Under the leadership of Gault and most recently his son, Rob, the company's capacity grew to over 10,000 speakers per day, employing nearly 200 people.

"The Eminence Speaker factory is like my brother. We've grown up together side-by-side," said Rob Gault, chairman. "I'm grateful to my family for the opportunity and to God for bringing together such a great group of people who make up the Eminence family."

Originally a supplier to OEM manufacturers only, Eminence began distributing its own line of branded products in 2000, and

currently distributes to over 90 countries. In 2006, Eminence expanded its worldwide operations with the addition of Eminence Dongguan Enterprise Ltd. The 96,000 sq. ft. facility was part of the international Eminence effort to provide loudspeaker manufacturing capability in areas strategically located near manufacturers of musical instrument and professional audio products. In 2009, Eminence further expanded its Asia operations with the addition of the Eminence Cabinet Shop, providing turn-key solutions for professional audio enclosures, finished systems and components, and guitar and bass amplifiers.

"NAMM is proud to recognize Eminence Speaker LLC for their 50 years of service to their community, staff, and to the music and sound products industry," said Joe Lamond, NAMM president and CEO. "Their hard work and willingness to adapt, as well as their commitment to making this world a more musical place, have helped them stand the test of time and will be the driver of their future success."

American Recorder Now Distributes RMV Drumheads and Fuhrmann Guitar Pedals

American Recorder Technologies, Inc. announces that they are now the exclusive distributor of RMV Drumheads in North America. RMV is based in Brazil and is the leading manufacturer of drumheads in South America. "We are very excited to add RMV to our line of high-quality drum accessories," says American Recorder Technologies, Inc. President Alan Adelstein. "We have admired their products for many years and feel the time is right for a new player to shake up the drumhead business. Best of all RMV is sold through independent MI retailers and not on Amazon. Dealers will enjoy healthy margins and customer loyalty, key to growing their MI business in this competitive economy." RMV Drumheads are completely crimped to the aluminum rim, not glued. This sure-grip system allows for perfect resonance and unparalleled durability. The precisely formed hoops provide a perfect fit every time and drums stay in tune. RMV offers a full line and styles of single and multi-ply drumheads in both clear and with their proprietary coatings.

American Recorder Technologies,

Inc., is also the exclusive North American distributor for Fuhrmann Guitar Pedals. Fuhrmann is the leading manufacturer of hand-built guitar pedals in Brazil and is one of the leading brands in South America. Fuhrmann designs and manufactures all pedals in-house. They control every aspect of the production process from metal fabrication, screening and decorating, to electronic assembly.

Fuhrmann produces a wide assortment of pedals covering industry-standard tones as well as more unique offerings. "We are looking forward to introducing Fuhrmann to our dealers," states Adelstein. "Fuhrmann fits our limited distribution concept of quality products with great margins for MI Retailers. These are boutique, hand-made pedals at very reasonable prices. In addition, like many of our other products, Fuhrmann will be exclusive to our MI Retailers and not found on Amazon. Our dealers know we are looking out for their best interest and keeping the independent MI Retail profitable is key to the industry's future."

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MMR GLOBAL



by **Ronnie Dungan**

B&M adds DR Exclusive

Barnes & Mullins has become the exclusive distributor of DR Handmade Strings in the UK and Ireland.

DR Strings offers an extensive selection of guitar and bass strings for electric, acoustic, and other folk instruments. All strings are made in the U.S. with All-American materials and have been for over 25 years.

Endorsers include Victor Wooten, Biffy Clyro, Adam Clayton of U2, Muse bassist Chris Wolstenholme, Derek Trucks, and Stefan Grossman.

Brian Cleary, B&M's joint managing director, said: "DR Strings is a prestigious brand with a raft of top artists, and this addition has great synergy with our existing high-level bass brands such as Spector and Aguilar Amplification. We are pleased to be able to supply these excellent guitar and bass strings to our customers from January 2016."

Meanwhile, the firm has added a back order facility to its trade website enabling retailers to build and save orders throughout the day.

The new service means orders can be built during quieter periods throughout the day with the website automatically saving order progress to allow the retailer to return to it at a time that suits.

With the full B&M catalogue listed, including multiple product images and a greater list of specifications, store owners and buyers can use the website to speed up their sales in store. Customer enquiries that would ordinarily require a phone call are now able to be resolved immediately using the website.

And in addition, purchasing manager, Gary Tichopad, has been promoted to the position of associate director.

He joins a board of associate directors that already includes Alex Mew, Sarah Lewis, and Stephen Finley under the leadership of managing directors Brian Cleary and Bruce Perrin.

'Musicians' eBay' Eyes Expansion

Reverb.com – the marketplace for musicians to buy and sell musical instruments and gear – has secured another \$25 million of funding through equity investor, Summit Partners.

Launched in 2013, Reverb is set to process more than \$120 million in transactions in 2015. The company's earlier investors include Lean Startup pioneer Eric Ries, Rick Nielsen of Cheap Trick, and country music star Brad Paisley.

Comprised of a website and two mobile apps (iOS and Android), Reverb allows users to create product listings, browse new and used gear, and compare historical pricing and sales data. It also hosts content including product reviews, demo videos, gear histories, and artist interviews.

The new investment will support the company's international expansion strategy, key branding initiatives, and continued technical innovation.

"The market for new and used musical instruments is enormous – over \$23 billion globally," said founder and CEO David Kalt. "Reverb brings new life to old musical instruments by putting them side by side with new gear while giving musicians a convenient experience with price transparency and engaging content that stokes their passion for music. With Summit's support, we are focused on further establishing our position as the innovative leader in the market."

Kalt is also the owner of the Chicago Music Exchange, one of the world's largest and best-known vintage guitar dealers. He founded Reverb in late 2012 in response to his frustrations with buying and selling used gear online, and he launched the Reverb marketplace in 2013.

"At Summit, we look for experienced founders and companies with strong fundamentals making a profound impact on their markets," said Summit Partners Principal, Andrew Collins, who will join the company's Board of Directors. "Reverb checks all of those boxes. We believe that its value to musicians, dealers and collectors is clear and proven; its customers are raving fans; and, as the sole institutional investor in David's prior company, optionsXpress, we could not be more confident in Reverb's leadership. We are thrilled to be their partner for this next phase of growth."



Porter & Davies Goes Direct

Drum and bass monitoring specialist, Porter & Davies, is now selling direct into the U.S. through its website, www.porteranddavies.co.uk.

Effective immediately, the firm will supply its BC2, BC2rm, BC Gigster and KT Platform direct from the UK to the U.S. to both dealers and end-users. For-

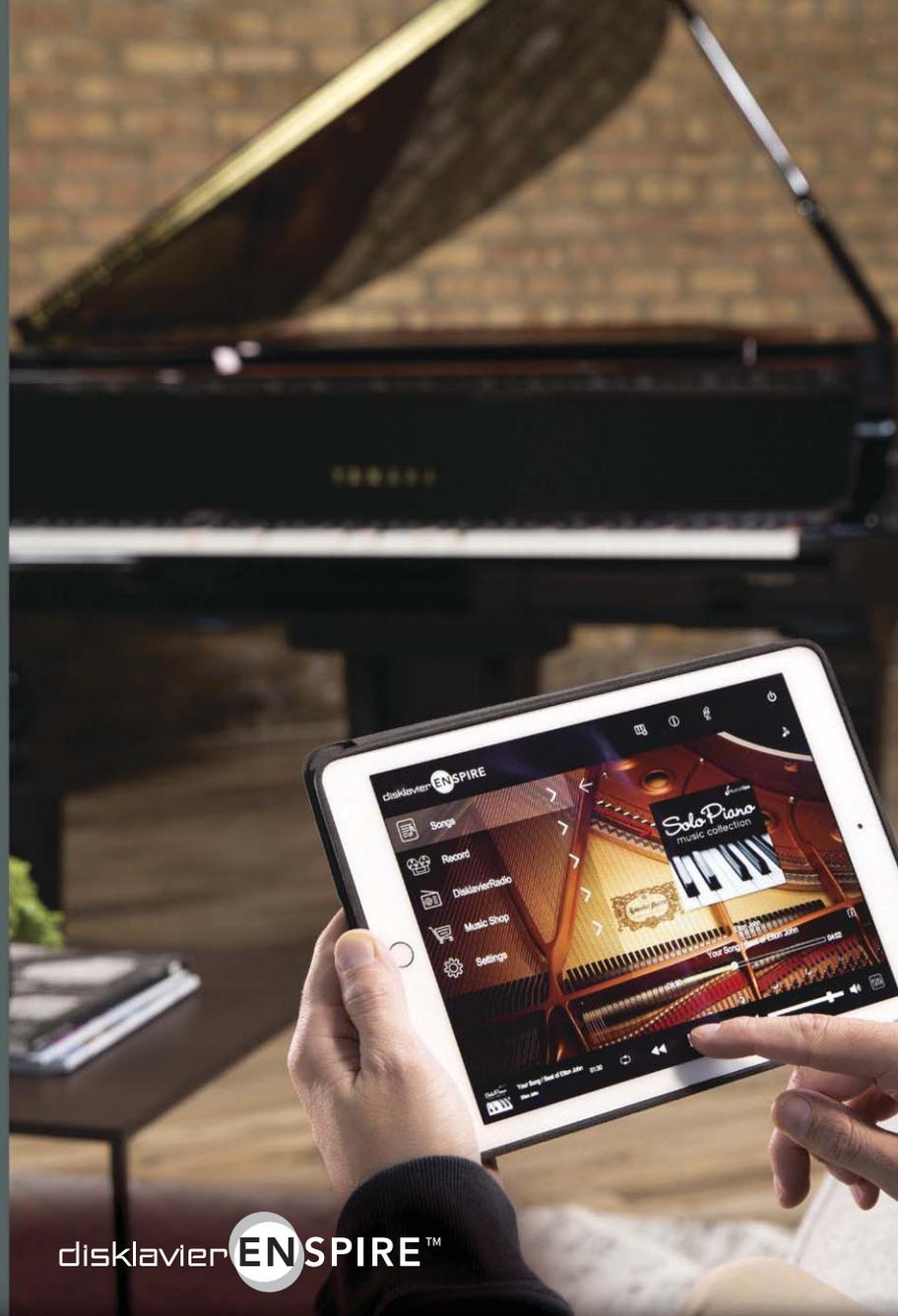
merly it was working with Denver Music Group in the U.S.

By focusing on direct sales, it aims to be able to reduce overheads and therefore prices and open a one to one relationship with each of its customers.

"Direct distribution will create a more efficient Porter & Davies, more able to timely deliver our products to the dealers and end users, complete with full technical support and competitive pricing," said Paul Barretta, managing director. "We are passionate about providing all our customers with the best service in the world."

All service requirements of Porter & Davies products in the U.S. will continue to be dealt with in the U.S.





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Relish Brothers Ready new Models

Swiss manufacturer Relish Guitars is launching a new addition to its innovative range of guitars made with a chambered aluminum and wood body and boasting several distinctive features.

After three years in the research and development stage the company's joint-owners, Silvan Kung and Pirmin

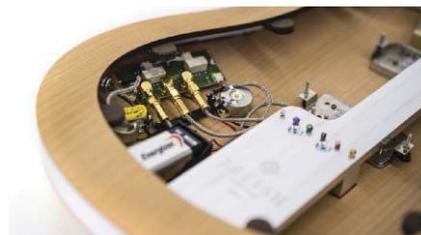
Giger, who call themselves The Relish Brothers, came up with the Jane model and are launching a new guitar called Mary at NAMM.

The bodies of the guitars are a sandwich. The middle layer is made out of one piece of aluminum while the back and the front are made out of moulded wood

veneer. The maple neck is covered with a bamboo fretboard. The guitars also feature LED illuminated touch-sensitive pick-up selectors, replacing the usual switches or knob controls.

The Jane model comes in five different finishes; Walnut, Cherry, Ashy, Bordeaux, and Snow Jane.

Relish will launch a new model called Mary at the NAMM show (21st-24th Jan-



uary 2016). Part of the guitar's design feature is that you can access the inside of the guitar - with no need to remove any screws - just by opening the back-lid to get to the electronics, which you then can easily adapt and customize. Changing the pick-ups can be done by lifting them out and swapping them over. The three-layer construction is fixed by powerful magnets.

It will be priced around \$2,700.

As well as existing model Jane, and the launch of the new Mary model, Relish will have other new lines to present at the show in Basement Hall E

New Fender UK Boss

Following Graeme Mathieson's step to European chief, Fender GBI has promoted Jim O'Connor to the position of general manager.



O'Connor joined the firm in 2008 as a district sales manager and was promoted to sales manager earlier this year.

Previously he worked in the MI retail sector, firstly with Academy Of Sound and then with Sound Control.

His remit will oversee Fender's Great Britain and Ireland sales, marketing, service, and finance operations for Fender, Gretsch, Jackson, Charvel and EVH products, from the company's headquarters in East Grinstead.

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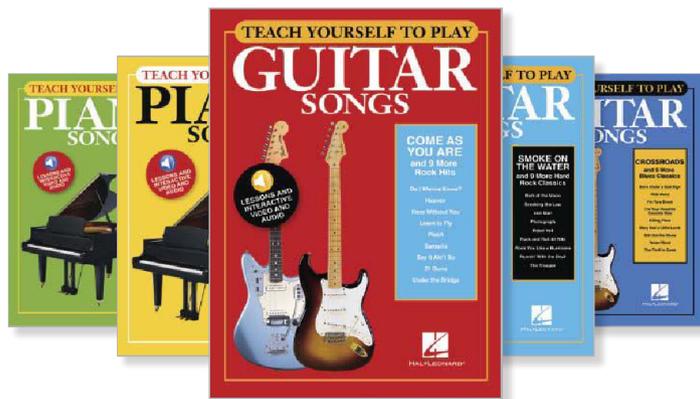
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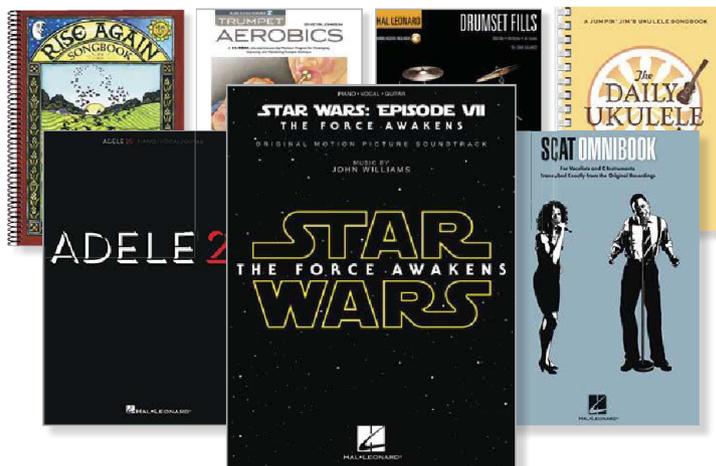
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Band Instrument Co. Expands International Reach

The British Band Instrument Company will be distributing QuikLok Stands and Eko Guitars in the Middle East and Africa plus Acus Sound Engineering in the Middle East, Africa, India, and Eastern Europe.

Gaetano Clementi, export manager for QuikLok, commented, "BBICO has a great reputation for their knowledge of the musical instrument industry in the Middle East and Africa, we look forward to working with them to grow the sales of QuikLok Stands and Eko Guitars worldwide."

Export manager for Acus, Renato Gasparini, said, "We believe that with the professionalism of BBICO, Acus will be able to improve the technical and commercial service in these territories and will guaran-

tee all of the necessary promotional actions to introduce the world class Acus acoustic guitar amps, preamps, and acoustic PA systems."

Alex Smith, BBICO brand manager, added, "We are very pleased to add these great new product ranges to our portfolio, they will provide significant new opportunities for our territories. Both Acus Sound Engineering and the Eko Music Group are continuing a long and successful history of musical instrument and accessory manufacture in Ancona."

BBICO's range also includes Selmer Paris Saxophones, Faith Guitars, Premier Percussion, Jo-Ral Mutes, Giardinelli Products, HW Products, and Jones Double Reeds.

Christmas Cracker for Gear4Music

Like-for-like sales have soared over the Christmas period at on-line specialist Gear4Music, according to its latest trading update.

In an update covering the two months from November 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015, the firm saw a 37 percent sales rise following strong growth in both the U.K. and Europe.

Dispatching and delivering goods seven days a week during the Christmas period was said to have helped to increase website conversion, with a 63 percent rise in mobile revenue compared with the same period last year.

Sales of microphone and PA systems were particularly strong during the festive period, 83 percent up on the same period last

year, apparently helped by the resurgence of live music performances in the UK's pubs and other venues, following on from the popularity of music festivals during the summer.

Gear4music's chief executive Andrew Wass said: "Gear4music delivered a strong performance during the festive period with more visitors to our websites becoming customers, and increased sales through mobile devices.

"We remain confident that as we continue to enhance our websites, extend our product ranges and strengthen our fulfilment systems, we will deliver results in line with market expectations for the financial year ending February 29, 2016."

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Photo by Joy Strotz

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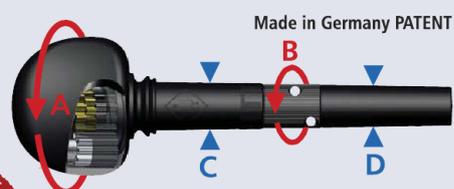
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New Head for Aussie Trade Body

The Australian Music Association has appointed Brendan Callinan, MD of Roland, as president.

Callinan had previously had a stint as president, and is a long-time committee member. He has worked at Roland for 25 years, and first served on the committee in 2002 playing his part in the association's work to develop the industry and its market.

Commenting on his new role, Callinan said: "After taking several years off from the AMA committee, I returned in 2013 believing that the rapid change impacting our industry would be best addressed by a cohesive, collegiate approach to business. The last two years have reinforced my belief that we are always stronger and more successful working together to solve shared problems, than in isolation. I have been privileged to watch the efforts of Rob Walker, Tony Burn and my fellow committee members rebuild, rejuvenate, and repurpose the AMA towards relevance in today's environment.

"I see the next few years as critical to our industry and association. The opportunity for businesses that understand the shifting landscape and develop quick and creative responses, is unparalleled in our recent history. I want the Australian MI industry to be at the forefront of that movement. I see our agenda as increasing the tangible value proposition of AMA membership, providing strong connections to consumers for AMA members and building

revenues that can, once again, allow us to invest in programs that engage the community in active music making. To that end I am happy to hear from any AMA member who has ideas on how this can be achieved."

Guitar Village to Offer Gibson Custom Bespoke Guitars

Gibson Custom has linked with Guitar Village in Surrey, which has become its first Made 2 Measure custom facility in Europe.

The appointment-only service guides you through body and neck materials, neck profiles, hardware finishes, color charts, and other info required for Gibson Custom to build a custom guitar. You can even select the actual maple top for your Les Paul Reissue, a service that has previously only been available for prestige dealers visiting Gibson's Nashville Custom Shop.

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New German Partner for JHS

John Hornby Skewes has appointed Musik Wein as its new distribution partner in Germany for Vintage electric and acoustic guitars and Pilgrim Folk Instruments.

Based just north of Hannover in the town of Isernhagen, the firm was set up in the 1920s, and is one of the region's longest-established music distributors. JHS formerly worked with Music and Sales in the German market.

"JHS would like to take this opportunity to thank Music & Sales for helping to establish Vintage guitars in the German market" says JHS export sales manager, Adam Butterworth. "We are excited about Musik Wein developing further the Vintage business and introducing other JHS ranges such as Pilgrim to the German market. They share the same passion and vision for our brands and will do an excellent job."

Musik Wein CEO Ralf Rohrbach, commented: "We are delighted to be representing Vintage and Pilgrim. These instruments have a real place in the German market, offer great specification, playability, and excellent value for money for many players, and we can't wait to get started!"



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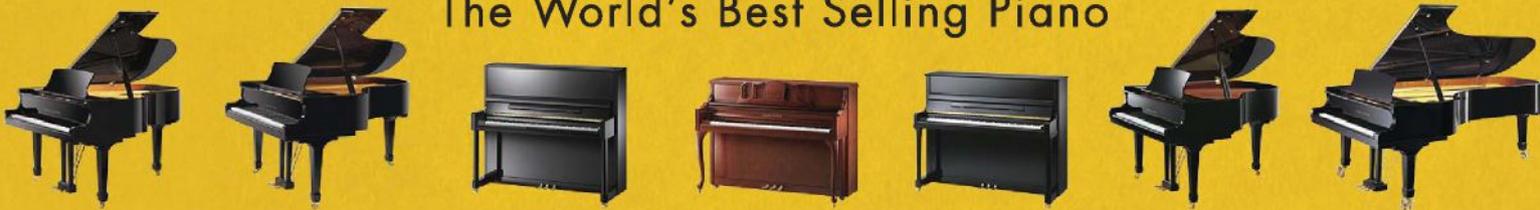
A Note of Thanks on a Grand Scale.

Pearl River has just been named MMR's Acoustic Piano Line of the Year. Thank you to everyone who made it possible...our dealers, our staff, our customers and of course, all the voters. It is the perfect way to begin our 60th Anniversary celebration. We're proud of the beautiful pianos we build and we look forward to seeing you at the **NAMM Show, Booth 205A**, this January in Anaheim. Or you can visit us sooner at **PearlRiverUSA.com**



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Trade Regrets

In late December of last year, NAMM's Dan Del Fiorentino shared the following sad news with us:

Ruth Sibley Bensinger was a pioneering woman in the music publishing industry! As the manager of Shawnee Press, she helped establish a large catalog of materials still legendary in the choral music field.

In the 1940s, she wrote a song called "So Long Sweetheart" when she was a teenager. The song was about lovers split by war. Members of her musically inclined family thought the song was quite promising so they encouraged her to have it published. Ruth decided to walk the song over to Fred Waring's home, whom she had met once through her bandleader father. Mr. Waring, the king of choral music and leader of the Pennsylvania Vocal Group, liked the song and later had his group perform it several times. The song led to several jobs for Ruth over the years with Mr. Waring, including one with his music publishing company, Shawnee Press, where she remained a key employee for several decades.



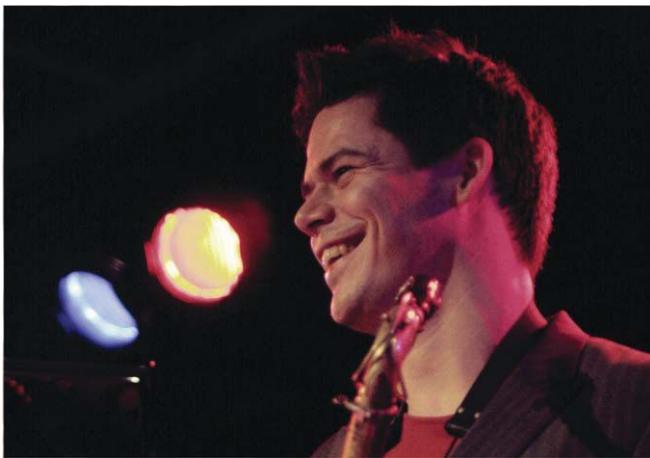
As one of many examples of how sweet and caring Ruth was, she wrote me a letter each and every time I wrote her. If I sent a birthday card, I would soon receive a three-page, handwritten letter. When I learned today that Ruth passed away last month, my heart sunk. She will truly be missed.

Harry Anthony Osiecki passed away at the age of 87 on December 17, 2015.

Osiecki's father started Osiecki's Music Store out of the family home during the time of the Depression, and when his father passed away, his mother kept the store open with the help of her three sons, all accomplished musicians.



After serving in the Korean War, Harry and his brother Jerry returned from the service and grew Osiecki Brothers Music Center to become one of the great names in music retail in the Erie Pennsylvania Area for over 75 years. Harry was also a nationally known accordion player and teacher who played at many national conventions.



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ON THE MOVE

Roland Corporation U.S. has announced the promotion of **Chris Halon** to vice president, marketing.

Most recently, Halon served as director of marketing communications for Roland U.S. In his new role, he will continue to head all marketing efforts in the U.S. for both the Roland and BOSS brands, as well as lead a team of Global Content creators throughout the worldwide network of Roland offices to support the expanding reach of the Roland brand.

The company has also announced the appointment of industry veteran **Mark Nelson** to the newly created position of vice president of Drums and Accessories.

In his new role, Mark Nelson will oversee and focus on the business development of Roland's Electronic Percussion and Accessories divisions.

The Audio Engineering Society (AES) has welcomed **John Krivit** as he takes over the leadership role of president from Andres Mayo.

Previously Krivit served as chair of the AES Education Committee and is currently an associate professor teaching at Emerson College and Bay State College in Boston.

Krivit was voted president-elect of the AES in 2014 and has served on the Executive Committee of the Board of Governors over the last year.

Plugiversity.com has appointed **Ashley Smith** as the creative development and product specialist for all their distributed and partnered software



brands that include Applied Acoustics Systems, BBE Sound Software, Flux, GRM Tools, Ircam Lab, Nomad Factory, Metric Halo, Nugen Audio, and many more.

Radial Engineering Ltd. has announced that **Ryan Tobias** has joined Inside Sales, Central Region.

Tobias learned the business of live sound before taking his formal education in audio engineering and recording while living in his home state of Ohio. After a few years of live engineer mixing onboard cruise ships, he moved to Vancouver, BC where he's since gained experience working in studios, including producing from his own home studio and gradually moving into sales.

Mike Bauer has joined Radial's Tech Support Team with a focus on custom product requests for snakes, splitters, and stage boxes. Before taking on this position, Bauer worked as an audio engineer in New York City in various capacities for several years.

Two Old Hippies Stringed Instruments has named **Colin Besancon** as global sales manager.

Breedlove has been located in Central Oregon for 25 years and Besancon has been a part of the organization for almost 14 of those years. During his tenure here he has held various positions from being a builder of the instruments to the product design and development, and has also represented the company in sales.

Chauvet has appointed **Jaime Friedstadt** as director of business development & marketing for Hispanic Markets for the company's Chauvet Professional and Illuminarc divisions.

Friedstadt will report to Stephane Gressier, international sales director of Chauvet.



Ryan Tobias and Mike Bauer



Having transitioned to a direct-to-retail sales model in 2015, **SABIAN** has just enlisted a solid team of industry veterans to bolster their U.S. sales effort.

Roger Jewell is the new Northeast regional sales manager, with **Tim Morris** as Midwest rep, **Paul Holdgate** as West Coast rep, and **Mary Sandschafer** as inside sales rep.

A 16-year veteran of the MI industry, Roger Jewell has been a force in independent sales for a number of leading manufacturers – including SABIAN (1999–2003).

Holdgate began in MI in a Northern California “mom and pop” store in 1978, then worked the retail side with Guitar Center until 1994, then as national sales manager and vice president of Vestax, before eventually making the transition to the manufacturing side as a rep with PCM Marketing in 1996.

New Midwest rep. Tim Morris carries credentials as a representative for Hoshino USA (Ibanez, Tama) in the Midwest for 26 years.

New Inside Sales rep. Mary Sandschafer is a 21-year veteran of MI. From her first gig with Midco International in Illinois, Mary has gained a wealth of experience with Musicorp, Kaman, KMC Music, and JAM Industries.

Renkus-Heinz has announced that company president **Roscoe Anthony** has decided to resign from his position effective immediately.

No replacement for Anthony is currently under consideration. Harro Heinz will return to serve as president and CEO.



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EMG

40 Years of Innovation

'You Can't Sit Still in This Business'

2016 marks four decades of EMG, Inc., game-changing designers and producers of pickups, EQ accessories – and more! (read on) – that have been embraced by players across a number of styles. *MMR* recently spoke with company founder, Rob Turner, to learn more about the origins and evolution of EMG, his observations on the changing MI landscape, and what's ahead for the company he began back in 1976.

By Christian Wissmuller

Rob Turner

With this being the 40th anniversary, lets do some brief reminiscing. What prompted you to start the EMG in the first place?

Rob Turner: I grew up in electronics. My dad was in the ham radio business, so I was surrounded by a bunch of engineers who wouldn't leave me alone [*laughs*]. I have always loved audio, so mixing the two was more of a natural progression. I started by building and repairing amplifiers and the like, but always found them a little boring. My thought was to go into the microphone business, but the entry cost was just too high. So, I set my sights on something easier to conquer that was in sore need of a major tune-up: the guitar pickup. Since I'm a musician and played in bands, I had a ready and willing group of guinea pigs to try things out on and I knew that low-impedance was the way to go – Les Paul had said it himself, more than once.

“We'll be around for a while – plain and simple.”

There are mainly two things that prompted the start of the company. First, I hit upon a design that simply worked really well, I worked hard at it, and eventually hit a homer. Second, my father said, “If you want to be happy in life, work for yourself.” It takes two ingredients to catalyze, so there you go!

Back in 1976, how many employees were there, total? And can you describe the original set-up and facilities?

In 1976, there was just me. My dad's first shop was in the garage in Long Beach, California, then he moved his business to a larger building, so I took over the garage and started there. It was actually an addition on the back of the garage. My mom was really crafty, and she had her painting, stained glass, upholstery, and all in the same shop. She played piano out there, too.

I called the business “Dirtyworks Studios” because I spent my time cleaning up after other people's messes, and I mean the electronic kind. My brother and I joined forces in late 1978 when I moved the business to Santa Rosa and we worked together for many years.

Cut to the present-day: How many current EMG employees and how big are the facilities?

We now have a “Flex” workforce for assembly of over 50 people. But have a permanent administrative/sales group of 16 or so. We also have the EMGtv Studio crew that has a permanent crew of three, and expands to seven or so for a video production. The current facility is 30,000 sq. ft. The video studio is at a separate location and is around 3000 sq. ft.

How pivotal to the company's success was the '81 hookup with Steinberger guitars and basses?

The Steinberger days were definitely a big boost for us. Not only because we finally had a customer who sort of fit our ethos, but we also met a group of people who we are working with still. Hap Kuffner was really the third ingredient we needed to finally push ourselves into becoming a real business. He led us by the nose to Frankfurt and helped put us on the international map, as well as domestically. I still do a lot of development work for Ned Steinberger and work closely with him on most of his projects. It's been a long relationship.

If you were to name the five most significant events – partnerships, trade shows, product introductions, and the like – in EMG's development, what would they be?

As you can imagine, after 40 years I've had many people in my life with whom I've had “partnerships.” “Business Partnerships” are really people partnerships, especially in the music business. I'd first have to mention my late brother Bill, as well as Gary Rush, who worked for EMG for over 30 years. Of course, Hap Kuffner,

Ned Steinberger, and one of our early partners John Carruthers, who helped us immensely. As far as “business” partners go, I think ESP Guitars, Schecter Guitars, and for that matter the major players, both Gibson/Epiphone, and Fender have been worthy of praise. Trade shows have always been an important part of what we do, and like our business they have morphed over the years. I find the shows have fewer “players” as the retail industry has consolidated and with the addition of online retailing, we’ve really had major changes take place. I still love a good trade show – it gives me a chance to not only sell and promote products, but I always learn something new from someone at every show. Most of our product development comes from trade show input from customers, and I love talking to players at the shows.

Leo Fender never expected Jimi Hendrix to come along. Life is a bowl of cherries. Metal has been great for us, and for the players, so I’m glad the market has embraced us.

What’s the current best-seller for EMG?

Our biggest seller has always been the 81/85 humbucking combination for guitar. The DG-20 (David Gilmour) Strat set has been great for us as well. We have always done well in the bass market. The latest releases of the JH Set (James Hetfield, Metallica) and 57/66 have been really well accepted. Our focus over the next year will be making systems that are truly “replacement” systems for guitar and bass that are solderless installations that anybody can install. Solderless has been really good for us, so we’re going to push it further.



Overhead view of pickup assembly and coil winding.

Can you talk a little bit about what the embrace of EMG by metal and hard rock guitarists has meant to the company?

This is a case of “be careful what you wish for.” EMGs were originally designed for studio work – to be quiet, have clean, clear tone, and we used that mantra for years and years. Eventually word got around that EMGs were good for metal/hard rock and then we were off to the races. We took advantage of the situation by marketing to the group who most loved us. Why not? For years we were kings in Hollywood, New York, and Nashville with the studio players and then we were kind of kidnapped by heavy metal. I’m sure

For a company that used to pretty exclusively make and sell pickups, EMG offers a ton of gear now, from pedals and knobs to guitar straps and cables. What was the thinking behind expanding the range and, aside from pickups, what the hottest selling item?

We have never just been a pickup company. Pickups are what we’re known for, but we are also a design and manufacturing firm for many other companies in the MI. We are a great source for “Made in the USA” OEM products and we do it well. Moving into sales of accessories for guitar seems a natural for us. As you know, we sell some products online direct to customer. It isn’t any secret. We make so

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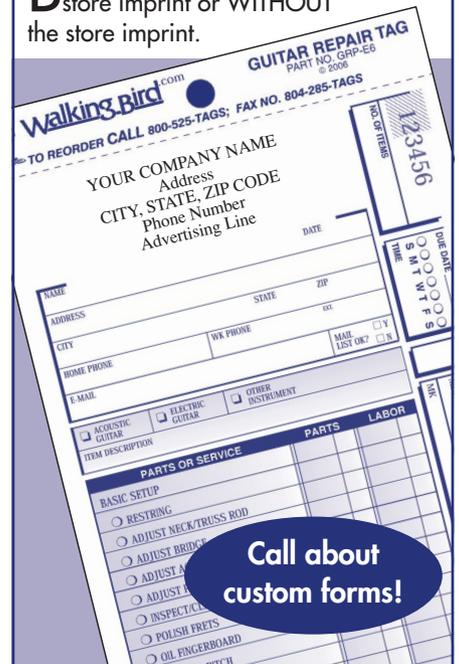


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Hand assembly of EMG pickups at the Santa Rosa, California factory.

many different products that dealers could never stock them all, so we protect dealers by pricing our most popular products higher on our site, but make accessory items available direct to consumers. Again, it's a natural progression that once you've got a customer on your website, why not encourage them to purchase more of what they like. As any retailer or brand knows, you cannot let customers get away because there are too many options a click away. With other products we saw brands that didn't have representation through retail and consumer sales channels, so we saw an opportunity to offer more

products to both. We don't want to invest in making pedals or cables when there are very good companies out there, that complement our brand and product, that have been building their products/brand for as long as I have been building pickups. We have very good retail partners and so are looking forward to offering great new products from EMG and other brands in the New Year.

Any special plans – celebrations, product, initiatives – in the works to mark the 40th anniversary in 2016?

We're not having a big to-do at the NAMM Show. I think we'll wait for the 50th for that. We'll be celebrating with our long-time employees and families – they deserve it more. There's a bunch of products coming, it's just a matter of getting them all done! We have been working with builders, artists, and dealers more so than ever before on products and marketing that 2016 is shaping up to be busy in many areas. Not to mention EMGtv is going into its seventh year with more artist's performances, product demonstrations, commercials, and contests, which gives us a good platform to promote our 40th.

Expectations for the coming year?

Doing what we do best, and hopefully more of it. You can't sit still in this business there's too much change going on and you have to stay on top of where your business needs to be. We'll be around for a while – plain and simple, we have a lot of plans. The expectations are to stay very, well... active. **MMM**



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Steve West



Steve with his father, Pearl West.



A recent West Music executive photo.

Fighting the Good Fight

A decorated veteran in the war to advocate for widespread music education access, Steve West is this year's recipient of the Don Johnson Industry Service Award.



“...obviously you have to run a business well to stay in business, but there has to be a higher order and passion than just making money. I'm sure I got this from my mother and father, but I also believe that the associates, the 210 associates here at West Music, strongly believe in what the power of music can do to whatever population utilizes it, and how they utilize it.”

By Paige Tutt

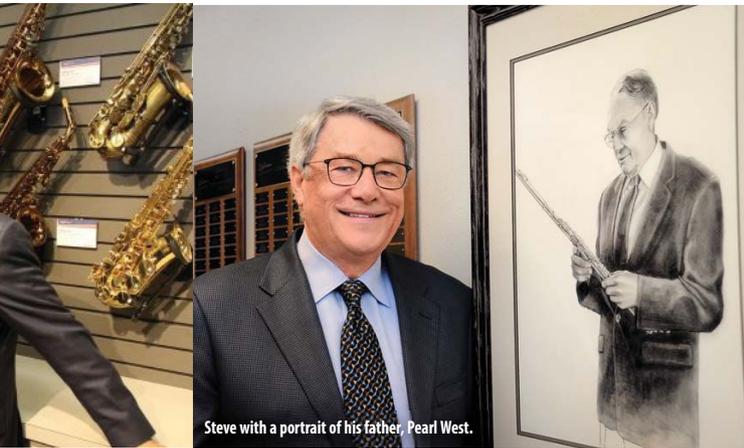
We all know the saying, “the apple doesn't fall far from the tree,” and you'd be hard pressed to find a more applicable example than Steve West. His father, Pearl West, was a musician, owner of West Music, and a prime example of a music education advocate. Pearl passed that torch on to his son Steve, who passed that torch on to his own son, Ryan West, who now operates as senior vice president of West Music.

Steve West has spent over 40 years in the music industry, and advocated for equal opportunity music education just as long. Between co-funding the Music Achievement Council, starting the New Horizons Band, helping lay the foundation for SupportMusic, acting as chairman of the NAMM foundation, starting the West Music Music Therapy Services, helping to spread the West Music Education Catalog throughout the U.S., and establishing the Iowa Alliance for Arts Education, it's hard to imagine how West had time to sleep.

MMR sat down with Steve to discuss his legacy, his achievements over the years, and the moments that really set in stone not only what music meant to him, but also what it could mean for the world – from traveling the world with the University of Iowa Symphonic Band in college, to hiring the first music therapist at West Music.

One thing stands out when you speak to Steve about music and music education, and that's his genuine belief in its power and desire to spread that gift to as many people as he can. “There are almost an unlimited number of populations, and maybe it is an unlimited number of populations that would benefit from involvement in music,” comments Steve. Its quotes like this that made it evidently clear to the selection committee who would be the 2016 recipient of the Don Johnson Industry Service Award.

This year, the Don Johnson Industry Service Award finds its home with Steve West – a man who has dedicated his life not only to his own love of music, but has made sure that as many people as possible have access to music, no matter what your age, background, color, or creed



Steve with a portrait of his father, Pearl West.



Steve with president/CEO of West Music, Robin Walenta, and son, Ryan.

What role did music and music education play in your life as a child?

(He chuckles lightly) Where does one start... back in fourth grade... well you know obviously my father was a very good musician, he was a music educator himself and he had started a music store so obviously music was everywhere but I think I started percussion when I was in the fourth grade and switched to the clarinet when I was in fifth grade and when I got to high school I switched to the bass clarinet and so obviously continued to play and still play today but I had some wonderful experiences when I was growing up. In high school and college, I had some wonderful experiences... as a child, yes, I was definitely involved. I was a believer.

What are some of the most important things you learned from your father, not only as an educator, but also as a business owner?

He was very, very hardworking. He... Whatever it took, he did it. If he had to go back at night and work he certainly did that. He was very focused, but that being said he always enjoyed life and always had a smile on his face. He was not all that serious, but he was a darn hardworking man.

The other issue that I remember and something I've tried to do all my life – he was always a constant learner. He was a musician, he was a music educator, but when he got into business he didn't know all the accounting and all the other things but he constantly was reading books, and studying this, and going to conferences, to better himself and his skill-set so he could be successful within the company. Obviously his passion for music, music was the way he got off the family farm and because of his playing ability, he was very passionate. He continued to play all his life, so it was more than just making a living off of music but it was really playing music and participating in music as well.

Where did your passion for music education stem from?

I did have some great experiences in K-12 growing up and certainly I had some of what are referred to as “goose-bump” moments when I was in high school playing in band and all-state music. Probably the greatest influencer of me was when I was in college and a sophomore, the University of Iowa Symphonic Band was chosen to go on a European Soviet Union tour by the State Department. These were 90 college students, extremely good musicians, we spent a full semester together not only playing everyday but also seeing the world and certainly we had a number of incredible experiences mu-

sically and as far as just going out and seeing the world. That really helped to shape and form my passion for music, but also my passion for travel, understanding how others around the world feel, and how music affects them.

In what ways did your marketing major in college contribute to your success in your position at West Music?

Going back to my father, Pearl, he was a very patient fellow, a great craftsman, could sit at the repair bench fixing an instrument for hours; he was also a flute builder. I wasn't quite that patient. I played throughout college but I decided I wasn't going to become a music major, but I was going to go into business because that was a bit more in line with my personality. Also I had an inkling about getting into the business and I thought those skills might help take the business to another level.

You joined the company in 1969 and were named sales manager two years later in '71. What was your vision for West Music at the time, and how did it evolve over the years?

This was a smaller company. I think we had 14 employees. We were covering a fairly limited geographical area here in Iowa. In the '70s, there was a major recession based around a farm crisis and generally the economics of small family farms was changing. What I quickly discovered was no matter how good we were that our success was because we were so regional in an agricultural area, our success was determined more by the price of corn and hogs than it was by our ability to manage a music store. By the mid-'70s, I had pretty well decided that we needed to diversify and geographically and perhaps in other product lines in addition to band instruments and pianos at the time, we needed to become more diverse so that we were able to withstand changes in local regional economics and be a bit more stable as we hope to grow.

On the West Music website, it's stated that West Music's goal is to “[enrich] all people's lives through the participation in music.” Can you speak about not only how music has enriched your life, but how you feel you have been able to enrich the lives of others through music?

How many hours do you have? How long do you have? (chuckles) We've always looked at obviously you have to run a business well to stay in business, but there has to be a higher order and passion than just making money. I'm sure I got this

from my mother and father but I also believe that the associates, the 210 associates here at West Music, strongly believe in what the power of music can do to whatever population utilizes it, and how they utilize it. Music can reach the very young, the very old, it can reach populations of various skillsets and abilities in such positive ways. So not only have I personally experienced those but tens of thousands, well, hundreds of thousands have observed how music and participation in music can affect people's lives in a very positive way.

What was the catalyst that led to the formation of the West Music Education Catalog Department in 1980?

Two things happened in and around that time. Before this, one of my first times attending NASMD (the National Association of School Music Dealers) there was a session on Orff teaching or the teaching of Carl Orff. I was fascinated by this particular teaching;



West Music Company circa 1950



Pearl West, Steve's father

it was for earlier elementary and basically elementary school students. So I came back and sponsored a clinic to bring in Grace Nash, who's kind of the number one person in this field in the U.S. She came in for a clinic and we had a wonderful response from the general music teachers in Iowa. They were very appreciative, and I could see that was a wonderful foundation for learning music as a child. Our initial hope was to get behind it

and try to get as many schools in Iowa using that. I hired an Orff specialist that had recently graduated, but I quickly figured out that I could sell all the Orff instruments in Iowa and still not be able to pay this young woman's salary. First of all, she did everything from group teaching of guitar and whatever else to be able to pay for the position, but then we started reaching out to find people with expertise in that area outside of Iowa. I still believe it gives wonderful educational background to every student who wants to go on to band and orchestra but it just gives them

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Steve at beginning band recruitment night – 1991.

Tell me a bit about the West Music Music Therapy services, and the partnership with University of Iowa.

In much the same way we got involved in K-6/K-8 music education, we also found more music therapists were coming to us because we had products that resonated with special populations that they were servicing. So I started going

to the music therapy conventions. They're some of the most passionate, committed individuals that I've ever met, in any career or any group of people. As we were starting to do business with them, going to the national conventions, I said you know, this is something we might want to try, hire a music therapist on our staff, number one so we better understand the needs of music therapists (much the same as we do with



Steve presenting to local band directors – 1969.

music educators) but also for us to start experiencing because we really saw the number of populations that could be served and were effectively being served by music therapists. So we started with one and all of the sudden, it grew, then we started with another. We set up some clinics throughout Iowa. And now we have 15 music therapists servicing populations

A large advertisement for Schilke ST21 trumpets. It features a man in a black suit, Eric Crees, smiling and holding a Schilke ST21-G3 trumpet. The background is a large, ornate glass and steel dome structure. The text "SCHILKE ST21" is prominently displayed in large blue and white letters. Below it, the slogan "The choice of the best around the world." is written in a cursive font. To the right, the name "ERIC CREES" is listed along with his title "SECTION PRINCIPAL TROMBONE" and "ROYAL OPERA HOUSE-COVENT GARDEN". At the bottom right is the Schilke logo, which includes the name "Schilke" in a stylized font and "CHICAGO, U.S.A." below it. At the bottom left, the model "SCHILKE ST21-G3" is noted. At the very bottom, the website "WWW.SCHILKEMUSIC.COM" is displayed in large white letters.

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very young, very old, everything from school districts to senior living facilities, hospice, you name it – we serve those populations and now because of the number of therapists we have on staff, some of them are able to specialize in various population skillsets, so that’s been quite rewarding as well. It’s been amazing. An amazing group of people doing amazing work and changing people’s lives again through the power of music.



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Steve at West Music Annual Meeting, January 2015

It’s been over five years since you retired as president of West Music. What are your observations on the evolution of the company under Robin’s stewardship and what are your own goals for the future?

I am extremely proud of that. Robin took over I think, seven-eight years ago as president, and Ryan West, my son, came back to the company around the same time. He is a senior vice president. I am happy to say that we are having very, very good success and the best year in our history much to their hard work and that of all the associates. Robin has been fabulous. I am extremely proud that both of them are giving back to the industry much as I had. She is vice chairman of NAMM and



Cedar Rapids store opening, Steve with members of Chamber of Commerce – 1986.

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at this year's NAMM show in January, well he already is, he's president of the NAMM Young Professionals group and is very involved in that, as I was many years ago at that age. So they have brought the company to a whole new level and I'm extremely proud.

As far as what I'm going to do, basically I'm working my way out of a job and feeling great about it.



A young Steve West, second in on the left.

What are you most proud of when you look back on your legacy?

When I joined the industry, when I graduated from college in 1969, I was thinking I was joining a longtime, old, established industry that had been around for a long time but now

that I reflect on it a little the industry as we know it specifically in music education really didn't start until WWII. There were certainly successful band programs and orchestras prior to WWII; in the twenties and thirties there were some incredible national competitions for bands and orchestras, but it wasn't until after when the soldiers were coming back and musicians were coming back and getting hired and bringing



1997 - West Music warehouse opening.

music back into smaller school districts, not just the major school districts, in our case Iowa, and especially throughout the United States. Thinking about it, in reality when I joined, WWII had only been over for 24 years. I thought I was in the middle of a longterm trend but really it was just the begin-



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ning of the school music business as we know it today. So after knowing all that, and after 47 years, I realized how it's evolved even when I've been involved in the industry.

Because of the hard work of a lot of people, after the great recession that we've just gone through and the slow recovery since then, that the school music side of the music industry was not affected nearly as much as other parts of the industry. I attribute that to a number of things that have been done over the years within the time that I have been involved in the music industry. NAMM, obviously, has been heavily involved with that and has continued to provide some great tools and support through supportmusic.com and through the use of the NAMM Foundation to ensure we have the tools to advocate and assure that every teacher, student, or parent that needs to advocate for music participation in their particular area has the option and has those tools to make sure they have access to music and good music education. I was very involved when I was chairman of NAMM of putting into place the foundation for SupportMusic and I think it has been



Robin Walenta, Iowa Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds, and Steve West.

very successful and has contributed in a positive way to administrators and politicians not going after music programs.

The Music Achievement Council, I was involved in co-founding that many years ago. MAC, getting ready to retire from that, but the Music Achievement Council has done a number of things, first it has created a lot of tools for educators and students to help recruit students as well as teachers and retain them within music education – an extremely important part of the success of the music industry that supports music education.

In addition, at the beginning when we started that, music manufacturers really didn't talk or work with music retailers. They were more adversarial than they were colleagues or collaborators in supporting music education. I think the Music Achievement Council people – three of them are manufacturers, three of them are retailers, one is the president of NAMM – have done a lot to break down those barriers so that we are all pulling together making sure we can provide the means to keep music education on the forefront in school districts throughout the United States and Canada, worldwide.

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Steve working with customer at Farm Progress show – 1980s.

“ It’s a marathon, not a sprint. Everyday people need to continue to go out of their way to advocate, and if we continue to do that, I think the power of what music education can mean to any population will continue to be recognized more and more. Obviously that will be good for all those who have the advantage of participating. ”

In addition, we’ve taken another step and really reaching out and working much more closely with music educators. The Music Achievement Council is doing that, but also obviously NAMM, Mary Luerhsen through the Foundation, so we’re all pulling together to make sure every child has access to a quality music education. And I think we’ve made great strides in that so I’m very, very proud of that.

I was very involved in establishing the Iowa Alliance for Arts Education, an advocacy group that has had a major impact on our state and Robin is very involved in that group now, doing a marvelous job. Again, ensuring our educators have the support and that politicians understand the value and importance of music education.

And then of course I’m still the president and playing in the community band, those are important things locally. I have a concert coming up, so I gotta talk the talk and enjoy the product. I’m still playing, I wouldn’t say professionally by any means, but enjoying every minute that I have a chance to play. Then you get into the New Horizons band – we started the third New Horizons band and its been incredibly successful, showing the power of music with seniors and how important they can be and how much

joy they can have in their retirement years participating in music. My life has been a transition of how does music affect what population and there are so many populations, virtually maybe every population, that participation in music can certainly have a powerful impact there.

What advice would you give to others hoping to support and advocate for music education?

The battle is never over. The war is never won, but we continue to win. We are in such a better place than we were 47 years ago when I got involved in the industry. There are so many other tools and opportunities for dealers, manufacturers, parents, players, musicians to advocate for music education and music participation. There are almost an unlimited number of populations, and maybe it is an unlimited number of populations that would benefit from involvement in music. It could be the very old. It certainly could be the very young, and everyone in between. It could be those special populations with special needs, who are particularly served with them being involved – not listening, but participating, creating music. As soon as we are successful in one area, there’s always an opportunity in another, to advocate and make sure

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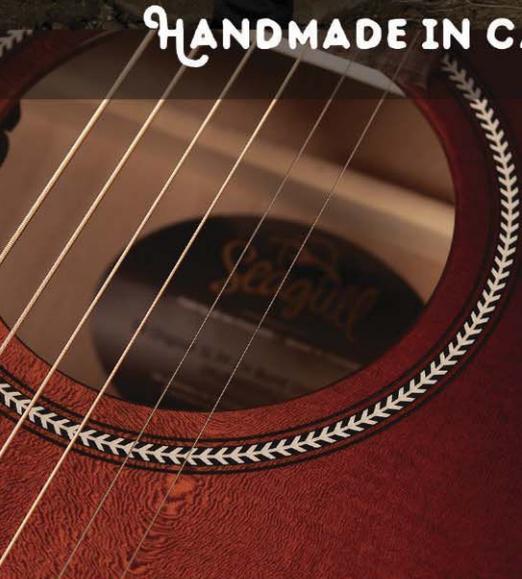
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Spotlight **Steve West**

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“My life has been a transition of how does music affect what population and there are so many populations, virtually maybe every population, that participation in music can certainly have a powerful impact there.”

that other populations have access to a quality music participation experience. It's a marathon, not a sprint. Everyday people need to continue to go out of their way to advocate and if we continue to do that I think the power of what music education can mean to any population will continue to be recognized more and more and obviously that will be good for all those who have the advantage of participating.

Who are some people/companies who have helped you to further your support of music education?

Early on, my father, Pearl, was a part of a group called Omega. It's a research-sharing group, and the founding fathers of that were basically those, at the time men, who were coming back from WWII and starting the music business. Many of them were music educators, and I sat in this room and just tried to absorb as much as I could... These were people who really started to sector the industry after WWII and I was privileged to be able to, twice a year, sit in the same room and listen to how they resolved problems or how they built their businesses and served music education and I think that made a tremendous impact.

That said, NAMM has been an incredible resource and has continued to grow to support music education, first under Larry Lincoln and then under Joe Lamond, and many of the people who I worked with while I was on the board were very committed to again advocating and helping not only to build business but to build the populations that we serve with the products and services that we offer, so all of these people had extremely important influences on me. Then of course the Music Achievement Council – these are all good people who are doing it for all the right reasons. **MMR**

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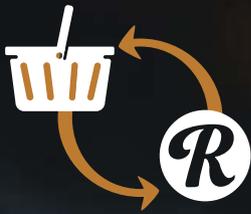
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Small is the New Big

Micro-amplifiers and ‘Lunchbox’ Heads Continue to Gain in the Marketplace

By **Christian Wissmuller**

Back in April of 2013, *MMR* took a fairly in-depth look at the then-burgeoning field of mini/micro – or “lunchbox” – guitar amplifier heads that had become quite the rage over the previous few years. At the time, many were still unsure whether this development was a momentary fad driven by the country’s economic downturn, by “fashion,” or whether these diminutive powerhouses were truly here to stay.

Six years later and this particular product segment is not just maintaining, but thriving. Additional functionality, coupled with the portability and reasonable (comparatively) price-points that made them a hit in the first place – plus the fact that more and more guitarists seem to be coming around to the fact that if you’re playing a 60-person capacity room fitted with a decent PA system, you don’t actually need that glorious full-stack in order to be heard – are all keeping micro-amps winners for both players and dealers.

We recently checked in with some of the biggest names in these types of amplifiers – as well as some popular all-in-one “tiny combo” suppliers – to see what’s driving the market and what the future may hold

What is it about these mini and “lunchbox” style amps that has given them such sustained – indeed, increased – popularity over the past decade or so?

James Garza: The mini amplifier or “lunch box” style amplifier has had continued success for several reasons. Some of the reasons include convenience, portability, feature set, versatility, price point, and sonic character. Today’s working guitarist is challenged with many aspects of recording and performing music. One of the main reasons I see the popularity mainstay of this category is simple: portability. A lunch box style amplifier can meet many of the demands of the working musician with an added bonus of convenience. Who likes carrying amplifiers? I can tell you, personally, that load-ins and load-outs were my least favorite part of being a performing musician. Lunch box or mini amps are like the Swiss Army knife of amplifiers. They can be used in studios, clubs, festivals, offices, bedrooms, or practically any application where you need an amplified guitar.

Pat Quilter: My theory about the rising popularity of mini amps relates to several trends in the guitar-playing commu-

nity. First, it’s increasingly common to mic an amp or go direct-out to a stage console, so many players no longer need a super-loud amplifier. This especially applies for worship performances and small restaurants. Second, home recording has also become popular, so a small amp that can overdrive at reasonable volume levels is obviously useful. Third, small tube amps can be made at a lower cost and weight, thus overcoming some of the traditional complaints about high power tube heads. And, lastly, like pedals, a small amp is often affordable enough to buy as a novelty item, just to have fun and restore some zest to your playing.

Fred Poole: Portability and functionality continue to allow sustained growth in the mini head market. Always pushing the state of the art, Peavey’s new mini heads provide features not found on any other mini head in the market. Unique features such as USB and silent recording out, continue to drive the market forward.

Armando Vega: While mini amp heads’ compact size may have initially led people to think of them as a fad, they have

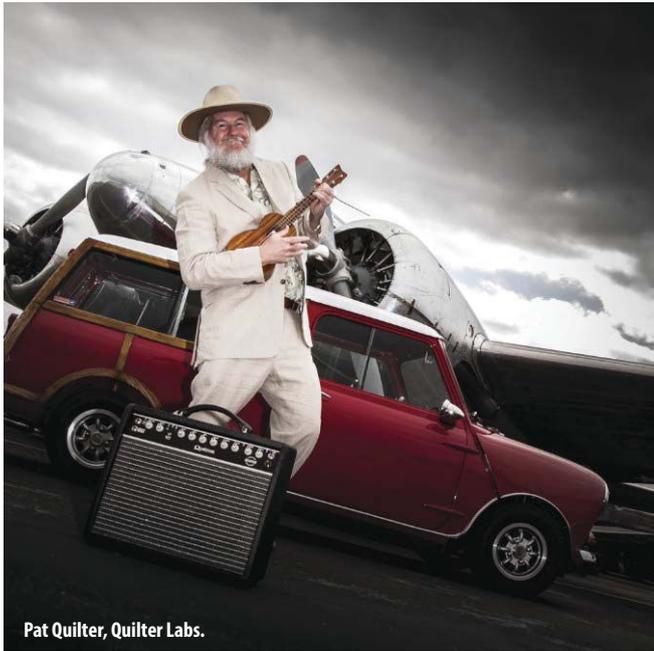


James Garza, Orange Amps



“Lunch box or mini amps are like the Swiss Army knife of amplifiers.”

– James Garza,
Orange Amps



Pat Quilter, Quilter Labs.



since earned sustained popularity, largely due to the fact that they represent a re-thinking of the conventional approach to guitar amplification. To me, it boils down to simplifying the life of a musician. With the increased use of amp and effect modeling, speaker simulation, software plugins, and other important new features, it's super important for today's head amps to remain lightweight, portable, versatile, customizable, and to enable musicians to get great sounds on the fly.

John Stippell: Size, tone, and price are the three things that immediately come to mind. The light weight and portability of the mini head is certainly attractive to many players, whether they be looking to add to their pallet of tone in the studio, or an easy, grab-and-go gigging solution. Because of their size, mini guitar heads are often much lower wattages than traditional tube amps, which means players can crank these amps up and get all of the natural overdrive, presence, and touch sensitivity of a tube amp at much lower volumes. A majority of these mini heads are also relatively easy on the wallet, so players now have the ability to add a few to their collection and have a variety of tonal options to choose from.

Mark Gooday: The convenient combination of high power and light weight has been the driving factor in the popularity for mini bass amps. While players love the tone of conventional bass amps, many feel that these big amps are just too much to carry to every gig or session. The recent increase in lightweight power has also helped these amps become more of realistic option. That being said, the smaller products don't seem to have the staying power of the bigger, old-school amps and consumers may be finding this out. We are seeing a renewed interest in bigger amps, including tube amps, amongst players who have been disappointed with the performance of some mini amps. Bassists in loud bands, especially, still prefer a "real" amp.

Bob Imhoff: I can only speak for the some of the Kustom customers I have had discussions with. Besides the obvious

small size appeal of these amps, the low output power dictates some favorable performance aspects. Meaning the ability to drive the power amp into soft clipping (Power Supply Sag) at a manageable output level. This is much different than adding more preamp gain and the end result is much sweeter, more controllable, dynamic sound. The amp becomes more of an instrument than a device to make things louder...

Rick Heins: The era of guitarists, whether they're pros or weekend warriors, needing big, loud amps is a thing of the past. Modern PA systems and in-ear monitors make having smaller, lower powered amps that get great tone essential. Also, having a smaller amp that weighs considerably less helps makes the decision all the easier.

Joel Richardson: Guitarists don't need huge volume on stage, so the low wattage is appealing. They are also portable and easy to take to the gig while being perfect for home use.

Douglas White: Yes, I will agree – our best-selling amps have always been the 20-watters. I believe it's due to the balance of portability, cost, and performance. 20-watt amps are loud enough for rehearsal and small gigs and just sound great when they are cranked up. We've also had quite a lot of interest from our retailers in 5-watt amps, so we will be bringing a new amp to market in that category again.

Austin Gibbons: Mini heads are generally low-wattage and are sold on the basis that they'll give the player the full-throttle tone without having to get loud – mainly for recording or practice. It's no different from low-wattage mini-combo amps but they give the player options to use different speakers. They're affordable, and you can get into some prestigious brand names for not much cash, which a lot of players like. The ZT Lunchbox is different, though: it's a high-power mini-combo amp that will power an external cabinet as well. People have seen that they really do work and solve a lot of very real issues for players. And when you have guys like Nels




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Fred Poole, Peavey Electronics

Cline, Lee Ranaldo, and Billy Gibbons (no relation) using our amps live, people take notice that it must be a serious thing to attract serious players.

If there are all these reasons why mini amps are a hit with many players, it begs the question: why haven't they "always" been a significant niche segment of the amplifier market? What took so long?

JG: Why it took so long? One word: innovation. Sometime in late 2004, Orange's amp designer Adrian Emsley – a.k.a. Uncle Ade – had an idea, or say a challenge, to design an amplifier that would fit on a standard size piece of A4 paper. In 2006, Ade's design materialized in the form of a lunch box style amplifier called the Tiny Terror. The release of this amplifier created a brand new lunch box category that the music industry had never seen before. You can say that the rest is amplifier history.

AV: When it comes to clothing, style, and music, most musicians love to think "out of the box" and search for new and unique ways to create their own personal identity. It's different with amps and guitars. Players historically have been late adopters and very traditionally minded when it came to gear choices. This has all changed in recent years, largely due to technological advances and the fact that everybody is comfortable using personal tech-



nology such as smart phones, mobile devices, computers, and social media. These new head amps offer so much power and versatility in a small package, incorporating technology that is easy to use, which is why they are growing in popularity today.

BI: Let's face it: the current guitar market is struggling. Fewer customers are spending less money. These mini amps cost less while offering a different product than large amplifiers. There are pedals that cost more than some of these mini amps.

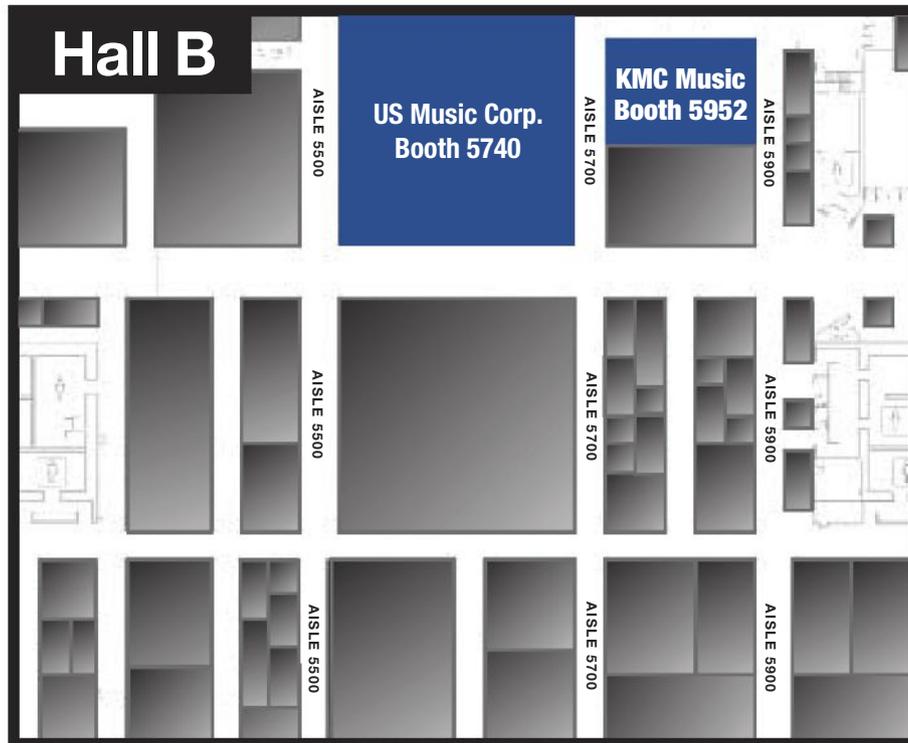
RH: Part of the answer is in my previous response: Better PA systems, smaller clubs, and in-ear monitors all contributed to the reduction in size and volume of amplifiers. In the late '60s/early '70s PA systems weren't powerful enough for most venues and the need for guitarists to be heard over the band was paramount. That's why amp companies kept increasing the size and wattage of their amps.

Guitarists are sometimes slow to change and were very comfortable with their louder gear. I really think it

“ Let's face it: the current guitar market is struggling. Fewer customers are spending less money. These mini amps cost less while offering a different product than large amplifiers. ”

– Bob Imhoff, Kustom

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Armando Vega, Yamaha Corporation of America



was the soundmen who kept asking guitarists to turn down as the PAs got louder which helped make that shift. We all know that tube amps need to be turned up to let the sound of the tubes come through and having a loud amp turned down low does not sound as good as when it's cranked.

JS: I feel that the evolution of both live sound systems and home recording technology have the most to do with the development of this mini amp market. Many clubs and venues now have great-sounding equipment, and hopefully a knowledgeable and accommodating sound technician, so throwing a decent microphone in front of your 15-watt mini amp can get you

through most any gig. Some of these mini heads offer additional luxuries like DI or speaker emulated line outs, allowing players to plug right into the board. This is often a welcome alternative for guitarists who have spent decades hauling stacks of cabinets and 100-watt heads to small clubs. Similarly, all of the incredible home recording technology that now exists is great for the mini amp market. The benefits of lower wattage and lower prices enables recording musicians to achieve a variety great sounding guitar tracks in their bedrooms or home studios with relative ease and without annoying their neighbors too much.

AG: I can't say for sure – maybe we

jumped the shark with all these enormous amps and finally realized that's not what everyone needs. In our case, what we came out with in 2009 had a different approach and goals than most mini-heads, and it was a result of decades of design experience from ZT's founder, Ken Kantor, who said "Everything else in audio has gotten smaller, lighter, and more reliable. Why can't that happen with guitar amps too?"

MG: I think for bass, especially, the technology to make a capable and great-sounding mini amp just wasn't available until very recently. When the mini bass head trend began, it was new and cool for dealers who suddenly had a new segment of the market to explore. They grew quickly because the sound is good enough for most players and the costs of production for manufacturers are much less than when building conventional bass amps. Not having to pay for big lumps of steel to support big transformers makes a big difference! Production, shipping, and storage costs all come down. Also, displaying these amps in stores is much easier for dealers and they can widen their offering a bit more because of this.

JR: Unless you are playing large venues, you don't need the really big wattage. The tone from one of these mini amps is based on bigger heads, so you get a big sound from a small box.

FP: The amplifier market has shifted significantly since the days where A circuit touring bands blasted their full stacks night after night in venues all across the U.S. Many of those venues have disappeared, and the need for full stacks and 100W heads has disappeared with them. Mini heads allow the player to recreate that sound in a portable manner at bedroom and re-

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John Stippell, VOX

ording levels. Unique to Peavey's all-tube mini heads is the ability to silently record to your smart device or laptop via USB, making the mini head the perfect recording tool.

What's selling best for you in this category? What new or recent product introductions is your brand excited about?

AV: The latest in Yamaha Guitar amplification is our new THR-Head and Cabs. They offer an entirely new level of tone creation and customization that combines the natural, organic response and drive characteristics of Yamaha's VCM modeling with an all-new power amp section that finally delivers real tube tone and dynamics from a digital power amp. THR-Head makes it easy to create, tweak, and use amazing pro tones. It also offers switchable amp topology and tube types, tube output stage performance, incredible reverbs, VCM modeled selectable boost stages, and user loadable IR speaker simulators – all in a completely analogue amp interface. Nothing quite like it out there, at the moment.

PQ: Those of you who have been following the Quilter saga will recognize that we have developed technology that offers full-size performance in a small, light package. Our big achievement is getting warm chewy tone with "no tubes required." Our full-service combos have gained widespread recognition as great sounding amps that



can meet or beat even the best boutique amps, but part of that tone recipe involves full-pro components and cabinet construction that keep the price somewhat above the range that most players can afford. Our streamlined heads offer the most innovative parts of our technology without the expense of a cabinet and speaker, and bring out new levels of performance from speakers you already own. With this approach we gained some new friends with the Tone Block 200, but our latest 101 Mini Head seems to have hit the target, with 50 watts of real power and some really nice tones, fully adjustable down to zero for quiet playing, in a sleek little 2-pound chassis that fits nicely in any bedroom or stage rig. It's a great introduction to the "Quilterer mojo" and a great primary or spare head.

MG: We are seeing great success with our Rootmaster line, which offers high powered, lightweight solutions for gigging bassists. Our new UK Built, 800-watt Retroglide has also been a big hit for us in the past year or so as well. Not to mention our CTM15, which is one of the few all-tube, mini bass heads on the market. At only 15 watts it is, of course, not so loud, but it's got lots of tone.

“ The benefits of lower wattage and lower prices enables recording musicians to achieve a variety great sounding guitar tracks in their bedrooms or home studios with relative ease and without annoying their neighbors too much. ”

– John Stippell, VOX

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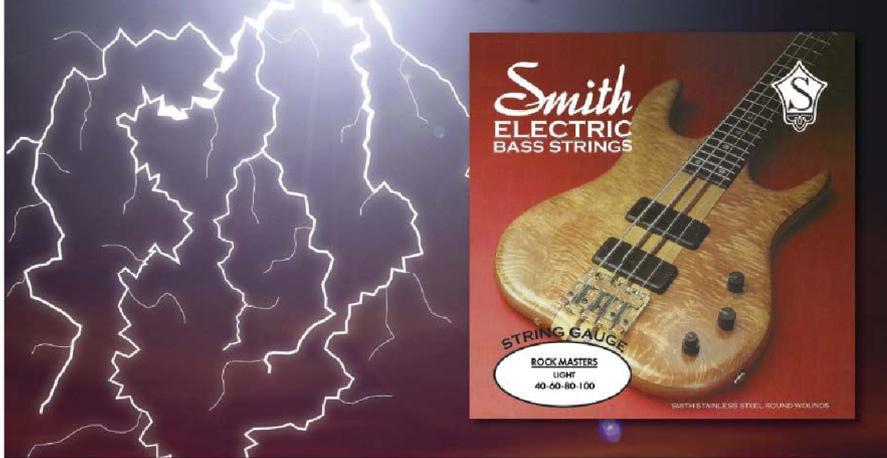
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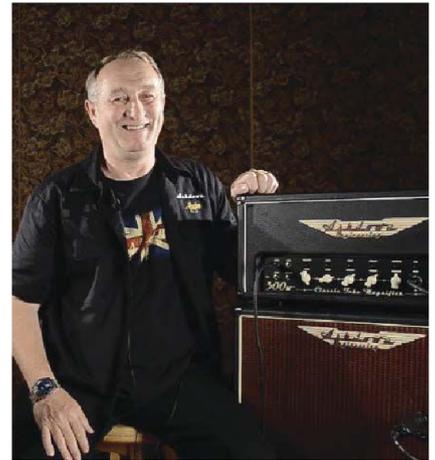
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Roundtable

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Mark Gooday, Ashdown.



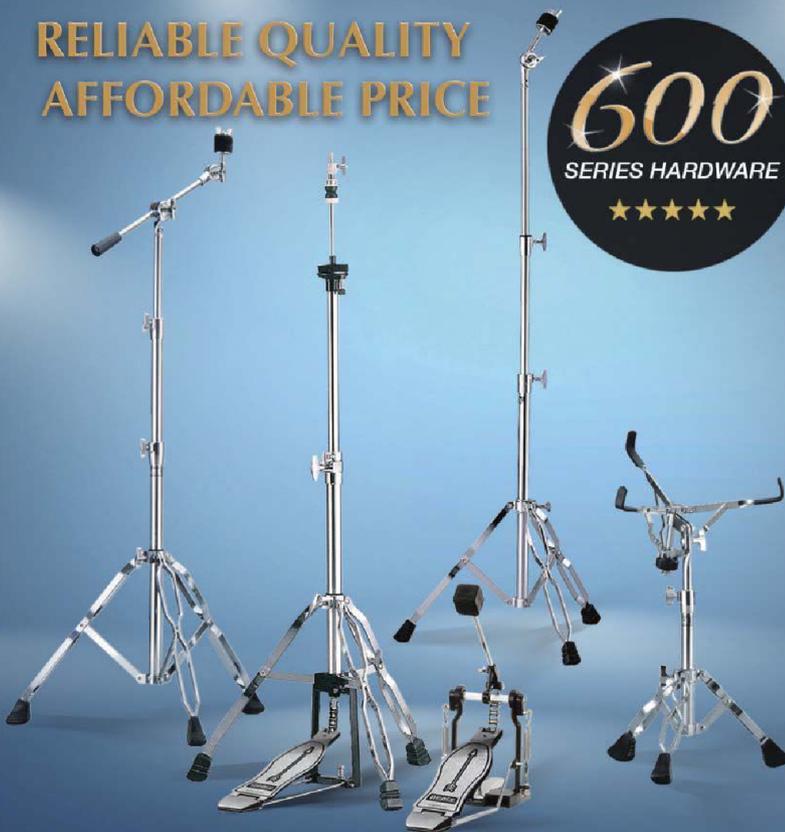
“Displaying these amps in stores is much easier for dealers and they can widen their offering a bit more because of this.”

– Mark Gooday,
Ashdown

JG: Since the release of the Tiny Terror, Orange has been dedicated to designing amplifiers with different features and flavors to meet the needs of the guitarist. Following on the success of the Tiny Terror, Orange released a flurry of these lunch box amps that included the Dark Terror, Dual Terror, and the signature #4 Jim Root model. Staying true to values and tradition of innovation, Orange then released a new micro format lunch box amplifier called the Micro Terror. And just this last October, Orange released its newest micro format head called the Micro Dark. I once heard someone ask Ade, “What’s the hardest thing about designing amplifiers?” His answer was, “Making them better.”

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Bob Imhoff, Kustom



JS: VOX Amplification was actually one of the early adopters of the mini-head, with our first Night Train debuting in 2009. Being that VOX has a long-seated history in what are often considered low wattage amps with the AC4, AC10, and AC15, it was only natural for VOX to offer a mini amp. Night Train was a big hit for us, for all of the aforementioned positives about mini amps, but namely for the great tone it offered. We've since released the second generation of our Night Train series, which offered a bit more in the way of tonal flexibility and a great sounding reverb. The Night Train 15 G2 remains one of our best-selling amplifiers to this day and

has become a go-to amplifier for many guitarists seeking a mini head.

AG: The Lunchbox is still our most popular product; people are really drawn to an amp that's built for the gigging musician without frills or compromises. We have a few new products we're planning to release that I'm really excited about, but we're not announcing anything yet.

RH: We have done very well with our Super Champ X2 heads in this category for the past few years and we're re-

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Rick Heins, Fender Amplifiers



“ The era of guitarists, whether they’re pros or weekend warriors, needing big, loud amps is a thing of the past. ”

– Rick Heins, Fender Amplifiers

leasing the Bassbreaker 007 and 15 heads in the next couple of months. Both of the Bassbreakers pack a lot of tone and flexibility in their smaller size and are perfect for smaller venues, home recording, and practice. The Bassbreaker 15 even comes with a built in XLR out with cabinet emulation for silent recording to make it more versatile for home recording.

BI: Our Defender 5H and Defender 15H heads continue to gain momentum. So much that we have developed Hot Rodded versions of these two popular models. The new models

are exactly as advertised. Our Marketing team sent some stock amps to a known amp tweaker/designer who put his spin on the designs. We are going to offer these “Hot Rodded” versions to the public in the next 60 days. We’re very excited about it.

DW: We just recently released our new Custom 22, which I am super excited about and seems to be garnering some interest from guitarists. It shares similar traits as our earlier amps in terms of construction qualities and feature set, but

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we've updated a few things including the amp's voice. Also as mentioned we have a new 5-watt amp in development, which should be simple and fun.

FP: Demand for the new 6505 MH has tripled our expectations. Capturing the sound of the legendary 6505 in a compact format was challenging, but once the market understood that is exactly what we did, sales have exceeded our wildest expectations. Our new mini heads currently set the bar for features/price. Peavey intends to continue to innovate, providing new and useful features to our loyal customers.

JR: The HT-5 really put Blackstar on the map and remains to be one of our best-selling amps. It really caught the imagination of guitar players – tube tone in a small box that's amazing to record with. It ticks all the boxes.

Are there any larger trends you've noticed with respect to mini amps or "lunchbox" amp heads?"

MG: While the amps keep getting better and better, mini amps still seem to have a bit less of everything you can expect from a conventional amp, with only one or two exceptions on the current market. The mini amps are generally more price based and therefore often omits the features and true power that many players expect. I also find that mini amps have a harder time holding on to dynamics and feel of a conventional amp. Honestly, I can see a time where bigger amps will make a bit of a comeback in order to remedy some of the aforementioned shortcomings of the mini amps. Our ABM line has always been the flagship product of the brand and continues to sell well throughout the world, although we do manufacture quite a bit of mini amps as well.

JS: The biggest trend I see, and it is perhaps the same reason this article exists, is that there are seemingly more and more mini heads on the market every time I look. It has become a product that an amp company has to offer to stay competitive in the current market. There are now a variety of mini heads at higher price points and high wattages as well, which tells me that a low-profile and easily transportable amp is something that all kinds of players are attracted to, regardless of genre or budget. It seems like this trend is true throughout our industry, whether it be guitar pedals, drum kits, or synthesizers – small is the new big.

DW: Not really. I think I wouldn't call it a trend anymore, it's more like an established part of the overall amp market with a lot of possibilities. If anything I suppose direct-recording outputs are becoming more prevalent.

RH: I just think that there are so many options these days that, whatever your budget or playing style, there is an amp out there for you. These days I do think it's about the amp's flexibility, but tone is still the biggest factor.

JG: The largest trend I see for the amplifier category regarding consumers is portability and price point. That's where these types of amplifiers deliver. Our newest Micro Dark head streets for \$189, and when combined with a 4x12 cab with your eyes closed, you can easily be fooled that it's a full size 100-watt stack screaming back at you. Dealers appreciate these amps due to their versatile compact footprint. Everyone looking for a guitar amplifier becomes a potential customer.

BI: We see blogs, and forums from players and enthusiasts who like to play around with the amps – meaning changing component values to obtain different and/or unique tones.



Douglas White, Jet City



Although we do not recommend or encourage non-qualified persons to open their amp and start “messing around,” it does happen a lot. It's something like a Heath Kit project with no instructions (Heath Kit reference intended for your older readers). [I got it. Oh, wait... - Ed].

JR: Even smaller wattage. We also designed the HT-1, which is 1-watt, tube. This also remains a strong seller for Blackstar.

PQ: Price is a huge problem in today's market. Musicians are getting the same pay they did 50 years ago, with everything else being much more expensive. In the past, “serious” amps needed to have enough power to fill a club, which meant they were big and heavy, especially with tube technology. Small amps were built down to a low price point with major compromises in tone and quality that made them unsuitable for serious players. Now, I think that manufacturers are seeing micro-amps as an opportunity to make good-sounding low-power amps at a reasonable price with good tone and professional materials. But the low power still limits where you can really use these amps.

AV: The hot trend is in small, lightweight, flexible amp heads with multi-tasking capabilities (the ability to practice, record, play along with music). The next big buzz will come from cabinet-free solutions for the live performance world, as well as re-amping advantages in the recording world. As

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Austin Gibbons, ZT Amplifiers

time goes on, these two things will fundamentally change the amp world. End-user and dealer interest is very high, because the products are in demand and just make everything in life easier.

AG: The trend seems to be toward more boutique amps built for the home – so low-power – and either very bare controls or a whole array of effects, but not much in between. ZT doesn't fit into this because we focus mostly on gear for pros, which means



simple, minimalist controls and effects, but a lot more power and durability for use on stage and touring.

Expectations for the future of these types of amps?

AV: Much like the current ukulele craze, mini head amps represent a growing trend because they are light, easy, fun, and, of course, convenient. Going back to huge stage amps and practice amps will be a thing of the past and I'm not convinced that musicians, for the most part, will ever go back to huge stacks. The evolution of this type of product will always be based on sonic improvements and cosmetics. That is a constant in tech products. The other refinements will be centered around connectivity with mobile devices and applications.

JS: I suspect that the mini-amp category will continue to grow steadily and eventually overtake the "traditional" head and cabinet market. For most applications, the mini amps are far more convenient than larger amps and sound every bit as good, if not better, than some of the big amps guitarists have been lugging around for years. I expect to see smaller manufacturers begin to offer smaller matching cabinets to accompany their more popu-



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lar mini amps as well, if they aren't already, to really complete the "mini-rig." As engineering continues to advance and the amps get more powerful and flexible, there's really no telling when, and if, the mini amp craze will diminish.

RH: I don't see smaller, quieter amps going away anytime soon because there will always be bedroom players or players that need great tone at lower volumes. I just don't think that modern players, unless they're playing large venues, will ever need to go back to amps that have to shake walls to get good tone.

BI: Not quite sure. We believe the trend will continue for a while longer for sure. How long would be hard to say.

JR: I think this will continue. Our new ID:Core practice amps are incredibly popular with beginner and experienced players. That's why we made the 40-watt into a mini head. We have product plans for future products so watch this space.

AG: I think they're here to stay. There hasn't been any indication that they're losing steam. The Lunchbox is an outlier here due to the power and usage, but I see the acceptance and enthusiasm for our products since we launched six years ago as evidence that we're here to stay as well.

FP: Since Peavey has lead the way, providing a premium all-tube mini head with modern features at an affordable price, more and more players will step into the mini head market.

JG: Unless all working guitarists can have a crew and are playing festivals, I don't see consumers changing their tune on small portable amplifiers. As trends and flavors of the month come and go, what continues to be constant is quality of design. This is especially true when designers have the guitarist or musician as the focal point.

DW: Well, I really like them. They're fun, and allow players to have some different amps in their collection without spending a whole lot. So I'd expect to see more of them. Thanks for asking us to

participate in this, it's much appreciated.

MG: They will certainly continue to have their place, just as hybrid amps have their place, and tube amps will always have their audience as well. They will continue to sell and appeal to some segments of the market for many of the reasons we've covered. It's our job to work harder and harder to engineer them better and better so they can compete with, not only all of the other mini amps on the market, but all of the bass amps that have come before the mini amp trend. **MMR**



I'm totally digging the sound on stage; so much presence and no feedback problems at very loud volumes. I'm spreading the word on this great pickup.

—Tony Garnier,
Bassist for Bob Dylan





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Bill's Music Turns 50



Owner Bill Higgins reflects on half a century of history, explaining how Bill's got its start, to the monumental celebration of its 50th anniversary.

By Paige Tutt

When you walked into Bill's Music in the 1960s, one of the first things you'd see is owner, Bill Higgins, greeting you. When you walk into Bill's Music today, 50 years later, you will still see Bill Higgins, except those customers over the years have become friends. "Bill's Music is known for a family atmosphere but with a huge selection of both the latest technology and the classics," explains Higgins. "Bill's doesn't just sell musical instruments, it caters to all the needs of musicians by offering a variety of services including repairs, lessons, practice rooms, mobile bandstand, and much more."

Bill's Music started its musical journey as an 8'x8' rented room behind a coin shop on Frederick Road in Catonsville, Maryland. There, Bill started teaching music lessons. Higgins' initial interest in music was born of his introduction to Rock n' Roll in the 1950s – specifically Elvis, the Beatles, and the Rolling Stones. He taught himself to play their songs on his guitar and then started going to people's homes and giving guitar lessons. Eventually, Higgins and his wife, Nancy, branched out and took over more space, selling accessories and a few instruments. The 1990s brought the addition of BillsMusic.com and an eBay storefront, which allowed Bill's to continue to grow, selling instruments and equipment all over the world.

Over the years, Bill's Music has blossomed into one of the largest musical instrument retailers on the East Coast. 2015 marks half a century in business. "2015 marks the 50th year in business for us and we recognized the occasion with a major celebration dedicated to the staff, musicians, and friends who have supported us over the years," says Bill. "Live bands, the Baltimore Marching Ravens Pep Band, Gibson Guitar Bus, KidZone, trivia contests, food stands, local vendors, and a huge anniversary sale were among the festivities. We had door prizes and gave away a ton of stuff to our customers that day – a Martin Backpacker, Peavey Powerslide, Fender Strat, hundreds of T-shirts, and logo apparel. We are so grateful to all the manufacturer, reps that contributed giveaway items and

came to the event to support us as well as hundreds of family, friends, and customers who came out to enjoy the celebration."

Bill acknowledges that there were a few people who were integral to the success of Bill's Music. "First and foremost I would say my wife Nancy... she has worked alongside me for 50 years and without her we wouldn't be where we are today," Higgins says. "Next, my three long-time friends and store managers who have been with me since the very early years – Ron Cook, Jim Mays, and Lou Campagnoli. Ron manages our guitar and electronics repair shop, and Jim is a store manager. Lou, who just retired this past spring, managed the store and provided comic relief for over 41 years. Not only have these guys contributed greatly to the success of the store, but they have also made it a pleasure to come to work every day."

Bill's Music prides itself on offering a family atmosphere. "It's our goal," Higgins says, "not just to be a retail store, but also to be an experience when you come to our store. We realize that there are many avenues a consumer can take to buy the products we sell, so we strive to offer any and all services the musician may need. To us, offering our customers a variety of services is vital to our continued success and growth."

As far as what's next for Bill's, Higgins says that as the industry continues to evolve, they intend to focus their efforts toward the expansion of their online presence. "We've already begun to make a concerted effort to ramp up our web presence, completing a major overhaul of our website – billsmusic.com – and continuing to develop and fine tune the site," Higgins explains. "We feel it is laid out as well as any and that it's packed full of information and products, many of which are hard to find anywhere else. Bill's is also a power seller on the eBay storefront run by my son-in-law, Leni. One of our goals for 2016 is to be more involved in social media and take advantage of all of the opportunities that exist to keep the relationship between our staff and our customers strong and fresh. As far as we can see, the sky's the limit for Bill's Music."



“As far as we can see, the sky's the limit for Bill's Music.”



The Gibson Guitar Bus at the Bill's Music 50th Anniversary Celebration.



A Look Inside and Out

“We have always tried to maintain a high artistic & creative standard when it comes to how we present Bill's Music aesthetically, both inside and out,” says Higgins. “When people are driving down Frederick Rd., we hope they will take one look at our store and think, ‘I've just gotta stop and see what's inside that place.’ Our slogan ‘We Believe in Music’ frames the main doorway in big red letters and at your feet is the likeness of a piano keyboard. That, along with our electric guitar shaped door handles lets visitors know upon arrival that when you come to Bill's Music you are in for a full musical experience.”

On the front of the store is the Bill's Music logo, taken from a caricature drawing of Bill's face done by a local artist back in the late 1960s when they first opened. Next to that is an oversized replica of a Gibson Explorer that lights up after dusk. On the sides of the building are the 12 ft. tall Fender Stratocaster and Gibson ES335 replica guitars Bill's had custom-made approximately 16 years ago. They are detailed right down to their knobs and pickups and are also outlined in neon lighting.

The retail sales floor is broken up into departments including guitars & amps, drums & percussion, keyboards & electronics, mics, acoustics & bluegrass, and brass & woodwind. “We have a large acoustic room when you first walk in that houses over 200 acoustic guitars, basses, mandolins, ukes & banjos,” Higgins explains. “Down the main aisle you'll see hundreds of guitars, basses, and amps, which customers can plug into at any time. Drum kits line the walls of our vast showroom. We have our Pro Sound and Recording rooms partitioned and they are dimly lit so patrons can get a feel for the sound and lighting as it might translate into a nightclub or stage... Though we are a full line music store, I would say our biggest sellers continue to be guitars and amps. Some of the brands that move the most are Rickenbacker, PRS, Yamaha, Gibson, Fender, and Alvarez... In the back of the store we have our repair shops and about a dozen private lesson rooms where students & teachers bustle in and out starting in the late afternoon. Bill's private collection of vinyl records are hung with pride along with pictures of friends, customers, and a collection of the famous faces who have passed through the doors of Bill's Music.”





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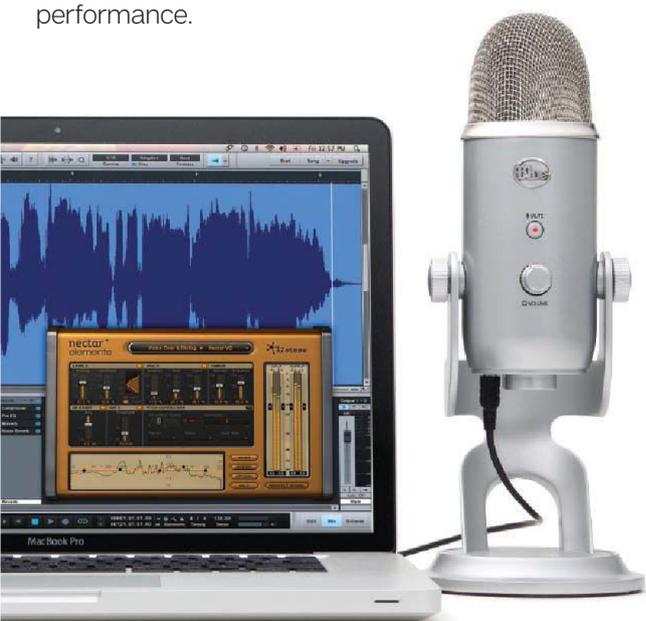
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USB Mics: Recording/Audio Engineering's New 'Starter Drug'

By Christian Wissmuller

Unlike most – many, really – of our dealer surveys which exhibit quite a bit of parity, this month's poll found a lot of similar responses coming from all over the country, and even the world.

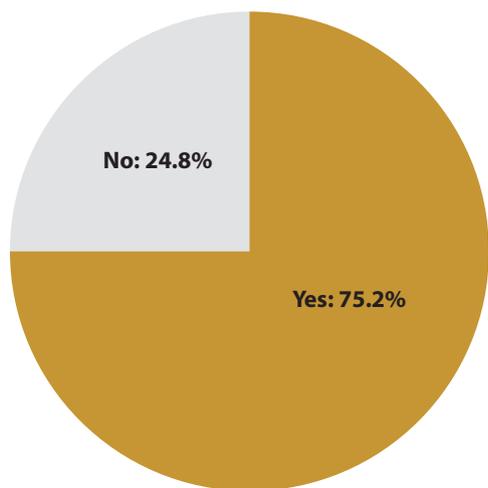
USB microphones – typically made up of the same components as “standard” condenser mics, but with built-in A/D converters and onboard pre-amps – haven't been around for all that long (15 years, give or take), but do present many upsides to the consumer: no need for phantom power, generally low-cost, and overall “ease of use.” Nearly everyone who participated in this month's survey characterized the typical USB mic customer as a young or inexperienced user, hoping to enter the world of home recording or to experiment with podcasts and the like.

Due to the relatively low profit margin of many of these units, as well as competition from even less expensive options available online, some feel it's a product segment that can't really help a retailer much: “It is only a low-end market or a portable convenience market, which is a small one,” observed Neil Crosier of Music Junkie in Leicester, UK. “My expectations are very low for this sector.”

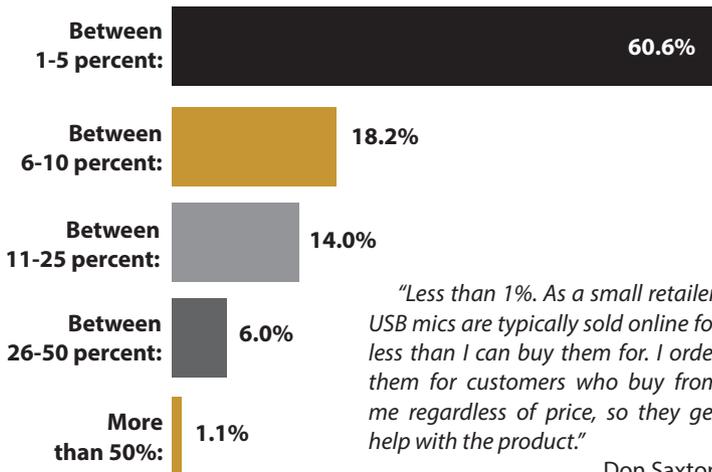
However, others express excitement about the myriad of applications – both present and future – that might employ USB microphones, while still more pointed to the clear upside of any technology that creates more music makers. As Marc Rabins of Port St. Lucie, Florida's Audio Design & Instruments observes, “USB mics will lead to bigger sales as the customer gets more into recording.”

An interesting, very young, and still evolving product sector...

Does your MI retail operation sell USB mics?



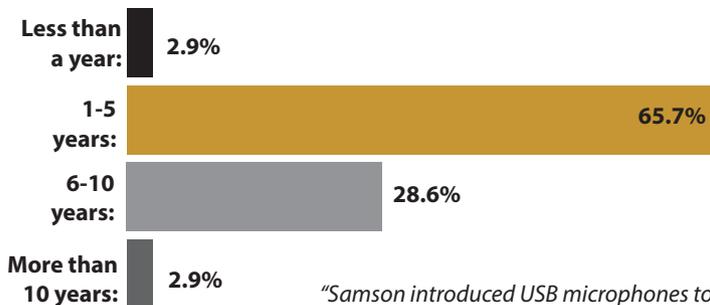
If “yes,” what percentage of total microphone sales (volume, not revenue) do USB units account for?



“Less than 1%. As a small retailer, USB mics are typically sold online for less than I can buy them for. I order them for customers who buy from me regardless of price, so they get help with the product.”

Don Saxton
Sioux Falls Music
Sioux Falls, S.D.

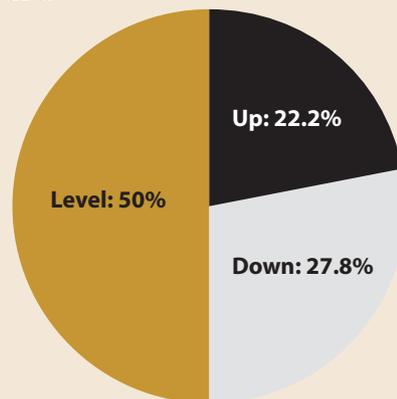
For how many years have you been stocking USB microphones?



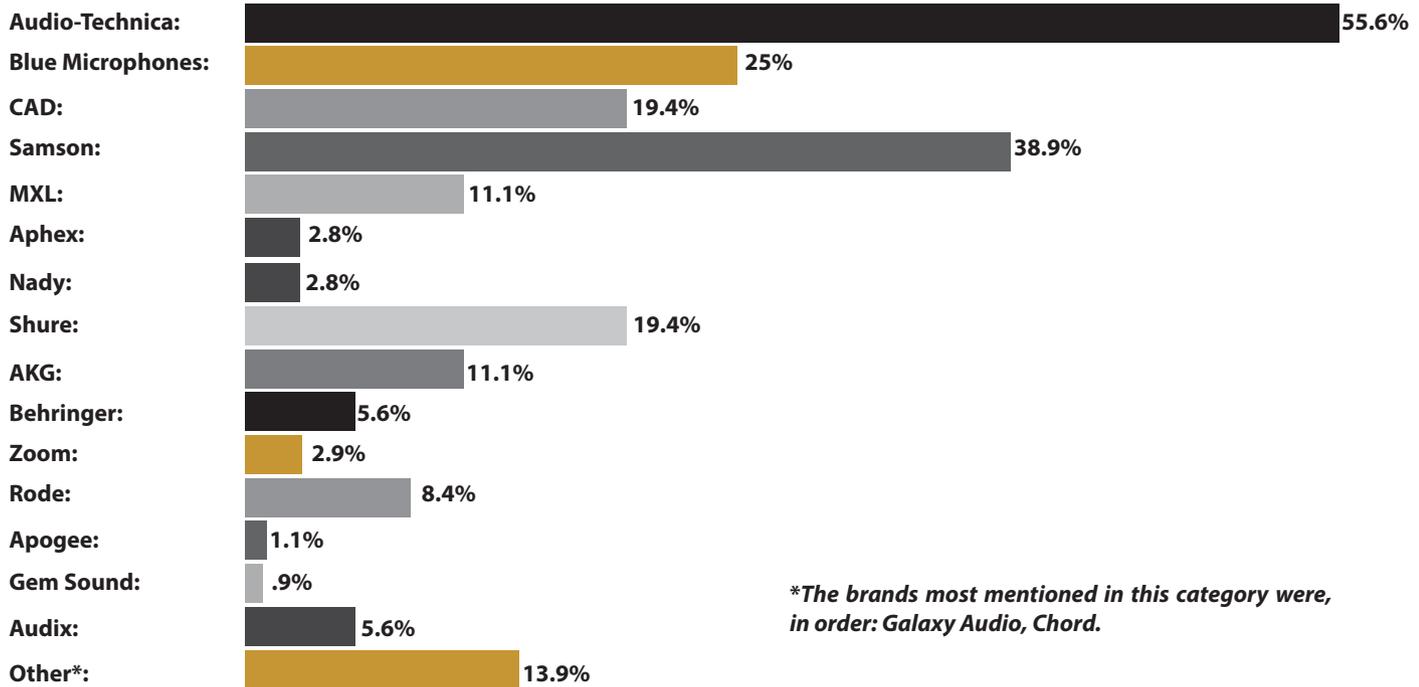
“Samson introduced USB microphones to us with their C01U, and we've grown the category with mics from Audio Technica, Blue, Samson and MXL.”

Jeff Simons
Watermelon Music
Davis, California

Compared to this time last year, sales of USB mics in your store are:

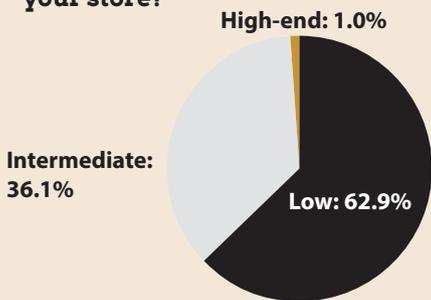


What brands of USB microphones were the strongest sellers for your operation in 2015?



**The brands most mentioned in this category were, in order: Galaxy Audio, Chord.*

With respect to USB mics, what price points are doing best for your store?



Describe the typical USB microphone customer at your store (age, skill-level, intended application, et cetera).

"Any age, just starting to explore the world of recording."

Marc Rabins
Audio Design & Instruments
Port St. Lucie, Florida

"16-30 years old, beginners, using them for making music."

Roger Strosnider
Shenandoah Music, Inc.
Winchester, Virginia

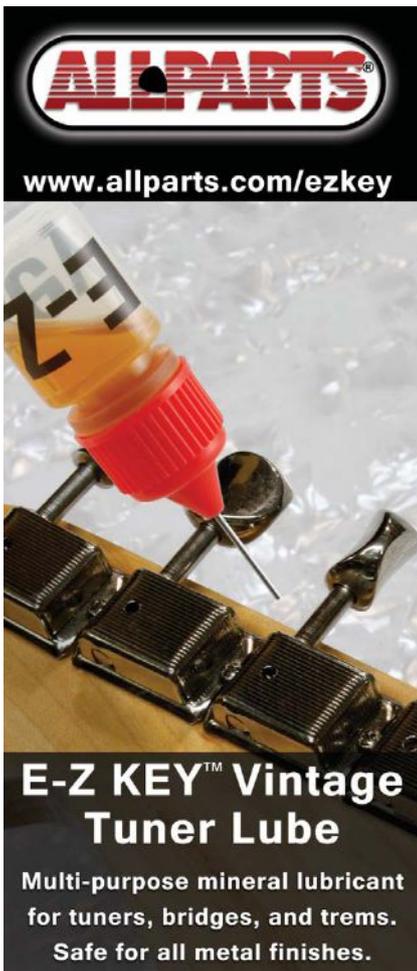
"Younger adults and teens, home project users."

Dave Clark
CA House Music
Parkersburg, West Virginia



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Survey: USB Mics

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"Teenager, very little skill, looking to 'start recording' – usually singer/songwriter stuff."

Zach Rodamaker
Mozingo Music
O'Fallon, Missouri

Dan Patterson
Roger's Music
Fort Payne, Alabama

"We have basically two customer groups: Younger persons wanting to record, and older customers using [USB mics] for Internet radio and ham use."

Mark Logies
Arrowhead Music Corp.
Mentor, Ohio

What trends have you been noticing with respect to USB microphones (price-points, technological developments, buyer demographics) and what are your expectations for this market segment in the coming months?

"USB mics have picked up especially with YouTube channels and live video blogging. I see this trend continuing."

Chad Clausen
Brass Bell Music Store
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

"We saw growth this year with USB microphones. For 2016 we think we are going to have even more growth."

Franky Dedeayne
Key Music
Sint-Niklaas, OVL
BELGIUM

"The price point is getting lower, sales dropping (cheap, cheap, cheap online junk taking over), but also home recording needs are changing a little to instrumental mics as the fashion is acoustic songwriting with uke, guitar, and cajon."

Derrick Brooke
Nilam Music
Hereford
Herefordshire
UNITED KINGDOM

"We see more people seeing it as a podcast quality option and not a serious recording option. High-end solutions are not as popular as buying a good audio interface and mic for the same cost. Therefore it is only a low-end market or a portable convenience market, which is a small one. My expectations are very low for this sector."

Neil Crosier
Music Junkie
Leicester
UNITED KINGDOM

"Buyers are still having a hard time actually getting the USB Mic to work with their computer and whatever software they have downloaded from the Internet."

David Randall
Field of Dreams Music
Fairfield, Iowa

"Most of the end-users are looking for entry level product. About four out of five customers that come in looking for a USB mic end up with an interface/mic package."

Michael Kay
Ted Brown Music
Tacoma, Washington

"More females who are singer/songwriters just looking to hear what they sound like seems to be on the increase."

Mandel Kingwood
Guitar Center
Killeen, Texas

"I feel if we could target video gamers and get them into music stores for better quality audio set ups which would work with their streaming and speech applications easily, we would see an increase in the market."

Kathryn Irving
Sound of Music
Abbotsford, BC
CANADA

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Audix's OM Series of dynamic vocal microphones has been setting new performance standards for more than 25 years. Each microphone features VLM™ (Very Low Mass) technology, and is designed, assembled and tested by Audix in the USA.

Professional music artist ZZ Ward relies on the OM5 to cut through the mix and deliver her soul-filled, powerful vocals. With six different models to choose from, professional artists and sound engineers worldwide trust Audix's OM series — no matter the venue, no matter the voice.



OM5

AUDIX®

www.audixusa.com
503.682.6933

*ZZ Ward
Love and War Tour*

*ZZ Ward performs with the OM5
wired and RAD360 wireless.*

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2016 Winter NAMM Buyer's Guide

Take a peek at some of the hottest items hitting the show floor this year.

ACCESSORIES

Perri's Black & White Collection, Hippy Collection, and Skull Collection

The Black & White Collection consists of eight stylish monochromatic straps, each of which makes a bold, balanced statement. The classic palette has been used to produce guitar straps that feature musical notes, stars, roses, skulls, scorpions, guitars, and more.

In complete contrast the Hippy Collection is a bright colorful selection of seven guitar straps with a vintage vibe. Inspired by the carefree bohemian spirit of the sixties these straps feature the classic smiley face, psychedelic tie-dye patterns and flower power, peace designs.

On a more spiritual plane the three guitar straps in the Praise Collection offer astral and mythological symbolism. Included in the designs is the Greek symbol Ichthys incorporating the word Jesus, a guitar with a dove representing Peace, Love & Music and the astral symbols for the sun, moon and stars intertwined.

The Skull Collection contains four artistic, powerful and elegant guitar straps that offer something for everyone. There is the punk influenced pink tartan design, the delicate floral design interlaced with rock 'n' roll skulls in two different color schemes and a red and white design featuring red & white skulls paired with hearts, butterflies and flowers.

All the collections feature guitar straps made from hardwearing polyester webbing, with heat transferred designs on both sides. They all come with high quality leather ends that will fit most guitars & basses. All the straps are 2" wide and fully adjustable from 39" to 59" long.



perri.ca/store.com

Kyser Music Products Rosewood Quick-Change

Kyser is proud to announce a new Quick-Change capo featuring a dark rosewood design. It's the Quick-Change capo that musicians all over the world have tried and now it's available in a beautifully natural polished rosewood style finish. (MSRP: \$24.95)



kysermusical.com

Levy's MJ19UKE and MS317STR

This 1/2" wide polyester and leather jacquard weave ukulele strap features strap pin holes at each end to accommodate ukuleles with two strap buttons. Also suitable for mandolin and available in three jacquard patterns: From left to right 001 to 003.

A soft suede garment leather strap with Stradivarius embroidery. Available in black only with soft suede backing and adjustable from 37" to 51".

levysleather.com

NAMM Booth #4656

The ReedGeek

The ReedGeek® "Universal" Tools are designed to help all woodwind players (both students and professionals), achieve better reed performance – with a compact, portable design and proprietary true-edge retention technology.



The ReedGeek "G4" & "DoubleGeek" are the newest members of the ReedGeek "Universal" family. The DoubleGeek focuses on the specific needs of the double reed player, but is useful for all reed players. In addition to the ReedGeek Universal tool's features, both the "G4" & "DoubleGeek" implement two new, elongated and curved rail bevels, which are designed to profile rails and re-contour the spine of both single and double reeds. Both tools include ReedGeek's proprietary black diamond wear finish, which provides ultimate refinement of the cut on natural cane as well as synthetic reeds. The ReedGeek "DoubleGeek" is the only Universal tool that offers a threaded, removable handle for added leverage and familiarity in the hand.

reedgeek.com

NAMM Booth #2701



EMG Red Series



EMG, Inc. announced the release of the Red Series. Leading the series are two new artist signature sets: The Gary Holt Signature Set and the Glenn Tipton Vengeance Signature Set. The Gary Holt, (of Exodus & Slayer fame), uses a combination

of the EMG 81 and the EMG 89R pickups while the Glenn Tipton Vengeance set, (of Judas Priest), is a new humbucker that has been in development since 2011. The Red Series includes other popular sets: humbuckers, bass sets, and single coil pickups.

emgpickups.com

JodyJazz Premium Accessories

The new JodyJazz Cork Grease is high-grade. The cork grease will lubricate your instrument cork to ensure airtight fit every time. Using it regularly will protect and extend the life of your cork. Also great for clarinet, oboe, bassoon, and recorder.



The JodyJazz Perfect Patch Mouthpiece cushion can be used to protect your mouthpiece and the enamel on your teeth. It's smaller than many other mouthpiece cushions because too large a patch deadens vibrations from the mouthpiece, which takes away a minute amount of richness in the sound. The JodyJazz Perfect Patch Mouthpiece cushion is a clear cushion and available in a 4-pack.

jodyjazz.com

Lee Oskar QuickGuide

As the first of a series of Lee Oskar Quick Start kits, the inaugural guitar/ukulele kit features four harmonicas, including the major diatonic (Key of C)—the standard tuning for folk, country, blues, rock and pop music along with three alternate tunings for playing a wide array of musical genres and styles:

MelodyMaker (Key of G)—for R & B, country, reggae, pop, jazz, Latin, Afro and ska music

Natural Minor (Key of Am)—for minor blues, reggae, ska, Latin, funk, R & B, hip-hop music

Harmonic Minor (Key of Am)—for Gypsy, Yiddish, Asian, East European, tango, reggae music

The Lee Oskar QuickStart Kits come with a soft pouch to hold the four harmonicas, a harmonica holder, and a 16-page instructional booklet that is supported by the educational website. This educational resource for the musical community provides an online support system with clear, easy-to-follow guidance and videos, organized by instrument for each of the four tunings in the QuickStart Kits.

leeoskarquickguide.com

SpiderCapo Mini SpiderCapo

The Mini SpiderCapo is for ukulele, banjo, mandolin, and bouzuki, and features individual fine tuning per string, plus endless open tunings - without retuning your instrument.

Weighing in at under an ounce, it is the lightest capo made. Soft leather pads are used to protect the neck's finish.

It is fully compatible with the Harmonic Mutes.

Price: \$29.95 street.

spidercapo.com

Electro-Harmonix 720 Stereo Looper

With 720 seconds (12 minutes) of stereo recording time on 10 independent loops and unlimited overdubbing, the compact EHX 720 Stereo Looper provides guitarists with an intuitive tool that's perfect for practice and live performance. Undo-Redo, Reverse and ½ speed effects are all available at the touch of a button. Audio is high quality, uncom-



pressed, and the pedal features 24-bit A/D/A converters as well as a 44.1kHz Sample Rate. Stereo in/out yields enhanced usability and enables the looper to record two instruments at once. A Foot Controller input provides a way to use popular three-button foot-controllers to change a bank up or down, and gives access to instant Undo-Redo.

A Level control lets the player adjust the output volume of the loop. The Push:Mode pushbutton toggles between Loop Select, Loop Progress and Loop Fadeout (trails) modes. Independent push-buttons for Reverse and ½ Speed are provided and those effects can be used separately or simultaneously. The 720 Stereo Looper also features silent footswitches for Loop and Stop/FX which provide convenient foot control of the pedal's main functions.

The 720 Stereo Looper comes equipped with an EHX 9.6DC power supply and also runs on a 9V battery. The pedal carries a USA List Price of \$185.40 and is available now.

ehx.com



ADVERTORIAL • JANUARY 2016 • NAMM.ORG

Note From Joe Part of Something Bigger

As our industry gathers, the impact lives far beyond the trade show floor.

We're all fortunate to be a part of an industry that brings such positive benefits to society. NAMM member companies create and sell the products that become the musical soundtrack to our lives, unlock the learning potential of young people around the world and, as more research is being done, are linked with being a key ingredient of healthy aging. Music making is becoming more understood and valued than ever before.

The intrinsic beauty and passion for music has drawn us all into this industry and, in spite of the countless challenges and struggles to succeed, most everyone I speak with can't imagine a more rewarding way to spend one's life energy than being a part of this vast musical ecosystem.

And, as NAMM members from more than 100 countries and regions gather in Anaheim, it is this love for music that unites us. The NAMM Show first and foremost serves as a conduit to unite buyers and sellers, a platform for product introduction and the annual industry gathering spot where news and trends are shared and commerce is catapulted into the New Year.

But it is much more than that: it is a catalyst for NAMM's year-round efforts to promote music and music education. Through

our Circle of Benefits business model, revenues from successful NAMM Shows are invested back into activities that promote the benefits of music making to people of all ages. These efforts, often led by countless dedicated volunteer NAMM members themselves, have changed the way the world sees our industry and led to greater awareness and support of music education and the lifelong benefits of music making.

They say the millennial generation is motivated to work for companies connected to a deeper cause. We see that in the headlines and in our hiring practices. I suspect it's true of the majority of us working in the music industry as well. So when you arrive in Anaheim for a fun and adventure-filled week, I hope you'll also take a moment to think about how far-reaching your decision to come to the show really is. You are part of something bigger—the grand vision of a world where every child has a deep desire to learn music and a recognized right to be taught. Thank you for your support and being part of the global NAMM Family!



Joe Lamond
NAMM PRESIDENT AND CEO

Through the support of NAMM members, we're able to promote music making in communities everywhere...



Grants

Music-making grants support non-profit public service organizations that expand access and opportunity to music education for thousands of individuals. Foundation-supported programs such as the Community Opus Project are helping kids like Bruno Bello change their lives—from a struggling student to a budding rock star.



Research

Research expands understanding and validates the many benefits of music education and music making. A recent Northwestern University study funded by the Foundation provided the first direct evidence that a community music program for at-risk youth has a biological effect on children's developing nervous systems.



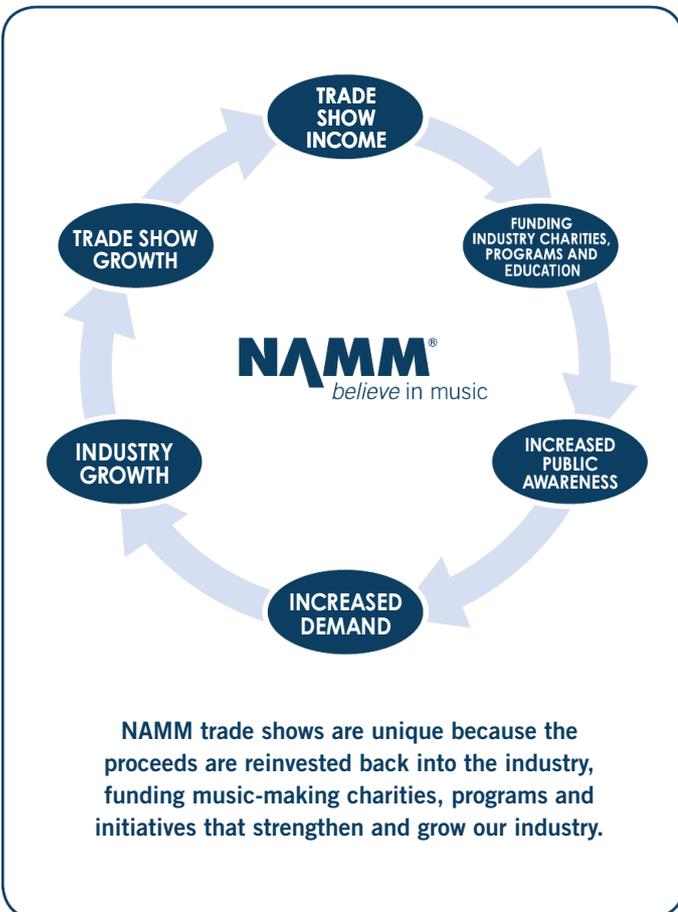
Advocacy

Programs uniting non-profit organizations, schools and businesses empower people in communities everywhere to be advocates. The Best Communities for Music Education program recognizes and celebrates schools and districts for their support and commitment to music education, and has helped winning districts make the case, increasing visibility and support.



Lobbying

Year-round lobbying profoundly affects our members, from intellectual property rights and to ensuring that the more than 50 million students in the U.S. receive music education as part of the ESEA reauthorization. Each May, NAMM conducts the annual Fly-In, uniting more than 100 members to meet directly with their state and national constituents to support music programs.



On Friday, January 22, the NAMM Foundation will host a special evening at The NAMM Show, to gather as a community, **celebrate our shared passion for music and support music education through the Believe in Music fund.** Join us at the NAMM Nissan Grand Plaza Stage with special musical guests and thousands of your NAMM friends who share the belief that music making should be part of everyone's life.

Thank you, NAMM members! Learn more about how your support has changed lives at nammfoundation.org. **NAMM** Foundation

ACCESSORIES

IMS Technologies Charactune

IMS Technologies is proud to introduce the latest additions to the Charactune family: the new bulldog and cat clip-on instrument tuners. They both have presets for chromatic (virtually any instrument), guitar, bass, violin, and ukulele, and work great with fretted, string, woodwind, and brass instruments. The bulldogs come in blue, brown, red, and yellow. The cats come in blue, green, red, and yellow. Both have a suggested retail of \$19.99, and along with all IMS products, a portion of the proceeds from each sale will go to a fund to directly help cancer patients and their families.



imstechnologies.net

NAMM Booth #4827

Floyd Rose Rail Tail Non-Locking Tremolo

The new Rail Tail Tremolo is a full contact, dive-only tremolo designed to retrofit your existing Strat-style 6-point tremolo with no modifications to your guitar; a design merging the feel and reliability of a hard-tail bridge with the flexibility of a tremolo system.

Unlike the original tremolo design that rocks on a bevel located under the screw heads, the Rail Tail tremolo plate rotates around a precision rail that is mounted directly to the guitar body. The plate cradles the entire rail with precision as if they were one unit improving sound quality and tuning stability. This union also creates a greater breakpoint allowing open strings to maintain pitch when bending another, much like a hard-tail.

The tremolo plate consists of slotted string block mounting holes not only for accommodating installation but also allowing the string block to be positioned forward for greater rotational range. This means diving up to 15 degrees more than conventional tremolo bridges. An advanced string block also consists of game-changing features: Mid-positioned tapered string holes assist in true string saddle contact. Working in alliance with the rail and string block are the direct-to-plate designed string saddles. This entire assembly provides ultimate vibrational energy transfer from the strings to the guitar body resulting in better overall sustain and tonal qualities.



floydrose.com

NAMM Booth #4860



AMPLIFIERS

The ISP Technologies Vector FS

The ISP Technologies Vector FS is a full spectrum audio guitar cabinet/monitor



designed for use with today's digital guitar processors that incorporate a speaker-simulated output. The Vector FS provides a powered 400-watt full spectrum audio cabinet with frequency response from 50hz to 20khz. With the Vector FS, the guitarist can hear exactly the same signal that is coming from the front of house sound system on stage. The Vector FS has two separate inputs so the players can feed the speaker simulated output to one input and mix a second monitor signal from FOH eliminating the need for a second stage monitor speaker. The Vector FS can be used on the floor as a monitor or placed on a pole for vertical mount applications and includes a selectable response for either floor or pole mount applications. When used as a floor monitor, the Vector FS has a 40 degree tilt angle.

The tuned Vector FS cabinet is based on a high performance 12 inch Neo woofer with a demodulation ring for improved midrange clarity and lower distortion. Also, a 1 x 1.75 inch poly diaphragm high frequency compression driver on a 60 x 80 advanced waveguide is incorporated for accurate HF response.

All of the components are powered by a dual channel, 400 watt ISP Technologies patented D-CAT power amplifier that has been precision tuned and equalized for flat, full spectrum audio. The Vector FS can deliver up to 126db SPL peak output level for even the most demanding stage performance. While the Vector FS is the perfect partner of the ISP Technologies Theta Pro DSP floor guitar system, it will also function with other guitar systems or product with a speaker simulated output.

isptechnologies.com

NAMM Booth #5863

Blues City Music Matchless Independence 35 Amplifier

This 35-watt amplifier measures at 8.5" tall, 21.5" wide, 10.5" deep, weighs 50 pounds, and comes standard in vintage green but other colors are available. The user can change between three channels by the use of a footswitch that also changes the backlit nameplate color from red, white, or blue depending on the channel being used. Channel 2 (white) is powered by one 12AX7 and will provide ample chunk and high-gain lead. Channel 3 (red) is all about fire. The master volume control is by-passable and features a cut control to thicken up and shave the highs.



Four 12AX7 preamp tubes set up the Independence 35's power section equipped with a 5AR4 rectifier tube and a pair of cathode self-biasing EL34's. Switches on the amplifier include reverse speaker phase, hi-lo power, 3 position rotary impedance, and 6 position rotary tone. This model also includes dual speaker jacks.

Pricing starts at \$ 3,455 for the 35-Watt head.

bluescitymusic.com

AWARD WINNING PERFORMANCE

VECTOR FS
FULL SPECTRUM

THETA PRO DSP
Limitless Possibilities

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Silky Smooth

ISP Technologies
Intelligent Signal Processing

Visit us at
NAMM booth 5863 www.ISPTECHNOLOGIES.com

MADE IN U.S.A.

AMPLIFIERS

Yorkville Compact Powered Cabinet

Weighing in at under 15 pounds (6.6 kg), the Excursion Series EXM 70 uses two high quality long excursion 5-inch woofers and a studio monitor quality soft dome tweeter to deliver quality full range tone from as small a footprint as physically possible.

The integrated three channel, 70-watt, passively cooled amplifier allows direct connection of instruments, media players or microphones to the system without an additional external mixer. Individual volume and tone controls for each input channel, and a master digital effect processor ensure the EXM 70 is ready for any solo or duo performance.

Two EXM 70's can be linked with a single XLR microphone for true stereo operation, effectively doubling the number of inputs and output power for larger events and increased audience coverage.

Yorkville EXM 70 Ultra Compact Portable PA MSRP: \$510



yorkville.com

Traynor Ultra-Compact Acoustic Amplifier



The all new Acoustic Master Series AM Mini delivers maximum tone and clarity from its two discrete input channels, one tailored for acoustic guitar and the other for vocals with simple and effective controls ensure quick and easy setup for any solo performance. XLR balanced DI output that allows the same mix the artist hears to be sent to an additional powered speaker or Front-of-House PA for larger applications. The Traynor AM Mini is making its debut at the January NAMM show, and will be shipping in the first quarter of 2016. AM Mini 200-watt Acoustic Instrument Amplifier – MSRP \$489

AM Mini 200-watt Acoustic Instrument Amplifier – MSRP \$489

traynoramps.com

CASES & STANDS

AirTurn MANOS

AirTurn has confirmed its MANOS Universal Tablet Holder adds the Apple iPad Pro to its list of tablets it can hold.



The MANOS can be mounted on any mic stand or extension using the industry standard 5/8"-27 thread. It easily rotates from portrait to landscape and can be tilted to any position. The MANOS is made in the USA from rugged plastics with stainless steel pivots and springs. It's very solid construction will outlast numerous tablets. The MANOS retails for \$49 and the Desk Clamp for \$16.95. Both may be purchased together for \$59.

airturn.com

String Swing Mic Stand Tablet Holder

The Mic Stand Tablet Holder is the latest addition to the String Swing product line. As portable electronic devices prove themselves useful in nearly every situation, one will surely find its way on stage with you. With this holder, you will have approximately 1,215 degrees of freedom to position your tablet exactly where you want it. Wing screws



allow the assembly to move easily when you want it to, and lock it in place when you don't.

The Mic Stand Tablet Holder utilizes a low-profile adhesive coupler, which remains attached to the back of your device or its cover. The coupler creates a surprisingly strong magnetic attachment point that will not affect the functionality of the device. While only 0.2" thick, the coupler provides a secure hold on even the largest tablets, and yet still works great with smartphones. The powder coated steel arm secures a rock solid grip on all mic/music/cymbal stands ranging from 1/2"-1" in diameter.

stringswing.com

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Riversong
GUITARS
2977D
NAMM



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Unveiling at Winter NAMM 2016! Visit our booth and witness the premier of our **Rocker-Lug Mic Stands**. Not one, but two revolutionary designs will pioneer an entirely new category of mic stands. The new smart, simple profile is sure to turn heads and cause a buzz in the industry. Partner with us and bring your customers the best selling, award winning, and most innovative accessories and MI products. Visit On-Stage.com to see over 600 products plus more than 180 pro audio brands to choose from.

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Buyer's Guide

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CASES & STANDS

Henry Heller Silver Series

Henry Heller introduces the new Silver Series – smooth lines with a focus on the appointments essential to guitar players: 15mm EPE ultra high density padding on the top, bottom, and sidewalls.

These feature fine yet rugged 400 Denier Atomic Silver outer shells with a custom Carmine Red plush velvet interior adorned with darker Ruby red string guards.

Other upgrades include the sporty ergonomic padded grab handle, 2" wide sewn-in cotton backpack straps, and high quality continuous coil zippers to ensure years of hassle free usage. Available in electric, bass, dreadnaught, and classical guitar sizes.



omgmusic.com

SKB Secure Par Light Transport



SKB Corporation has developed another new interior for the popular iSeries watertight cases to fit Chauvet Freedom Par Lights or similar sized models. The new 3i-201510PAR Chauvet Freedom Par Case is the perfect solution for a rental house, band or DJ that travels with up lighting.

The interior of the iSeries 3i-201510PAR case has been fitted with rigid dividers to keep the fixtures from rubbing against each other. A high quality dense piece of PE foam is positioned at the bottom of the case to keep the Par lights at an easy reach height. There are ten pockets positioned around the outside of the lights to store power cables and other accessories.

The 3i-201510PAR iSeries case is watertight, dust proof, lightweight, and features a convenient pullout handle and wheels for easy transport with trigger release latches that can be retrofitted with TSA trigger latches or locked with SKB's TSA combination padlock in the stainless steel locking loops.

The 3i-201510PAR Chauvet Freedom Par Case is backed by SKB's unsurpassed Million Mile Lifetime Warranty with a street price of \$249.99.

skbcases.com

DJ & Lighting

ADJ ON-X

Utilizing eight 3W LEDs (two red, two green, two blue, two white) and a tight 4-degree beam angle, the ON-X lets users create dense, cutting beams in a range of vibrant colors, while the 270-degree tilt movement of its dual heads produces a hypnotic, cross-venue spectacle with fast-moving beams that flit around for a futuristic laser-like lightshow!



These far-reaching effects are enhanced by the 8-zone chasing offered by the ON-X's LEDs and the precise positioning enabled by its high-speed stepper motors, both of which let mobile DJs, venue owners, event organizers, roller rink managers, and LDs take their lightshows to the next level, filling the dance-floor with high-impact color effects and sweeping movement.

adj.com

NAMM Booth #5774

DJ & Lighting

Bourns Professional Lighting Component Line

Bourns Pro Audio added the new professional lighting portfolio to help lighting and stage equipment designers and manufacturers meet industry demands for computer automation and technology advancements. As stage and theatrical productions become more elaborate and automated with stage lifts, moving platforms, and motorized lights and lighting truss rigs, component technology is now an integral part of stage designs.



bourns.com

NAMM Booth #6865

DRUMS/PERCUSSION

SONOR "One of a Kind" Model Snare Drums



Each series features an extremely limited run of uniquely designed snare drums with natural grown veneers and new shell designs. For each edition, a specific tree has been selected with the goal in mind to only use the most figured parts of the grain, and set them to meticulously to produce the most stunning vertical grain patterns.

All veneers are sourced through specialized suppliers in Germany, which guarantees that these trees come from environmentally friendly sources. The instruments badges highlight laser cut mallet shaped logos, made out of the same veneer that is used on the snares itself.

The Pacific Walnut Burl 14" x 7" features German beech shell (10mm/15 plies), a 45° bearing edge, die cast hoops, a dual glide system snare strainer, and is limited to only 50 pieces worldwide.

The Poisonwood 14" x 6" features a North American maple shell (12mm/18 plies), a 45° bearing edge, die cast hoops, a dual glide system snare strainer, and is limited to only 80 pieces worldwide. Both are made in Germany and include an exclusive One of a Kind Snare Drum case made by Hardcase.

Prentice Practice Pads

Separating each pad into two pieces and adding Velcro, so they can easily come apart, allows quick and easy adjustment of the playing surface angle to suit both traditional and matched grip players. The rubber-playing surface. It is actually embedded into the wooden surface of the pad as opposed to simply being glued on top, which provides superior sound quality and a more realistic drum-like bounce. The rubber surface is also available in two thicknesses, which results in two different pitches when played. This makes these pads perfect for use by a student and teacher or two students playing a duet, as you can easily tell who is playing what based on pitch. (MSRP: \$59.99)



prenticepracticepads.com

Accessories for the Mobile Musician



DUO
AirTurn's most popular controller with rechargeable battery and removeable hand held remote.



PED
A great entry level low energy Bluetooth page turner and effects controller.



QUAD
OnSong, Jamup and other iPad apps come alive with 4 programmable foot switch options.



goSTAND with MANOS
Everything the mobile musician needs for mic and tablet support. And it all fits in a backpack!

freedom to perform

- Wireless Controllers to Turn Pages, Manage Effects & More!
- Universal Tablet Holders for any Size Tablet
- Truly Portable Mic/Tablet Stands that fit in a Backpack

Come see us at NAMM 2016 Booth #1041 (Hall E)
www.AirTurn.com 888-247-1223

DRUMS/PERCUSSION

Dream Cymbals TryHat

Dream selected three hi hat cymbals that created the most dynamic mix of hi hat sounds available. Any of the three can be a top or bottom allowing up to six sound combinations. By adding an extra clutch, quick changes during a set are a piece of cake. You can go from velvety and warm, to rockin' and fat, to tight and crisp with just one TryHat pack.

Each TryHat pack is available in either 13" or 14" configurations and includes a Bliss, Contact and Energy hi hat cymbal, an extra hi hat clutch and a streamlined bag to carry it all in. Suggested retail is \$289 - a bit less than the cost of one and a half of their regular hats.



dreamcymbals.com

FRETTED

Kala Guitarlele Mahogany Model

The mahogany model is a more affordable version of Kala's Koa Guitarlele, which is a hybrid instrument that fills a niche for guitar players looking for the perfect travel guitar as well as ukulele players exploring guitar for the first time.



The six stringed instrument is tuned to A-D-G-C-E-A and projects a bright full tone, similar to capoing up on the 5th fret of a regular guitar.

The KA-GL is constructed of mahogany back and sides and projects a full rich sound. Features include rosewood fingerboard and bridge, chrome Grover tuners, bone nut and saddle, black and white dual rosette, Aquila strings, and a satin finish. The KA-GL has a list price of \$224.99.

kalabrand.com

VKnob



OKnob

Another First!

QRS PNO³
App for Apple Watch

QRS Music Technologies, Inc.



Lounge 88 - Booth 320

Boulder Creek Travel Bass

Boulder Creek's Suspended Bracing System makes it possible for the bass to product fat, full sustain, richness of tone, and addictive playability. The Dual Port System lets you hear more of what



you are playing while the increased soundboard area produces greater projection. The absence of a center soundhole reduces or cancels out feedback issues while still maintaining a fat, warm, bass sound. It is very versatile with its longer scale.

It comes with Aquila strings. Tone woods consist of a solid spruce top and mahogany back and sides. The bass comes configured with Boulder Creek's UK-300T preamp and tuner.

It sells on the street for \$359.

bouldercreekguitars.com

FRETTED

ESP LTD Series

LTD's new offerings for 2016 include big additions to their artist Signature Series. Glenn Tipton of Judas Priest is a new ESP artist, and his LTD GT-600 is based on the ESP Viper shape. Other new Signature Series artists to ESP include Alan Ashby (Of Mice & Men) with the LTD AA-600, Mille Petrozza (Kreator) with the E-II MK-1 and the LTD MK-600, Marco Mendoza (Dead Daisies) with the LTD MM-4 FM, and Ted Aguilar (Death Angel) with the LTD TED-600. ESP-playing legend George Lynch is debuting two LTD models with the GL-200 Sunburst Tiger and the Burnt Tiger. More new and updated Signature Series models from current ESP artists include Alex Skolnick (Testament) with the ESP Alex Skolnick FR and LTD AS-1FR FM; Alex Wade, Ben Savage, and Zach Householder of Whitechapel with the AW-7B, BS-7B QM, and ZH-EC7B QM. Buz McGrath and Ken Susi (Unearth) with the BUZ-7QM and KS-M7 ET; Stephen Carpenter (Deftones) with the SC-607B and SC-608B, Max Cavalera (Soulfly) with the MAX-200 RPR; Michael Wilton of Queensrÿche with the MW-TRIRYCHE; Tom Araya of Slayer with the TA-604 FRX



and TA-204 FRX; Will Adler (Lamb of God) with an update to the WA-WARBIRD; and Andy James with the E-II AJ-EC-7.

LTD's line of basses has been updated. Most noticeable are the B-1004SE Multi-Scale and the B-1005 Multi-Scale, two basses that use a special fret design to optimize string tension and ergonomics. The new H-1004SE and H-1005SE are based on the coveted ESP Horizon bass. More new and updated basses in the LTD Series include the AP-204; the B-204SM, B-205SM, B-206SM with spalted maple and See Thru Black Satin finishes; the B-1004SE and B-1005SE; the RB-1004SM and RB-1005SM designed with Rocco Prestia and now offered in a new See Thru Red finish, and the Stream-205, Stream-1004, and Stream-1005.

esp guitars.com

NAMM Booth #208A/B

Riversong Silhouette & Silhouette DLX Models w/ Carbon Fiber Necks

Riversong has combined a carbon fiber neck with a wooden body. Playability, and extreme neck rigidity are characteristics of carbon fiber necks. Another benefit is a lower resonant frequency that helps voice the guitars nicely. Taking cues from the new Riversong Tradition Grand Auditorium Series, a new tone bracing system on the top opens up the dynamic responsiveness, while a unique X-brace on the back not only stiffens, but more efficiently transfers the energy across the back.



riversongguitars.com

NAMM Booth #2977D

Loog Guitars

Loog Guitars is an award-winning line of small, 3-string guitars designed to make it fun and easy for children to play music.



They come unassembled for kids and parents to build together and bond with the instrument (and with each other) in a deeper level. The innovative guitars pair with an app that gets kids playing songs on day one.

Hal Leonard Corporation and Loog Guitars announced a partnership covering distribution in the U.S. and Canada, as well as licensing rights for Loog's new instructional book and app. Loog Guitars will be present at Hal Leonard's booth at the NAMM Show, where they'll have their full line on display.

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Buyer's Guide

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FRETTED

Bedell Bahia Series

Bedell Guitars is proud to announce the new Bahia series of acoustic guitars. Over a half-century ago several Brazilian rosewood logs were shipped from Brazil to a small company producing church ornaments just outside of Madrid, Spain, where they rested peacefully in a warehouse. As the generations passed and the business focus changed, the logs were cut into tonewood sets for guitars and the company became known as Madinter, one of the premier tonewood suppliers to the world's exclusive guitar builders. The new Bedell Bahia dreadnought, orchestra, and parlor models are paired with Sitka spruce that was salvaged from the forest floor near Craig, Alaska. The soundboards are over 400 years old, growing slowly as they compete for sun, water and freedom. The guitars feature solid salvaged Sitka spruce tops, solid Brazilian rosewood backs and sides, Honduran mahogany necks, ebony fretboard/bridge, koa binding, Waverly tuners, gloss finishes, and a hard-shell case. (MAP: \$4,990)



bedellguitars.com

Sunsmile RAWkits



RAWkits offer music & woodworking enthusiasts the hands-on experience and satisfaction of crafting. Customers are looking for something new on the market and high quality guitar kits are the answer. These kits feature proper body and neck thickness, plug and play electronics, minimal tool requirements, and include easy-to-follow, full color instructions.

rawkits.com

NAMM Booth #1248



PIANOS & KEYBOARDS

Yamaha Clavinova CVP-700 Series



The new lineup includes the CVP-701, CVP-705, CVP-709 and the CVP-709GP. At the heart of each model is Yamaha's Real Grand Expression sound engine, which harmonizes the three key elements of sound, touch, and pedals to provide the definitive, immersive experience of playing a real grand piano.

For the first time, the Yamaha CVP Series features the sampled sounds of two world-class concert grand pianos — the Yamaha CFX and the Bösendorfer Imperial.

Another highlight of the new CVP models is Piano Room, a feature first introduced in the previous generation and expanded upon in the new series. Piano Room lets the player select from multiple types of pianos including grands, uprights, a honky-tonk piano, and many more. Users can also select a playing location, such as concert hall, cathedral, or stage. Instantly, the tone quality changes to match that piano and place, giving the player's performance a totally different feel. When playing the grand piano or pop grand, the player can even choose to have the virtual piano lid open or closed. The new CVP-700 Series includes more instruments, such as Super Articulation Flute, Audio Style Drummers, and Boys Choir, plus a new session mode with a built-in recording studio for capturing and sharing your music.

The CVP-701, CVP-705, and CVP-709 (MSRP range: \$5,399 to \$20,999) are currently available in black walnut wood finish or polished ebony. The CVP-709GP (MSRP: \$20,999) offers customers a 4-foot 6-inch baby grand cabinet with an enhanced sound system.

NAMM Booth: Anaheim Marriott Hotel, Marquis Ballroom

PIANOS & KEYBOARDS

Lowrey Compact EY320 and EZ1

Lowrey just announced the addition of the EY320 Journey to its Virtual Orchestra lineup of keyboard instruments. The Journey offers an assortment of naturally authentic sounds, 'Live Performance' music styles, and easy to use 'Touch and Play' setups for every type of player. Designed to be both elegant and user-friendly, the Journey is offered in cherry and oak finishes.

Developed on Lowrey's Virtual Orchestra platform, the EZ1's great sounds and easy player features make it fun for people to get started making music.



lowrey.com

Casio CELVIANO Grand Hybrid GP-500BP and GP-300

The CELVIANO Grand Hybrid pianos feature the new Natural Grand Hammer Action Keyboard. The full-length piano keys use the same materials and processes as in C. Bechstein grand pianos, with a new unique mechanism developed by Casio that delivers authentic grand piano hammer movement. This has a dramatic impact on the Grand Hybrid's tactile response, and thus enables the pianist to play in a completely natural way. Their most subtle playing nuances are translated to beautiful sound, with reliable key response and a familiar, uncompromised touch.

Furthermore, the GP-500BP and GP-300 feature a Grand Acoustic System that faithfully represents the sound of a grand piano as it emanates from above and below the soundboard. The multi-channel amplification system creates an immersive sound field like that of a 9-foot concert grand for both the player and audience. A special headphone mode is even included to produce an ideal stereo image while playing or practicing quietly. Casio's GP-300 (\$3,999) and the GP-500BP (\$5,999) are available now.



casio.com

PRINT/DIGITAL

Newzik

Newzik is an app for musicians who want to read and manage their sheet music on their tablet. The Newzik app features a powerful MusicXML reader, a smart library management, technical features such as transposition and annotation, collaborative tools, manual, automatic, or bluetooth foot-pedal page turn, and the app is iOS 9 and iPad Pro compliant. Try it for free now or get Newzik Premium for \$19.99. Subscribe to the collaborative tools from \$4.99/month.

Newzik handles every format that musicians need: in addition to supporting PDF or Lyrics & Chords files, Newzik is the best MusicXML reader app. Newzik is also the only collaborative music app that developed a "Google Doc of Playlist" and a Band Mode that syncs and connects all the screens together.



newzik.com

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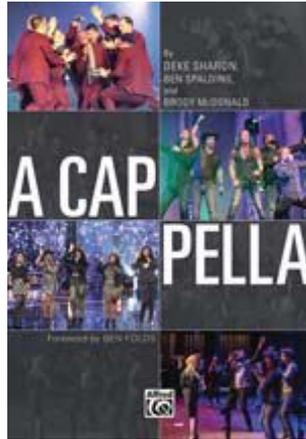
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PRINT/DIGITAL

Alfred A Cappella

In just over 400 pages, *A Cappella* is the most comprehensive volume ever created on contemporary a cappella, spanning from its early history to modern performing and recording techniques. The photo-filled sections within the book include detailed descriptions of how to produce a unique and diverse a cappella sound including auditioning and forming groups, arranging and performing pieces, using the right technology, competing and much more. Contemporary a cappella pop groups are continuing to gain in popularity and *A Cappella* gives the reader all the tools to successfully form and maintain an a cappella group. Fans of the genre will also enjoy an inside look at Pitch Perfect and the real-life Barden Bellas, as well as behind-the-scenes lessons from the *The Sing-Off*. With a forward by Ben Folds, Deke Sharon shares his vast knowledge and expertise of contemporary a cappella, along with expert directors Ben Spalding, Brody McDonald, and several guest contributors. From valuable insights on finding the right blend to choosing the best equipment, Deke Sharon is heralded as "the father of contemporary a cappella." Sharon has continually pushed the boundaries of contemporary a cappella sound from his early college days experimenting with adding vocal percussion and extended vocal techniques to his arrangements, to his current work on television and in movies including *The Sing-Off*, *Pitch Perfect*, and *Pitch Perfect 2*. *A Cappella* is now available for \$29.99 at music retail stores and online retailers



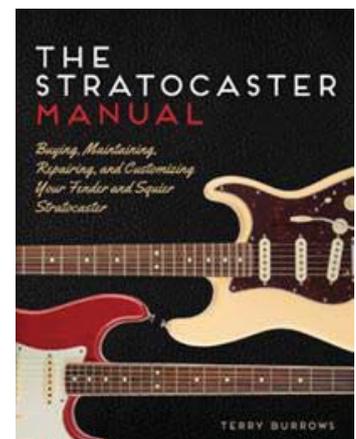
alfred.com

Voyageur Press The Les Paul Manual and The Stratocaster Manual

Both books are by Terry Burrows. This book is a step-by-step, heavily illustrated guide to everything about Les Pauls. Starting with the guitar's history and evolution, the book shows owners and dreamers the basics of selecting and buying your guitar, how to use it, and how to keep using it once you have one. There's nearly 650 photos in all, from close-up, step-by-step repairing and maintenance shots (shot exclusively for the book), to classic and rare Les Pauls. This book gives Gibson Les Paul owners a detailed visual guide to all aspects of their guitars.

The Stratocaster Manual is a step-by-step, heavily illustrated guide to everything about the Fender Stratocaster. It covers it all the basics of selecting and buying Strats; maintenance and repairs such as tuning, setting intonation, tremolo alignment, fret repairs, and bridge and nut adjustments; electrical troubleshooting; spur-of-the-moment stage-side fixes; and some basic "performance" enhancements such as adding "hot rod" Fender aftermarket pickups, locking-tremolo nuts, and more. Featuring over 600 photos, many shot exclusively for this book.

The history of the guitar is covered, with an illustrated timeline charting significant dates and guitars in the Strat's history.



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Apex747 and Apex787

The Apex747 large diaphragm side address dynamic microphone and the high performance Apex787 active ribbon microphone are the first mics in the Apex line to debut an all new, classic vintage appearance – a look unlike anything else in the popular brand's lineup to date.



The Apex747 is a side address large diaphragm dynamic supercardioid microphone that delivers exceptional tone in a visually stunning vintage styled package. The black over black chrome all metal chassis, vintage yoke design and antique windscreens make the Apex747 the ideal microphone for artists needing to make a visual as well as sonic impact from the stage.

The Apex787 is the first active ribbon mic in the Apex catalog. Following in the footsteps of the Apex210 Classic Ribbon microphone, a staple in the Apex line for over a decade, the Apex787 delivers the incredible tone associated with a ribbon mic, with the advantages of added impedance stability and improved sensitivity. Unlike classic ribbon designs where the response characteristics can radically vary from one preamp or mixer input to another, the Apex787 is extremely consistent, and delivers output rivalling any traditional condenser microphone.

Apex747 Large Diaphragm Dynamic Microphone – MSRP \$209
 Apex787 Vintage Style Active Ribbon Microphone – MSRP \$299

apexelectronics.com

Radial Catapult

This four-channel audio snake lets you send analog and AES digital audio signals over standard CAT-5 shielded twisted pair cable. This enables system contractors to take advantage of pre-wired networks to connect one room to another and allows stage techs to take advantage of the relatively low cost of this abundantly available cable for return snakes or for transporting channels of balanced audio across a large stage.



radialeng.com

NAMM Booth #470

**Applied Research and Technology
 ART SCC**

The ART SCC has been designed to be the ideal control center for small home and project studios. Housed in the all metal convenient ART Project Series chassis, the SCC delivers three selectable stereo sources can be quickly and easily routed to any or all of three sets of stereo balanced outputs from the front panel. Sources can be individually selected or blended from the front panel. A large single volume knob controls the overall output level of the system.



The ART SCC has been designed to be the ideal control center for small home and project studios. Housed in the all metal convenient ART Project Series chassis, the SCC delivers three selectable stereo sources can be quickly and easily routed to any or all of three sets of stereo balanced outputs from the front panel. Sources can be individually selected or blended from the front panel. A large single volume knob controls the overall output level of the system.

ART SCC Studio Control Center – MSRP \$149

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myproaudio.com

NAMM Booth #6914, Hall A

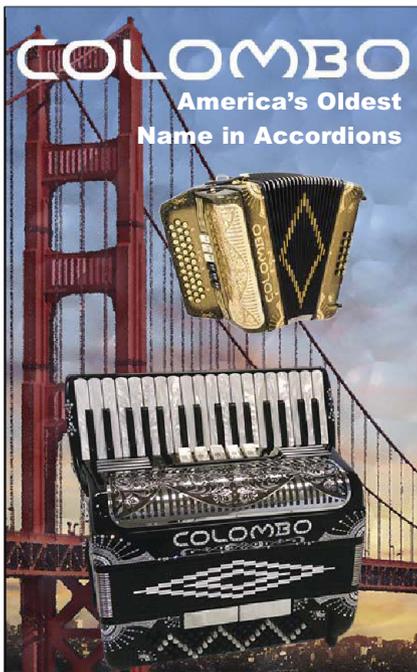
TASCAM DA-6400

TASCAM's DA-6400 is an all-new 64-track recorder that records to an internal SSD drive caddy for live and event recording. Professional I/O options like MADI and DANTE make it ideal for live recording, event capture, or as a backup for critical DAW sessions. Available with a single or dual/redundant power supply, the DA-6400 is an unbeatable option for professional remote recording.



DA-6400: \$3499.99 (estimated street price) • DA-6400dp: \$3999.99 (estimated street price)

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Cannonball Limited Edition 20th Anniversary Saxophone Models

Cannonball Musical Instruments is celebrating their 20th year with two limited-time anniversary models: The Big Bell Stone Series Anniversary Edition and the Vintage Reborn Series Anniversary Edition. The first model is specially designed and hand-engraved, featuring a Celtic knot, a laser-engraved "20th Anniversary" above the bow to body ring, blue-sodalite semi-precious stones, a blue hand-painted neck octave key logo, an iced black nickel-plated body, and a polished black nickel plated bow, bell, and keys. The second model features red-fire jasper semi-precious stones, a red/chestnut hand-painted neck octave key logo, and is available in a brute or dark-amber lacquer.



cannonballmusic.com

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BY MARY LUEHRSEN

Mary Luehrsen has been a senior executive at the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) since 2001 and serves as executive director of the NAMM Foundation, an organization that supports music research, music education advocacy, philanthropic, and public service programs.

5, 4, 3, 2, 1...

Happy NAMM Show!

As the headline indicates, we've been counting down the days until The 2016 NAMM Show. Hopefully, you've already made plans to attend (I'm talking to NAMM members, music educators, college music faculty members, or college music students), though depending on when you read this column there may still be time to be a late registrant. On the fence? Check out the incredible lineup of NAMM Show exhibitors and thrilling performances at www.namm.org/thenammshow/2016. There, you will also find information for how to register, as well as relevant travel information.

This year, the NAMM Foundation offers expanded programming for music educators (see below) during Music Education Days (MED) and for college music students and faculty as part of NAMM's GenerationNext program. All program details for both tracks are available at www.nammfoundation.org, including details for registration.

We have been attending to hundreds of details as we prepared for the global music industry to converge with us in Anaheim, California on January 21-24, 2016. And so this is crunch time for NAMM staffers who are busy getting ready for The 2016 NAMM Show and its many program offerings. There is tremendous excitement among our ranks to meet with so many old and new friends and colleagues, who will unite and share a passion for ensuring access to music education for all children.

After you register for your NAMM Show badges, make travel arrangements, and begin to schedule your time, I thought it would be useful to share a few "not to miss" events. These are only a few highlights; the full (and I mean FULL) menu of offerings is available at NAMM.org and NAMMFoundation.org.

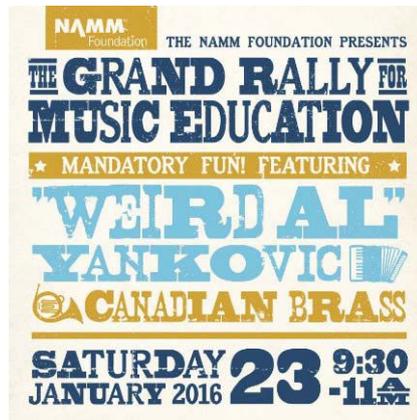
For NAMM Members: www.namm.org/thenammshow/2016

For Music Educators: www.nammfoundation.org/projects/music-education-days

For College Music Students and Faculty: www.nammfoundation.org/projects/namm-generation-next

To download the NAMM Show App, with info when you are on-site: app.core-apps.com/namm16

NAMM Show Day of Service, Tuesday Jan. 19: Over the last few years, the NAMM team has created



a new tradition to support the advancement of music education through direct service by NAMM Members with its Day of Service program. The NAMM Foundation Day of Service events have taken place in New Orleans, Louisiana; Washington, D.C.; and Anaheim, California. This year, we kick off The NAMM Show with a day of music-making at an elementary school in Anaheim. The Anaheim Public School District has committed to comprehensive reinstatement of music educa-

tion for all children. The NAMM Foundation connected the Anaheim group to learn best practices from the Nashville Music Makes Us program, in NAMM's other music city. The success of our event comes down to dedicated volunteers, and we need your help with drum, guitar, and ukulele teaching events for this year's Day of Service on Tuesday morning, Jan. 19. For information on volunteering and to sign up, please check out this link www.namm.org/issues-and-advocacy/music-education/day-service, and if you can't join us, consider making a donation to the NAMM Foundation to support the effort by visiting www.nammfoundation.org/donate.

Music Education Showcases have quickly become a "must attend" event offered as part of Music Education Days at The NAMM Show. Showcases offer a fast-paced format where new materials and services are presented in five-minute segments (time limits are strictly enforced!) so information and presentation are geared to spark interest and provide quick overviews of assets. Networking blocks are built in to the schedule to allow for follow-up discussions. It is a great way to explore emerging technologies and connect with available services and learn some new best practices. Showcases are just one offering of many during the Music Education Days program; check out all sessions by visiting www.nammfoundation.org/projects/music-education-days.

College Music Society/GenerationNext/Sandy Feldstein Roundtable: NAMM is proud of our collaboration with the College Music Society (CMS)— the association that serves college music faculty and leaders. Through this collaboration, we have developed a conference program that offers detailed perspectives and various pathways for those seeking careers in the music industry. Check

“ Whenever this message greets you, I wish you warmest regards for the New Year, and hope that it is filled with music! ”

out all the offerings of various sessions (www.nammfoundation.org/projects/namm-generation-next) that culminate at the Sandy Feldstein Music Industry Roundtable on Saturday, January 23, at 4 p.m. in the NAMM Foundation Lounge in the Hilton Hotel. This MUST attend event is where music business leaders and industry professionals share career journeys, provide guidance, and offer suggestions for career development. If you have or are working on a career in music, this is a must-attend session filled with inspiration to support goals for a life in music.

The GRAND RALLY FOR MUSIC EDUCATION: With guests “Weird Al” Yankovic and a return of the awesome Canadian Brass, this gathering to celebrate music education is truly going to be GRAND with stories from our guests about their musical and creative journeys (along with performances!). The event takes place on Saturday morning, January 23, at 9:30 a.m. and will also be available via live webcast (see NAMMFoundation.org) for those who cannot attend The NAMM Show this year. Please be part of this GRAND RALLY that seeks to inspire music education supporters and advocates everywhere to keep music education strong and assure that is available to all children as part of the school curriculum.

Best Communities for Music Education: Get the recognition your school district or school deserves for its commitment to

music education. Participate in the Best Communities for Music Education program (available to school districts) and the Support-Music Merit Award program (available to individual schools) to be considered for national recognition by the NAMM Foundation. The application process closes on January 31, 2016 and all information is available at www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2015-10-14-namm-foundation-opens-2016-best-communities-music-education-survey.

Talking Up Music Education Podcast: Finally, to assure you are current with music education news, subscribe to the NAMM Foundation’s new podcast “Talking Up Music Education,” available on iTunes and in Stitcher. Be informed on news and advocacy updates from leaders in the music education field and tap into a network of fellow “music education believers” who are working to keep music education strong. itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/talking-up-music-education/id1051087311?mt=2

You are likely to be reading this in the dawning days of 2016, either just before or just after the NAMM Show has begun, in earnest. Whenever this message greets you, I wish you warmest regards for the New Year, and hope that it is filled with music!

Buckle your seatbelts, because the New Year and The 2016 NAMM Show are in full swing! **MMR**

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Radial JDV Mk5 Direct Box

By JJ Jenkins



How many times can you reinvent the wheel? A direct box may seem like a simple piece of gear — and some are, such as Radial’s acclaimed JDI line of passive direct boxes. But when active processing enters the picture, Radial has been known to break out of that “just a direct box” mold with some creative designs and features that redefine the modern direct box.

In fact, Radial seems to do this on a regular basis and improves on it every time. The Mk5, the latest version (and fifth generation) of the company’s popular JDV active direct box, features some interesting and useful innovations that take it well beyond the norm.

Features & Functions

The user guide is well put together, informative and useful. It even has a block diagram so you can see the routing of the electronics.

But let’s begin with a look at the JDV Mk5’s front panel. There two input channels with separate level adjustment knobs for channel A and B. Both channels also have individual knobs for high pass filters ranging from 5 Hz to 500 Hz.

There is also a channel select button and LED indicator to switch between channels A and B. A Phazer (phase adjustment) knob to fine-tune the relative phase (time alignment) between channels A and B. But this is no simple polarity reverse: A switch changes your adjustment option from 1 to 180 degrees to 181 to 360 degrees — an essential touch, particularly on combined miked/direct bass feeds.

LEDs on each channel show if you are receiving signal or you are overloading. Channel A has a “10M” switch sets the load to 10 Mohms for piezo or variable drag for magnetic pickups. A “drag” adjustment knob for matching the load of passive pickups is one of the recent innovations that Radial has broken new ground with. Also on channel A is a phantom power LED to let you know 48V phantom power is active on the mic input.

The actual phantom power switch is on the side of the box, along with a button to blend channels A and B, and an Aux out/direct switch that lets you introduce an isolation transformer into a stage amp output signal path to reduce ground hum or buzz.

I have to say that these switches, as well as the load switches on the front are all recessed inset switches, which I think are great for keeping them safe from getting bumped by accident, but I had trouble visually telling if they were active or

not. The phantom has a front panel LED, so that is identifiable, although I had trouble turning the phantom off. I thought I had released the switch, but the LED remained lit.

To continue with the front panel, in addition to the level and high pass filter adjustment, channel B has a load switch that the input impedance from 10M ohms for piezo transducers to 220k ohms for magnetic pickups. On the back panel we’ve got a locking 4-pin XLR power connection, a standard 3-pin XLR output that is transformer isolated to address ground loops.

Slick Input Tricks

There are also two unbalanced 1/4” input jacks used to connect instruments to either channel A or B. There is a balanced 1/4” TRS microphone input. And as the unit has phantom power, you can use a condenser or dynamic microphone. One slick trick comes from the “Blend” switch, which makes both the A and B inputs active at the same time. Using the Blend switch, you can easily combine an instrument’s Hi-Z pickup output (going into channel B) with a mic input (such as a miniature clip-on mic) going into channel A. This opens up a lot of tonal variations with a rotary pot on each controlling the blended sound. The downside here is that the mic input is TRS, so you will have to come up with an appropriate adapter to connect to your mic.

An unbalanced 1/4” thru output can be used to feed a stage amp. There is also a 1/4” tuner output and an input for an optional JR2 remote footswitch. When connected, this lets you select the input channel or mute the JDV for silent tuning. There are also a series of inset switches to adjust the XLR output. The first is a polarity reverse that inverts the signal polarity by flipping pin-2 and pin-3 on the XLR output. The second is a ground lift that disconnects pin-1 at the XLR out to reduce hum or buzz that might be caused by ground loops. Switch three adds a transformer into the XLR signal path to help eliminate noise — or simply add another tonal variation. Switch four increases the XLR output from mic level to +20 dB line level for direct connection to a console.

The Bottom Line

I tried the JDV Mk5 out with a variety of instruments to see how it handled them. I tried guitars, keyboards and bass and the JDV did not color their sound in any way, which is what I look for in a direct box — that is, unless I wanted more coloration and here, the unit delivers a wide palette of possibilities.

From an audio perspective, the JDV Mk5 rocked, taking full

advantage of the clarity of its discrete Class-A electronics, feed-forward design and 30-volt rails providing headroom for days — exactly what you want when capturing the percussive transients of hard rhythm guitar strums.

Is this the perfect direct box for every situation? Hardly. The JDV Mk5 is a precision instrument and would not be my first choice when plugging into a bass rig from band #11 while doing sound for an all-day street fair. But for use with players that are willing to make a relatively small investment in time to create the optimal sound from their instrument, the JDV Mk5 is an ideal tool for some serious sounds. Radial Engineering refers to this flagship model as a “Super Direct Box” and I believe you’d be hard pressed to find a more versatile, great sounding tool in your sonic arsenal. **MJR**

JJ Jenkins is a live sound and studio engineer based in the San Francisco Bay Area.

At a Glance



Radial Engineering JDV Mk 5

PROS

- Transparent, but full featured
- Tough, near-indestructible construction
- Unit can output at mic or line level
- Jensen Transformer isolated outputs

CONS

- Uses external power supply
- It can be difficult to determine which position the inset switches are in (particularly on the side of the unit).

STATS

Frequency Response	20 Hz to 20k Hz
Dynamic Range	107 dB
Equivalent Input Noise	-90 dBu
Weight	2.8 pounds
Price	\$449/street
Manufacturer	Radial Engineering
More Info	radialeng.com



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Graph Tech Guitar Labs in 2016



Dave Dunwoodie

Sometimes You Feel Like a Nut (And So Much More)

By Charlene Arsenault

It's the old adage: if you don't trust someone to do it, do it yourself. But the same token, if the product you need doesn't exist yet, invent it. Dave Dunwoodie did just that, first by concocting improvements for his own instruments, then marketing to others, and building his operation into a business that focuses on innovations for the guitar.

Canada-based Graph Tech Guitar Labs now produces multiple lines of innovative and reliable saddles, nuts, bridge pins, pickup systems, precision tuners and picks, with ideas bubbling up consistently in the invention room.

But it all started with a nut. A guitar nut.

Dunwoodie played in bands since he was in high school, wrestling with typical guitar player frustrations: broken strings, faulty equipment, tuning issues. Then at one gig, when Dunwoodie pressed his tremolo bar during a Deep Purple solo and it veered out of tune, he was convinced this particular problem needed a remedy. By the early '80s, he experimented with different composites to engineer a slicker, slipperier nut that was easier to turn.

"I was a musician since I was 18, and also worked in a music store for five years," said Dunwoodie. "I quit because I had started to bring in guitar bodies and necks and build custom guitars for guys. Building guitars went well, except nobody would pay the bills.

"When I was at the music store, we'd get a Strat with a whammy bar and we'd put pencil lead in the slots there, which let the strings stay in tune. When you make a whole nut out of graphite,

it's super slippery. I started to read up on it, and bought silicone, epoxy and a bunch of graphite powder. I put it in a mayonnaise lid, made a mold, and came back the next day and I had two nuts. I thought, 'Great, but they break easily.' It was too soft – like a pencil. This was around 1982, and in one engineering book I was reading, it talked of new polymers that could make a mold."

Dunwoodie borrowed \$5,000 from his mom, spent \$2,000 of that on a mold, \$1,500 to put an ad in *Guitar Player* magazine, and \$1,500 on materials. He called his product the Graphyte Nut, called the company Graph Tech Guitar Labs, and sold the nuts for \$9.95.

"The day we got the first order was the day we made the first part," said Dunwoodie. "They were too sticky before, so when you pushed down on the arm, the wouldn't come back in tune. They had to come right back. I couldn't afford to patent the Graphyte Nut, and as soon as you make it public, it's not patentable. It didn't take off like I thought it would. I thought I was going to be a millionaire really fast."

While it didn't take off "fast," the idea took off, particularly when Sam Ash took it on. Today, Graph Tech's products are factory-installed by virtually every major guitar producer, including Taylor, Gibson, Godin, Martin, Ibanez, Carvin, Washburn, Yamaha, Guild, Tom Anderson, and Schecter. The company distributes to more than 42 countries, shipping more than \$3.5 million in parts.

The company has three new products that have hit the market in the past year or so, and also a couple in the works.

Ratio Machine Heads: Making Tuning an Easy Turn

Twenty-five years ago, Dunwoodie was working on building a machine head, and what he found was that each string reacted differently to tension. Some are thicker; some are more sensitive to tension because of the piece of steel. The G string is always harder to turn and the high E takes too long. The idea – or problem – tumbled in the back of Dunwoodie's brain for a long time, and he knew he'd one day create a solution.

He built a prototype and used it when filling in with his wife's



Locking Ratio tuned machine heads

band, a Motown tribute show.

"The first night was really weird," he said. "You're programmed to tune a certain way. But with this guitar, every string was balanced. It's like going from a standard transmission to an automatic because it was so smooth. It takes this whole equation out of playing guitar. We took it to a trade show and so many guys in the industry were wondering why nobody had ever thought of it before. 'You've got to be kidding, it's so obvious,' they said. If you want an open tuning, just turn on the knob and drop it to B. All the tunings are really quick."

Eventually getting the product perfected, and a patent, the locking Ratio tuned machine heads hit the market about a year-and-a-half ago.

With locking Ratio tuned machine heads, "one turn is about one tone change on all strings, allowing you to go from standard tuning to alternate tunings, such as a drop D and open tunings, with much more efficiency, speed and ease." It's made possible by having finer tuning on the thicker strings and coarser tuning on the thinner strings. The string is held tight without tying or multiple wraps around the string post, which eliminates the possibility of slipping and dropping out of tune. Ratios are available in two-pin or single-screw housing options with four different button designs: classic, contemporary, contemporary mini and vintage. They're available in chrome, gold, black and nickel finish.

To complement the product, Graph Tech just launched Invisomatch plates, making it easier to attach the machine heads. Now, attaching the head doesn't require drilling holes in the headstock.

The ResoMax Sonic 1 Wraparound Bridge: Recapturing the Rich Tone of the '50s

In the 1950s, everyone seemed to play a Les Paul. By the 1960s, "it looked like all the tree wood went bad [on the Les Pauls]," explained Dunwoodie. In the '50s, he said, the bridges were cut out of aluminum, and by the early '60s, zinc die casting came out.

"It was cheaper and the molds lasted," said Dunwoodie. "Everyone just switched over to it."

Dunwoodie wanted to capture the "magic of the '50s"

Les Paul, but an aluminum-only bridge wasn't quite strong enough. For the Sonic 1, he devised a composite of aluminum and magnesium, a proprietary alloy called ResoMax known for its strength, harmonic content and its lightweight characteristics.

The ResoMax Sonic 1, launched in August of 2015, is a one-piece wraparound bridge string mounting system, and the latest in Graph Tech's ResoMax Harmonic Guitar Bridge lineup. All ResoMax bridges feature a patented Auto-Lock that magnetically locks the bridge to the posts without any tools, which



GraphTech ResoMax Sonic 1 wraparound bridge

keeps the bridge in place during string changes and still supports the string height adjustment posts when the strings are off.

"Usually, you have to thread the strings on the headstock side and wrap them around," said Dunwoodie, "so what happens is you'd break a string, and the pick up is close to the hole. If you break a string on stage, it's not something you remedy quickly. With the Sonic 1 bridge, you don't have to do that. It's a quick way of putting the string under the bridge. And it's all about the tone. The '50s Les Paul sounded so good. The wood was better, and the bridge - the thing the strings vibrate on - switched to a totally different material. Aluminum produces more harmonics. That's what it's all about. If you can create more harmonics, it'll sound richer. It's like having 12 people singing instead of four."

TUSQ Picks: Man-made Ivory Creates Bright, Warm and Deep Tones

Graph Tech offers man-made ivory nuts, saddles, and bridge pins designed to "transfer the full spectrum of frequencies from the strings to the top of the guitar better than plastic, micarta or bone."

Now, Dunwoodie has applied that same logic to the most basic tool for guitarists: the pick.

Many years ago, there were tortoiseshell picks that are now illegal. Guitar players loved them because they were thin, but still

TUSQ
MAN-MADE IVORY PICKS

We formulated our highly resonant TUSQ® material and produced three distinctive pick tones.

TONES	Bright	Warm	Deep	SHAPES	Tear Drop	Standard	Bi Angle

World's First Picks with Built-in Tone

stuff. Trying to emulate that, Graph Tech offers the TUSQ pick.

"You can really feel the string when you hit it," said Dunwoodie, who said that the picks were available in 2014.

Graph Tech calls it the world's first and only pick with built-in tone, in a class all its own with "highly resonant characteristics that produce three distinctive tones: bright, warm and deep.

The TUSQ pick comes in three different shapes, three tones and three sizes.

"No one has done picks in different tones before," he said. "We wanted to do something different and I think it's useful."

Hands Up

Dunwoodie said that Graph Tech's sales are 50 percent to manufacturers and 50 percent to retail, including distributors. Sales directly to the consumer account for a small fraction of Graph Tech's sales. "Maybe three percent of our sales," said Dunwoodie.

Some ideas come directly from customer suggestions, but ultimately, Dunwoodie comes up with the products for Graph

Tech. Many household names in the industry tout the products, and communicate with Dunwoodie directly: Jennifer Batten, Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Dick Dale and Randy Bachman, to name a few.

Next on the horizon for Graph Tech is in the hands.

"We're working on a new hand powder," said Dunwoodie, who said the powder will complement its Chops PrePlay, which balances your skin's pH level, protecting the guitar from damage caused by oily or acidic hands.

"We're working on a whole hand care line for guitarists," said Dunwoodie. "We'll have more to complement PrePlay in the next six months."

Graph Tech's mission remains: to make a guitar perform better, yet still look, feel and respond like a guitar.

"For us, it's all about improving the playing experience," said Dunwoodie, "whether it's tone, feel or performance, while keeping the integrity of the look, feel and history of the guitar." **MMB**

COMPANY	PAGE	WEB	COMPANY	PAGE	WEB	COMPANY	PAGE	WEB
Accordions International	110	accordionfactory.com	Hailun USA	81	hailun-pianos.com	Pearl River Pianos	45	pearlriverusa.com
Acoustics First Corp.	102	acousticsfirst.com	Hal Leonard Corp.	9, 39	halleonard.com	PageFlip, Inc.	109	pageflip.com
AirTurn, Inc.	103	airturn.com	Hollywood Winds Inc.	66	hollywoodwinds.com	Peace Musical Company	76	peace-drums.com
Al Cass	105	alcassmouthpieces.com	House of Troy	82	houseoftroy.com	Peak Music Stands	46	peakmusicstands.com
Alfred Music Company, Inc.	13	alfred.com	Hunter Music Instrument Inc.	113	huntermusical.com	PJLA Music Products	22	pjlamusic.com
Allparts Music Corp	92	allparts.com	IMS Technologies	74	imstechnologies.net	Prentice Practice Pads	92	prenticepracticepads.com
Amati's Fine Instruments	7	amatis.org	ISP Technologies, LLC	99	isptechnologies.com	QRS Music Technologies	104	qrsmusic.com
American Recorder Technologies	54	americanrecorder.com	J.J. Babbitt Co. Inc.	26	jjbabbitt.com	Reed Geek	123	reedgeek.com
Antigua Winds Inc.	10	antiguawinds.com	Jody Jazz, Inc.	34	jodyjazz.com	Reverb.com	67	reverb.com
Audix Corporation	93	audixusa.com	Kawai America Corp.	51	kawaius.com	Riversong Guitars	100	riversongguitars.com
Blue Microphones	89	bluemic.com	Ken Smith Basses Ltd.	76	kensmithbasses.com	Roland	23	rolandus.com
Boulder Creek Instruments	78	bouldercreekguitars.com	KLOTZ AIS GmbH	42	klotz-ais.com	Rovner Products	83	rovnerproducts.com
Bourns Inc.	6, 108	bourns.com	KMC Music, Inc.	71	kmcmusiccorp.com	Schilke Music Products	56	schilkemusic.com
Breezy Ridge Instruments	106	jpstrings.com	Kyser Musical Products Inc.	25	kysermusical.com	Shubb Capos	78	shubb.com
Casio America, Inc.	20, 21	casio-usa.com	Lee Oskar Harmonicas	64	leeoskar.com	SKB Corp.	27	skbcases.com
CE Distribution	61	cedist.com	Legator Guitars	121	legatorguitars.com	String Swing Mfg. Inc.	15	stringswing.com
Celestion Professional	C3	celestion.com	Legere Reeds Ltd.	29	legere.com	Suzuki Music	33	suzukimusic.com
Chauvet	C1	chauvetdj.com	Levy's Leathers Ltd.	C2	levysleathers.com	Taylor Guitars	2, 3	taylorguitars.com
Connolly Music Company	28	connollymusic.com	Liaocheng Sunsmile Instruments	77	ssmil.com	Ted Klum Mouthpieces	46	tedklummouthpieces.com
Cordial GmbH	106	cordial.eu	Loog Guitars	31	loogguitars.com	Telefunken USA	91	telefunken-elektroakustik.com
Creative Tunings Inc.	72	spidercapo.com	Lowrey Organ Company	30	lowrey.com	The Music People	101	musicpeopleinc.com
D'Addario & Co.	5	daddario.com	M&M Merchandisers Inc.	113	mmwholesale.com	TKL Products Corp.	12	tkl.com
Dava Company	102	davapick.com	Messe Frankfurt Inc.	38	us.messefrankfurt.com	Truetone	C4	truetone.com
David Gage String Instruments	32, 85	davidgage.com	Metalin' Guitars	70	metalinguitars.com	Two Old Hippies	35	twooldhippies.com
Dream Cymbals And Gongs	66	dreamcymbals.com	MIRC	107	mirweb.com	Vic Firth Company	11	vicfirth.com
Dusty Strings	80	dustystings.com	Musiquip	62	musiquip.com	Walking Bird Forms & Tags	49	walkingbird.com
Eastman Music Company	19	eastmanmusiccompany.com	MV Pro Audio Inc.	79	mvproaudio.com	W.D. Music Products Inc.	4	wdmusic.com
EMG Inc.	14	emgpickups.com	NAMM	96, 97	namm.org	Wexler Music Co.	84	wexlermusic.com
Eminence Speaker	17	eminence.com	National Educational Music Co.	50	nemc.com	Whisper Room Inc.	80	whisperroom.com
Epilog Laser	60	epiloglaser.com	New Sensor/Electro-Harmonix	59	newsensor.com	Willcox Guitars/Lightwave Systems	41	willcoxguitars.com
Fishman Transducers, Inc.	63	fishman.com	NS Design	16	thinkns.com	Wittner GmbH	40	wittner-gmbh.de
Gatchell Violins Company, Inc.	18	gatchellviolins.com	Nuvo Instrumental Ltd.	55	nuvo-instrumental.com	Yamaha Corporation of America	1, 37, 57	usa.yamaha.com
GE Commercial Finance	73	gecdf.com	Ohana Music	58	ohana-music.com	Yorkville Sound Corp.	43	yorkville.com
Godin Guitars	65	godinguitars.com	Olympia	44	olympiakorea.com	Zildjian Co.	19	zildjian.com
Graph Tech Guitar Labs	75	graphtech.com	OMG Music	98	omgmusic.com			
Grover Musical Products	30	grotro.com	Option Knob	104	optionknob.com			

Four Ideas to Help You 'Get on the Good Foot' in 2016

With the new year under way, Menzie Pittman has a few suggestions to start 2016 on a good foot.

By Menzie Pittman

Yes, it's that time of year, and we trust any suggestion from James Brown!

So, here come the resolutions and pledges to improve over last year's successes or shortcomings. This is the time of year we always reflect and strive to do better in the coming year, pledging to fix the inconsistencies in our business that slowly erode profits.

Humorously, it really is a great time to stop and reflect on what worked well or what didn't work as well as we thought it would in the previous year. Consider these few thoughts; hopefully, they may guide you to a profitable year ahead, and get your business "on the good foot."

1. Take some time to reflect on the 2015 economy and what it means for you in 2016.

If you thought that in 2015 the marketplace seemed to be in flux, you might be on the right track. If you thought, "maybe I need to take a hard look at how my company is positioned in a morphing marketplace," then consider yourself forward-thinking.

But, if you believe that oil will never sell below \$50.00 a barrel or that polyester is a classic fabric, or that what you hear about the economy in an election year is true, then I suggest you Google the conservative American economist, Larry Kudlow. You can see by his quote below that he doesn't agree with the Fed's decision to hike interest rates, "Because business investment has slumped (it never really recovered), various measures of middle-class take-home pay remain below peak level ... Even this tepid, 2 percent, so-called recovery may be running out of steam."

2. Keep your ear to the ground.

As reported by music dealers across the country in December's *MMR* "Fifty Dealer/ Fifty State" article, many dealers have indicated that they had a healthy and productive year in 2015, and that's the good news. But the most telling quote in that article is from the president of Easy Music in Hawaii, Peter Dods. Peter has an extensive background in finance and has worked on Wall St. as an investment-banking analyst.

To quote from the "Fifty Dealer/Fifty State" article,

In your opinion, what was the single most significant development in the world of MI in 2015?

"Fender Musical Instrument's decision to sell online to customers direct. I would say that is the most significant move from a major player in the past decade actually, not just in 2015."

So when you blend all the angles together, you can see that no one thinks the economy is automatic or entirely trustworthy - much less bankable. The smartest thing you can do is listen to how your competitors are doing, regardless of location, and take their experiences into consideration for your own business. What helps someone in New York might hurt you in North Dakota.

3. Learn when to say, "Yes, yes, yes!" when something works and "No, no, no!" when something doesn't.

I am a firm believer that if something is really working, you can feel it, and to expand upon that idea is sound thinking. If something in your business resonates with everyone, and everyone is solid in getting that idea, product or service embraced by your customers, then throw gasoline on it and ... *Run, Forrest, Run.*

But what about the products and programs and ideas that used to work but now are producing less than inspirational results? If they were your #1 big idea three years ago, what do you do with that scenario?

If you listen to the advice from good accountants, they say actively pursue cleaning house, and 2016 may be just the right starting point. You need to say, "Enough... that doesn't work anymore."

There was a time when I believed vision outranked conservatism. And although many times I was right, and my belief netted healthy results, a good house cleaning is your friend and can be very liberating, not to mention productive to your bottom line.

4. In 2016, let's try something new.

While I believe it is the best time of year to clean house, it's also the very best time to take a healthy look at new ideas. Think about it - we are musicians and playing the same tunes over and over makes us certifiably neurotic. So don't be afraid to let your inner musician suggest "new material" or take a solo in the song of your store. If your shop isn't speaking to you, it probably isn't speaking to your customers either. Re-arrange the look of your store, or commit to a new idea that is a bit scary to you. Maybe consider attending a few sessions at the NAMM Idea Center, or TEC Tracks. Let your inner rock star out of the box. Show your clients how you got to be a big shot in the first place. If you are daring, maybe they will be too, and buy that instrument they have been waiting to buy but have been putting off.

Go ahead, lead the way, and "Get on the Good Foot" in 2016! **MMR**



All About That Bass, 'Bout That (Spector) Bass

By Paige Tutt

Stuart Spector, president of Spector Instruments, is excited about 2016. With the release of new bass and guitar models, as well as a new partnership with Korg, Spector is soaring straight to the top.

It seems as if 2016 will be the year of the Spector Bass. The company ended 2015 with a bang by way of their win-win marketing distribution partnership with Korg, so things are only looking up from here, according to Stuart Spector. "We were looking for a new North American distributor," Spector recalls. "Late, last year, we started discussing this. Shortly after NAMM we worked out the parameters of an agreement to work together. It's a tremendous boon for both companies in that Korg did not have a bass guitar line to compliment the Ashdown bass amps that they're selling. We needed assistance with servicing a wider range of dealers with our imported instruments." Spector imported instruments are made both in the Czech Republic and in South Korea, and these are the products that Korg will be distributing. Spector will continue to sell their U.S.A.-handmade instruments direct to dealers, which are made in their woodshop in Woodstock, New York.

In conjunction with the announcement of the news, Korg launched a creative rebranding project, which resulted in the release of several new Bass models, new variations, including new finishes to Spector's Legend and Coda lines, as well as extended pickup options. "Spector basses are built for a lifetime and deserving of the highest level of sales and marketing support dealers have come expect from Korg U.S.A.," says Brian Piccolo, Korg's director of guitar brands. "As a partner in product development we are thrilled to help bring these new products to market." The new bass models premiered in early October of last year, the CodaP4 Pro and the CodaPJ 4 Pro. The CodaP 4 Pros features a solid alder body with a figured maple top. The CodaPJ 4 Pro was designed with working bassists in mind and offers a palette of both classic & modern tones. Adorned with a high gloss black finish, the CodaPJ 4 Pro features custom-wound Spector pickups. Both models come equipped with a pickguard, a newly designed Spector split-coil pickup, and Spector exclusive TonePump Jr circuit.

Spector believes a few things set a Spector bass apart from any other bass on the market. "Thanks to a brilliant design and his first design for the music industry by my friend Ned Steinberger, back in 1977," says Spector, "we were the first bass with a multi-curved ergonomically curved body that fits perfectly from the instrument body to the human torso for playing. That feature provides an incredibly comfortable instrument. Through the years, we have tweaked every detail of the instrument, both on the U.S.A. and with our offshore products."

And though Spector notes the company has tweaked the instrument slightly over the years, he firmly believes in the continuity and legacy of the Spector bass. "Any instrument such as our curved body basses that you can produce with very slight variations except for improvements in performance for 40 years has to be a classic," comments Spector. "We are deep-



ly honored to be participating in producing something like that. One of the rare opportunities that manufacturing musical instruments presents is the opportunity to produce a product that is not disposable – that is so durable that you can play it for all of your life, pass it on to your children and their children – and in an age of disposable products, that's an incredible privilege to be able to work in that sort of realm."

In 2016, Spector has a lot of new things planned. "2014 was okay, but 2015 even with Korg just starting to work with us, has been a significant leg up in terms of having the help of their incredible marketing department and sales and customer service, which is at a level that with the small company that we are here in Woodstock, we could not begin to provide that to our customers," Spector says. "So there's a huge benefit for everybody in something that is really helping to move the brand ahead in a big way... We will be producing for this year only 40th anniversary instruments with a special inlay at the 12th fret commemorating this, which will be available in all three series – the U.S., the Czech Republic, and the South Korean models. We've had a chance to expand a range of finishes and some of the existing products."

Spector is very excited to start offering some U.S.A. electric guitars. The new Kenmair carved top electric guitar uses wood sourced from NYC – reclaimed redwood from water tanks that have been on top of NYC buildings for 70-80 years. "We've made this into a really wonderful, responsive electric guitar, which we are just starting to produce in the U.S and which there will most likely be a Czech Republic version of in the Spring," says Spector.

There will also be some new basses, which will debut at NAMM. "We are truly excited about being able to participate in the NAMM show in conjunction with Korg; we will be exhibiting at the Korg booth," comments Spector. "We'll have our U.S.A. stuff and our Czech and Korean instruments there. Also just having a little 40th anniversary BBQ celebration after the show in the neighborhood and seeing all of the great people we have worked with over the years and continue to work with, which is always one of the joys of NAMM, that we get to see our friends from not only all over the country, but all over the world." **MMR**



Stuart Spector and Brian Piccolo

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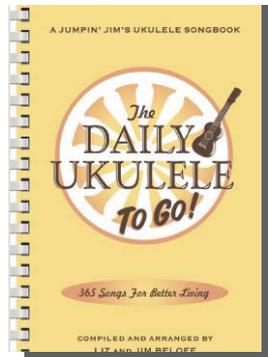
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JON DONAIS (ANTHRAX)

2015's Top-Sellers in Print Music

As a component of our annual review of the past year, *MMR* contacted some of our friends in print music publication to learn what titles were the biggest sellers in 2015.

Mammoth albums and evergreen artists (*1989*, Zeppelin, Van Halen) led to big sales for retailers, but so did traditional method books and instructional folios. Read on to find out which publications were flying off the shelves last year...

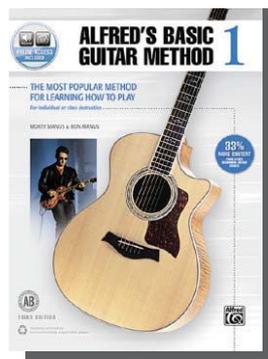


Hal Leonard

1. *Essential Elements*
2. *Hal Leonard Guitar Method*
3. *Faber Piano Adventures*
4. *Taylor Swift – 1989*
5. *The Daily Ukulele Songbook*
6. *The New Decade Series with Online Play-Along Backing Tracks*
7. *Willis Teaching Little Fingers To Play*
8. *The Real Book*
9. *First 50 Songbook Series*
10. *Van Halen Guitar Play-Along*

"Thanks to the continuing efforts of the retailers, the education and lesson-related materials segment of our business is stronger than ever. Sprinkle in some of our new songbook series and pop sensations like Taylor Swift and 2015 is wrapping up nicely!"

– David Jahnke, vice president national sales
Hal Leonard Corporation



Alfred Music

1. *Alfred's Basic Piano Library*
2. *Suzuki Violin School Violin Part, Volume 01 (Revised)*
3. *The Legend of Zelda: Symphony of the Goddesses – piano solos*
4. *Alfred's Basic Adult All-in-One Course*
5. *Accent on Achievement, Book 1*

6. *Alfred's Basic Guitar Method 1 (Third Edition)*
7. *Alfred's Teach Yourself to Play Ukulele, Complete Pack*
8. *Alfred's Essentials of Music Theory: Complete*
9. *Led Zeppelin: Acoustic Sessions*
10. *Sound Innovations for Concert Band, Book 1*

"Business seems to be picking up. What started as a slow July for us has now picked up pace to where we had hoped we would be with the back to school season. Being a publisher whose strength is in educational music, we're happy to know that the educational market is solid, and school programs are still strong. Even when there are the normal budget cutbacks, parents and booster organizations step in to fill the gap. Parents still feel that music is a core part of their children's education and will do whatever it takes to support that.

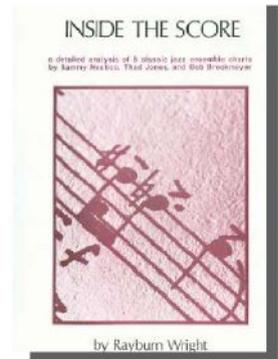
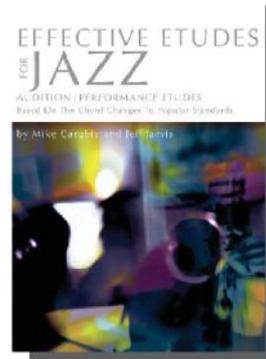
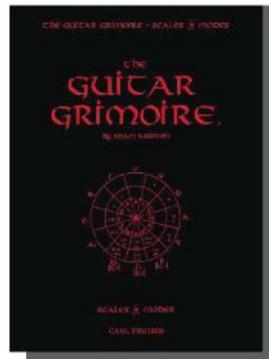
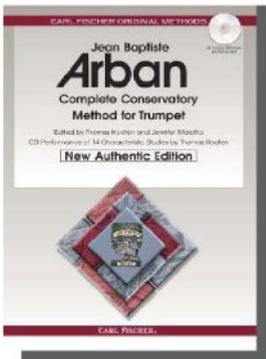
"We live in a digital age, so that part of our business is strong and growing faster in percentage terms than the traditional areas. However, traditional print is still the largest part of our business and is very strong, especially in our methods areas, where print still outsells digital by a large margin. Yet, we are continuing to work with our dealers in the digital area through our TotalSheetMusic and Video On Demand websites, that dealers can either link to through an affiliate program, or fully integrate within their website. Many dealers are also taking full advantage of our EDI ordering system creating higher efficiency on both sides of the ordering process, and accuracy is greatly improved

"We've also teamed up with Xchange Market Platform, so that dealers can sign up, at no cost, to be able to sell digital downloads of software products in their store and on their website, without having to stock any inventory. The platform can be integrated with their existing POS system so that the download codes can be printed out on customer receipts. See more: dealer.alfred.com/DealerPromotional/DealerResources/XchangeMarket.aspx

"We've boosted the revenue of our top selling methods, such as *Alfred's Basic Piano Library* by adding new publications with current popular songs to enhance the line, but also through an increased marketing effort to teachers. Alfred provides lots of great multimedia marketing tools for dealers to use when promoting our products. We've also enhanced our best-selling titles by transitioning to a cloud based solution for the multimedia components of our publications.

"We are cautiously optimistic for future growth in an environment where pedagogically strong content, combined with multimedia and technological solutions, help teachers achieve success in their classrooms and studios."

– Andrew Surmani, chief marketing officer
Alfred Music



Carl Fischer

1. *Arban Complete Conservatory Method for Trumpet*
2. *Flesch Scale System for Violin*
3. *Clarke, Technical Studies for the Cornet*
4. *Bordogni, Melodious Etudes for Trombone, Book 1*
5. *Schroeder, 170 Foundation Studies*
6. *Tucker Rhoda, ABC'S of Violin*
7. *Arban Complete Conservatory Method for Trombone*
8. *Guitar Grimoire, Scales & Modes*
9. *Simandl, New Method for The Doublebass*
10. *Guitar for Absolute Beginners*

"Business in 2015 was steady compared to last year. Our method books are doing well, such as the evergreens *Arban's Trumpet* and *Flesch Scale System*, with newly engraved version of *Schroeder 170 Foundation Studies for Cello* and *Arban's Trombone* adding to our top sellers. We have seen an uptick in sales of smaller and flexible ensemble publications, especially in our *Compatible and Progressive Ensembles Series*."

– Rachele Gayer, sales manager, Carl Fischer

Kendor

1. *Inside The Score* by Rayburn Wright
2. *Contest Solos* series for snare drum by Murray Houllif
3. *Winning Snare Drum Solos* series by Tom Brown
4. *The Pink Panther* instrumental solos, various editions, arr. Arthur Frackenpohl
5. *Kendor Concert Favorites* string orchestra collection, various composers/arrangers
6. *Mozart Sonatina* instrumental solos, various editions, arr. Jay Ernst
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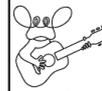
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By Dan Daley

Sometimes Big Government is a Good Thing

Congress left the music education world a last-minute Christmas present when on December 9 it ratified the Every Student Succeeds Act. Known by its shorthand acronym ESSA, the act replaces the much-reviled Bush-era No Child Left Behind Act, whose lack of vowels made it a rather clunky acronym and whose tenets raised the ire of parents and educators with its intense focus on relentless student testing.

It's ESSA's focus on "WELL-ROUNDED education," to use the ALL CAPS exclamation preferred by the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) in its analysis of the law's impact on arts education, including music, that makes this a landmark moment for music education.

In a .pdf, NAfME scoured the lengthy law's verbiage, looking for references to music and arts, and they found plenty of them. "Programs and activities that use music and arts, are referenced specifically, as tools to support student success, through the promotion of constructive student engagement, problem-solving, and conflict resolution," reads one section called out by the organization, which also lobbied for ESSA's passage with direct phone calls and letters to their legislators, and last June joined State Music Education Association leaders in visiting the offices of U.S. Senators and Representatives to advocate for it. More importantly, they draw a connecting line between arts education and funding, noting, "From reserved funds, the U.S. Secretary of Education shall award grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements, on a competitive basis, to eligible entities for the purposes of enriching the academic experience of students by promoting arts education for disadvantaged students and students with disabilities."

A Boost To Community Programs

The law opens up federal grant funding for states and local school districts to support music education programs and train music teachers. There will also be opportunities for federal grants to fund music education at community centers across the country. This will give a boost to community programs like, for instance, Nashville's Music Makes Us, which recently celebrated an all-time high number of students enrolled in music education programs, according to the Nashville Tennessean. The program, which reports that over 48,700 Metro Nashville public school students – 56 percent of the district's enrolled – take part in music education classes, already receives substantial gifts from locally affiliated manufacturers like Gibson and Yamaha, and recently was awarded a \$10 million grant from the Country Music Association. ESSA is like an afterburner on a jet engine for an organization in an environment like that.

It'll be a huge jump-start for those elsewhere, too.

NAMM president and CEO Joe Lamond said of ESSA, "We envision a world in which every child has a deep desire to learn music and a recognized right to be taught. The passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act is a significant step toward the realization of that vision."

The Takeaway

Not to be too opportunistic regarding what is a very positive development in national education legislation, but ESSA also presents MI retailers with some pleasant prospects. Schools will have additional funding to purchase more musical instruments and consumables. The very long-range pool of potential customers will deepen considerably over the time the law is in effect. It also offers an opportunity for retailers to show parents the benefits of adding music education into their children's curricula, because ESSA is going to make music education more affordable in the long run. For instance, a ten-year study for the Music Empowers Foundation that tracked over 25,000 middle and high school students showed

“Not to be too opportunistic regarding what is a very positive development in national education legislation, but ESSA also presents MI retailers with some pleasant prospects.”

that those in music classes receive higher scores on standardized tests than students with little to no musical involvement. The musical students scored, on average, 63 points higher on the verbal section and 44 points higher on the math sections of the SATs

than non-music students.

ESSA opens the door to a broader conversation, one between schools, community centers, retailers, and manufacturers, as well as students and their parents. Christopher Woodside, NAfME's assistant executive director, summed it up when he told NPR, "The main reason why we're so happy is because in the well-rounded education definition, which appears towards the end of the bill in the general provisions but informs the entire legislation, there is a distinct stand-alone listing for music for the first time in American history," which along with other arts had suffered under No Child Left Behind's emphasis on testing math and reading.

MI retailers can use this as an opportunity to make stores a hub of that conversation. It's critical to act quickly in order to underscore ESSA not just as a piece of legislation but as an inflection point in the evolution of music education as it relates to the larger education infrastructure. Like most of what comes out of Congress, ESSA is huge and unwieldy – take the time to point out what it does for the arts in general and music in particular. Make the connections between participation in music classes and better performance in all aspects of learning. And get ready to leverage some of the positive things that can happen when something comes out of Washington, D.C. **MMR**

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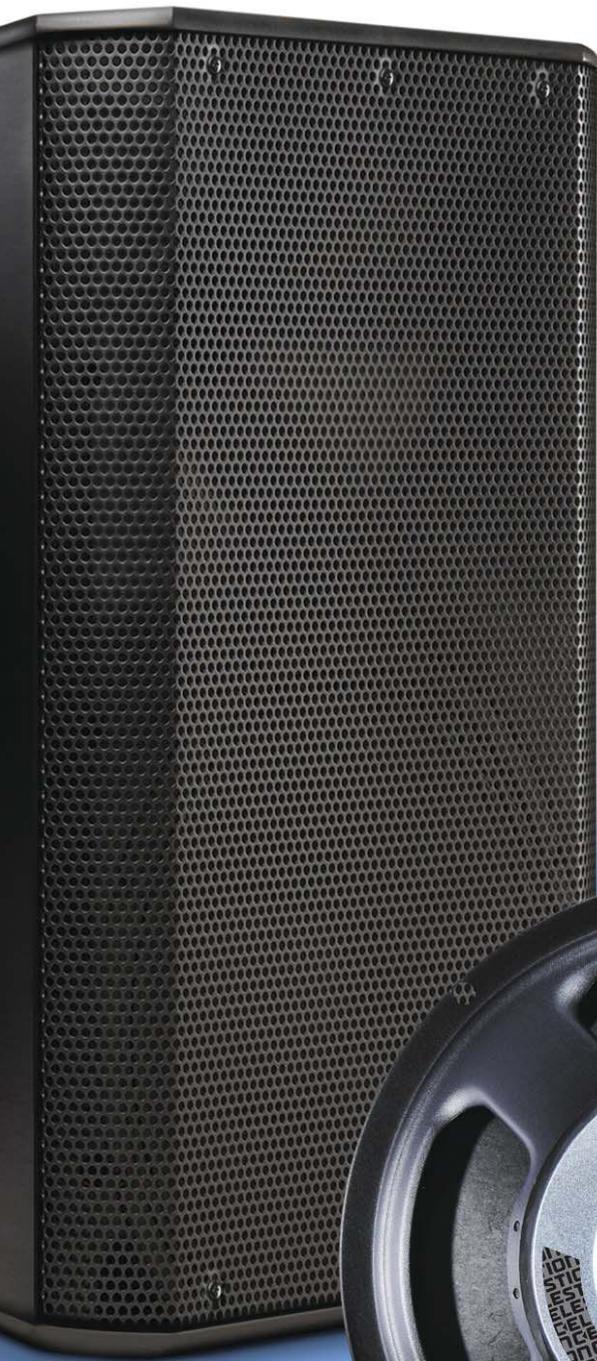
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