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String Theory:
Electric Guitar & Bass
Suppliers Discuss the
Market



38

32

Show Report:
RPMDA 2017



Dealer
Survey:
B&O Accessories

48

Small
Business
Matters:
Five Tips and Tricks
to Avoid Burnout

51



Keeping MI Retail Contemporary

Menzie Pittman of Virginia's Contemporary Music Center

34

Roundtable:



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CONTENTS



MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

Vol.176 JUNE 2017 No.6



38

FEATURES



30 The Cable Connection: The Ascension of KLOTZ Cables

As KLOTZ Cables nears their 40th Birthday, the German company reflects on their impressive – and growing – worldwide expansion



34 Keeping MI Retail Contemporary: Menzie Pittman of Virginia's Contemporary Music Center

A peek into the doors of Virginia's two Contemporary Music Center locations and owner Menzie Pittman's winning attitude

32 Show Report: RPMDA 2017

38 String Theory: Prominent Suppliers Discuss the Guitar & Bass Market

Five representatives from the biggest names in electric guitar & bass design and manufacture weigh in on the state of the market

44 Jordan Kitt's Pianos: The Legend and Legacy

At 105 years old, piano dealer Jordan Kitt's flourishes under its newest owners and new Rockville location

Cover Photo: Craig Hunter Ross

“The MI dealers who are successful in selling ANYTHING right now are on top of it in terms of social media, email blasts, and great customer service.”

– Jon Moody, GHS Strings | Rocktron



46 Never Break The Chain: How Music & Arts Continues to Spread as One of the Country's Largest MI Retailers

A Q&A with Music & Arts president Steve Zapf on the company's 65 years in business and 150 stores across the country

48 Taking on Internet Competition for Small-Ticket Items: Band & Orchestra Accessory Sales in 2017

An analysis of how accessory sales are changing for independent MI dealers

51 Small Business Matters: Five Tips and Tricks to Avoid Burnout

Menzie Pittman offers de-stressing solutions for overwhelmed store leaders and managers

COLUMNS

Editorial	4	Show Report.....	32
UpFront	6	New Products	52
SupplierScene	15	Classifieds.....	56
MMR Global	24	Ad Index	59
Trade Regrets	28	The Last Word.....	60
People on the Move	29		



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Suckerpunch



by Christian Wissmuller

President Donald Trump has boasted in the past (he later backpedaled on this) that, as a second-grader, he punched his music teacher, giving him a black eye. "I didn't think he knew anything about music," Trump explained. "It's clear evidence that even early on I had a tendency to stand up and make my opinions known in a very forceful way."

What if that was that just the first such hit? Trump's recently proposed budget would cut funding to the Education Department by 13 percent – specifically arts, civics, foreign languages, history, and basic literacy, among others (who needs to know any of *that* stuff, anyway?). This is on top of previous Trump recommendations to eliminate both the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).

Perhaps of most direct relevance to readers of *MMR*, though, is the proposed "zeroing-out" of a \$1.69 billion innovation fund – a resource that is available for individual states and districts to provide a "well-rounded" education. The loss of this fund would unquestionably and inevitably impact public school music education programs in profoundly negative ways.

Worried yet? NAMM's Mary Luehrsen, for one, is and she isn't taking any of this lying down. "Zero' sends an emotional, philosophical message that for us, frankly, is just not acceptable," she recently told *USA Today*. Luehrsen was, once again, in D.C. late last month, along with other NAMM members, industry leaders, musicians, and arts & education advocates as part of the annual NAMM Fly-In, meeting with members of Congress and other key policy makers to help ensure that music is recognized as an important part of a child's complete education.

Efforts like the Fly-In are more important now than ever – a fact not fully understood

by some. When the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law in 2015, many assumed that, in large part, the "fight" was over. We had won. Music education would now formally, across the board, be recognized as a core subject throughout the nation.

Not so fast. While President Obama made ESSA the law of the land two years ago, the legislation doesn't actually get implemented by individual states until 2018. If the cuts now on the table, outlined in President Trump's proposed budget, become reality, that state-level implementation may not be either as comprehensive nor as easy as initially hoped.

Here's the thing: it doesn't matter if you like and admire Trump or loathe him; it's not of direct importance what your party affiliation is, whether you identify as liberal or conservative has little bearing; it's not important if you 'Cofveve' or not – the issue at hand is one that transcends political ideology or individual philosophy. Music education in U.S. schools – the engine that generates those music-makers who ultimately (hopefully) go to your stores, buy instruments and gear from you, putting food on the table and keeping the lights on in your homes – is not out of the woods yet.

If the individuals and communities which benefit from, and believe strongly in, the importance of music education are complacent, we won't have anyone to blame but ourselves if we wind up with a black eye.



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Industry News

Moody's Revises GC's Outlook to Negative, S&P Global Downgrades Rating

On April 12, Moody's Investors Service revised the outlook on its B2 rating on Guitar Center (GC) to negative, suggesting it could downgrade that rating further into junk territory in the medium term. Then, on Wednesday, May 3, S&P Global downgraded GC's rating to CCC-plus from B-minus saying the company had underperformed expectations.



"The outlook revision considers Moody's view that GCI, similar to other retailers, will continue to be challenged with respect to improving its consolidated revenue and earnings performance," said Keith Foley, a senior vice president at Moody's.

Bonds issued by Guitar Center currently sit at record lows due to growing concerns related to the organization's \$1 billion (give or take) of outstanding bond debt, part of a total debt burden that amounts to roughly \$1.6 billion.

GC's lease-adjusted debt-to-EBITDA coverage for 2016 was about 6.3 times, which is precariously near 7.0 times that Moody's believes would trigger a downgrade.

Additionally, the company has \$615 million of 6.5% notes that mature in April of 2019, which Moody's rates at B2. According to MarketAxess, those notes traded last at 83.25 cents on the dollar.

An additional \$325 million of 9.625% notes mature in April of 2020, which carry a lower rating from Moody's of Caa1, or seven notches into junk territory. Those notes last traded at 58.10 cents on the dollar, again according to MarketAxess.

"From strictly a quantitative perspective, ratings could be lowered if lease-adjusted debt/EBITDA increases to at/near 7.0 times or EBIT/interest drops below 1.0 time," said Foley.

➤ Industry News

➤ MMR Global

➤ Trade Regrets

➤ Supplier Scene

➤ People on the Move

AES to Join the 2018 NAMM Show

NAMM and The Audio Engineering Society (AES) have announced a new collaborative alliance which will integrate pro audio educational training activities related to live sound, performance audio, recording technology and other topics into The 2018 NAMM Show, January 25-28 in Anaheim, California.

From live sound and studio recording, to musical instruments and entertainment technology, The NAMM Show has evolved from its original gathering of 52 piano dealers in 1901 to become the crossroads of the music products ecosystem. The show serves as a business platform for the global music, pro audio and entertainment technology products industry and its over 10,000 diverse professional member companies, hailing from 104 countries. In 2017, the show attracted nearly 107,000 registrants, 7,000 exhibiting brands, top-name artists, industry



innovators and creative luminaries, and offered over 125 educational sessions and networking opportunities. The show is also host to the annual TEC Awards. Now in its 32nd year, this year's awards honored Aerosmith's Joe Perry and producer Jack Douglas, alongside a variety of top pro audio exhibitors, professionals and products. NAMM will also host the professional touring and production industry's Parnelli Awards for the first time at The 2018 NAMM Show.

Additional details on registration, technical paper sessions, workshops, and tutorials for the upcoming event AES at NAMM, including registration, program topics and expert speakers along with other NAMM education and professional development opportunities will be available in the weeks to come. Until then, discover more about The 2018 NAMM Show by visiting www.namm.org

CHAUVET DJ to Distribute SoundSwitch

Chauvet & Sons LLC has entered into an agreement with New Zealand-based One-sixone Ltd to have CHAUVET DJ distribute the SoundSwitch hardware/software package in North America, as well as throughout much of the world.

A revolutionary control solution, SoundSwitch allows DJs to trigger and keep their lighting in sync while playing any song, in any order.

"This is a game changer for DJs who wish to create their own complete live lightshow," said Chauvet CEO Albert Chauvet. "SoundSwitch puts the total show experience under the control of the DJ by seamlessly integrating DMX lighting with live audio."

DJs can use SoundSwitch to attach lighting cues to their audio tracks and video files then automatically play them back in sync while performing live from the mixing or controller board. SoundSwitch works with any DJ mixing board or controller equipped

with Serato DJ, the leading DJ control software.

Teaming up with a lighting industry leader like Chauvet will further accelerate the global adoption of this breakthrough technology according to SoundSwitch chief executive officer, Zak Meyers. "SoundSwitch is a first-of-its-kind lighting solution for DJs and CHAUVET DJ is clearly a leader in DJ lighting," he said. "So there is a great deal of synergy created by the two of us joining forces."

Under the terms of the agreement, SoundSwitch will be sold through most of the CHAUVET DJ dealer network worldwide, including on an exclusive basis in the United States and its territories, Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, Central America, Venezuela, Colombia, Guyana (French/English), Suriname, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Paraguay, United Kingdom, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and France.



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Alfred Music's Manus Wins RPMDA's Dorothy Award



Alfred Music's chief business development officer, Ron Manus, was the recipient of the 2017 Dorothy Award at the annual Retail Print Music Dealers Association (RPMDA) Convention in Atlanta, Georgia.

The 2016 recipient, Eric Strouse of Stanton's Music, presented Ron Manus with the award.

The "Dorothy" Award is an extremely prestigious award named for Dorothy Hutchinson, former executive secretary/treasurer and charter member of RPMDA. She epitomized the finest that our industry has to offer, and had in abundance the attributes that print music dealers and publishers all aspire to. Her examples of hard work and high standards make the Dorothy Award RPMDA's highest honor.

Candidates are nominated by current RPMDA members and the honoree is selected by a committee comprised of past Dorothy winners.

The Award Committee considers the following criteria in selecting the award winner:

- A lifetime of service to friends and family, community, and the print music industry
- Promotion of ethical business standards and policies

•Setting high standards for customer relations and service, as well as dealer/publisher relations

- Personal integrity
- The encouragement and support of music education
- Innovation in business, with a vision for the future

Alex R. Ordoñez, vice president of marketing, Alfred Music said, "Ron's continued passion for the print industry is expressed in everything he does. He believes in our products, educators, and our retailers. He understands challenges and is not afraid to face them head-on while continually providing solutions that strengthen our industry."

"Ron's commitment to print music, the dealer network, RPMDA, and Alfred Music are highly admirable," says Krista Hart, trade marketing manager, Alfred Music. "He has a respect for the history of our industry along with a passion for innovating to meet the current challenges we face."

Ron Manus has dedicated his entire life, along with his family to create one of the most successful print music businesses in the industry. Alfred Music celebrates its 95th anniversary this year, a company that grew under the Manus family for 94 years and continues to flourish. From a young age, Ron began learning this industry from the ground up under the guidance of his parents and other respected leaders in the industry. He has contributed as an author, provided excellent service as a sales representative, led the company as

continued on page 10

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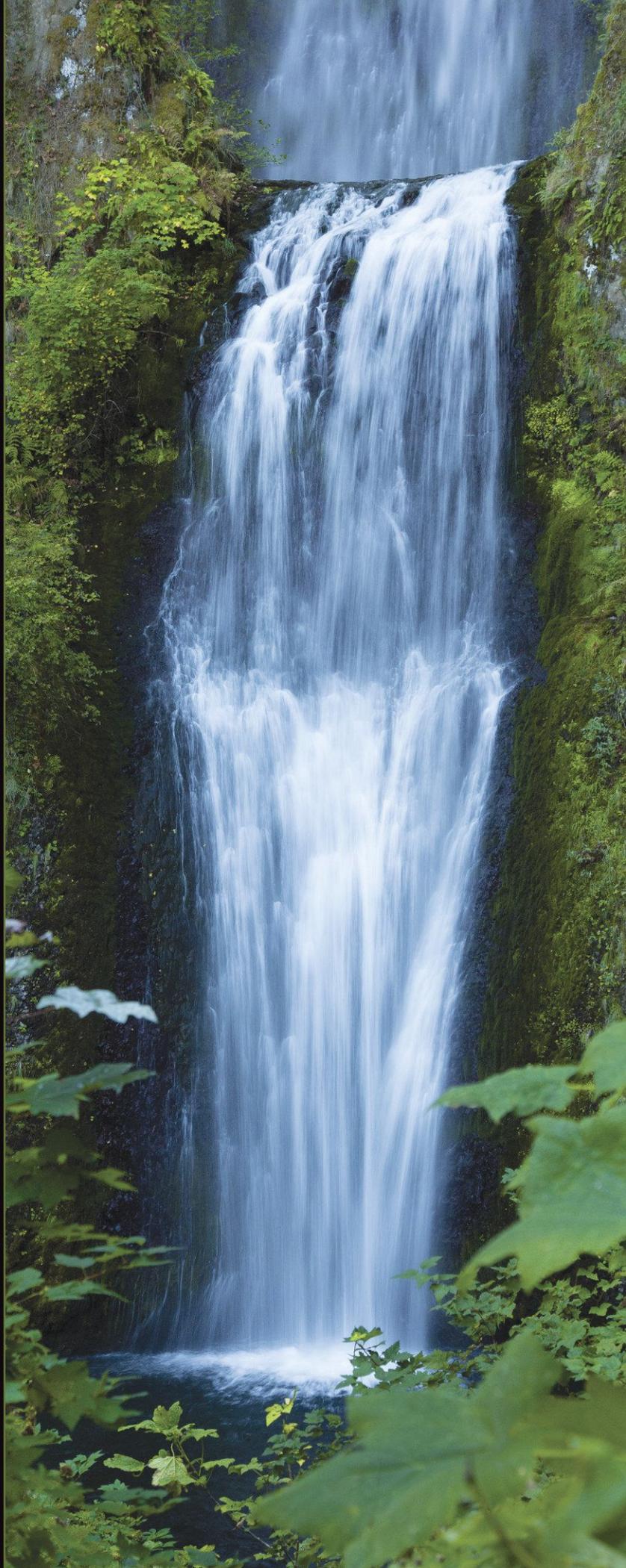
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Korg USA Expands Relationship with Tanglewood



Korg USA has announced an expansion of their growing partnership with Tanglewood Guitars, revealing official distribution to the United States.

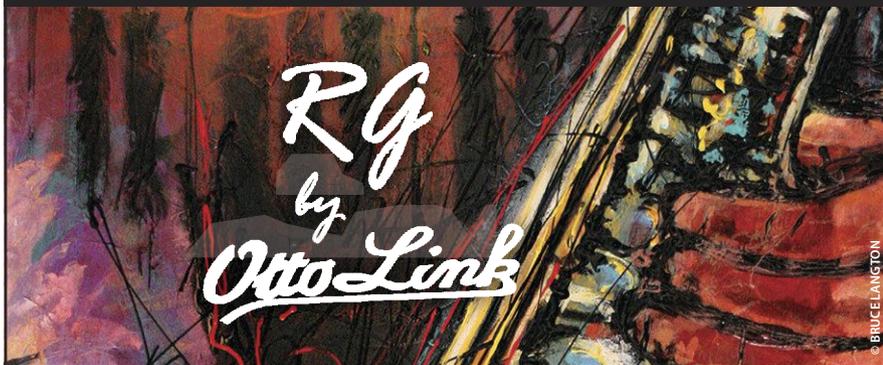
The news comes after their Canadian distribution announcement, which was released last October. Effective May 15th, Korg USA will handle Tanglewood circulation to the entire North American region.

"We are thrilled to broaden our relationship with Tanglewood Acoustic Guitars by expanding our distribution to the U.S.," says Brian Piccolo, director of Guitar Brands at Korg USA. "It is a great brand that has achieved tremendous success throughout the rest of the world. We believe our dealers and consumers will be impressed with the brand and we are looking forward to watching the brand thrive beyond the Canadian and European markets," concludes Piccolo.

"Partnering with Korg USA is a milestone in our brand's progress and an opportunity that we look forward to with great anticipation. The strategic advantage of working with such a valued and respected company will ensure that Canadian and U.S. retailers alike, large and small, will have full access to our product range and can benefit from the logistics and trade experience that only a blue chip partner like Korg USA can offer," shared Tanglewood's managing director, Tony Flatt.

Tanglewood Guitars offer vintage-inspired designs with modern features and playability, all while avoiding the elite price tag. To learn more about Britain's most popular acoustic guitar brand and the instrument ranges available, visit www.tanglewoodguitars.co.uk, and to inquire about becoming a dealer, please contact Sales@korgusa.com.

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Alfred Music's Manus Wins RPMDA's Dorothy Award

continued from page 8

CEO, builds and strengthens relationships as CBDO, and has continuously been a cheerleader to staff and dealers. He regularly makes personal visits to dealers to help them grow their business. Ron's passion is helping the world to experience the joy of making music and that belief is reflected in the ways he advocates within and beyond the industry. He has served on the NAMM Board of Directors and regularly participates in the NAMM Music Advocacy Fly-In.

"I am never speechless, but winning the Dorothy Award has come close to achieving the impossible..." said Ron Manus after receiving the Dorothy. "This award was given to me, but it belongs to Alfred Music and to all of us. I am the person people see at conventions as our 'brand ambassador,' but so much of what I do, communicate, and represent, is because of the people of Alfred Music, both present and past."

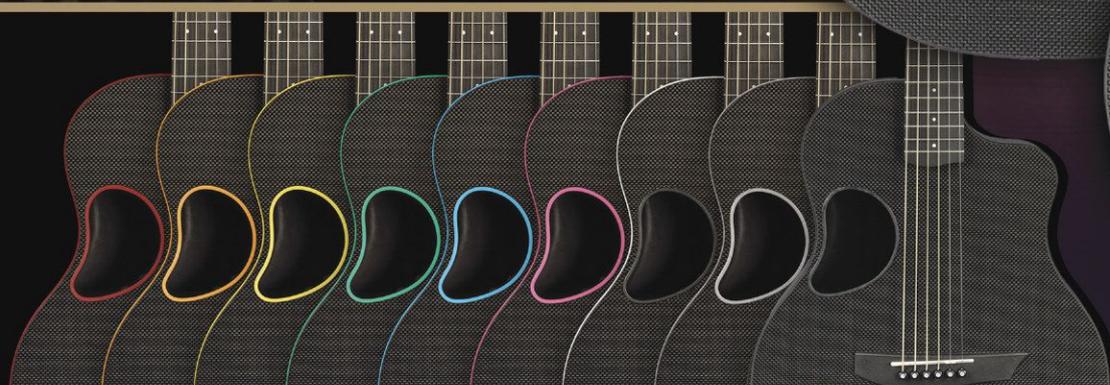
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NAMM Top 100 Dealers to be Honored in Nashville

NAMM has announced the list of music product retailers to be recognized at The Top 100 Dealer Awards.

The annual awards show recognizes the industry's outstanding music retailers who demonstrate exceptional commitment to their stores, neighborhoods and customers, and share in a vision of creating a more musical world through their local communities.

"At the heart of every music store, there is a story of inspiration, dedication and a pursuit to create a more musical world," shared Joe Lamond, NAMM president and CEO. "The Top 100 Dealers exemplify a commitment – to their communities, their staff, and the industry to create a space which welcomes and inspires music makers through their products and services."

The Top 100 Dealers will be honored at an awards gala on Friday, July 14 at the annual Summer NAMM Show at Nashville's Music City Center. From the Top 100 honorees, seven music retailers will be recognized in "Best Of" categories including:

Best Store Turnaround, Best Customer Service, Best Store Design, Best Marketing and Sales Promotion, Best Online Engagement, Best Emerging Dealer/Rookie of the Year, and one recipient will be honored with the Music Makes a Difference award. The coveted Dealer of the Year award will go to one of the recipients in the aforementioned categories.

From a self-submission process, an independent panel of judges numerically rated the Top 100 Dealers across several categories including customer service, music advocacy, store design and promotions. Each submission was scored to determine the Top 100 list, the category awards and the overall Dealer of the Year award.

The Top 100 Dealer awards party will be held in the Karl F. Dean Grand Ballroom at Music City Center during the Summer NAMM show. All Summer NAMM badge holders are invited to attend this evening honoring excellence in music retailing.



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NAfME Awards Two, Two-Year Research Projects

As part of an ongoing series of research projects that the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) has funded, the leading association for music educators has awarded two new research projects



National Association for Music Education

to study important issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in music education.

The award recipients are the University of Connecticut, Dr. Joseph Abramo and Dr. Cara Bernard, principal investigators, and Arizona State University, Dr. Jason Thompson, principal investigator. Each award carries a \$10,000 stipend and spans two years of research.

Dr. James Byo, chair of the Society for Research in Music Education (SRME) which issued the call for proposals and chaired the selection committee, spoke to the importance of these projects to move forward the teaching of music for all students. "By sponsoring research that documents the ongoing state of inclusivity, diversity, equity, and access in music education and illuminates context-specific challenges and best practices, NAfME as an organization demonstrates a commitment to acting on its support of social justice in music education."

"At NAfME, we are working for the day that the many benefits of music education are present in the lives of all our students," adds Mike Blakeslee, executive director and CEO for NAfME. "Our work needs to be guided by more and better information on which we can base long-term strategies for achieving music for all."

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Yamaha Ensembles Take Home Eight Medals at 2017 WGI Championships

At this year's Winter Guard International (WGI) Indoor Percussion & Winds World Championships, eight awards were earned by groups using solely Yamaha instruments. The championships, which took place from April 20-23, featured over 590 participants in Dayton, Ohio. Almost all of the competitive ensembles used an instrument from Yamaha.

Chino Hills High School Percussion Ensemble of California received the 2017 WGI gold medal in the scholastic category, while the percussion ensemble from the Arcadia Unified School District (also of California) received the silver. Pulse Percussion of California won the 2017 bronze in the independent category. Fair Lawn of New Jersey won the gold medal in the Scholastic 'A' category, and Farmington United of Michigan received the silver medal in the Independent 'A' category.

Chromium Winds of Illinois won both the Winds Championship Independent



Open class and the "fan favorite award." The Scholastic World gold medal was awarded to Avon High School of Indiana.

"Yamaha has been a proud supporter of WGI and indoor percussion

for nearly 20 years, and is the only company that has all the instruments and products these groups need to compete at the highest level – from drum sets, marching percussion and wind instruments to mixers, PA systems, sampling and arranging products," said Troy C. Wollwage, the percussion marketing manager, Band & Orchestral division, of Yamaha Corporation of America. "Competing at WGI is akin to playing in the major leagues. The numbers of young performers and their musicianship levels keep rising and many of these young people will become the music educators of the future."

In addition, nearly 30 Yamaha performing artists worked on the event, offering their services as instructors, judges, and ensemble directors.

Sweetwater Donates \$20,000 to Music Education Film

Sweetwater has donated \$20,000 to the National Association of Music Parents in an effort to support the completion of the feature documentary film "Marching Beyond Halftime."

The film demonstrates the benefits that come from participating in music programs through the stories of individuals who have been successful because of what they learned in school music, as well as through showcasing several band programs. The movie was produced and directed by Sara Flatow.

"I have been committed to supporting music education for my entire adult life," Sweetwater founder and president Chuck Surack said. "Music is at the center of my life personally, at the center of Sweetwater as a music retailer, and is one of my top philan-



thropic priorities. I am personally very excited about the potential impact 'Marching Beyond Halftime' could have on prevailing attitudes about the importance of music education. It's every bit as important as academic subjects, and I believe this film will make that crystal clear."

Supplier Scene

D'Addario Foundation Donates \$17,000 to Music Education Non-Profits

The D'Addario Foundation donated over \$17,000 in grants to six Chicago-area music education nonprofits on Friday, April 28th at the Quinlan & Fabish Burr Ridge (Illinois location).

Owner George Quinlan presented the checks to the six organizations with D'Addario Foundation director Suzanne D'Addario Brouder.

"Handing out grants to not-for-profit organizations like these is really my favorite part of my job," Brouder said. "Our purpose as an organization is not only to support organizations like yours, but also to recognize and raise the visibility of the tireless and incredibly impactful work you are doing in expanding music education possibilities."



The different music education nonprofits that received grants included the Chicago Jazz Philharmonic's Jazz Academy Program, the Chicago West Community Music Center, DePaul's School of Music's DePaul Community Music, El Valor's Music Program, Intonation Music Workshop, and The People's Music School.

"As grant makers, we have pioneered a process of supporting grassroots efforts to bring music back into underserved communities, particularly in Illinois where our education system is so challenged," Brouder said. "Because of this, independent not-for-profits are more vital to widening the achievement and access gap for music and arts education."



Note From Mary

Create More Music, and Customers

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Make Music Day, the global celebration of music, not only aligns with NAMM's vision of a more musical world but also provides retailers the opportunity to create unique events, generate traffic to their stores, create new customers and grow sales.

Corresponding with the summer solstice on Wednesday, June 21, the longest day of the year is now filled with the sounds of music in all its many forms, and provides a platform for people of all ages and skill levels including professionals, amateurs, and first-time music makers to experience the joys of making music.

As the signature, national sponsor of Make Music Day, The NAMM Foundation worked alongside our partners at the Make Music Day Alliance to celebrate the special day's 10th anniversary in the United States, last year in 2016.

NAMM members across the world have benefited from the media attention Make Music Day has generated, and utilize the opportunity to bring attention to their stores and the year-round opportunities they provide to learn and grow with music.

We have a number of resources available to retailers to benefit from this special day including a dedicated website and tool kit, and we are always able to help with ideas by emailing info@nammfoundation.org.

Mary Luehsen
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE NAMM FOUNDATION

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one-day event



200 TV
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events
of the day



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and online
media articles
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“We did a giant group guitar lesson for Make Music Day. We came in that morning and were worried that no one was going to show up. But suddenly all these people showed up and it was all over the news. It was a really nice vibe.”

Mike and Miriam Risko, Risko Music

GET INVOLVED WITH MAKE MUSIC DAY!



Join the worldwide celebration of music on June 21!

Make Music is a free celebration of music around the world on June 21st. Launched in 1982 in France as the Fête de la Musique, it is now held on the same day in more than 750 cities in 120 countries. Completely different from a typical music festival, Make Music is open to anyone who wants to take part. Every kind of musician – young and old, amateur and professional, of every musical persuasion – pours onto streets, parks, plazas, and porches to share their music with friends, neighbors, and strangers. All of it is free and open to the public.

MAKE MUSIC ABOUT LOCATIONS PARTICIPATE SCHEDULE PARTNERS MEDIA CONTACT

JOIN THE WORLDWIDE CELEBRATION OF MUSIC!



Table of Contents

- Section 1 What is Make Music Day?
- Section 2 Ideas to Get Involved
- Section 3 Ideas for a Public Relations Timeline
- Section 4 Ideas to Engage the Media
- Section 5 Resources
 - Press Release Templates
 - Recommended Social Media Posts
 - Questions



Visit MakeMusicDay.org

The Make Music Day Alliance exists to serve Make Music organizers around the world. Its goals are to promote Make Music participation and provide tools to help manage the event in each community. Through the support of The NAMM Foundation, the Alliance has become a global hub of activities across the U.S. and world.

Download the Make Music Day Toolkit

NAMM has created a special marketing toolkit complete with in-store merchandising and social media graphics to celebrate this special day, and engage your community to kick-off a year-long love of music making.

View the 2017 PSA

To encourage more people to learn and grow with music, NAMM's national PSA campaign will continue this year with the message that "Music Follows You" throughout our lives. Our 2016 PSA garnered millions of impressions through print, TV and outdoor placements.

youtube.com/nammorg

Need more inspiration?

Summer NAMM is right around the corner, featuring products across music and pro audio and industry-best education including an opening keynote with Doug Stephens, the *Retail Prophet*, and events such as the NAMM Opening Night Party featuring the American Eagle Awards honoring Crystal Gayle, Patti Smith and Harry Shearer. The NAMM Foundation will host

a series of forums with ideas on how to advocate for music education in your state as well as policy roundtables and music-making circles.

Events are free to NAMM members but you must register to attend. Register for badges and book hotel at namm.org



Opening Keynote Speaker
Author of *The Retail Prophet*
Doug Stephens



American Eagle Awards Honoree
Crystal Gayle



American Eagle Awards Honoree
Patti Smith



American Eagle Awards Honoree
Harry Shearer

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Audix Named Microphone Sponsor of Vans Warped Tour 2017

Audix has announced that they will be the official microphone sponsor of the 2017 Vans Warped Tour presented by Journeys. Audix will provide their microphones for all seven stage backlines and PA, in addition to providing microphones for all the workshops provided by The Entertainment Institute.

"We are truly excited to have signed on for the Vans Warped Tour this year," said Chris Doss, vice president of sales and marketing, Audix. "Audix microphones are designed for the rigors of the 'road' and engineered to perform exceptionally well on loud stages. It is a privilege to have the opportunity to share

AUDIX®

the clear, authentic sound of Audix with so many fantastic bands and their audiences across the US."

Warped Tour, which started in 1995, remains the longest-running and largest touring festival in the United States, and starts in Washington on June 16. Some of the headliners for the 2017 of Warped Tour include Anti-Flag, Beartooth, Bless-the-fall, Bowling for Soup, Creeper, Futuristic, GWAR, Hatebreed, I Prevail, Memphis May Fire, Neck Deep, New Years Day, Our Last Night, Sick Of It All, and TSOL.

The workshops will consist of 40-min small group conversations with artists backstage, with topics ranging from musical instrument lessons, to careers in the music industry.

"It is great for the Vans Warped Tour to have the support of endemic music companies like Audix," said Kevin Lyman, founder of Warped Tour. "We are excited for the strategic opportunities that arise when partnering with a brand that is able to fit the unique rigors of the tour."

Vans Warped Tour presented by Journeys runs until August 6, where it concludes in Pomona, California.

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Photo: Stefanie Tendler

Kyser to Begin Minimum Advertised Price Program

Starting on July 17, 2017, Kyser Musical Products, Inc. will begin to enforce a Minimum Advertised Price (MAP) program in the United States to discourage potentially detrimental price-based advertising in print and online.

The MAP for all Kyser Quick-Change capos will be \$17.95 each. MSRP will remain at \$24.95 each. This MAP program will be enforced by using third party monitoring software and an in-house monitoring team.

Kyser hopes to protect the current musical instrument business model by preserving distributor's prices while also allowing dealers to maintain or increase their margin on this quality accessory.

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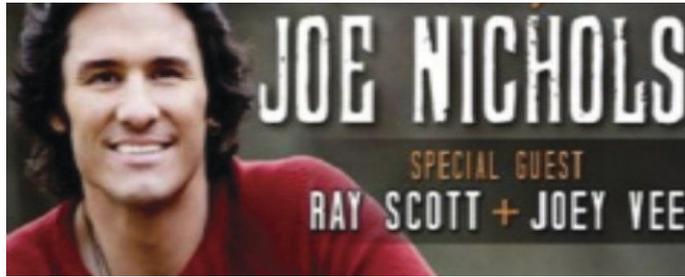


www.rockettpedals.com



Joe Nichols Headlines Veterans Fundraiser on ISP Rig

Country radio station WYCD partnered with Vets Returning Home to host a fundraiser and concert featuring headlining country star Joe Nichols using an ISP Rig. The event at Emerald Theatre in Michigan raised money for Vets Returning Home organization to help veterans with medical, psychological, educational and housing needs.



Special guests Ray Scott and Joey Vee also performed.

At the concert, Nichols played through an ISP Technologies 20 box (10 per side) High Definition Line Array system, each side of which consisted of five each of the patented True Four-Way HDL4212's and the HDL4210 line array boxes. In addition, three per side of the ISP XMAX 212 horns subwoofers were used as well.

Guitar Center Named BCA 10 Honoree

Americans for the Arts has announced that Guitar Center has been named a "BCA 10: Best Businesses Partnering with the Arts in America" honoree for 2017.

Every year, the Business Committee for the Arts (BCA) awards ten American companies, business leaders and arts and business partnerships for their commitment to the arts through grants, local partnerships, volunteer programs, matching gifts, sponsorships, and board membership. The 2017 awards ceremony will be held on October 11 at the Central Park Boathouse in New York City.

"We are grateful to honor these businesses and individuals for their exceptional involvement in ensuring that the arts thrive in their communities," said Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts. "They provide the arts with significant financial and in-kind support, and they incorporate meaningful arts-related programs into their employee, customer, and community relations activities – truly setting a standard for other businesses to follow."

Guitar Center's community outreach and charitable work includes helping schools improve their music education, providing grants to musicians, and donating music equipment to be used as therapy for veterans. In the past, the company has partnered with celebrity ambassadors like Colbie Caillat, Vince Gill, Cody Simpson, and national charitable organizations such as Little Kids Rock, Mr. Holland's Opus and Girls Rock Camp to make these actions possible. In 2016, Guitar Center donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to be used for purchasing toward musical equipment for musicians of all ages and genres.

"Guitar Center is a proud supporter of the arts and we've purposefully engaged in opportunities within the community to help aspiring artists find their own unique sound," said Brian Berman, Guitar Center's vice president of marketing. "From underserved students to the undiscovered artist, we are committed to helping all musicians plug in to the power of music."



Yamaha Cares Donates \$110,000 to California Children's Hospital

In January, more than 10 Yamaha staff members and friends participated in the Southern California Half Marathon and 5K races to raise money for Type 1 juvenile diabetes research at Children's Hospital of Orange County (CHOC Children's).



2017 marks the ninth consecutive year that Yamaha has participated, and Yamaha Cares and KatrinaKures have presented CHOC Children's with a check for \$15,640. The grand total of overall donations from this annual event now surpasses \$110,000.

"This fundraising effort keeps getting bigger and better each year," says David Jewell, marketing communications manager of Yamaha Corporation of America. "The money we raise has no strings attached and 100 percent of it goes directly to research, which we hope will one day lead to a cure for this disease."

Jewell says that he is personally invested in the cause because his daughter was diagnosed with Type 1 juvenile diabetes when she was 13.

"I wanted to do something grassroots to raise money for research," he says. "I'm a runner, so I asked my running pals and some industry people to join me in the race and they have been with me ever since."

To encourage online donations, Jewell also ran a concurrent CrowdRise campaign, KatrinaKures, and local merchants like The Corner Bakery in Anaheim Hills and Tempo Urban Kitchen in Brea donated food for the post-race celebration.

"I had more help this year than ever," Jewell says. "Everyone wanted to contribute. I took a day to solicit businesses in the area for silent auction items and we raised almost \$1,000 with their donations!"

For the event's 10th anniversary next year, Manheim Auction will raise funds for KatrinaKures this November and December.

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Sweetwater Launches Improved Online Guitar Gallery

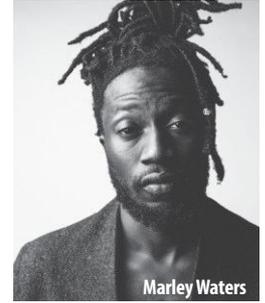
Sweetwater has launched a new version of their online Guitar Gallery that features larger photos, more close-ups and a better navigation experience. The new version of the gallery also allows customers to search for guitars by weight, brand, number of strings, body, top, fingerboard, neck materials, number of pickups, orientation, finish, scale length, number of frets, and nut width.

The original gallery, which was launched in 2004, was loved by customers because they were able to see high-resolution photos of guitars online, as well as see any in-stock guitar from multiple different angles. The new version of the gallery builds on the original with features that make browsing the gallery even more informative.

"Sweetwater's Guitar Gallery revolutionized the experience of buying guitars online. Never before was a customer able to browse, find, compare, and purchase a guitar, by serial number, from high-quality photos of that specific guitar," said Sweetwater founder and president Chuck Surack. "Now we've taken Guitar Gallery to the next level, with larger, clearer photos with a distinctive background designed to make the guitar image more detailed than ever before. Guitar Gallery is one more example of Sweetwater's ongoing investment in online innovation, all for the sake of providing the best possible customer experience and customer service in the world."

Roland and RYSE Team Up for Discovery Series

In an effort to find the next top producer, Roland and RYSE UP have teamed for the ROLAND + RYSE Discovery Series. The first search of the series will feature Marley Waters and Wyclef Jean, who are looking to find a producer to remix Jean's hit "I Swear."



Marley Waters

Artists can submit their work for the contest via the RYSE platform, and peers and artists will vote for the best tracks. Roland will be waiving the entry fee for the first 100 participants. The top entries will be sent to Waters, who will pick the winner.

Not only will the winner be flown to Los Angeles and work with Marley in the Roland studio, but they also will have the chance to have their work mastered in the Roland studio and shoot and edit a music video at the Roland headquarters.

"RYSE is beneficial because it gives producers, singers, and songwriters a chance to connect and make music together. I'm always looking for the next innovative person to work with, and sometimes it's not the people you're referred to," Waters says. "RYSE is creating a new experience in itself, through an app that connects artists digitally for real-life opportunities to work together."

A portion of the Discovery's proceeds will be donated to the House of Blues Music Forward Foundation.

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Barnes and Mullins Clinches Peavey Pro-Audio Exclusive

Peavey Commercial Audio has signed a new U.K. distribution deal with Barnes & Mullins after ending a three-year partnership with the Midwich Group.

Barnes & Mullins are distribution partners for Peavey's musical instrument portfolio and this new deal will see the full Peavey Commercial Audio range join its offering, including Crest Audio, MediaMatrix and the full line of Peavey Professional products.



James Kennedy, operations manager for Peavey Commercial Audio EMEA said, "Established in 1895, Barnes & Mullins have experience in sales and distribution that few can match. With our musical instruments, we have worked with them for over two years and their expansion into pro audio is a natural fit for us both. Their new pro audio division will provide the focus and drive for Peavey Commercial Audio in the U.K. and we are excited at the prospect of this new synergy."

Barnes and Mullins Pro Audio (BAM-PA) will see further development of a dedicated Pro Audio area sales manager position with full technical backup from Peavey Commercial Audio's U.K. office. May also saw the launch of a B&M Pro Audio website (www.bandmproaudio.co.uk) complete with trade prices, stock levels, online ordering capabilities and much more.

Brian Cleary, Barnes & Mullins joint managing director commented: "We're very happy to now be taking care of Peavey Commercial Audio. Although this is a new area of the market for Barnes & Mullins, I'm confident that alongside Peavey CMA's technical prowess, we can offer exceptional sales, service and logistical support."

Tough Choices, Easy Decisions

By the time you read this it will probably all be over, of course, but as I write, the U.K. is currently gripped by general election fever.

And when I say "gripped by general election fever" I mean that large swathes of the U.K. public are too slack-jawed to understand even the most basic arguments being made on either side and would rather go back to getting wasted on Spice and clicking on funny cat videos and the rest of us kind of already know the result we're going to get so are also wishing it would all go away so that we can just continue being crushed under the yoke of oppression, which we're familiar and comfortable with.

For those of us who are paying attention, however, like the recent U.S. election, some serious choices are being put before us this time round. Finally. And I think it's fair to say that, as in the U.S., the creative industries tend to lean in a particular direction.

For the music-related creative industries the battle is always about funding and in recent years, since the conservatives won in 2010, as part of their National Plan for Music Education in England, in place since 2011, funding for music education hubs has been falling drastically.

Now, local authorities are being ordered by the Department for Education to cut all funding for music services – a key partner in many music education hubs from 2015-2016. These local authorities were putting £21.3 million into music

education in 2011/12 but now this funding could be lost completely.

There is also the issue of the government's drive to establish a new exam curriculum in schools called the English Baccalaureate (or Ebacc) which is a set of subjects focused on english, maths, science, et cetera, leaving little room for music or expressive arts, generally.

Researchers from Sussex University's School of Education and Social Work, surveyed secondary school music teachers at 657 state and 48 private schools across England over five years.

Staff at about 60 percent of the state schools specifically mentioned the EBacc as causing a negative effect on the provision and uptake of music at their school, while just three percent believed it had benefitted the subject.

As musicians are the very lifeblood of this industry, it's hard to imagine a more damaging policy for the future of music and it presents a stark choice between the current government and alternatives that value music education and the arts as much as so-called 'core' subjects and reflect this in their approach to educational structure and funding.

Those who portray political choice as non-existent are missing the finer details. Boring it may sometimes be, but crucial to the success or otherwise of so many different aspects of our lives, it remains. For the MI industry in the U.K. things are about to get either a lot better or a lot more difficult.

TalkBox Comes Alive with New TC Pedal

TC Helicon has revitalized the Talk Box with its new TalkBox Synth stompbox. The pedal offers both classic "singing guitar" talk box effects and modern "robotic" vocoder sounds, with its four Synth styles.

Using the same solid metal construction as the rest of TC Helicon's stomp box line, the pedal can be used with an electric guitar but doesn't require a plastic hose like the original. Players simply vocalize the sounds they want their guitar to make directly into a microphone while they play.

The onboard synthesizer features four Synth styles that follow single note electric guitar licks to create realistic synth performances that emulate a skilled keyboardist.

In addition, to minimize feedback, TalkBox Synth outputs to a PA not a guitar amp which means it can avoid sending a mic signal through the amp, which can result in feedback.

TalkBox has an RRP of \$149 and is available now.



Larriveé Launches Silver Oak Acoustic Guitars

Larriveé Guitars has introduced a limited run of 03 Series Silver Oak acoustic guitars.

Priced identically to standard 03 models, the special editions feature free of charge upgrades to solid Silver Oak back and sides, a premium solid Sitka Spruce top (as used in Larriveé's 10 Series) and black stripe body binding (from Larriveé's 09 Series).

Silver Oak has a sound "as jaw-dropping as its figuring", according to the firm's eponymous boss, Jean Larriveé, who explained: "It is one of the best woods I've used. We made our 45th anniversary [guitars] with this wood, so I feel very strong about it. It was a real surprise at the beginning. I thought it was a freak so I made a few others and the results were the same, so I decided to make many of them."

Larriveé is now using Silver Oak for its 50th anniversary guitars. Body shapes include a P-03E parlour guitar equipped with a Shadow Nanoflex pickup, a dreadnought-shaped D-03E with LR Baggs Anthem pickup system and four OM orchestra models, including a non-electro OM-03 model, two OM-03E electro-acoustic models with either a Shadow Nanoflex or LR Baggs Anthem pickup option, and finally an OMV-03E electro-acoustic model with LR Baggs Anthem system and Venetian cutaway.

All models are made in the U.S. and come with a Larriveé hard shell case.



Pricing is as follows:

- P-03E Shadow Nanoflex Silver Oak Special - £1,399
- D-03E LR Baggs Anthem Silver Oak Special - £1,849 RRP
- OM-03 Silver Oak Special - £1,499 RRP
- OM-03E Shadow Nanoflex Silver Oak Special - £1,699 RRP
- OM-03E LR Baggs Anthem Silver Oak Special - £1,849 RRP
- OMV-03E LR Baggs Anthem Silver Oak Special - £2,299 RRP



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Gear4Music's continued success, reflected in its latest stellar set of market-bucking results, will see it move into a new head office this month.

Results for the full-year ended 28th February show the publicly listed dealer's revenue up 58 percent from £35.4m to £56.1m with gross profit up 65 percent from £9.1m to £15.1m.

The group will move into a new 50,000 sq. ft. headquarters in York next month which it has purchased at a cost of £5.3m. This year also saw the firm open distribution centers in Sweden and Germany and the acquisition of a software development team to improve its e-commerce offering.

Commenting on the figures, CEO Andrew Wass, said: "This has been a transformational year for the business, with further expansion of the Gear4music brand driving record sales and profits. In particular we have seen significant expansion in our International business where sales have been very strong. We have therefore

accelerated investment in our European infrastructure to improve our customer proposition and reach, most notably through the opening of two new distribution hubs in Sweden and Germany.

"Our growth has been underpinned by the quality of our bespoke e-commerce platform and we continue to drive innovation in this area to further improve our systems and websites, both in the U.K. and overseas.

"We begin our current financial year with good momentum and continued appetite from customers around the world for our market leading service and product offering. We are well positioned to deliver further growth and have plans in place to continue investing in our operational facilities and systems to support our growth plans. The next 12 months will be exciting as we move into our new head office in York, scale up our European operations, and enhance our worldwide proposition, and we remain confident in the long-term growth prospects for the group."

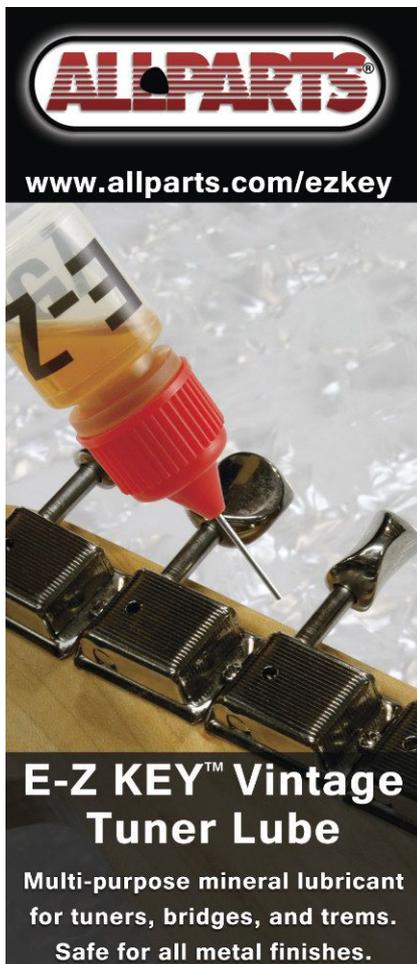
Guitar Guitar Ends Ghent Stint

Ambitious U.K. dealer Guitar Guitar has been forced to close its store in Ghent, Belgium due to the unexpected decision of the landlord to sell the retail property.

Managing director, Graham Bell, said, "It is with deep regret that we announce the closure of our Ghent store. Unfortunately, our landlord's decision to sell the building has made ongoing trading unviable, as they have already been granted planning permission for a new property."

"Under Belgian law, we were given first refusal on the sale, however due to the unforeseen impact of Brexit and the uncertainty that surrounds trading arrangements, currency and economic conditions in both countries, we do not see buying the building as commercially wise at this time."

The U.K. and online operations are unaffected by the Ghent closure.



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Adam Hall Hosts Asian Distributor Summit

Adam Hall Asia recently held its first APAC Distributor Summit at the company's showroom in Singapore.

The summit saw a large round-table discussion among the participating distribution partners.

Since September 2014, Adam Hall Asia has acted as a 100 percent subsidiary of Adam Hall Germany. Based in Singapore, under the direction of managing director, Chandan Mahtani, the firm has been growing continuously, opening the first Adam Hall Group showroom in Asia in 2015.

The inaugural APAC Distributor Summit featured 15 of its exclusively signed partners in Asia, Australia, New Zealand and the Middle East.

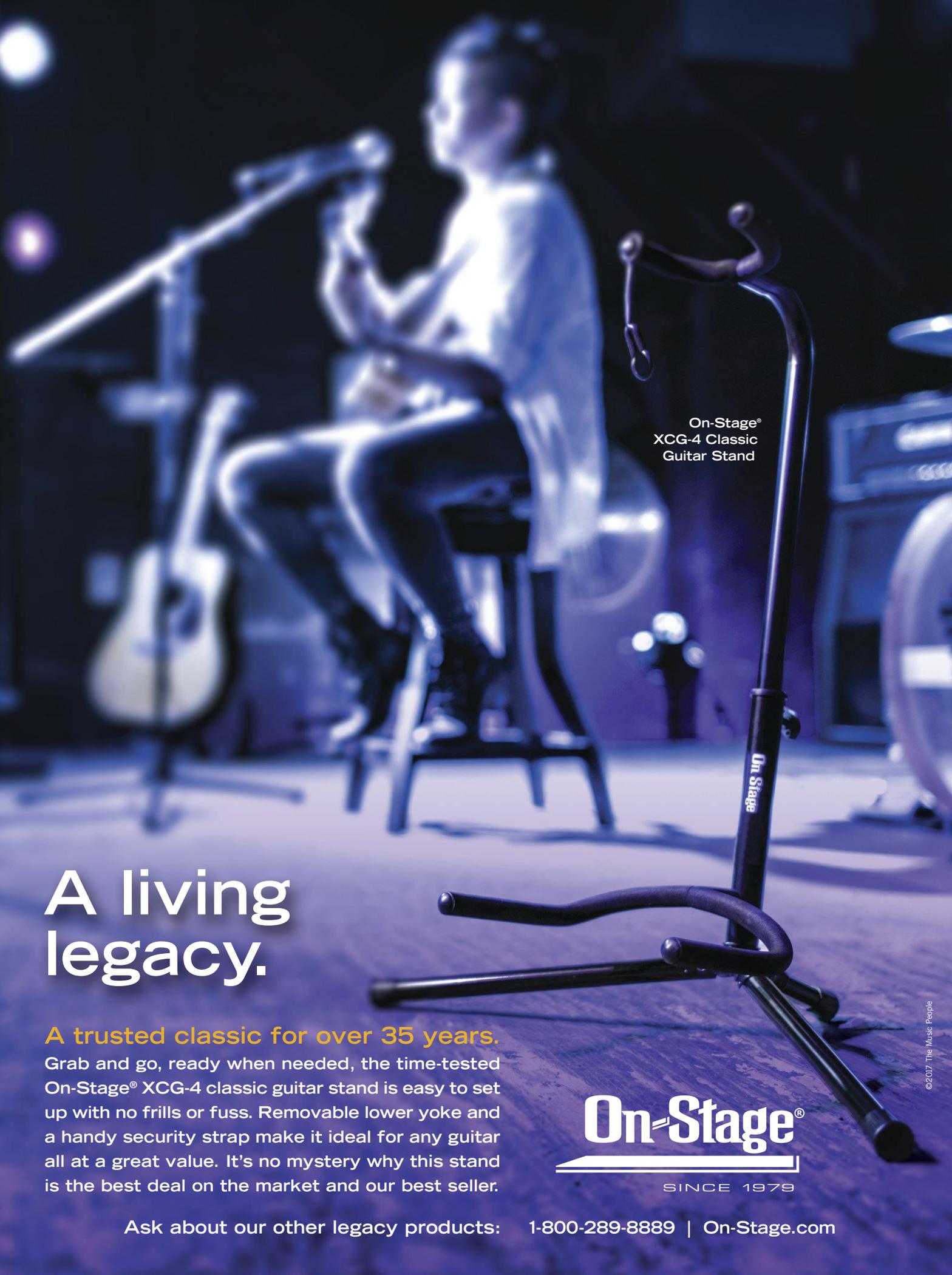
The event was attended by 34 partners from 11 countries at Adam Hall Asia's showroom in Singapore followed by a warm-up gathering on the preceding evening. The opening speeches were held by Chandan Mahtani and



Markus Jahnel, COO of the Adam Hall Group. After introducing this year's new product highlights, including the LD Systems MAUI P900 designed in collaboration with Porsche Design Studios, all partners took part in an extensive round-table discussion to share their experiences and challenges in a changing economy.

"I feel obliged to endorse that the partners sitting at the summit are the pillars of the business and driving Adam Hall to strive," said Markus Jahnel.

"There was a great feeling of camaraderie in that room. It clearly showed that it's important to share in order to grow," added Chandan Mahtani.



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Trade Regrets

Joshua Harris, longtime webmaster for Timeless Communications, parent company of *MMR*, died April 19, 2017 after suffering a heart attack. He was 42.

Harris joined Timeless as a graphic artist in December 2004, and within a year, he was able to put his skills in graphic arts, web design, and database management to work as Timeless Communications' full-time webmaster.

His responsibilities grew along with the company, and within a decade, he oversaw websites associated with seven magazines. Harris designed and maintained more than 10 Timeless Communications websites in all.

Prior to joining Timeless Communications, Harris worked in graphic design at Social Studies School Service in Culver City, California. A graduate of Cal Poly Pomona and Burbank High School, Harris also earned a degree at Westwood College of Technology.

Born in Burbank, Josh and his younger brother Tim grew up playing sports and guitars, and they performed with friends in a number of bands named Insanity, the Premmys and Soul Core '74. Josh was devoted to his wife Catherine Clay and their son, Cassius, and his love for the outdoors included many hikes through Grif-



fitth Park around the Observatory, the Old Zoo and for drum circle get-togethers.

A memorial service was held shortly after his death, giving friends and family a chance to celebrate Harris' life and to mourn his passing. One of the tributes noted, "We will forever remember him for his kind and gentle spirit and how deeply he loved and cared for his family."

On April 27th, we received the following message from NAMM's Dan Del Fiorentino:

Guy Ward passed away on Friday [April 21]. He was 93 years old.

Guy was the president of the Ward Piano Company, located in Canton, North Carolina, from the 1940s until his retirement. After his daughter and son took over the company, he continued to go into the shop every day even at the time of his 2013 NAMM Oral History interview when he was 89! As Guy said, "the piano business is in my blood and I really don't want to do anything else." While the company has a retail component, the main focus has been piano repairs and service, the same tasks that inspired him to come into the business after his service during World War II.



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ON THE MOVE

Yamaha has announced the hiring of **Kirk Davis** as the central regional manager for the company's Institutional Solutions Group (ISG).



Yamaha ISG creates and implements specific marketing plans that highlight the benefits of Yamaha keyboard products and services to Educational Institutions. The group is responsible for improving dealer sales skills within this market and builds on the relationships, sales, support, and strategies that have dramatically increased the company's academic presence in recent years.

A respected music industry veteran, Davis joined West Music in 1985, rising to the position of corporate director of the piano division, where he managed sales, inventory, marketing, manufacturer relations, and institutional needs for all six of West Music's Iowa retail locations. He received numerous piano industry awards over the years, including the coveted Yamaha Touchstone Award for excellence in customer service.

"Having spent 32 years at West Music, I came to see the organization as family, and leaving them is bittersweet," Davis says. "But this is a new step in my life that offers great new opportunities and I look forward to the challenges ahead of me at Yamaha."

"Kirk brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the ISG team, having spent more than 30 years serving the institutional community from the retail side," says Dan Rodowicz, national sales manager, Institutional Solutions Group. "He has a keen understanding of the needs of our institutional customers and how Yamaha can provide the solutions that best serve their faculty and students. And, having represented Yamaha products for many years, he also has a deep respect for our company's culture and history and our passion for providing the best instruments and technology to create the ultimate learning and performing experiences possible."

Davis has a degree in music education from Mount Mercy University in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where he was a choral director. Davis is also a professional musician and has played across the United States and Europe. He lives in Cedar Rapids with his wife Wendy, a piano teacher and musician.

Buffet Crampon USA has announced the appointment of **John Hadden** to the newly created position of brass development coordinator.



John will be based at the North American headquarters of Buffet Crampon USA in Jacksonville, Florida.

John's mission as Brass Development Coordinator will be to identify top prospective markets for growth of Buffet Crampon's six brass brands (Besson, B&S, Antoine Courtois Paris, Hans Hoyer, Melton Meinl Weston and J. Scherzer), analyze market trends, and develop a network of regional educational artists. He will be working with Buffet Crampon USA's Product Specialists, the Group's roster of performing artists, and Buffet Crampon USA's authorized dealer network throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico.

John comes from an extensive musical and business background, first playing tuba when he was 8 years old. In 2011, he began studies with Jay Hunsberger (Sarasota Orchestra) and has had the opportunity to learn from and play alongside some of the "greats," including Bob Tucci, Øystein Baadsvik, and Melton Meinl Weston Tuba Artist Roland Szentpali. John has his BM in tuba performance from the University of South Florida, and recently finished a Master's Degree in Music Performance at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music under the tutelage of B&S Tuba Artist Dan Perantoni. He has also studied composition with the illustrious James Grant, Dr. Aaron Travers (IU) and Dr. P.Q. Phan (IU).

As a performer, John has performed with the Sarasota Opera, Ocala Symphony Orchestra, Terre Haute Symphony Orchestra, Carmel Symphony Orchestra, Columbus Symphony (Indiana), Florida Wind Band, and the First Brass of Sarasota. He has been a finalist or semi-finalist for highly sought after positions with the "President's Own" Marine Band, the U.S. Army Field Band, The West Point Academy Band, New World Symphony, and Tanglewood Music Center.

François Kloc, president and CEO of Buffet Crampon USA, was excited about the recent addition to the Jacksonville team: "John brings a musical background coupled with an appetite to learn and keen business acumen. His knowledge of our brass lines is already strong, given his previous association with some of our Tuba Artists, and his enthusiasm for the brands

is contagious. I look forward to watching John grow our brass outreach throughout North America."

Buffet Crampon USA, based in Jacksonville, Florida, is the North American distributor of Buffet Crampon, Besson, B&S, Antoine Courtois Paris, Hans Hoyer, Keilwerth, Melton Meinl Weston, Verne Q. Powell, J. Scherzer and Schreiber musical instruments.

Italian Speaker Imports (I.S.I. / FBT U.S.A.) has announced the addition of **Chris Grajewski** as its new director of sales. A seasoned professional with a love



for all things audio, Grajewski has over 22 years of experience in the industry and brings extensive sales experience – as well as a reputation for integrity – to the role. Italian Speaker Imports is the exclusive U.S. distributor of FBT, Bespeco, and JTS, and is a partner with ApeLabs and Motion Labs. They are located in Armonk, New York.

"I'm extremely excited to have Chris on our team," said John Krupa, president and owner of the company. "I've known him for a long time and have always been impressed by both his capability and his personality. I'm honored to call him a close friend and, as of today, also a partner working toward a common goal – to add to the success of the I.S.I. brands in the United States."

In addition to sales, audio engineering and installation experience, Grajewski holds a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in business. He's owned his own production company, Jersey Sound, for 15 years and continues to run it part time. Referring to himself as "a gear guy" as much as he is "a business guy," the jack-of-all-trades possesses a combination of skills that make him uniquely suited to work with a brand whose reputation is growing rapidly in the U.S.

Equally significant, Grajewski has extensive experience playing with bands, and credits this early work with being the reason for his initial interest in sound technology and engineering. A classically trained saxophone player who also plays the drums, he worked with sound, both on stage and off, allowing him to see things from the perspective of both the musicians and sound technicians he now services.

He is also eager to represent Italian Speaker Imports and, particularly, FBT.

The Cable Connection



The Ascension of KLOTZ Cables

By Victoria Wasylak



The KLOTZ Factory in Germany

Most musicians take the magic of cables for granted; German innovators KLOTZ, however, do not. The company, founded in 1979, is rather young in comparison to many MI suppliers, but it has covered an overwhelming amount of territory in just under 40 years; 130 countries' worth of territory, to be exact.

Initially named KLOTZ Electric and started by two brothers in the late 1970s, KLOTZ has adapted with the times to become synonymous with quality cables. Peep into Wembley Stadium in London, for instance, and you might just see their moniker on the venue's cables.

Frederic Kromberg, who has been with the company since 1999, now works as the director of international sales, and René Greil has been with the company for four years and works on product management and artist relations at the company. Both gentlemen represent the company in numerous ways, from working with artists to overseeing affairs all over the globe. And for a company like KLOTZ, those responsibilities stack up quickly.

Luckily, the two employees (along with the rest of the company) are always up for a little bit of growth and a challenge.

"We really concentrate on this business, which means we live cables, we smell it, we eat it, we taste it, we do everything," Kromberg says. "This is our daily thing we do."

40 Years of Growth

KLOTZ may have seemed like a very different company when Kromberg joined in 1999; the company mainly worked within Europe and was only starting to go abroad. Now, KLOTZ cables are an international standard for quality. Kromberg, for instance, oversees sales in Europe, South America, the United States, and the Middle East.

"In the course of 40 years, the whole company has grown steadily and regularly from a very small activity – which was basically only the assembly of microphone cables and instrument cables for musicians for the local market – and it grew to a multi-national company, indeed," Kromberg says.

While things have expanded significantly for the company, it remains family-owned and run with about 100 staff members in total. The two KLOTZ locations in Germany include both the head-

quarters on Munich and the company's factory.

"We have an important footprint worldwide – KLOTZ is present in nearly 130 countries worldwide," Kromberg says. "Everything grew out of Germany, and then Europe, then spreading the business to other areas of the world. The business grows naturally."

"It has grown simply over the fact that KLOTZ has a very clear and strong philosophy in terms of delivering the best product at a reasonable price," Greil adds. "The quality-price relationship with our company are highly appreciated and accepted in the market."

Tested to Last

Being made in Germany comes with a bit of a reputation, but KLOTZ is always ready to surpass the expectations. Because of their ISO certification, the company is required to test each and every cable before they leave to be distributed, but KLOTZ takes the chore on as a point of pride. In fact, it's entirely more likely that you'll lose the cable before it breaks.

"We are a ISO-certified company. We have a quality management system in the company which assures that every single cable, and not just one out of ten in random checks, but every single cable, 100% are being tested, and every cable that is leaving our company works. That's why we have almost a zero return rate," says Kromberg.

KLOTZ has a department of three or four people doing quality checks constantly, and the payoff is large – Kromberg says that often customers can rely on their cables for well over a decade. The companies that KLOTZ rents to can go 15 years without a single snafu, and end up choosing to upgrade their cables instead of having to replace broken ones.

"We have people all the time telling us, 'Yeah, I have a KLOTZ kick instrument cable from you 10-15 years ago, and I'm still using it – it never breaks, it has an excellent sound and its perfect quality,'" Kromberg notes.

"It's always strict and the best quality for the best price you can get – sound-wise, quality-wise, build-wise - everything. We're not promising anything we can't guarantee," Greil adds.

The duo say that a large factor in the quality of the cables is the fact that KLOTZ runs its own factory, instead of outsourcing the work. By doing this, the company remains in complete control of

the quality of parts and production.

"We are a manufacturer, and we control our manufacturing processes and our assembly processes," says Kromberg. "Above all, it's the consistent quality, the consistency in delivering qual-



A glimpse inside the expansive KLOTZ factory

ity products which match with all the features we are telling out customer. You're going to buy a cable for almost your lifetime – whether it's the instrument or the musician itself, that's another thing!"

A KLOTZ Family Affair

As a part of KLOTZ's process for delivering cables of the utmost quality, the cable company has partnered with various bands and artists to create a system of feedback and support that ensures KLOTZ cables serve musicians as well as possible.

The program started in the late 1990s when KLOTZ was looking to manufacturing a signature series, and took T.M. Stevens on board to develop a cable with KLOTZ. The cable was introduced at Musikmesse in 1999 and was an immediate success.

"(He) developed with us a cable that responded best to his needs as a bass player," says Kromberg.

Since then, acts like Andy Vargas (of Santana), Three Doors Down, the Jessica Lynn Band, and the Nashville Cats have all joined the KLOTZ family – a name that KLOTZ has chosen for a very specific reason. KLOTZ sees the partnerships as a give and take relationship where the artists get quality cables, but also offer useful feedback in return.

"We need brand ambassadors out there to build our brand, and on the other hand, small musicians who are spreading the word and getting us feedback," Greil says.

KLOTZ Manifest Destiny

The most recent aim of KLOTZ's impending world domination has been spreading more into the United States. In comparison to Germany, the biggest MI market in Germany, the US market is four to five times bigger. It's a leap for KLOTZ, one that they are taking in small steps.

"Rather than doing big steps at once and staying where we are for a while, we keep on doing small steps but constantly and regularly, all the time. This is at all levels – whether it is developing of new products due to changing technology, this is a constant process in the company to be innovative and to come out with the newest cable solutions to all the new gear," Kromberg states.

"This is one very dominant part of our company."

Music Link Corporation now works as KLOTZ's U.S. distributor, boasting locations in San Francisco Bay and Knoxville. In the quick year that KLOTZ has been working with the company, there



are already 60 to 70 KLOTZ dealers and stockists in the country.

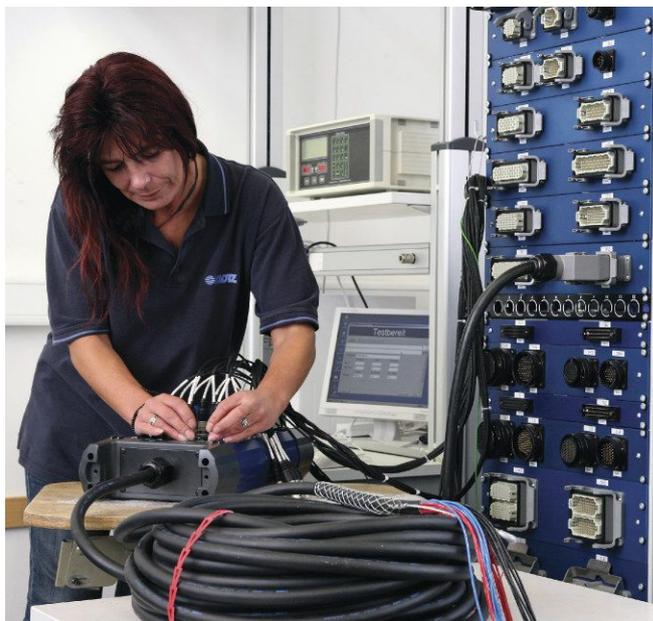
"They have taken KLOTZ on board to really develop the KLOTZ cable business in the MI market US. I have to say, within a year's time, this has been done very successfully," Kromberg adds.

While cables don't advance much as far as trends go, KLOTZ makes an effort to keep up with modern instrument technology. Their dedication to quality however – cables with high copper content, good shielding – remains the same.

"We are not ones to set trends, I think, the trends come out of the gear," says Kromberg.

"The basic idea of being a copper cable between your guitar and amp is always the same and stays the same."

Access KLOTZ from your home at www.themusiclink.net or www.klotz-ais.com **MIMR**



KLOTZ meticulously tests each cable before it leaves the factory to guarantee the best quality possible.

2017 RPMDA Convention

Embracing the ‘Content Creator’ Mentality

By Victoria Wasylak

It's always tough to top a major anniversary celebration, but the 2017 Retail Print Music Dealer's Association gathering did its very best, assembling 49 dealer companies and 36 commercial companies to discuss the present and future of the print music industry. Held in Atlanta, Georgia, the 41st annual event drew 169 registrations for the four-day event on April 26-29.

Gear Fisher, president of Alfred Music, started the festivities by addressing the uncomfortable reality of the industry: print is not used in the same way that it used to be. The spin he provided on the situation, however, shines a new perspective of the 21st century digital conundrum.

"From my view, we're a content creator," he said. "The delivery mechanism, without a doubt, is changing."

To comment on the current state of the print industry, Fisher likened the situation to the new music lessons he sought for his daughter. When it was time for instrument demo night in his community, Amazon wasn't there, but his local dealer was.

While Fisher noted that retailers cannot control money, he emphasized that can control engagement, which often leads to future sales. Unlike past years, where customers simply bought from the nearest retailer by default, the Internet has stripped dealers of that "local advantage," but they can get it back with community involvement and engagement.

He cited statistics that demonstrate a 1-2% decline in retail every year.

"I believe print and interactive will coexist in a balanced approach to helping people learn, teach, and play music," he added.

In one of the convention's many breakout sessions, Amy Larkin, who works in purchasing for West Music, demonstrated ways to get non-print staff excited about selling print music. She noted that combo salespeople and small commission salespeople often have little knowledge or interest in selling print music. While books often make a great add-on or accessory with sales, some employees need an extra push to see why print music is important in the digital age.

Because much print music is available for free (albeit illegally)

online, many musicians assume that they can look it up through sites like Ultimate Guitar. In reality, many of these tabs have errors from the person who transcribed and uploaded it, meaning that the player will either have to keep playing it incorrectly, or completely re-learn the song. The time that having the proper music saves people makes them more likely to invest in print music. The fact that much of the tabs online are hard to decipher doesn't help, either.

In addition, Larkin suggested asking about a customer's musical tastes when working with them in a store – not only will this

help to make a bond with the customer and point you in the right direction for which sheet music to suggest, it also shows you what instrument they might be interested in learning next (a whole new line of sales altogether).

Dr. Sigrun Jantzen of G. Henle Verlag presented a breakout session on the history and importance of *urtext* sheet music, a staple of many print retailers. *Urtext*, roughly translated to 'original text' in English, refers to a piece of music the exact

way that a composer meant it to be played and printed. Musicologists draw from primary documents like sketches and engraver's copies to analyze and transcribe a piece of music – often from a composer like Bach or Chopin – and write it without additions to the pages. Often, these are seen as "pure" editions of compositions.

Dr. Jantzen broke down the complex and cultural history of *urtext* editions for print retailers to understand why musicians might want *urtext* in particular.

Activities over the course of the four-day convention included a tour of J.W. Pepper, an opening cocktail party for both newcomers and old friends, and a preliminary trip to the aquarium. Ron Manus, chief business development officer of Alfred Music, was awarded the prestigious Dorothy Award at the convention's final banquet. **MMP**

The 2018 RPMDA Convention will take place in Minneapolis at the Radisson Mall of America Hotel from April 25-28.



Alfred Music's Christie Smith



David Jahnke of Hal Leonard



Molly Rutgard and Karl A. Kjos, Kjos Music

Voices from the
SHOWROOM FLOOR

"I think the attendance is quite good, and I know that it is a struggle to keep up with this small convention, and everybody thinks about how to keep it alive and how to make it more worthwhile for the people to come and benefit of coming. I think it will change, but I think it's very important that it will keep on going, that publishers and dealers can exchange and talk about the business. Print is essential. It will not go away for many, many years, so there's a need to talk."

"I don't see anything really that really can replace print. That's why we think it will kind of stay there for a long time to be books, it will be printed material, which gives you the best use of music. Certainly the technology will add on, will come and supplement things. As you already see, we have a new piano method. It teaches the basics that the

children need to learn, but these days you also have to have other things which help the students to stay interested. So we add videos and audio, and on the Internet, we have additional resources to give pupils to fill out. The more interaction you can give children these days, to not only have the lessons, but also have fun doing things related to the lessons, is important today, because certainly many distractions from learning an instrument. You need somehow to keep their interest and their enjoyment, so it's important to have many more things than the past for these children."

Bernhard Mueller, Schott Music

"I think the thing about our convention every single year is that the board is really committed to making sure we move with the times, all the time. Every single convention is different than the last. We analyze exactly what our dealers and the publishers need, and we make sure that we have sessions or something that will help them with that, because in the world of print, things are changing so fast – it's just like any other industry, so we really need to be on top of that and make sure that we have something for everybody, from buyers, to the people who are publishing the books. We also have a really exciting tour this year at J.W. Pepper. We always have some kind of tour so people can go and see an example of how a business is being run, so that's another one of the cool things about this year."

"We have to think of what we do as we are selling content, so the delivery system is what changes, and what that is, exactly, is a mystery to everybody. We pay attention to it every year. That's what so great about a convention like this, is how else are you going to sit down and see what everybody is doing and what is the next step? It's like a mystery to everybody. Print is definitely not going away, it's doing very well. People will want the print music book, but also the ease of having it in their iPad one day, and they might want apps that help train them to use this stuff. We as publishers and as dealers

will have to get into that whole world – it's not just about selling a book anymore."

Christie Smith, Alfred Music

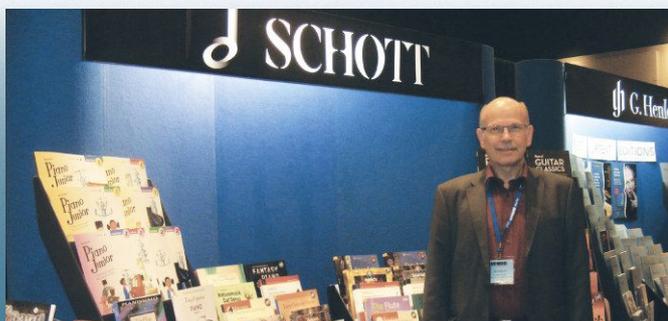
"There's a lot of change in the industry in terms of students that are coming up now are really well-acquainted with technology in a way that they never have been before. I know that we as a publisher have really tried to cater to that. We're moving away from having CDs included with our books and moving towards MP3 downloads, I know that we have used part-by-part resources, accompaniment downloads, as well as recordings of our pieces. We have started doing score students for students themselves have been watching these videos and pieces that they've been playing, and really getting involved in music that way. I think the big trend that we're seeing in the music industry at this point is that students really want to use technology and we have to cater to that."

Rachel L'Heureux, Carl Fischer

"This year, I'm always encouraged because it's still very much a family gathering, but I'm just really encouraged at the amount of new and first-time attendees that we have here. I believe there's about 29 first-time attendees, which is encouraging because that tells me that RPMDA's mission, which is to help promote print music and help retailers that want to be more successful with print get a handle on it – it tells me that the stores are still very interested in print and interested in having their employees trained to make the most out of print as they can. That alone, even though it's the first day into it, tells me that this convention is going to be a successful, because we've already got some many new people that are here, and it gives us the opportunity to share a lot with them."

"There's a lot of confusion about the industry. There's still some people out there that love the physical presence of a magazine or a book, and for print, it's a little bit different when it comes to music books. There's a certain size that comes along with it, a visual aspect of it, which when you put it on a piano bench, or music stand because the print is a little bit bigger than what you can get currently at on an iPad. But with the iPad Pros, which are now 9" by 12", there's still just different advantages of how you use print. I would say the biggest challenge isn't necessarily about the digital side, it's about some of the change about how people are learning to play. We're watching the direction of YouTube because that's kind of helped a generation learn to play a musical instrument without ever having to go into a music store – and that's one of our biggest concerns. As long as we can continue to partner with music retailers and service the customers that are walking through their door, and get them to be able to go from point A to point B in their musical career together in a partnership, the industry will survive and thrive."

David Jahnke, Hal Leonard



Bernhard Mueller, Schott Music



Rachel L'Heureux, Carl Fischer



Keeping MI Retail Contemporary

Menzie Pittman of Virginia's Contemporary Music Center

By Victoria Wasylak

Whether he knows it or not, Menzie Pittman has always been an entrepreneur. Before his store Contemporary Music Center was even a thought, the drum teacher had 96 students, 20 students on a waiting list, and worked with a handful of school bands.

And that's not even counting the bands that Pittman performed in.

Still, at the end of the day, the Contemporary Music Center owner finds it hard to unwind when there's so much to juggle between the store's (very successful) two locations in Chantilly and Haymarket, Virginia.

"I kind of knew in 1989 what to expect, as far as no 'off switch.' That's the one thing they don't tell you, when you go to open your own business, they don't tell you there's no off switch, they don't tell you that the thing never sleeps, you don't have an off switch, you're just on all the time," Pittman says.

But if anyone was made to handle the stress and duress of managing 8,000 square feet of store, it's Pittman. With almost 30 years of business experience under his belt, and a lifetime of teaching and performing ingrained into his system, Pittman is the man you'd want as the captain of any ship – and he has the success and history at Contemporary Music Center to prove it.

Pittman Family Values

Pittman grew up in Alexandria, Virginia, surrounded by musical talent in one of the most pivotal periods of rock 'n' roll history. In the midst of the explosion of the British Invasion in the 60s, Pittman's siblings dabbled in rockabilly, James Brown, and Elvis. His father, who played professionally in a jazz band until his 30s, stayed in music his whole life, playing about three days a week.

"My father was a professional saxophonist, so that was the catalyst to my exposure to music. I often joke and say my first gig was as a roadie," Pittman says.

Between helping his father with his gear when going to shows, to seeing the frequent living room rehearsals of his dad's 7-piece band, Pittman's involvement with music grew rapidly by the time he was a teenager.

"In the house, it really affected all of us, because there wasn't anyone who met my father who didn't immediately revere what he did, so that spoke to me growing up," Pittman adds. "We couldn't agree on everything in the house, but we always agreed that music was reverent."

When Pittman founded a band in high school, things never blew up for the young rockers, but every member of the group went pro at some point afterwards. While one member is now an actor, two are studio musicians, and one works in commercial music, Pittman went pro in an entirely different way.

When Pittman was about to take over the business that would become Contemporary Music Center, he had 96 students (with a waiting list of 20 students), worked for three high school marching bands, and was in two different freelance bands. From that point on, Pittman realized that freelance performances would probably be the best fit with his new schedule and responsibilities.

After performing in a total of fifteen-plus bands over the span of his career, Pittman doesn't play for a living anymore, but the idea of starting a new project is never off the table.

"I don't perform for income anymore. I've closed that door but I never lock it – it's always unlocked."

The Seeds of CMC

Like most music shop owners, before Menzie Pittman was an entrepreneur and head honcho, he was a music teacher. With an impressive roster of almost 100 students, business was booming for Pittman in the store where he worked, while things in the rest of the establishment seemed kind of lacking.

"I was teaching for another owner. He was a repair guy, but he wasn't running a great shop. I was a drum teacher in the back – this was in the late 80s," Pittman explains. "My practice was exploding, and his front thing wasn't doing so well, so he came to me and let me know he was going to go out and asked me if I wanted to pick up his fixtures and the location and whatever else. I was crazy enough to jump in in 1989."

From there, Pittman started working on bolstering the business immediately, building up the store's retail and expanding teaching. The store remained in its original location for five years, until it moved to its second Chantilly location in 1994.

Fast forward ten years to 2004, when Pittman opened the Haymarket location on Main Street. Because the building where Contemporary Music Center resides was being built at the time of purchase, Pittman was able to design the store as it was being constructed. Pittman designed the location so that the studios would be downstairs and the retail would be upstairs, a layout that he kept until 2012.

Contemporary Music Center remains one of the anchors in the building, along with a restaurant.

When Pittman added venue @4410 to the Haymarket location, however, things really exploded.



Inside one of CMC's teaching studios

Under 18 at @4410

Offering lessons at music retail stores is a fairly common occurrence, but where Pittman truly distinguishes himself is in the way that he pushes for exposure with his venue @4410, a small, all-ages club attached to the Haymarket location. The venue, which hosts open mics, benefits for high schools, and concerts for kids under 21 and 18, provides a chance for many young adults to perform in a realistic atmosphere without any age restrictions.

"It is truly a small club – no alcohol and no hot food – but other than that, there's nothing that's any different in that room than when I grew up playing," Pittman says. "Kids get the experience to step on stage basically in front of the capacity of 100. They're very motivated, and because of that, a culture has begun to take its own course and grow."

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Because of the all-ages venue, teens in the community were finally able to perform “real” gigs and Pittman was able to continue CMC’s Rock Camp program throughout the year, as opposed to just in the summers.

Drawing from his experience of performing for a living for 28 straight years, Pittman wanted to create a place for teens to play that was a reflection of his experiences in performing as a professional musician.

“That’s my true background, I was in clubs every day of my life for 25 plus years. We speak from road experience,” he notes. “This mission was to re-create what I grew up with, and with authenticity – that’s one of my hangups, if it’s not authentic, I bore easily. It has to speak to me. Down here music is a religion. I wanted the kids to know that that opportunity quality was now up to them because the one thing I can’t do for them is play!”

Pittman cites the installation of the venue at the Haymarket location as the last major step that the company has taken, and as a result, the community has really accepted the new space as a much-needed novelty in the area.

“A lot of people do things because



The CMC staff never needs an excuse to have fun.

everyone else is doing it, and that wasn’t why we took this on. We took this on because no one was doing this right,” Pittman explains. “We don’t take it half-heartedly, it is a serious undertaking for us. We want to make sure that they get what we’re promising to deliver. We’re not trying to do a moment in the sun, we’re trying to develop young musicians to have skills that would give them the tools they need to really understand whether or not it’s the right career, or whether they want to be a hobbyist.”

On Location at CMC

When customers step into either of Contemporary Music Center’s locations, Pittman wants to bombard them with something, and it’s not sales pitches – it’s

records. Before vinyl was back in vogue, Pittman decked the walls with iconic albums from his personal collection, another (decorative) part of his mission.

“The design of the store is [made] to impact you from the second you walk in. Whether it’s in Chantilly or Haymarket, I really try to use the impact of music history to stir your soul – that’s our job,” Pittman says. “Our job is to provide you with information, whether that’s on an instrument, or how to play the instrument, or doing it in front of people, our job is to give you that experience. We take that mantra pretty seriously.”

The original Chantilly location, which used to be a dance studio, boasts 3,000 square feet with a dozen sound-conditioned teaching studios, while the Haymarket location stretches over 3,000 square feet, plus another 1,500 square feet for @4410. Including storage, the Haymarket location is around 5,000 square feet. All together, that’s 8,000 square feet (in two different locations) that Pittman is responsible for.

“The upside to multiple locations is it widens your voice, but for every new undertaking you take on, it gives you a new psychological responsibility too,” he says. “You’re spread thin, so you have to have communication skills down to a science. Communication is the main thing. It’s hard, I won’t tell you it’s not hard.”

While both stores open at noon, Pittman’s business day starts at 9am with a call from the regional manager Jerry Hammack, and ends the same way with a business brief. The process is exhausting for sure, but it’s a price that Pittman is willing to pay for keeping up the quality of his stores. As he says confidently: “You have your bumps and bruises, but you forge forward.”

Testing the Teachers

When someone wants to teach at either of the Contemporary Music Center locations, they have to interview with Pittman – there’s almost no way around it. With a teaching staff of about 60, Pittman understands that just because a person is a good musician, they aren’t automatically a good teacher. The owner looks beyond the classical education of potential teachers, and seeks out musicians with good communication skills and a knowledge of more current and “popular” music. While Pittman

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realizes the importance of learning the fundamentals, he pushes for social relevance in his employees' teaching.

"That's something I've never given up. I'm like, 'hey, if you want to teach here, you interview with me.' I want you to know what my beliefs are, and I want to know what your beliefs are, and I want to know if we match, and I want to know if your way of approaching students matches. I ask them what happens when a kid comes in and says 'hey, I want to learn a Disney princess tune, I want to learn a Taylor Swift tune,' because if that's where the student connects, all the opera in the world isn't going to resonate with them."

The other factor that goes into Pittman's interviews is measuring how well potential employees can communicate, especially in an age of constant distractions from technology.

"I don't care if you're 18 or 80, I want you to be personable...that's why I personally do the interviews, because I want them to show me how they communicate. Moms don't really care about how many degrees you have hanging on the wall, what a mom really cares about is how you communicate with her when her child has a question," he adds. "Right now we have so much social distraction with our telephones. You've got to break through that electronic distraction and get to the people, and to do that you have to be really good at understanding both today's methods of communication and traditional pieces that really matter, and how history plays into it."

Altogether, Pittman cites the strong teaching staff at both of the Contemporary Music Center locations to be one of his biggest contributions to the stores – since he took over, the teaching staff has not only been hand-picked by Pittman himself, but has rocketed from 6 to 60.

An Award-Winning Philosophy

When Pittman looks back on his successes with Contemporary Music Center, he likens the entire experience to Sun Records in the early 1950s, the studio that blew up with musical giants Elvis and Carl Perkins, and Sam Phillips as their guide. For Pittman, the passion and innovation is the same.

The past ten years in particular have been an explosion for Contemporary Music Center, netting awards for being in NAMM's top 100 the past seven years, as well as a nomination two years ago for "best online presence." Last year he was also nominated for "best store design" and

took home the award for "best store promotion," "Music makes a difference," and "dealer of the year." The success is something Pittman chalks up to authenticity, a trait that he gleefully says is finally back in style.

"We have to fight for everything – we have to compete with the guys online," he says. "We just try to stick to the idea that you came to play, so we want to show you how to do that, and I think we understand that probably as well, or better than some, and I think the industry has caught on to it."

For the past two years, Pittman has also been a vital contributor to *MMR*'s "Small Business Matters" section, adding insight to entrepreneurship in the MI industry. From sharing tips on social media platforms to explaining the importance of having a "right hand man," he covers it all, and isn't afraid of sharing his secrets to success.

"I was thrilled when *MMR* asked me to write," the store owner says. "I was like 'this just keeps getting more and more fun.' The fact that people actually like the writing is even more surprising to me! The fun part for me is when I get feedback from folks about the column."

What makes Pittman such a good member of the *MMR* team is that he's able to relate to every reader. Whether they're a huge dealer or a mom and pop store, Pitt-

man is ready to share his observations and apply them to any and all situations.

"Whether you're a large store or a small store, you're going to have challenges," Pittman says. "It's not the easiest thing I've done, but it's amazingly rewarding. When I look back over the things that have happened for us – when NAMM gave me the grace of asking me to serve on the board – that was a moment when I was like 'woah!' The little guy can succeed, you just have to be really pure and really driven in what you do. It's not a cakewalk, I promise."

But what it all boils down to for Pittman is the essence of human relationships. As he puts it – why would you buy from someone else when you can buy from a friend?

"I try to look at human situations, not just graphs, so when I talk about business, I don't talk about it in numbers, I talk about in philosophy," he explains.

That exact same mantra reflects in every aspect of Pittman himself and Contemporary Music Center, from the way he writes his columns in *MMR* to how he views and treats customers. Truly, Pittman has a bona fide winning attitude.

"When you open a business, you have to be prepared that you simply don't know what's going to happen," Pittman says. "We're in here and we just fly by the seat of our pants and have the time of our lives."

MMR

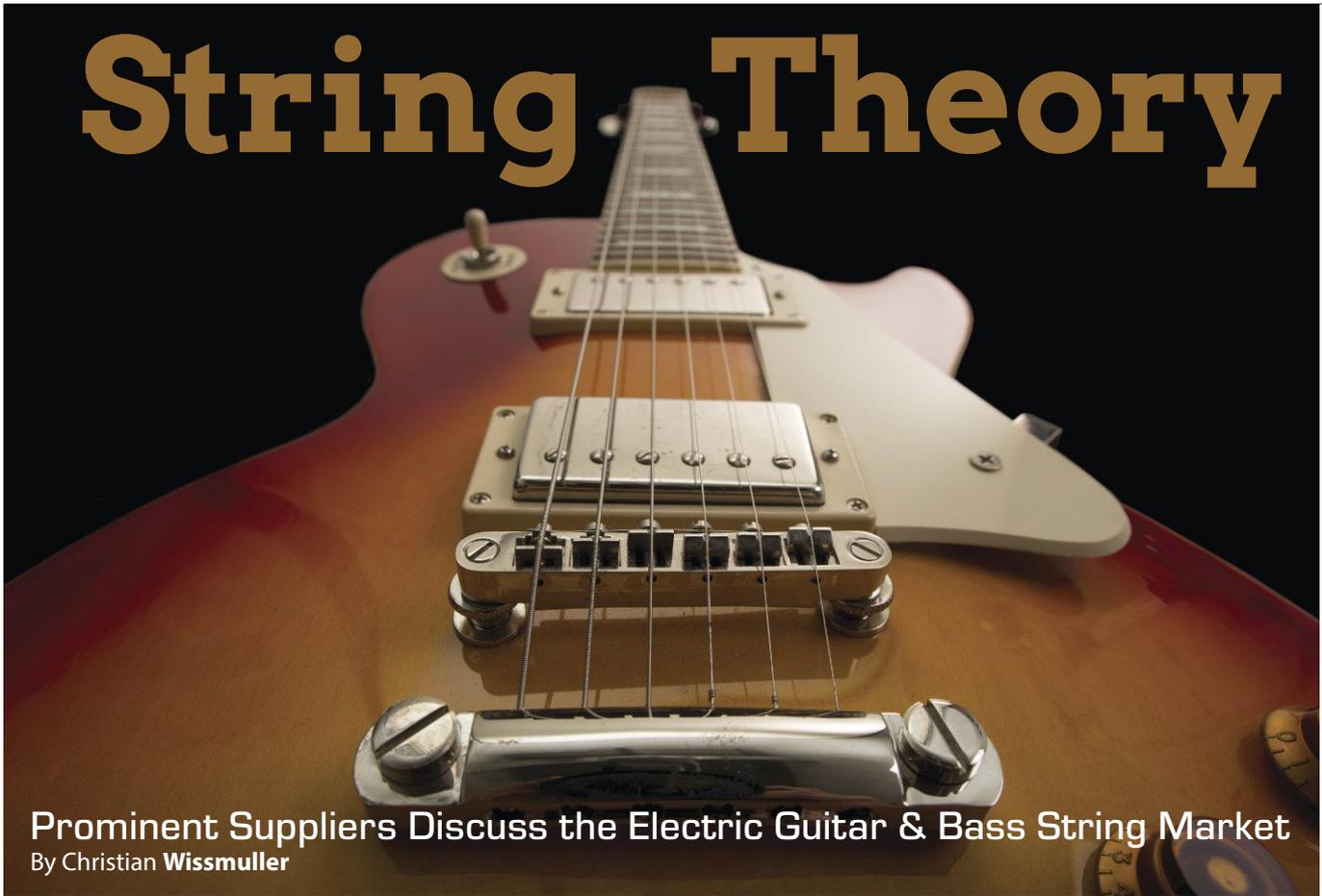
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String Theory



Prominent Suppliers Discuss the Electric Guitar & Bass String Market
By Christian Wissmuller

Accessories are a consistent, reliable category for most MI retailers and it's quite possible that nothing generates more traffic and sales than fretted string sets. Strings may not necessarily be "sexy" and (in most cases) don't exactly represent high-ticket items, but every guitarist and bassist goes through them with some regularity (particularly guitarists) and they have to buy new ones some where – may as well be your store, yes?

MMR recently touched base with representatives from five of the biggest names in electric guitar & bass design and manufacture to get their take on the state of the market, as well as to learn about new products and technology currently making waves.

What are your overall impressions of the electric guitar & bass string segment at the moment? For your brand, how are sales compared to last year?

Tim Pfouts: I feel the segment is solid right now. It is a crowded marketplace which has affected sales somewhat but we are still up from last year. We see a lot more peaks and valleys than we used to, so we now look at sales over a year's time rather than focusing too much per quarter. But overall things are good.

Justin Fogleman: Elixir® Strings is gaining momentum and has had several record sales quarters recently. We believe there is significant opportunity in the Electric Guitar segment. As you may know, Elixir Strings is the #1 selling string brand for acoustic guitar players. In electric, the uncoated segment is predominant. In prepping for the OPTIWEB™ Coated Electric String launch [March 2017], we were overwhelmed by the positive feedback we received from our global field trials--especially from uncoated players. We're confident now more than ever we can have

similar success in electric that we do today in acoustic. In fact, OPTIWEB Coated Electric Strings was just awarded a Musikmesse International Press Award for "Best Guitar Accessory." To date, sales of OPTIWEB Coated Electric Strings are doing very well and we are excited by the results we're seeing. In addition, the launch has increased demand across our entire electric offering as players are becoming aware of the full range of tone and feel options to meet their specific preferences. We are finding that retailers are carrying the range of our different coatings to meet the wider needs. This most likely comes at the expense of slow moving less profitable uncoated SKUs.

Jon Moody: In terms of electric guitar, I would say it's about level. We've seen a bigger sway toward acoustic guitar strings, which has been up from last year. Bass strings for us have always been steady, if not up this year, given that regardless of the type of music being played, there's usually an electric bassist.

Worth Dixon: According to industry data, the market for fretted instrument strings has been more or less flat for the past several years. However, D'Addario is the leader in dollar market share in both electric guitar and electric bass categories, while enjoying significant market share growth.

Brian Ball: The electric string market for both bass and guitar are red hot right now and it appears the pendulum has shifted back from the six-to-seven year rapid growth of the acoustic string market. Ernie Ball sales are up double digits in nearly every category in 2017, but the majority of the growth has stemmed from electric sales, most notably our new Paradigm series. There seems to be a little bit of a halo effect from Paradigm benefitting all other lines including Slinky, Cobalt, Earthwood, and others.



Worth Dixon, D'Addario & Co.



Justin Fogelman, Elixir Strings



Brian Ball, Ernie Ball, Inc.



Jon Moody, GHS Strings | Rocktron



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

How would you break down – percentage-wise – overall string sales for you, in terms of guitar compared to bass?

JM: I'd say between those two it's an 80/20 split, especially when you factor in that guitarists by and large buy more strings than the average bass player does.

BB: Electric guitar strings outsell bass strings by at least a ten-to-one margin, unit wise, maybe even more. Bass players change their strings less frequently and don't have as much of an issue due to the diameter and material difference (no plains).

WD: In the electric category, guitar strings generate about 75 percent of our revenues and bass makes up the other 25 percent.

TP: 70 percent guitar, 30 percent bass.

What's currently the best-selling type or line of strings for your brand?

BB: Our Slinky Electric strings have continued to be our top

selling line and one of the most popular globally. Our Earthwood acoustics have grown fairly substantially over the last decade which has allowed us to invest substantially into new patented technologies like Cobalt, Paradigm, M-Steel, and Aluminum Bronze acoustics.

WD: D'Addario's growth in an otherwise flat market has been driven by the success of our NYXL brand for electric guitar and bass, both of which are helping to stimulate market demand for premium strings.

TP: Although we have a lot of new strings, our best selling is still one of our oldest and most established lines, the Powerwound Electric guitar string. It is our 8% NPS electric guitar string. It is the most widely used sets among our artists so that continues to drive sales. In our manufacturing facility, we also work hard on our efficiency to keep the price point competitive for a high quality, American-made string. In our bass, our

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Powerwound is our best selling bass line. Again, this has to do with the quality in addition to price point.

JF: Elixir Strings is the #1 selling string brand for acoustic guitar players, loved for their tone and feel combined with long tone life. With the recent introduction of OPTIWEB Coated Electric Strings, which were designed from the input of over a thousand electric guitarists who wanted the performance of an uncoated string with the long tone-life of an Elixir String, we are well positioned to revolutionize the electric guitar strings segment and achieve similar success.

JM: Easily it's our flagship line of Boomers, for both guitar and bass. However, our Precision Flats are a very hot seller for bass players as more and more players are looking for that vintage, old school bass

tone. In the acoustic realm, our Phosphor Bronze strings are a continued best seller, with our recent Americana series of strings being very well received in the bluegrass, Americana and folk genres.

Have you noticed any particular marketing, display, or promotion strategies that work well for MI dealers who are especially successful selling electric guitar & bass strings?

JM: The MI dealers who are successful in selling ANYTHING right now are on top of it in terms of social media, email blasts and great customer service. All three of those things contribute to a customer shopping there for the experience over saving money (which, when comparing guitar strings from store to store, isn't much at all).

JF: Our leading retailers have told us that when they restring their guitars with Elixir Strings, they simply sell better and faster because the guitars on their wall stay in peak condition and inspire their customers to buy. Great sounding guitars sell guitars. Retailers can count on Elixir Strings to sound fresh and retain their tone longer than any other string. Another marketing strategy that retailers have seen great results with is setting up an A/B Demo Guitar Test. By allowing consumers to touch and hear the differences between strings, particularly between uncoated strings and Elixir OPTIWEB Coated Electric Strings, it makes the buying decision easier and faster.

TP: This, of course, varies greatly depending on the type of dealer. For the brick and mortar stores, a Restring Day promotion always seems to bump sales. This is something we help our dealers with and it really seems to get some customers through the door. I have also seen some dealers have success locally with social media promotions with local "influencers." Not so much players that are known nationally but local players with credibility who mention via Facebook or Instagram something about a new string or promotion that can drive business back into the local store. But for our really successful dealers, it is just a matter that they are focused on strings and understand the need for carrying a variety of products and the potential for continued revenue.

WD: People are what matter most. A well-organized string wall helps, but front line sales associates who can share their expertise and help consumers make the best choice for their instrument and playing style are the most important factor. Merchandising can also be impactful, but it's challenging for retailers to make space for it. Where there is a good story to tell and the display is well executed, some customers are able



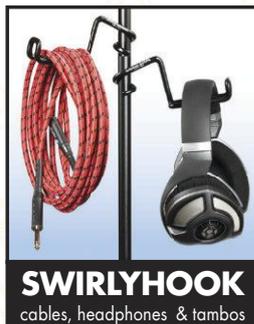
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to commit counter or wall space. For example, we've seen success with our NYXL neon-style signs, to the point where dealers have literally built NYXL product displays around them. The result is eye-catching, draws consumers to the string wall, and gets them asking questions about NYXL products.

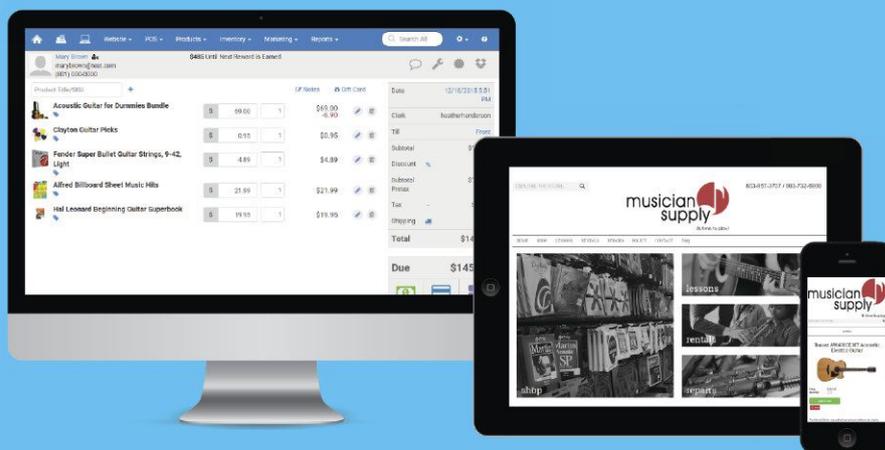
BB: The most successful dealers we see are the ones that continue to use and leverage all strings as a great opportunity for driving traffic through promos, bundles, and a reason to buy more meanwhile saving more. Obviously, a huge driver lately is your ability to generate a community of fans through social media and more importantly the content you use to promote your channels. Invest in a nicer camera than a flip phone, start promotions like guitar of the week, deal of the day, and any other social candy that makes your page a destination for fans.

Any upcoming string releases, promotions, or other developments that you'd like to share with our readers?

BB: Paradigm maintains our primary focus and represents an incredible opportunity for dealers to make substantially higher margins on strings. We're constantly working on new products that feature improvements for strings, pedals, and accessories and will be releasing some new products this fall. Promotion-wise, we're gearing up to launch a big 55th anniversary celebration this fall.

WD: We're always expanding upon our core brands with offerings for new instruments and a wider variety of gauge combinations. In addition to renewed marketing assets for our NYXL, Nickel Bronze, and Pro-Arté brands, watch for a series of new products from D'Addario for specialized and regional in-

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struments. Two examples are our NYXL sets for pedal steel guitar, a high-performance product offering for a dedicated community of musicians that have not been presented with new string options for many years, and a professional quality string set for erhu, a traditional Chinese instrument. We see regional musical instruments, musicians, and educators as an underserved part of the market that we are in a position to support.

TP: From a product standpoint we are excited about our new bass string we are releasing sometime over the summer called FOUNDATIONS. We have a new process and new materials that allow us to make a very flexible very bright bass string. It will not be replacing any current line we have but rather will make a nice addition to our bass offerings. From a promotion standpoint, we also have a new dealer-direct program that allows our dealers to order custom sets in smaller quantities with a lot of different options. Being a smaller boutique manufacturer, we decided to use this to our advantage in order to help our dealers hold onto customers who either need to want a custom set of strings.

JM: We expanded our line of Bass Boomers with a couple of sets specifically aimed at the players that use a 4 string bass but tune down to BEAD. We also just released our Pure Nickel Mandolin strings, which have been very well received. We're also in the final stages of increasing our banjo line with a couple of nickel-plated steel offerings, due to customer and dealer request.

JF: Elixir Strings is investing heavily to create awareness of our new OPTIWEB™ Coated Electric Strings among consumers through print and digital consumer advertising, a consumer sweepstakes, social media campaigns and more. Our marketing efforts are focused on driving traffic to retailers.

Because we know that retailers value restringing their guitars with Elixir Strings, we're offering a new Mini Bulk program, now in smaller quantities, where retailers can purchase strings in bulk – in sets of 25, 50 and 100, giving them flexibility and savings. This cost effective restringing solution keeps their Electric, Acoustic and Bass Guitar collection sounding new and feeling fresh for longer. **MMR**

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Tony DeSare performs at the Rockville Showroom's grand opening.

The Legend and Legacy

By Victoria **Wasylak**

Chris Syllaba's 30-plus year career with Jordan Kitt's Music essentially started by accident. Strolling through a mall on a gap year between high school and college in 1984, Syllaba wandered into his local Jordan Kitt's to ask if they were hiring. Now, more than 30 years later, he's the CEO of the legendary piano dealership with his business partner Ray Fugere.

"I was initially kind of looking to work for a year, and I wanted to take off from school for a year, work, make some money, and then go to college after that, and I just ended up falling in love with the business immediately – within weeks," Syllaba says.

Syllaba never did end up going to college, and instead worked his way to the top of the Jordan Kitt's ladder with Fugere over the course of three decades, learning everything possible about the piano business.

"Sometimes I say 'I went to the college of Jordan Kitt's,'" he says.

For Jordan Kitt's, Syllaba and Fugere only mark the third chapter in the company's lengthy 105-year history. Put quite simply, the legacy of the company survives – and thrives – because Jordan Kitt's has never just been about Steinways and baby grands. The piano dealership is rooted in perseverance and a passion for promoting and continuing music education.

"I think the big thing overall is that we want to be involved in both sides of the music world – the music business as well as the education side."

With a new location in Rockville, Maryland still gleaming from its grand opening in January, the newest chapter in Jordan Kitt's history is just beginning.

The Jordan Kitt's Dynasty

Even before Syllaba came into the Jordan Kitt's picture decades ago, the company had established an impressive history dating back more than 50 years. Founded by Arthur Jordan and Homer Kitts in 1912, the company remained in the founders' families for 60 years. It wasn't until 1971 that the company saw a change in own-

ership when Bill McCormick took over as president and served until 2007. Syllaba and Fugere took over the company from McCormick's son-in-law in 2011.

"In a way, Ray and I are really only the third major ownership of the company in 105 years," Syllaba says.

In the time since Syllaba joined the Jordan Kitt's team in the 1980s, the company has entered and left the markets in Virginia Beach, Philadelphia, and Chicago, downsizing to only four locations: two in the Washington, D.C. market and two in the Atlanta market under the name Steinway Piano Galleries.

Syllaba himself spent a significant amount of time climbing the Jordan Kitt's ladder. From store manager, market manager, and executive vice president, Syllaba had held almost every retail title imaginable prior to becoming CEO in 2011.

"The other thing I think is incredible is what the company has lived through, along with a handful of other companies in our industry who have done the same thing," Syllaba says. "We've lived through the Great Depression, through World War II, and the Great Recession of '07 and '08. It's certainly been an up-and-down journey, but we're trying to keep the torch alive."

Their latest addition to the Jordan Kitt's legacy is the new Rockville location, which celebrated its grand opening this past January. Located a mile and a half from the previous location, the new Rockville store has a warehouse directly next to the showroom to improve efficiency, rather than having a separate warehouse in the D.C. market.

Survival of the Fittest

The Jordan Kitt's that hired Syllaba more than thirty years ago isn't the same Jordan Kitt's that's operating in 2017, if for no other reason than the location that hired Syllaba was in a shopping mall.

Perhaps the biggest change that Syllaba has seen during his time with the company has been the significant downsizing that Jordan Kitt's – along with many other companies – underwent after mall rent increased in the 1980s. As a result of the high rent prices, stores like Jordan Kitt's moved to freestanding stores in order to survive. Prior to this shift, Jordan Kitt's had almost 220 employees at 22 loca-

tions in the Washington D.C. and Baltimore area when Syllaba was first hired. In 2017, the company only has 4 locations and about 55 employees.

"The industry, along with Jordan Kitt's, basically made a shift out of malls and into larger freestanding locations with lower per-square-foot rent, but you also had less locations," Syllaba said. "For several decades in there, instead of 22 stores, depending on the period of time, we had anywhere between nine and 11 stores."

This ability to adapt to the changes in the market and environment is what Syllaba cites as Jordan Kitt's key to such prolonged success.

"We went through the same thing that the entire industry went through during the recession, and it's lucky that we didn't disappear, basically," Syllaba says. "A lot of companies went under, and the companies that didn't go under, they survived by downsizing, basically. That's exactly what Jordan Kitt's ended up doing."

A Brand for Everyone

When a company like Jordan Kitt's prides itself on finding the right piano for every single customer that walks in the door, variety and a highly skilled sales team are both necessities.

Syllaba says that the Washington, D.C. locations mainly carry products from Yamaha, Bösendorfer, Roland, and Mason & Hamlin, a handcrafted American piano company. Models from Cristofori offer customers a reasonably-priced alternative to more expensive brands. In the Atlanta market, both Steinway Piano Galleries carry all three Steinway brands.

"All of our stores have baby grand pianos, we have upright pianos. We have different brands that we represent," Syllaba notes. "We carry digital pianos, we have new pianos, we have used pianos. So the goal is to try to have the best selection so when we're qualifying a customer, we can actually find the instrument that is right for them."

Syllaba says that the general improvement in the economy has been driving sales, which Jordan Kitt's will use to continue their ancillary business: education, service, and piano rentals. Even with the boost in the economy, the company hosts events regularly to expose new products from brands like Steinway or Bösendorfer.

"We're just not the type of industry that can just sit in the store and wait for customers to show up," Syllaba says.

Dedication to Education

Despite the changes that Jordan Kitt's has seen in its 105 years, one aspect of the company that has never changed is its deep connection and dedication to music education. Syllaba himself being a member of the National Association for Music Education and the Music Teachers National Association, education has close ties to the company.

"It's important and it's the right thing to do, to support music education," Syllaba says.

All four Jordan Kitt's stores have education centers that offer piano lessons, as well as at a small music school in Beltsville, Maryland that was erected to absorb students from the other locations. Sylla-

ba said that the new Rockville store in particular offers an ideal space for learning.

"The Rockville one is very exciting because we put a lot of resources into that in terms of studio space. We've got three private studios, we've got a pretty large group room for Yamaha Music School. There's a waiting area for the students, and then there's an easy expansion – as the school grows, we can add a fourth studio – that's already in place."

Outside of their own stores, Jordan Kitt's also sponsors kid-friendly orchestral concerts for over 20,000 Montgomery County public school children annually through Strathmore, a venue in Maryland. Over a series of five days, Strathmore hosts nine to 10 short concerts for 2nd graders, and then repeats the series of shows for 5th graders. Jordan Kitt's was the original sponsor of the event with Geico.

"Not only do we sponsor it monetarily, but we also actually attend the concerts, because it's a lot of kids," Syllaba says. "They're wild – you basically go into a concert hall with close to 2,000 kids."

Syllaba says that as a result of these concerts, Montgomery County has a very high percentage of enrollment in music classes compared to other counties in the Washington, D.C. area.

Syllaba, who started playing the piano seriously when he was a little over four years old, is an advocate for the benefits of learning how to play the piano.

"It's one of these things that's with you forever," he says. "If you're learning how to play the piano, you can unplug yourself for a half an hour and make music and not have 16 things happening at the same time."

The Push Towards Tech

Most aspects of modern life have become saturated with technology, and pianos are no exception. Syllaba says that in an effort to keep the piano relevant, many companies are incorporating more digital offerings into their product, citing

Yamaha's Disklavier ENSPIRE and Steinway's Spirio as examples.

"I think in general, more upright piano sales are moving towards some kind of technology product, whether it's a digital piano or a hybrid piano," he notes.

The new trend towards technology doesn't signify a decline in interest in playing the piano. If anything, Syllaba says that many baby boomers who are retiring now want to learn how to play the piano or get back into playing.

"I'm one of these optimists that believes that there is no less interest nowadays in music than there was before. It's just taking on a different form," he says. "There's a great desire to make music out there. I think we just have to adapt to how people want to make music, because they want to make music in much different ways now than they did 30 years ago."

Like anything else, the increased incorporation of technology is just a manner of adapting with the times – something Jordan Kitt's has been practicing for 105 years and counting. With an eye on the trends and a hand in supporting the arts, Jordan Kitt's is likely to be in the musical instrument game for another 105 years to come.

MIMF



Chris Syllaba, CEO of Jordan Kitt's Music; Tony DeSare; and Ray Fugere, CFO of Jordan Kitt's Music

Never Break the Chain

How Music & Arts Continues to Spread as One of the Country's Largest MI Retailers

By Victoria Wasylak

The great American chain is one of the most versatile parts of our culture, but adding music stores into the rapidly-evolving retail equation usually isn't very common. Yet, Music & Arts – a company on the brink of turning 65 – has already accrued 150 stores across the United States (that's about two new stores every year they've been open, for the record). What Music & Arts isn't about, however, is the never-ending chase for sales and expansion. As company president Steve Zapf says, "We are, at our heart, a music education company."

This mantra reflects in their ongoing "Upgrade Your Sound" series, a nationwide tour of instruments for performers, students, and teachers to browse for free. Zapf answered some questions about the reaching the 150-store mark, trends in the MI industry, and what's next for the still-growing company.

How did you come to be president of Music & Arts, and how did you initially get involved with the company?

Zapf: I was named president of Music & Arts and Woodwind & Brasswind in 2012. My appointment followed six years driving growth as an EVP with our parent company Guitar Center, first in sales & marketing at Musician's Friend and then in multi-channel operations at Guitar Center.

But my personal connection to the music business has lasted all my life. Indeed, my great-grandfather founded Musikhaus L. Zapf in Germany in 1918; ten years later he immigrated to America to join my grandfather, a master violin maker, and together they established Zapf's Music in Philadelphia.

In the 1960s my father joined the business and built a 20,000 square foot full line music store – the first of its kind in Philly. Then, in the 1990s my brother and I came along... we started in the stock room and worked our way up to become buyers, IT guys, managers, you name it. In 1999 Zapf's Music would become the platform we used to launch our internet start-up, Music123, which peaked at \$60 million in sales before we sold it to Woodwind & Brasswind.

Certainly it was good preparation, but my connection with Music & Arts is, in fact, even more personal. In the year 2000, when my father was ready to retire, he contacted Music & Arts, believing that they were one of the only companies that had both the necessary experience and capital to acquire his business and pay a fair price.

What was true then is still true today, and it is not only my privilege to be the steward of Music & Arts / Woodwind & Brasswind, but also of those many family companies like my father's which we have acquired.

You just opened your 150th store in Kansas. At this point, how do you choose new locations for stores?

We are, at our heart, a music education company. Teaching more than 30,000 students weekly in our stores, renting more than 300,000 horns and fiddles, serving over 10,000 schools with our educational reps and repairing about 350,000 instruments annually. As such we look for locations with vibrant music programs – in the school and community – that we believe are underserved.

Sometimes it is at the behest of a fine arts/band director, sometimes at the behest of retiring business owner, and sometimes simply because we perceive there to be a gap in the market which we can effectively serve. In all cases, we build growth into the our pro-forma for these new locations – and a lot of it – because we know that, as a music education company, we help train more and more new musicians every day.

Can you play any instruments? If so, which ones, and when did you start to learn?

I played piano and violin in grade school and later some guitar – but I'm not a particularly talented musician. I did sing with a cappella group in college, the Duke's Men of Yale. In truth, I think you could say that I've spent much of my life learning to play the business of music. My daughter, on the other hand, who turned 14 in May, plays the flute in wind ensemble, cello in all-state orchestra, and guitar, uke, and vocals in a band with four other young ladies. So, proud papa you could say.

With regards to your lessons, aside from the sheer number of students that Music & Arts teaches, what separates you from other dealers who also offer lessons?

Many of our instructors are university-trained musicians with extensive musical education and teaching experience. We hand-select them based on recommendations from the professional music community proximate to each store. Some of our instructors have won Grammy, Tony, or Emmy awards, and others have published books!

In addition to this expertise and passion, every instructor must complete a thorough background check so we can ensure a safe environment for kids to learn.

What are the major brands that you carry?

We carry all major brands and many niche band and orchestral brands as well. The best place to search our brands is www.MusicArts.com but, to name a few, some of our most well-known



Steve Zapf

brands are Yamaha, Giardinelli, Buffet, and Bach for woodwind and brass instruments; Fender, Laurel Canyon and Yamaha guitars; Verve and Pearl drum sets; Strobel, Eastman, and Howard Core string instruments; D'Addario, Vandoren, Titan, and Jo-Ral accessories; and sheet music from Hal Leonard, Alfred, and Carl Fischer.

How many employees do you have now? How many did you have originally?

These days, we have about 1,500 people working for Music & Arts, but seasonally we peak closer to 2,000. Since 2012 when I joined, we've added nearly 50 stores and our ranks at our corporate headquarters in Frederick, Maryland, have grown to the point where all legal parking spots are gone before 8 am! Fortunately, we are moving into a new 50,000 square foot state-of-the-art office complex (with plenty of parking and collaborative work space) next month.

The first Music & Arts store opened in a small house in Bethesda, Maryland, in 1952. Our founder Benjamin O'Brien sold printed music and art supplies, and offered music and dance lessons. It was just his family back then working the business.

What is the square footage of both locations? How has the business expanded (with regards to locations and brick and mortar stores) since it started?

A typical Music & Arts store ranges between 2,000-3,000 square feet and has six private lesson studios. We have been averaging about ten new stores per year, about half of which are organic stores and the other half acquisitions. We expect this to accelerate in the coming years and are actively looking for great family music businesses to join our team.

What are some trends that you have been noticing in the MI industry?

It's not a new trend by any means, but omni-channel and e-commerce continue to shape the industry. To keep up, we're streamlining distribution, sharing inventory across channels, interacting more directly with suppliers, drop-shipping, etc., all in an effort to reduce some of the inefficiency inherent in traditional retail store operations. This evolution has taken a toll on retailers in other industries where brick-and-mortar store closings are commonplace; as such, I'm especially proud of our growth in stores and in services during these times.

I think we're also seeing a renewed

appreciation for the benefits of music education, thanks to the efforts of our fellow music store owners, NAMM, and new studies that link music with academic achievement.

What is the next big step for Music & Arts?

We're finishing up a rather challenging year (and that is putting it mildly) in which we migrated from an old leg-

acy ERP system to Microsoft Dynamics. There is no doubt that this conversion set us back in terms of our service promise to customers and our ability to grow. Finally, however, we are on the mend and ready to grow again. We have 10 organic stores and three acquisitions lined up for 2017, and are gearing up for much more to come in the next three to five years. **MMR**

Oboe & Bassoon Reeds

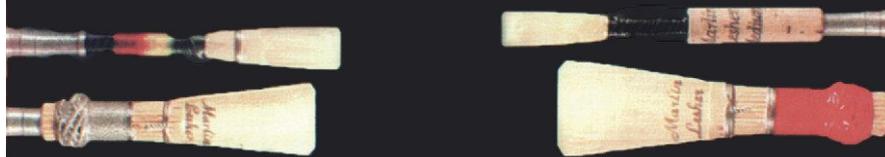


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P.O. Box 1004

Port Townsend, WA 98368



Taking on Internet Competition for Small-Ticket Items

Band & Orchestra Accessory Sales in 2017

By Christian Wissmuller

Reeds, drum sticks, clip-on tuners, stands, strings – these items and many more are essential to all active players of every ability level. As such, Band & Orchestra accessories have, for decades (longer, even) been a reliable income generator for MI retailers.

Much like many products from all retail segments, though, these items are increasingly sought out and purchased online. While a few, such as Mark Monaco of Monaco's Violin Shop in Getzville, New York report some optimistic counterpoint to the general shift ("Consumers [are] going to Amazon et cetera, being dissatisfied, and coming back to the store"), most are seeing movement of accessories take a serious dip: 71 percent of respondents in this month's poll report sales are either down or level with this same time in 2016.

Patton Music's (Owensboro, Kentucky) Jon Patton notes, "We are seeing less sales of reeds which used to be a big seller. The

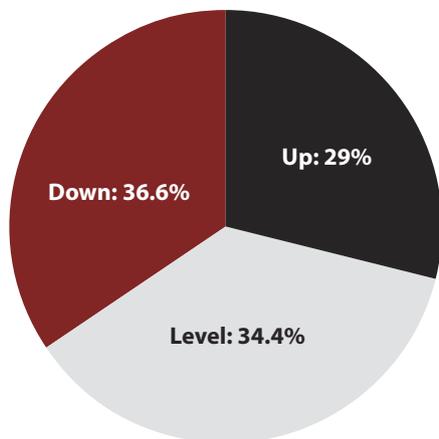
Internet has affected nearly all accessory sales. From reeds to mouthpieces and cases, these accessories were a solid profit center but now just take up room and operating capital."

With the convenience provided by portals such as Amazon (search, order, wait for delivery – done!) even when retailers can match price, they often still lose out on the sale. Marty Puzon of Puzon's Music in Lansing, Illinois notes that the main trend he's noticing lately is: "Customers buying on the Internet, even though my pricing is the same or better."

While a musician might – hopefully, anyway – be reluctant to purchase a \$1,300 violin, un-played and sight-unseen, from an online retailer, when the bulk of accessory sales are under \$50 (over 94 percent, according to this survey), it's just not much of a risk.

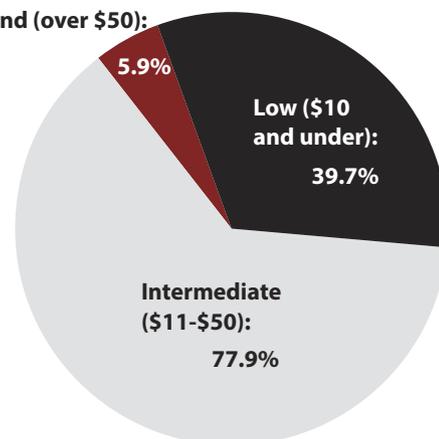
As John Czarnecki of Little Ferry, New Jersey's The Music Gallery says, when it comes to B&O accessories: "Online sales are killing brick and mortar stores."

Compared to Spring of 2016, sales of Band & Orchestra accessories for your store are...



What price points for B&O accessories are top-sellers for your business?*

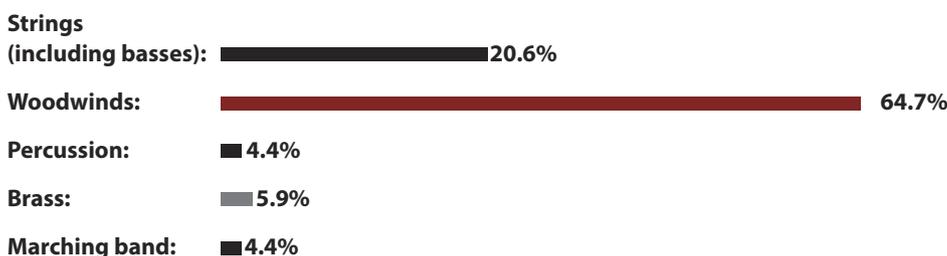
High-end (over \$50):



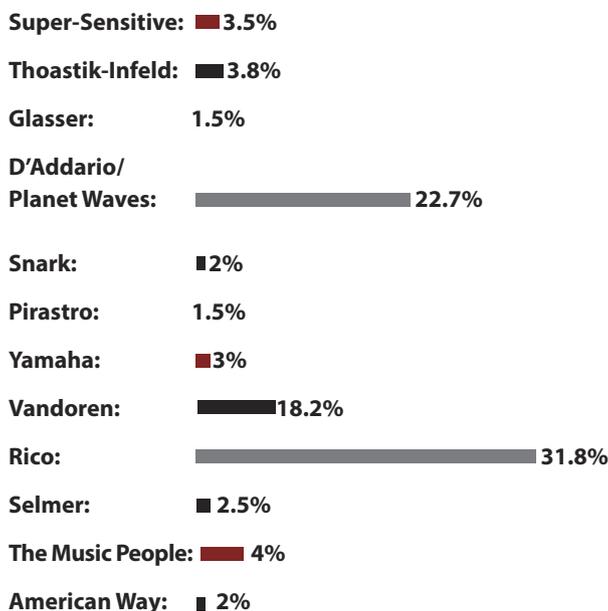
*(Responses indicating multiple price points were accepted for this question.)

"More competition from the Internet – big surprise..."
 – Tom Hosmer, Hosmer Violins, Fayetteville, New York

What group/category of B&O accessories do you sell the most of?



What one brand of B&O accessories generates the most profit for your operation in 2017?*



*(Multiple selections were accepted for this question.)

"People are going online for more and more of their B&O accessories."

– Stephen Schafer,

Schafer's House of Music,

Howell, Michigan

What larger trends have you been noticing in the B&O accessories market?

"Consumers going to Amazon, et cetera, being dissatisfied, and coming back to the store."

Mark Monaco
Monaco's Violin Shop
Getzville, New York

"An overall slow decrease in volume, as more customers (including schools – our main market) shop more online."

Jeff Young
Marshall Music Company
Lansing, Michigan

"Find something that works and stock it. Customers trust you to weed out the weak and the sick."

Sam Atkinson
The Candyman/Strings & Things
Santa Fe, New Mexico

"School music teachers seem to be requesting upgrades on mouthpieces and reeds over the past two years."

David St. John
Gard's Music
Montebello, California

"Music retailers have been abandoned by many of the orchestra accessory brands. It's sad – we need orchestra brands

to start including dealers in the profits."

Anthony Mantova
Mantova's Two Street Music
Eureka, California

"Parents opt for replacing single strings with violins, violas, and cellos rather than purchase full sets of strings (especially with cello) because of cost."

Samuel Perkins
Strait Music
Port Angeles, Washington

"More folks buying instead of renting. The cost to purchase an instrument has come down, plus there is a healthy used band instrument market to pick from."

Spidey Mulrooney
The Music Shop
Southington, Connecticut

"Parents seem to be a little more comfortable investing in needed accessories for their child's instrument than last year, as long as the item is recommended and justified."

Karen Janiszewski
Music Room
Cheektowaga, New York

"New ways of packaging products that have been around a while are helping get these products into the hands of more customers... As an example, the reed sampler packs originally from Vandoren and now also from D'Adario are very popular."

Steve Gibson
Absolute Music
Reno, Nevada

"Decrease in reed sales. More going to the Internet."

Kevin Walters
Central Penn Music
Palmyra, Pennsylvania

"Less money is available to municipalities (meaning they spend less). The best companies to work with engage MAP pricing for their products. ALL companies need to use MAP pricing. (For example, Vandoren reeds... a customer could purchase them online for cheaper than our store can even buy them to keep them in stock.)"

Mike Bauer
Giant Steps Music Corp.
Chattanooga, Tennessee

"More competition from the Internet – big surprise..."

Tom Hosmer
Hosmer Violins
Fayetteville, New York

"Guitar Center [is now] carrying reeds and other B&O supplies in-store."

Erik Swenson
Music Go Round
Woodbury, Minnesota

"April 2017 is the first month in the last 29 months where we have seen sales drop, month to month, and it was in all categories. The malaise and feeling of uncertainty generated by the press on a daily basis is hitting home. It's ongoing and significant. We will push back with more outreach, ads and promotions as we begin our fall recruiting season."

Drew Parker
Seperk Music
Lewisville, North Carolina

"People are going online for more and more of their B&O accessories."

Stephen Schafer
Schafer's House of Music
Howell, Michigan

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Five Tips and Tricks to Avoid Burnout

By Menzie Pittman

Owners and managers operate at a very fast pace, but it's not the pace that we need to be hyper-focused on; it is the prolonged exposure to running at such high RPMs that is critical. Leaders lead, and when there are issues, we are always the first call. You earn that position because it is only given to those who have demonstrated that they can handle extraordinary pressure. So, let's take a moment and look at good practices that provide relief from potential burnout.

1) The best trick in the business: start with admission!

Early on in my career, like so many, I needed to prove I could hit the mark, and for me it wasn't enough to hit it once; I needed to hit that sucker like Muhammad Ali. Fortunately, as I have grown in my career and in my life, I have embraced the understanding that it's a long game, and rest and rejuvenation are key factors in sustaining success.

But here is a secret that I feel is important to share. Success is not a business term, nor is it a financial term. Success is an understanding, a feeling, and an awareness. It is a condition. Success is the result of being happy with not only what you have accomplished, but also who you are as a person. Therefore, to be successful you must be centered, and that's the simple truth we must embrace. We should start with the admission that maybe we need rest and a healthier balance between work and life.

2) Hitting the gym versus changing your thoughts

I am a fan of good gyms for the obvious reasons. Your body is the foundation of everything. One thing to keep in mind: if you are in good physical shape yet are un-grounded in other areas of your life, you will remain stressed.

Interestingly, when addressing stress, most folks only address the physical, but that's a one-dimensional approach. While they get the physical part of the solution right, they don't practice a balanced life routine. When you are a business owner, or a key person in an operation, the stress is not only physical, it is emotional as well. That's why a gym won't get it all done. You really must look into less obvious and better routines and awareness.

3) The most overlooked secret is changing the way you think and feel

We are musicians, right? So, put on your creative hat and join me on an escapade into better ways. We will start with Bobbie McFerrin: "Don't Worry, Be Happy!"

In coping with work stress, 99 percent of our daily problems could be dealt with more effectively if we could avoid entering the "upset-anger" space. Certainly, I am not saying this is easy, but you have better clarity and are much more creative in arriving at workable solutions to problems when you are not upset or angry.

Here is an even more important take away. When you remain happy, you don't send your chemistry into the twilight zone; that alone is reason enough to control your reactions to daily problems. Speaking of chemistry, you are what you eat, so you must get that right as well. Your ability to perform simply depends on it.

“It's a long game, and rest and rejuvenation are key factors in sustaining success.”

4) Follow Willie Nelson's advice and "Just Breathe"

Seriously, let's talk "real" stress-reducing solutions. Relaxing with a focus on breath control is used in any yoga, martial arts practice, or guided meditation. It's a no-brainer for musicians because we do it in our music every day. All horn players, singers, and drummers have to focus on breath control to perform well. So why not incorporate this skill into your daily routine to reduce stress?

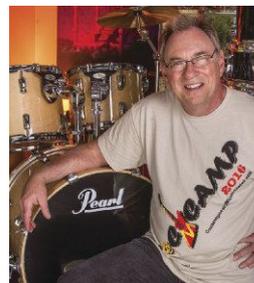
5) The Beatles advised us long ago to "Slow Down"

If you are like most business leaders, you are bombarded daily with information. You can't outrun it. Even if it's not something you need to act on, there is still a scroll and a click to get it moved from your in-box or purged from your computer or phone. This only gets worse as we move deeper into technology, and we all know technology only gets faster as more information bombards us daily. The really ugly truth, folks, is our addiction to mobile devices is increasing. Gone are the days when we could get up from our computers and walk away from the information onslaught. Be honest, when was the last time you walked away from your phone? I would venture to say it was a long time ago. Therefore, now more than ever it helps to incorporate an important but simple trick.

Change what you focus on, and do the opposite. If you are crazy busy in your routine, then schedule un-plugged personal time. Demand it from yourself. If you are a key individual in your work, that means you are a key person twice over because everyone is a key individual in his or her family.

In closing

My cue comes from Take Six. If you listen to their epic song, "A Quiet Place," they remind us that as we start and finish and maintain our day, we need periods of solitude. It may be the most important decision you ever make. **MMR**



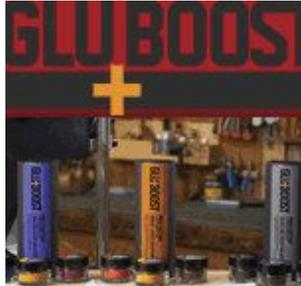
Menzie Pittman is the owner and director of education at Contemporary Music Center in Virginia (CMC). Following a performance and teaching career spanning more than 32 years, he founded CMC in 1989 and continues to perform, teach, and oversee daily operations. He has 50 years of musical experience as a drummer and drum instructor. Menzie is a frequent speaker at NAMM's Idea Center, and a freelance writer for MMR's "Small Business Matters" column. He served on NAMM's Board of Directors from 2012 through 2015 and currently oversees the curriculum for CMC's performance venue @4410. In 2016 NAMM awarded Contemporary Music Center the "Dealer of the Year" award, the "Music Matters" award, and the "Best Sales and Promotion" award.

ACCESSORIES

MasterTint from GluBoost

GluBoost has unveiled MasterTint, the company's newest product designed to make colormatching easy without solvents. When it comes to repairing instruments, MasterTint offers ultra pure, high-quality hues for in-repair color matching.

The product is available in three different collections – vintage (brown, yellow and amber), modern (red, yellow and blue), and black and white (three blacks and one white) – and the three mix and match MasterTint CA-Additive kits come with a non-stick mixing palette and three dispensing spatulas.



www.gluboost.com

Anasounds Boutique Pedals

Anasounds boutique pedals are customizable analog effects that players can use to tweak effects by simply tweaking the internal potentiometers.

The pedals are manufactured in Nice, France and use only the best components and unique laser-engraved bamboo face plates.



www.anasounds.com/en

The Wingman from OK Knob

The new Wingman from OK Knob is a foot-controlled effects pedal knob that allows players to replace any factory knob and gain real-time control over their effects parameters with their feet. The knob can manipulate effects to unlock the full, hands-free potential of pedals. The new Wingman boasts a more compact wing design, a thicker shaft for added stability, and two shaft inserts (class and boutique) so it will fit any pedal.



www.okknob.com

Stagehand Drink Holder

The new Stagehand Drink Holder from String Swing fits all microphone, music, and cymbal stands ranging from 1/2"-1" in diameter. The drink holder is ideal for holding cans, cups, bottles and more while performing onstage.



www.stringswing.com

Acrylux Series from D'Addario

D'Addario Accessories has released the Acrylux series of guitar picks, available in two different blends, Reso and Nitra. Both blends offer two distinct tones and provide the grip and output that is famous of acrylic picks. The Reso version is transparent red, made of pure acrylic for a brighter tone, while the Nitra is black pearl, made from an acrylic and nitrate blend for a warmer tone.



www.daddario.com



Aria Forte from Aria Lights

Aria Lights, Inc. has released Aria Forte, a new rechargeable high-brightness LED music stand light with an 8-hour run-time for professionals. The stand also offers more than 36 hours of light on half-brightness, meaning that musicians can use it for multiple concerts and rehearsals without recharging.

The stand's lithium polymer battery provides fast charging, and it can be plugged in or recharged via a USB port. Musicians can check battery life with the built-in charge indicator. In addition, a built-in full-range dimmer allows musicians to adjust the light accordingly in darker venues.

www.arialights.com

I.Q. Compressor from J. Rockett Audio Designs

The new I.Q. Compressor is an EQ/compressor with a pre-compression EQ that allows users to choose which frequencies they want to be compressed harder based on their respective gain setting. It features six band graphic EQ, volume and mix knobs, and I/O jacks at the head of the pedal.



A volume control increases or decreases the output level, while the device's mix control blends the compressed signal with the dry signal. Street price: \$229

www.rockettpedals.com

DJ & LIGHTING



Yorkville Sound LP-LED4X

Yorkville Sound has introduced the LP-LED4X, an upgraded version of the LP-LED4 Light Bar. Despite being 5-7 pounds lighter than the LP-LED4 Light Bar, the new device is capable of lighting a small stage or an entire dancefloor, and has the same intensity, output, and wattage at the LP-LED4. The device's advanced on-board programming and effect banks allow for ample coverage, and innovative pole-through technology allows multiple units to be used on a standard speaker stand for large scale mobile applications. In addition, the accompanying app for the LP-LED4X allows users to control up to four LP-LED4X fixtures at once. Equipped with a built-in microphone for quick audio mode demos, as well as integrated flypoints for safe installation, the LP-LED4X is both versatile and handy.

www.yorkville.com

PL2 PowerLink Stringers from Whirlwind

The PL2 series of PowerLink Stringers is designed to distribute AC power to multiple locations around a stage. Each PL2 module converts a multi-phase input into independent branch circuits, and also provides a multi-phase output connector so multiple boxes can be linked together.

The PL2 stringers are encased in versatile powder-coated steel, and the optional PL2-FB fly bracket allows the PL2 to be mounted to truss for multi-circuit power distribution to loudspeakers and lighting fixtures.



www.whirlwindusa.com

KEYBOARDS

Yamaha Clavinova CLP-600 Series

Yamaha has introduced the Clavinova CLP-600 Series, the latest addition to the award-winning Clavinova digital piano line. All of the new models, which include the CLP-625, CLP-635, CLP-645, CLP-665GP, CLP-675, and CLP-685, offer both enhancements in playability, sound, and convenience, as well as come with new finish and cabinet design options.



All models in the CLP line come with two sampled pianos, the Yamaha CFX and the Bösendorfer Imperial. Both the CLP-675 and CLP-685 models include the new Yamaha GrandTouch Keyboard action, which offers players the response of an acoustic grand piano. All of the models in the line come equipped with a set of binaural CFX samples.

The CLP-645 model and up offer Bluetooth audio capabilities so users can stream music from a mobile device through the piano's speakers. In addition, the Piano Room allows the payer to customize their experience with attention to fine details like lid position, touch response, resonance settings and venue.

www.usa.yamaha.com

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DRUMS & PERCUSSION

Evans System Blue Snare Head

The Evans System Blue snare head is the newest addition to D'Addario's Evans Drumheads line of marching percussion products. The new snare head was designed in collaboration with Scott Johnson of Blue Devils Drum and Bugle Corps and features a softer feel with excellent tonal clarity and projection. The heads are available worldwide starting July 3, but they can be purchased now via Steve Weiss Music and System Blue.



Evans Pipe Band Snare Batter

D'Addario's Evans Drumheads has released the Evans Pipe Band Snare Batter, designed in collaboration with Stephen Creighton and his championship-winning corps, the St. Laurence O'Toole Pipe Band. The new snare batter offers drummers extreme durability, as well as the excellent tone and pitch required for a championship-winning corps. This drumhead will be available for 14" Pipe Band Snares in both standard (for Andante and Pearl drums) and oversized (Premier) drum variations.



Stephen Creighton Signature Stick from Promark by D'Addario

Promark by D'Addario has launched the Stephen Creighton Signature Stick, the first product that the brand has introduced to the Pipe Band market. With the introduction of this new stick, Creighton will be added to the company's percussion artist roster. The stick will be available in three finish options: standard lacquer, painted white, and ActiveGrip, Promark's patented, heat-activated grip coating.



www.daddario.com

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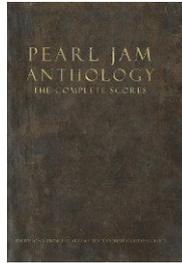
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PRINT & DIGITAL

Pearl Jam Anthology from Hal Leonard

Hal Leonard's *Pearl Jam Anthology - The Complete Scores* is the newest addition to the company's line of deluxe boxed sets. The hardcover book includes 800 pages and 130 scores of every song on the Pearl Jam albums *Ten* through *Lightening Bolt*.

Songs include "Alive," "Animal," "Better Man," "Black," "Breakerfall," "Corduroy," "Daughter," "Dissident," "Do the Evolution," "Elderly Woman Behind the Counter in a Small Town," "Even Flow," "Given to Fly," "Go," "Grievance," "Indifference," "Jeremy," "My Father's Son," "Not for You," "Nothing As It Seems," "Once," "Porch," "Rearviewmirror," "Wishlist," and more.



www.halleonard.com

The Professional Pianist: Classical Solos from Alfred Music

Alfred Music has announced the release of *The Professional Pianist: Classical Solos*, a collection of 40 piano masterworks in their original form. The book is the newest addition to the *Professional Pianist Series* from Alfred. The new book for late intermediate/early advanced pianist was edited by Albert Mendoza and includes only short pieces instead of flashy, concert-like pieces to make for better background music. Each piece has been carefully engraved for easy reading, and includes approximate performance time to use when planning events. Price: \$19.99.

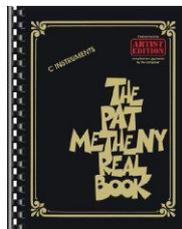


www.alfred.com

The Pat Metheny Real Book from Hal Leonard

Hal Leonard has teamed up with groundbreaking jazz artist Pat Metheny to release *The Pat Metheny Real Book*. The book includes 147 Metheny songs arranged for all C instruments, all of which were compiled and gig-tested by Metheny himself.

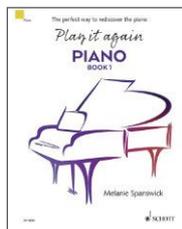
Songs include "April Joy," "Better Days Ahead," "Bright Size Life," "Farmer's Trust," "(Go) Get It," "H & H," "Have You Heard," "Jaco," "James," "Lakes," "Last Train Home," "Midwestern Nights Dream," "Phase Dance," "Question & Answer," "The Red One," "So May It Secretly Begin," "Sueno Con Mexico," "Uniquity Road," "Unity Village," and "Whittlin'". The book is 270 pages and retails for \$24.99.



www.halleonard.com

Play it Again: Piano from Schott Music

Schott Music has released *Play it Again: Piano: The Perfect Way to Rediscover Piano*, a songbook for returning players by Melanie Spanswick. Using pieces from jazz, ragtime, contemporary, and traditional piano repertoires to teach specific techniques and tips, the book aims to get players to play fluently again. The book includes 28 pieces, each of which is accompanied by two full pages of practice tips. The level of pieces in this book range from elementary to intermediate.



www.en.schott-music.com

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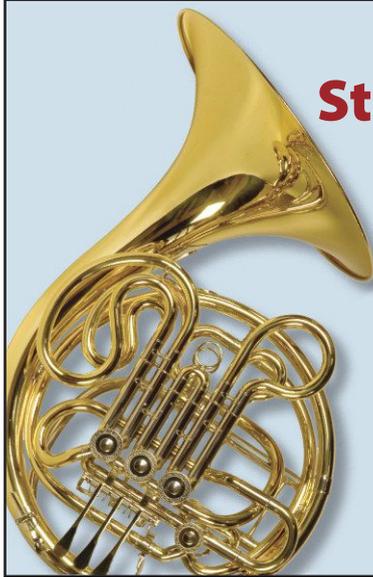
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By Dan **Daley**

Stop, Thief! – Online Tools Help Mitigate the Theft of Musical Instruments

The Hawaiian music duo Hapa has been the contemporary face of the islands' traditional music culture for two decades. So when co-founder Barry Flanagan's unique guitar went missing in March, stolen from the trunk of his car, it made the local news. That kind of attention can help keep it out of the pawnshops and alert local MI retailers to keep an eye out for it, but most instrument thefts don't get the benefit of that kind of awareness. However, there are a growing number of online-based solutions available to help counter what is likely the most devastating thing that can befall a musician, short of losing a finger.

Screaming Stone, founded a decade ago by musician Chris Stone, acts as a national clearing house for stolen instruments that uses crowd-sourcing to publicize instrument thefts to other musicians, because, as Stone's website points out, they are "the people most likely to come across a stolen instrument for sale." "The more people that know about an instrument theft, the greater chance we have at finding and recovering more stolen instruments," he says, adding that since 2007 the site has helped recover over \$500,000 in stolen instruments – twice the recovery rate of law enforcement. But, he warns through the site, that's still only seven percent of all instruments stolen every year. "We need to recover more, and we need the music community to help us," he adds.

Another, more high-tech approach is from Gear-Secure, an LA-based company that introduced what it asserts was the first embedded anti-theft device for musical instruments at the last NAMM Show. Using a self-powered RFID-type tracking device that can be attached or implanted into virtually any kind of instrument, the device's ping can be tracked by the owner's mobile device. The owner can also set a perimeter outside of which the device will send an alert – if you've left a guitar in a dressing room and it starts to "walk" out of the club, the tracking device will message your smartphone.

Another stolen-instrument recovery proposition will use optical recognition technology to help find lost instruments – or anything else, for that matter. HaveltBack.com is a Silicon Valley-area start-up that will use stored images of missing items uploaded by those who've lost them and match them optically by visual characteristics, as well as any other details the owners can share. Co-founder Antonio Vega says HaveltBack will rely mainly on details supplied by

owners when they enter the site, but that as the number of those increases, the algorithm that runs the system will use AI to put that information together with the photos of the missing items that those owners also supply, eventually creating a data file that has visual as well as other information. That file will then scan millions of aggregated internet sites seeking a match. In the case of musical instruments – Vega says musical instruments account for 30,000 of the five million or so items reported lost or stolen annually – those likely suspects will include pawnshops, MI stores that sell used instruments, and online portals used by individuals to sell used instruments.

“Losing an instrument is traumatic, and people have been stealing them ever since David restrung his first lyre.”

An initial one-week search is free; HaveltBack will charge between \$3 and \$5 per item sought, depending on the length of time the owner wants to keep the search active, between one and six months longer. If the search gets a hit, the owner's mobile phone gets a notification. HaveltBack can arrange for shipping for a nominal fee. And as a sort of insurance policy for true pessimists, Vega says individuals will also be able to load images and information about their instrument ahead of time, before they're stolen.

Losing an instrument is traumatic, and people have been stealing them ever since David restrung his first lyre. The informal network of MI retailers and ethical pawn shops have formed the biggest bulwark against this kind of crime, one that tends not to get placed high on the to-do lists of police departments. But technology is opening a new front in this ongoing battle, and it's worth keeping an eye on those developments.

And oh, yeah, I didn't want to forget to mention: Barry Flanagan got his guitar back a week or so later. According to a Honolulu media outlet, whoever stole the guitar from the car was unable to sell it because of how quickly word spread about its theft. However the word gets out, the faster, louder and wider it goes, so increases the chances of a good outcome to a bad experience. **MMF**

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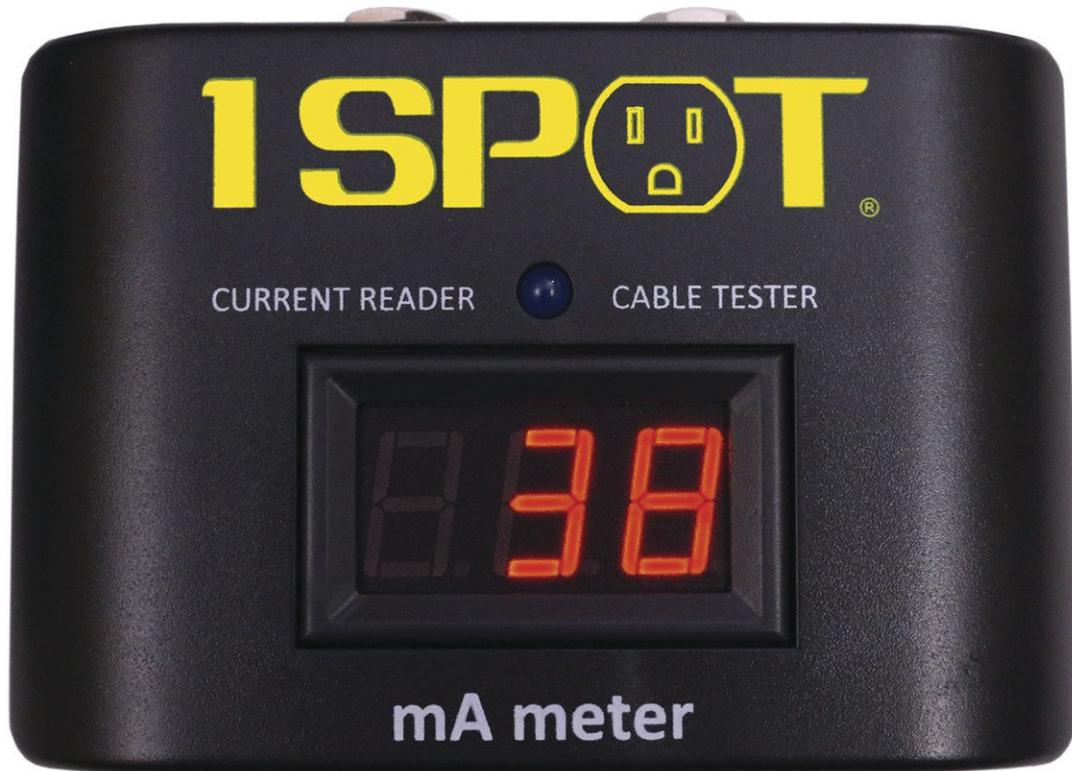
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