

MMR

MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

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| Alison Krauss | Clinic | Lee Jones | Steve Winwood |
| Alter Bridge | Colin | Anna | The Stills |
| America | Colin | Starr | Sting |
| American Idol | The O'Jays | Plant | Stone Temple Pilots |
| Ani DiFranco | Creed | Randolph | Styx |
| Animal Collective | Crosby | Swart | System of a Down |
| Annihilator | Crowded | Waters | Taylor Swift |
| Audioslave | Damien | Wines | The Black Keys |
| Avenged Sevenfold | Dandy | Tommy Emmanuel | the National |
| Barbra Streisand | Daniel | Tommy Lee | Three Doors Down |
| Barenaked Ladies | Dave | Tony Bennett | Timbaland |
| The Beach Boys | Deadma | Tony Levin | Tom Waits |
| Beastie Boys | The Dece | Tony Maserati | Tommy Emmanuel |
| Beck | Def Lepp | Toots & The Mays | Tommy Lee |
| Béla Fleck | Derek Tru | Tragically Hip | Tony Bennett |
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| Bootsy Collins | Econoline Crush | | |
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| Bruce Springsteen | Enrique Iglesias | | |
| Bruno Mars | Eric Clapton | | |
| Bryan Adams | Eric Johnson | | |
| Buddy Guy | Erykah Badu | | |
| Butch Walker | Evanescence | | |
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| Cheap Trick | Flogging Molly | | |
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| | Jars of Clay | Pink Floyd | Sleigh Bells |
| | Jason Mraz | Placebo | Slinknot |
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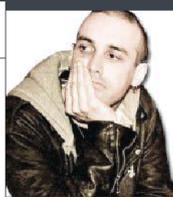
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People Doing Interesting, Creative, and Strange Things...



by Christian Wissmuller

The release of Avid's Pro Tools First, a free version of the widely used recording platform at the NAMM Show got me thinking.

With GarageBand having been bundled into nearly every Apple laptop, Mac, and tablet for years now, and with plenty of free (or nearly free) recording and sequencing applications available for download, home recording – and the number of individuals with some degree of skill in this field – has absolutely blown up. I realize this isn't news to anyone. Bear with me.

It's anecdotal evidence, to be sure, but of my own musician friends I'm hard pressed to think of anyone who doesn't engage in some degree of home-demoing or actual recording. Additionally, of the 30 or so medium- to large scale recording studios that existed in Boston as recently as the late '90s (two of which I worked at), I can only think of nine in 2015. Access to software, online tutorials, and a wealth of information via search engine has created thousands of experts (and semi-experts) in a discipline that used to require years of schooling, internships, et cetera, and a lot of time and money.

If you're a motivated self-starter, life online can, in fact, make you smarter.

"From instant messaging to social networks, every time a new technology has come along [we find] people doing interesting, creative, and strange things," said author Clive Thompson in a BBC report from last June. "People were using them in ways that helped them to think in different ways, to learn new things and to solve problems they couldn't have solved before."

There are two big takeaways (at least) for employers here – and this applies to both retailers and suppliers in the MI realm.

The first involves applying to your own business that same creative, self-motivated attitude that drove the home recording market and decimated the recorded music industry. Resourc-

es such as NAMM U and MMR's own monthly "Small Business Matters" column are valuable and should absolutely be taken advantage of, but why stop there? The experts you learn from through such avenues have already mastered the techniques and skills they're sharing, but someone did "it" (whatever the "it" in question is) first – who says you or someone on your team can't be the individual who hits upon the next "big idea?" Be resourceful with the tools available and you could very well come up with a game-changer.

Secondly, as an employer, make sure you're truly living in the present when it comes to hiring practices. Long held notions with respect to "higher education" are falling by the wayside.

A poll conducted by Gallup and Lumina Foundation released in late February of this year, "found 84 percent of business leaders said the amount of knowledge of potential hires is very important, while 28 percent said a candidate's college major is important, and just nine percent said where the candidate received his or her degree is very important."

It's nothing new for the sales clerk working the floor at your local guitar store to not have a Master's degree, but it's long been felt that management positions require some college background. These days, knowledge is everywhere for the taking – for both you and your potential employees – and "no college degree" does not necessarily equate to "no advanced skill sets."

Any employee or potential employee could well be doing interesting, creative, and strange things that could help your business. As could you.

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PRS Announces Museum Opening and Factory Tours

PRS Guitars has announced the opening of its new “West Street East” Museum Room and retail store and the commencement of free public tours of the Stevensville, Maryland manufacturing facility.

When touring the PRS factory, visitors will get a firsthand look at PRS Guitars’ processes, instruments, and amplifiers from raw wood or blank chassis form to finished guitar or amplifier. PRS intends to give visitors a unique view into PRS quality and the dedication of the people building PRS instruments. “We have a passion for building instruments and also for the music that these instruments help create. Most here are dedicated players, refining our craft as builders and musicians. There is a special kind of pride and individual ownership surrounding our instruments. From our experience, there is no better way to see this unique aspect of PRS than to walk through the shop,” stated PRS president Jack Higginbotham.

The guided tour takes visitors through the electric guitar manufacturing line, amplifier department, and acoustic shop. Tours will conclude at the company’s new “West Street East” store and museum room where visitors will find PRS apparel, parts, and accessories. The store also features a selection of guitars from the PRS archives for visitors to see as they learn about Paul Reed Smith and PRS Guitars’ history. A broad line up of current offerings will be available for visitors to play test as well.

The start of public tours and the opening of “West Street East” – named as a tribute to Paul Reed Smith Guitars’ humble beginnings in a small shop located on West Street in Annapolis, Maryland – are part of the company’s 30th anniversary.

Factory tours are offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10 am and 1 pm. Group tours are available by request.

Join NAMM’s Music Education Advocacy Efforts on Capitol Hill

NAMM members will take the nation’s capital by storm, May 18-21, making the case that all children deserve comprehensive school music education programs. Leaders of the music product industry, artists and other industry influencers will meet with their senators and members of Congress to forward legislation that advances access to music education for all children.

“Public school music programs are the first and in many cases the only opportunity that kids have to play an instrument and become lifelong music makers,” said Joe Lamond, president and CEO of NAMM. “And lobbying to ensure that music programs receive the support they deserve directly impacts the lives of millions of children across America. In addition, NAMM members say that advocating for music education in D.C. is one of the most meaningful experiences they’ll ever have.”

NAMM’s Music Education Fly-In coincides with school budget season, when schools and districts decide where to allocate resources for the coming school year. Research continues to show that music education contributes to student’s overall success in school and life.

“It is a rewarding honor to be a part of the diverse group of NAMM members who come together with a common



purpose, to ensure that our education system continues to provide the opportunity to learn music,” said Crystal Morris, president of Gator Cases. “In Washington, we are personally educating our country’s

leaders on the power of music and helping to protect student’s rights to have music as part of their curriculum, today and into the future.”

The music education advocacy effort kicks off on Monday morning with an optional day of service, when NAMM members will share the power of music with students at an underserved D.C. public school. NAMM delegates will spend Tuesday preparing for their role as music education advocates through updates on current music education issues, pending legislation, newly released research, and message delivery.

On Wednesday, advocacy kicks into high gear as NAMM members head to Capitol Hill to meet directly with their senators and members of Congress. The day on the Hill concludes with a Celebration for Music Education on Wednesday evening, May 20 overlooking the Capitol. NAMM’s Advocacy Fly-in concludes with a national SupportMusic Coalition “live from Washington, D.C.” conference call on Thursday, May 21 at 11 a.m. EDT.

More Shots from Winter NAMM



Leighton Tong of Nanjing Aileen Trading Co., Ltd.



Dowson Yu of JTS Professional Co., Ltd. with MMR’s Judy Wang.

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World Record Attempt at Musikmesse 2015: 1,000 Drummers Wanted

Musikmesse in Frankfurt will be the venue for a unique spectacle on April 18: the organizers plan to bring together 1,000 drummers and break the record for the world's biggest drum ensemble. The aim is for all participants to maintain the same rhythm for five minutes, as officially laid down by the Committee of Guinness World Records Ltd. If successful, everyone

who comes to Frankfurt with his or her drum kit on the Saturday of the fair will be able to leave in the evening as a world-record holder.

The Drums4Peace non-profit event aims not only to gain a place in the *Guinness Book of Records* but also to serve a good cause. It supports the objectives of the United Nations Refugee Agency



and provides financial aid for charitable projects. "Thus, the joint groove by 1,000 drummers will not only be an impressive statement for active music making but also a powerful appeal for peace. We are proud to offer this splendid event a worthy setting", says Cordelia von Gymnich, vice president Consumer Goods & Entertainment, Messe Frankfurt Exhibition.

Everyone who can play a simple 4/4 beat is welcome to take part. The participation fee includes not only a donation but also admission to Musikmesse for the participant and one guest, as well as a parking space at Frankfurt Fair and Exhibition Centre. Additionally, every drummer taking part in the event will be given an exclusive gift bag with drum accessories. It is also possible to donate more money to the project via the event website – and win valuable prizes donated by NATAL Drums, which is organizing Drums4Peace in cooperation with Musikmesse.

The attempt on the world record will take place in Hall 1.2 of Frankfurt Fair and Exhibition Centre on April 18. The aim is to beat the current record for the 'Largest Full Drum Kit Ensemble', which was set by 798 drummers in England in 2012.

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MMR's George Petersen presents Neutrik CEO Werner Bachmann with a plaque commemorating the company's 40th anniversary at the NAMM Show.

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Guitar Center Opens New Store in Illinois

Guitar Center opened its 264th location in Champaign, Illinois, on February 26. Guitar Center's latest store, a state-of-the-art musical instrument and technology center covering over 8,000 square feet, is the first in a series of new store grand openings in 2015. The announcement was made by Michael Amkreutz, Guitar Center executive vice president, marketing, merchandising,

and e-commerce, and is said to "further [exemplify] the company's ongoing plans for growth and long-term expansion and its primary goal of providing customers with the widest selection of musical instruments and professional audio products at the best prices sold by an experienced and knowledgeable sales staff."

"Our Champaign, Illinois, store is the first



in a series of 2015 new store grand openings," states Michael Amkreutz. "In addition to opening new stores, we are revamping many of our current locations to bring them in line with our new store designs that foster a hands-on environment in which customers are encouraged to interact with the products. We are always looking to create a more immersive in-store experience for our customers."

Guitar Center's Champaign location features modern showrooms equipped with the latest products for musicians—from guitars, amplifiers, percussion instruments, and keyboards to live sound, DJ, lighting, and recording equipment. The store also provides customers with a vast selection of products and a dedicated staff with unparalleled musical knowledge and experience.

To commemorate this occasion, Guitar Center hosted a special Grand Opening Weekend featuring exclusive savings, gear giveaways, and a free performance catered to local musicians. The grand opening kicked off with a free live in-store performance on February 26 by The Fights. In addition, shoppers received exclusive savings throughout the grand opening weekend including deals on guitar and drum essentials.

Additionally, the new store features Guitar Center Lessons, an in-house, state-of-the-art lesson facility, which will create opportunities for Champaign's musicians of all ages and skill levels. Guitar Center Lessons provides music lessons from beginner to advanced featuring certified instructors teaching world-class curriculum as well as one-on-one and group courses. Additionally, GC Repairs, Guitar Center's on-site guitar repair service, will offer a variety of repair and set-up services on stringed instruments.

Champaign customers can attend free classes every Wednesday and Saturday through the Music Mentor Series. These classes include introductory instruction on a variety of instruments and Recording Made Easy classes for anyone interested in recording their music. The store will also feature GC Rentals, offering the ability to rent instruments and other gear.

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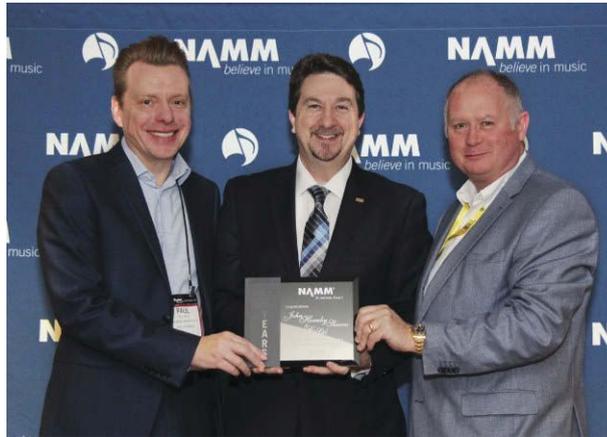
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JHS Honored with NAMM Milestone Award

NAMM has honored John Hornby Skewes & Co. Ltd. in Leeds with the Milestone Award for 50 years of service in the music products industry. The award recognizes retailers and manufacturers who have succeeded over the years through best practices and strong community standing to reach a landmark anniversary.

"2015 sees a very different commercial landscape to when John Skewes and his wife Madge started the business from a standing start 1965, but the basics remain constant," says managing director Dennis Drumm, "Provide great customer service, offer saleable, well-designed, profitable products, be prudent, follow through on promises, and be reliable, honest, and trustworthy".

He continues, 'We've enjoyed trading around the world like that for fifty years, and continuing to do so is



JHS' director of Purchasing and Logistics Paul Smith (left) and managing director Dennis Drumm (right) receive the Milestone Award from NAMM Board chairman Larry Morton.

our legacy. In a business environment where domination and control seems such prevalent themes, we've always gotten more satisfaction from listening and serving. Fifty years; quite a milestone and one we would not have achieved without the strength and

determination of our family, the support and cooperation of our vendors, staff, and customers, along of course with the wonderful relationships we continue to enjoy with our many friends in the industry. Thanks to NAMM for recognizing the moment."

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

Milestone Awards were presented to longtime industry leaders during the 2015 NAMM Show in Anaheim, California.



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Supplier Scene

Brent Fitz Now Using Vater Drumsticks

Brent Fitz is now using the Vater MV-10 Model Drumstick. His first public performance with the Vater MV-10 was on *Conan* on February 5.

A quick backstory on how Fitz ends up in a band with Slash and the guys... The musical dots that connected Fitz and Slash started in 2010, and were certainly 20 years in the making, but most likely due to Fitz's diverse resume and much respect amongst his musical peers, who all turned Slash's attention towards Fitz.



Growing up in Canada, the long list of roads traveled and gigs played lead Fitz to Los Angeles in the mid nineties (a key career move at the time) and contributed to a much larger scale of musical opportunity. From Winnipeg, Canada to Hollywood, California, the long list of artists Fitz has worked with include Union, Vince Neil, Alice Cooper, Theory Of A Deadman, Econoline Crush, Kenny Shields from Streetheart, and The Guess Who, to name a few. A twenty-five year span of many gigs and musical opportunity have all played a factor in the dots that would eventually connect Fitz and the guys to form Slash Featuring Myles Kennedy & The Conspirators – a band that proudly features Fitz's best work, and with the best musicians of his career.

Brent is currently on tour with Slash, supporting *World On Fire*. Dates can be seen at www.slashonline.com.

www.vater.com

JHS & Lewitt Sponsor International Producer of the Year Award

The Music Producers Guild hosted their 7th Annual Awards ceremony at the Park Plaza Riverbank Hotel in London. With a host of industry stalwarts, Grammy-award winning producers, and engineers in attendance, the show also featured live performances from top producer and former Eurythmics star Dave Stewart who picked up the MPG's Outstanding Contribution to UK Music Award.

Austrian microphone manufacturers Lewitt Audio in conjunction with UK and Eire distributors John Hornby Skewes & Co. Ltd., were proud to sponsor the International Producer of the Year Award to a shortlist that included Dan Auerbach, Pharrell Williams, and T-Bone Burnett. The award was presented to Dave Arnold on behalf of Dan Auerbach, who was unfortunately unable to attend, by compere Tom Robinson and JHS executive director of sales and marketing Alan Smith.

"It was a privilege to represent JHS and Lewitt Audio as a sponsor of the MPG awards," said Smith, "particularly to sponsor, and present, such a prestigious award as International Producer Of The Year."



JHS director of Sales & Marketing Alan Smith (left) with Dave Arnold and awards compere Tom Robinson (right)

Auerbach, probably best known for his work as guitarist/producer with the band The Black Keys, has also worked as producer for Lana Del Ray, Dr. John, Michael Kiwanuka, Hacienda, and Ray LaMontagne.

Lewitt Audio's head of sales, Mike van der Logt said, "It was an honor to attend the MPG awards with so many great producers and audio professionals present. Handing over an award for the best international producer confirms our interest in the creative process of recording. It further underlines our involvement with providing high quality microphones that are unaltered, authentic, and memorable."

www.jhs.co.uk

www.lewitt-audio.com

On-Stage Honors Kraft Music as Dealer of the Year

On-Stage presented its third annual Dealer of the Year award at the 2015 Winter NAMM Show. Established in 2012, The Dealer of the Year award is presented to On-Stage dealers who have shown exceptional growth, customer service, and commitment to the On-Stage family of brands. This year's award was presented to Kraft Music. Ben Kraft, Brandon Zunker, and Jamie Medina were on hand to accept the award.

In 2014, Kraft Music demonstrated the largest On-Stage products sales growth among all authorized dealers. On-Stage brands include On-Stage Stands, Hennessey, DrumFire, Hot Wires, and Audio Spectrum. Kraft Music's commitment to On-Stage brands illustrates the win-win relationship between On-Stage and its dealers, moving both sides towards continued success.



Pictured from left: Aleks Miglowiec, Bob Murray, Brandon Zunker, Jamie Medina, Ben Kraft, Sharon and Jim Hennessey

On-Stage senior vice president of sales and marketing, Sharon Hennessey, commented, "Kraft Music was awarded the Dealer of the Year because of their monumental growth in 2014. We truly appreciate the business that Kraft brings and the relationship that we have with them. They are a real pleasure to work with. We are excited for their success in the industry and look forward to exploring more opportunities with Kraft going forward."

Casio Donates Keyboards to Notes for Notes

Casio America, Inc. is proud to announce it will be donating digital pianos and synthesizers to six new Notes for Notes Recording Studios at Boys & Girls Clubs and after-school facilities across the country. The donated instruments will be used by the Notes for Notes team to help give youth the opportunity to explore, create, and record music for free, particularly in geographic areas of the highest need that are also removing arts from the curriculum.

"Music can be a very powerful outlet for today's youth to express themselves in a positive way and it can also be a great tool for developing an individual's self-esteem," said Stephen Schmidt, vice president of Casio's Electronic Musical Instrument Division. "We are proud to support such a worthy cause like Notes for Notes and we're excited to bring our electronic musical instruments to the new recording studios, enabling the aspiring musicians of tomorrow to fine-tune their skills."

Notes for Notes is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that designs, equips, and staffs after-school recording studios inside Boys & Girls Clubs and after-school facilities offering youth the opportunity to explore, create, and record music, free of charge. At the core of the organization is a focus on putting youth on positive paths with music as the first step.

This year, Notes for Notes will open six-plus new recording studios in cities including San Francisco, Ventura, Brooklyn, Atlanta, Detroit, and Austin – which has been made possible due to the support of the Country Music Association Foundation and Notes for Notes' partners. In support of this growing music education program, Casio donated brand new musical instruments including seven Privia Pro PX-5S digital pianos and seven XW-G1 Groove Synthesizers to be used in the new studios.

www.casiomusicgear.com

Playground Sessions and Yamaha Music Interactive Enter Partnership

Playground Sessions and Yamaha Music Interactive, Inc. have partnered to offer Playground's piano and keyboard learning software on Yamaha's popular MusicSoft platform using Playground's Play To Learn technology.

Co-created by the music producer, composer, and artist Quincy Jones, Playground's keyboard learning program launched on the Yamaha site in mid-December.

"Playground Sessions employs technology, popular music, and classic hits, as well as elements of gaming to reach the musician in all of us," according to Playground Sessions' CEO, Chris Vance. "In today's digital world, it's more important than ever to provide an interactive experience, allow for instant gratification, let users learn at their own pace, and serve up content they relate to and are inspired by."

According to Jason Nyberg, marketing manager for Yamaha Music Interactive, "The goal is to make music right away, and Playground does a fantastic job of making that a reality. It is a remarkable program, both in functionality and in style. This is not another online flash-in-the-pan series of video clips. It has an intuitive interface

that leads the user through effective and entertaining music lessons at beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels."

Playground Sessions also boasts an extensive online music library with a wide range of musical genres. With over 30 hours of video tutorials and printable arrangements, there is more than enough for users to stay interested and engaged. In addition, users often share their scores, progress, and messages on Facebook and Twitter.

"We are very pleased to make Playground Sessions available to the Yamaha family," commented Nyberg. "This powerful and effective online instructional tool will help ensure that our customers will be able to maximize their musical proficiency and enjoyment with our instruments, regardless of their ability or experience."

"We are deeply gratified that a manufacturer of Yamaha's caliber recognizes the mutual benefits of this collaboration for both companies. It is a natural partnership for our market-leading brands," said Vance.

www.playgroundsessions.com
www.yamahamusicsoft.com

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PLAY HARDER**

www.bourns.com/proaudio

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The advertisement features a high-energy photograph of a guitarist with long, flowing hair, illuminated by bright yellow and orange stage lights. To the right of the guitarist, several Bourns Pro Audio components are displayed, including various potentiometers, switches, and connectors. The Bourns Pro Audio logo, which includes a stylized guitar silhouette, is positioned in the bottom right corner.

Ashly Audio Appoints Sound Directions as UK Distributor

Ashly Audio announced the appointment of Sound Directions, Ltd. as its exclusive distributor in the United Kingdom. Sound Directions caters to consultants and A/V integrators with peerless systems knowledge and a free system designing and programming service. The Chessington, Surrey-based company will distribute Ashly's entire line of products, including Ashly's networked multi-channel amplifiers, Protea DSP-equipped amplifiers, and customizable user interfaces, such as Ashly's iPad app.



From left to right: Stanislas Boivin-Champeaux, Sound Directions UK; Jon Paul Boucher, Ashly Audio, Inc.; Francisco Lorenzo, Sound Directions UK; Christophe Palluat de Besset, Sound Directions France; Mark Wentling, Ashly Audio, Inc.; Jessica Colombain, Sound Directions France; Mike van der Logt, Ashly Audio, Inc.

Stanislas Boivin-Champeaux founded Sound Directions in 1998. "From the very start, we've worked closely with our customers to demystify the vast array of technologies that are available in the installed A/V market," he said. "When it benefits our clients, we happily design and program systems that work flawlessly under the pressures and challenges of the real world. We've seen countless systems designed by others that left end-users with a system that they did not understand and

could not operate. We go the extra mile to ensure that this is never the case for the systems we design. A job is never complete until everyone is perfectly satisfied."

The effort Sound Directions puts into system design and programming for its audio professional clients is unique among distributors," said Mike van der Logt, EMEA sales manager with Ashly Audio. They have a strong technical team that has depth of experience in the markets their customers operate

in. They understand the pressures their customers face and work alongside them to create on-time solutions, within budget. That ultimately wins more projects for everyone involved. We're pleased to partner with such a well-respected and forward-thinking distributor. Our existing UK customers will be pleased, and we expect Sound Directions' reach to win legions of new Ashly fans."

"We have travelled the world to pull together a portfolio of products that work flawlessly together, and Ashly Audio has a well-deserved reputation for building reliable, well-engineered solutions at exceptionally competitive prices," said Boivin-Champeaux. "Ashly's hardware, software, and user interfaces complement our existing partner brands perfectly, and their products are very flexible and Dante- and CobraNet-compatible, allowing us to leverage Ashly solutions in a huge range of designs."

www.ashly.com

Kimberly Freeman Partners with Blackstar Amplification

Blackstar Amplification has announced a new partnership with Kimberly Freeman, the front-woman of rock duo One-Eyed Doll. Freeman has chosen the HT Metal 100 Series Amps as her go-to for the band's upcoming North American spring tour.

"I'm so excited to bring the Blackstar HT Metal 100 on our *Witches* album release tour this spring! As the guitarist in a two-piece rock band, it's so important to have an amazing sounding amp. One-Eyed Doll is just drums, vocals, and one loud



guitar. No backing tracks or tricks, so the amp has to be

powerful. It's the backbone of our show," shared Freeman. "The rich, clear tone of the HT Metal 100 has everything I need for any size venue. I can't wait to show it off!"

"We are really thrilled to be working with Kimberly," said Loren Molinare, product manager for Blackstar. "Kimberly as a guitarist is on the forefront of Women in Rock, and with her playing through the Blackstar HT Metal 100 stack we are looking forward to a rocking partnership!"

For more information on Freeman and drummer Jason Rufuss Sewell, visit www.oneeyeddoll.com.

www.blackstaramps.com

On-Stage Honors AIMM Dealers

On-Stage announced its Outstanding AIMM Dealers of 2014 during a reception held at Winter NAMM. This year's recipients included Robert M. Sides Family Music Centers, West Music, Dietze Music, Paige's Music, and Palen Music Center.



From left: Dietze Music's Ted Eschliman and Tim Pratt with Jeremy Payne.

Jeremy Payne, On-Stage sales & marketing director, described the award in his comments, "TMP is a proud and longtime partner of AIMM. As a whole, AIMM is a fantastic organization and each year we like to recognize the very best performers in the group. We select the recipients of the Outstanding AIMM Dealer Awards based on many criteria, including purchasing growth, product assortment, business communication, and overall support of our lines. It is truly rewarding to be able to recognize these great friends and partners for their dedication to The Music People in 2014."

On-Stage is proud of all of its dealers' success and continuously work to provide them with the innovative and desirable products that contribute to that success. On-Stage looks forward to another positive year with all AIMM members as strategic partners.

www.on-stage.com

Chauvet DJ Geyser Adds Impact To Mardi Gras Floats

The Krewe of Endymion Parade, started at City Park and Orleans Avenues in New Orleans, and from there took visitors on a journey that figuratively at least reached far beyond the confines of the Crescent City. Built around the theme "Fantastic Voyages," the largest and most legendary of New Orleans' Mardi Gras parades featured floats depicting *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, *Gulliver's Travels*, and other tales of transcendent journeys. Accenting it all, along with 2,650 masked revelers tossing beads to the crowds are Geyser RGB Foggers from Chauvet DJ and video panels from Chauvet Professional.

"Chauvet products are a key part of our design," said Ray Ziegler of RZI Lighting (New Orleans), which does most of the lighting and special effects lighting for Endymion. "Being in New Orleans at Mardi Gras, the Endymion floats have to be



very lush and rich visually to capture the imagination. Yes, the Chauvet products certainly contributed to this look."

The Endymion project starts with a series of 45-foot floats which are linked together to form a parade train that rolls through New Orleans. Each float was decorated to reflect the "fantastic voyage" theme of this year's parade. Chauvet DJ Geyser RGBs helped add more light and

depth to the floats with their streams of colored fog. "The average person looking at the float gets about 30 seconds to view it before it moves further down the street," said Ziegler. "So we really needed a fixture like this that shoots a quick shot of fog with no re-heating."

The Geyser RGB blasts a vertical stream of safe, water-based fog while simultaneously illuminating it with 21 high-output RGB LEDs to create streaming 30-foot plumes of color. "We get a lot of excitement out of the Geysers with very little installation time," said Ziegler, who positioned 10 of the units on his float. "Endymion is near and dear to a lot of people in New Orleans, so we wouldn't make a decision about gear lightly. I feel good about the Chauvet fixtures and the contribution they can make to our floats."

www.chauvetdj.com

Kala to Include Humilele with Every Elite Ukulele

MusicNomad Equipment Care's Humilele, a humidifier for the ukulele, will now be included with every Kala Elite Ukulele sale. The Elite Ukulele is Kala's newest American-made, high-end ukulele.

"Kala wants to ensure our customers understand the critical nature of proper humidification of their ukuleles. That's why we chose the Humilele humidifier," says Mike Upton, founder of Kala Brand Music Company. "MusicNomad's Humilele is the perfect size for the ukulele and with its special anti-drip Humid-i-bar insert that holds a lot of water, it gets the job done with less maintenance," says Upton.

Humidity levels below 40 percent require instrument humidifiers. "We're honored to partner with Kala... and to be part of this important initiative to educate musicians on proper Uke care," says Rand Rognlien, MusicNomad owner. The Humilele retails between \$9.99 and \$10.99.

www.kalabrand.com



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Alphasphere Maker Turns to Crowdfunding

It's hard to get funding for business ventures these days, when banks are keener to give out bonuses to directors than to entrepreneurs.

That's why electronic instrument designer Nu Desine is raising extra funds to help develop and market its new AlphaSphere Me product through crowdsourcing.



The quirky musical instrument made quite an impact last year, when user videos went viral on Facebook, racking up over 10m views in less than two weeks.

The new model features the same pressure sensitive pads as the original Elite and Nexus models, but fewer of them and features a simplified software user interface.

"The idea is to make music accessible to anyone," said a spokesman, "and this is rapidly being proven through initial user testing. It is proving very popular in an educational context. The campaign itself is hosted on IndieGoGo and has a number of early-bird offers on the device so that contributors can get up to 25 percent off the retail price of \$199."

Tabla player Talvin Singh described the original Elite model as, "An incredible universe of an instrument, which gives you the feeling to tailor make tones, aesthetically and sonically, as well as allowing you the capacity to invest in more indigenous and rebellious scale systems".

alphasphere.com

Audio Firms Join Together



Duilio Salvucci

A new European audio firm has been set up, following the joining of two Swiss companies and an Italian loudspeaker manufacturer.

The Schertler group comprises: Schertler SA, Swiss manufacturer of high quality contact microphones and compact acoustic and electric amplification systems; SR Technology, the Italian loudspeaker systems manufacturer (wholly owned by Schertler since 2012); and Velvet Strings SA (developed and owned by Schertler).

The group's new website offers pro-audio customers, hi-fi enthusiasts and musicians a range of amplifiers, preamps and contact microphones plus active and passive loudspeaker systems for live work, home audio and installations.

In addition, it sells string sets for cello and bass and will soon be adding ranges for violin, viola and guitar.

Customers in Europe can either pur-

chase products directly via the website, or from authorised centres that have been set up in selected territories.

Duilio Salvucci, general manager of SR Technology, said: "As well as buying direct, visitors can also have direct contact with our multi-lingual product specialists and access immediate after-sales assistance. With an increasing range of products designed for different market sectors, it has proved a logical development going forward."

schertler.com



Line 6 Plans Take Shape

In other Yamaha news, it has begun the process of integrating Line 6 into its distribution network and will now be distributing the range out of its 13 European offices.

More details of how the structure will work going forward are likely to be announced at the forthcoming Musikmesse in Frankfurt.



"As a member of the Yamaha family, Line 6 now has the opportunity to target a growth target in Europe, which can only be

achieved with a well designed sales and marketing network," Paul Foeckler, president and CEO of Line 6 explained.

"The Yamaha Music Europe markets served are considered the main growth areas for Line 6. We look forward to working with a major Yamaha branch and are confident that we can serve the European market better in the future."



Francois Rousies

MBO for Cordial

German cable manufacturer Cordial has a new owner after a management buy out which saw MD Francois Rousies take control of the company. Cordial was founded 20 years ago by Neutrik partner Heinz Schneckenachner. Rousies became managing director in 2005.

cordial.eu

Yamaha Launches New-Look Flagship Store in London

One of the UK's best-known music retailers has undergone a transformation as part of Yamaha's overhaul of its dealer network.

The Yamaha-owned Chappell of Bond Street in London has now completed its rebrand to Yamaha Music London and undergone a refit to incorporate the new branding and new dedicated areas within the shop such as a pro sound area.

It is part of Yamaha's overhaul of its European dealer network which saw it introduce its first set of new dealer T&Cs in nearly two decades.

European dealers now have to adhere to a strict set of standards in-store to achieve their 25 percent Yamaha margin. The conditions are set out in a document, which has become known as Yamaha's Purple Book.

As part of that, the London store has become the benchmark and flagship for Yamaha's UK retail network.

Store manager Nigel Hill told MMR: "We've had a very positive reaction from our customers since the relaunch - without a doubt the new pro sound area focusing on stage, studio and stadium product has a real 'wow' factor. added to that the lighting in this area along with the stage looks very effective and professional. All of our customers are really buying into the idea of getting hands on with the guitars and drums and trying before buying."

In fact, the store now boasts the largest collection of Yamaha guitars in Europe and a stock of 35,000 sheet music books. "Regular and new customers have been curious to explore the



new look store for themselves," added Hill. "The feedback we have had so far has been very positive. The feeling is that it is a vastly improved shopping experience - they can connect and engage with the brand in a way they couldn't before." The refit has seen what was already one of the UK's best music retailers, seriously up its game and become a real showcase for the breadth of Yamaha's range.

Continued on page 20

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Continued from page 19

“The ground floor has been reconfigured – it is now more spacious which has given us a better opportunity to showcase our lifestyle range of digital pianos. The new orchestral display walls highlight brass, woodwind and strings and the sheet music area is light, airy and clearly defined. Working with a listed building there are obviously many restrictions but we feel the refurbishment has been cleverly managed to create a contemporary new look and feel to the store without detriment in any way to the character and fabric of the original building.

“The basement floor has gone from dark and uninspiring to a bright, lively and new space filled with the latest must have guitar, music production, drum and pro sound gear – the stage is the fo-



cal point of this floor creating theatre and a buzz with live demos and events, beginning in March.”

As well as increased range, the new-look store will play host to a number of live events and product demos, all closely linked in with its online presence. “YML is a multichannel retail experience where we reach our customers through not only the bricks and mortar Wardour Street store but also digitally and through hosting many exciting live events,” said Hill. “I’m working closely with Yamaha to stage a program of live in-store events throughout the year. In addition to creating customer involvement this will also bring to life the Yamaha goal of sharing our passion for sound, technology and performance.”



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Trade Regrets

Richard O'Donnell passed away on January 15.

O'Donnell was vice president of Yamaha Corporation of America at a very historic time in the company's growth and development during the 1970s. He worked on several projects including managing the operations for the Everett Piano Plant in Michigan, which Yamaha purchased to expand its piano manufacturing. O'Donnell later oversaw the Georgia manufacturing plants for Yamaha and witnessed first-hand the growth of the company within the American market.

O'Donnell was on hand at the time of the release of the DX7 in the early 1980s, which was pivotal in leading Yamaha to become one of the industry's leaders in the field of MIDI-driven gear.



our industry. Never was there such a profound example of this than when I interviewed Fritz Kollitz! What clearly came through within his interview was his passion. He made the subject of tonewood compelling and interesting because of his knowledge and because he clearly cared about providing the best products possible for his customers. Just listening to him explain the process of drying wood for musical instruments becomes of interest because of his dedication to the topic. And he was a very kind person who supported his son, Oliver, when he turned the company over to retire. He remained in a supportive role until his passing on February 11. Last month at the NAMM Show, his son was presented the Milestone Award to honor his father and the company.

Bob See founded See Factor, a pioneering and innovative pro-lighting and pro-sound service. See's career began when Bill Graham opened up the Fillmore East in the late 1960s. He cut his teeth in the lighting field as it was new to everyone. Many of the methods for lighting he created in those early days have become standards within the industry. Over the years, See and his team worked with top musicians and performers around the world and expanded their services to include pro-sound in the early 1980s.

Bob See passed away on February 10. To view a clip from his 2010 NAMM Oral History interview, go to www.namm.org/library/oral-history/robert-see



Bill Tregoe passed away on February 25. Throughout his 35-year career as a sales rep for CG Conn and later King Musical Instruments, Tregoe drove an estimated 1,300,000-plus miles. As a trumpet student, Bill took lessons at a Conn Music Store and later became a band director, serving schools mostly in Texas and Florida from 1949 until he was hired by Conn in 1962.



We recently received the following message from NAMM's Dan Del Fiorentino:

*At the time of **DW Caffey's** NAMM Oral History interview in 2012, he had been tuning pianos for just over 72 years! This fact is made all the more amazing considering DW was blind.*

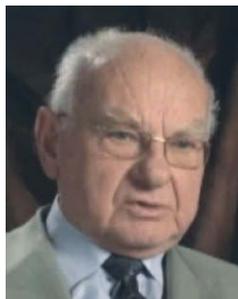
He was very young when he found himself enamored with the piano. In 1940, when he was just fifteen years old, DW taught himself how to tune pianos. He read a book and asked an old time tuner a few questions and was soon hired by a music store. He worked for several piano stores in Mississippi during his long career including Allegrezza Pianos in Ridgeland, where he was interviewed. He never let his blindness limit him and in fact he proudly taught others his craft at the Mississippi School for the Blind for over 32 years.

DW passed away in a Jackson, Mississippi area hospice on January 24.



In February, NAMM's Dan Del Fiorentino sent the following regarding the passing of **Fritz Kollitz**, founder of Fritz Kollitz Fine Tone Woods:

Without a doubt, one of my favorite components of an interview is gathering in-depth details of a given topic from a passionate expert of the various segments of



ON THE MOVE

Gakki Co. Ltd., holder of the Ibanez guitar and Tama drum brand names, has announced the appointment of **Kimihide "Ken" Hoshino** as the company's new president. He succeeds Toshitsugu "Tom" Tanaka who, beginning in 2004, led the company into an era of sharply increased sales and prosperity. Tanaka will continue his work with the company in the capacity of advisor.



Kimihide "Ken" Hoshino, son of late company co-owner, Masao Hoshino, began his career with the Hoshino organization in 1974. From 1981 through 1985 he served as president of Hoshino USA Inc. and was widely acknowledged as the driving force behind Tama's rise to prominence in the U.S. market during that period. He then returned to Japan to head Hoshino's domestic Japanese market distribution, and was also accepted as one of the company's Board of Directors.

In the early '90s, Ken turned his focus to the improvement and expansion of

the company's pan-Asian manufacturing efforts, and by the mid-90s was responsible for leading the company's Electronics division. In 2000, he was appointed president of the Hoshino Gakki Manufacturing Co. Ltd. in Seto City, Japan. This period of his career is marked by his role in the development of Tama's much acclaimed Marching Percussion line. Most recently, he has also been piloting the company's worldwide AR efforts.

Ken Hoshino remarks, "It will not be easy to live up to the exceptionally high standards of achievement and success set by my predecessors. But by applying what I have learned through all my past experience within the Hoshino Gakki Group, I believe our company stands poised to make Hoshino an even more valuable partner than ever."

Yamaha has announced the appointment of **Frank Gutwein** as district manager for the company's Pro Audio & Combo Division. His territory includes Northern California, Northern Nevada, Utah and Colorado. He reports to Frank Yardley, western regional sales manager.



Prior to working at Yamaha, Gutwein held the position of district sales manager at Peavey Electronics, where he covered much of the same region he will oversee at Yamaha. At Peavey, Gutwein managed and developed the entire musical instrument, multi-chain store, audio-visual and rental company accounts. His work earned him "Rep of the Year" in 2014.

Other experience includes territory sales representative for PCM Marketing, where he maintained and developed accounts with large format independent musical instrument, multi-chain store, audio-visual, and rental house clients. There, he received top sales awards from Shure, Monster Cable, Auralex, Gator, and Hosa. He also served as store manager at several Guitar Center outlets.

Yamaha has also announced the appointment of **Chris Marr** as national account manager for the company's Pro Audio & Combo Division. His main priorities will be managing sales relations with Guitar Center and Musician's Friend.



Prior to working for Yamaha, Marr gained experience as the key account and territory sales manager with Peavey Elec-

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tronics Corp. During his time there, he exceeded expectations and earned multiple accolades for his achievements, including several divisional top sales and Salesman of the Year. By acquiring and managing some of the largest national instrument retail accounts, including Guitar Center, Marr increased the company's territory sales.

Additionally, Marr worked for U.S. Music Corp. as a district sales manager, representing several guitar and amplification manufacturers. There, he developed many new accounts, increased territory sales and was named Salesman of the Year two years in a row.

Conn-Selmer has announced that one of the nation's leaders in music education and highly regarded music industry professional, **Tom Bracy**, has joined the company as the newly created director of educational programs within the Division of Education.

"It is with much enthusiasm we welcome Tom Bracy to the Conn-Selmer Division of Education," says Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser, vice president of Education. "He brings a wealth of knowledge to the ongoing expansion of our growing outreach programs and a rich history of organizational and administrative success."

Tom Bracy brings nearly 30 years of music education experience to the Division of Education. He began his career as a band director for the Archdiocese of Chicago while attending Northeastern Illinois University. While continuing as a band director for nearly 30 years, he also served in other positions such as executive director for the Association for Catholic Music Education and then became area manager for the Chicago Park District, one of the largest geographical and most diverse communities within the Chicago area.

For the past ten years, Bracy has held various positions at Chicago's Merit School of Music, including music teacher, director of operations, acting director of development, COO, and most recently executive director.

As director of Educational Programs, Bracy will collaborate with Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser, Michael Kamphuis, managing director Educational Services, and key Division staff to develop, administer and communicate the vision and strategies that support the educational programs within the Division of Education, including the VIP and Conn-Selmer Institute Programs.

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Floyd Rose

Still Breaking New Ground

by Bryan Reesman

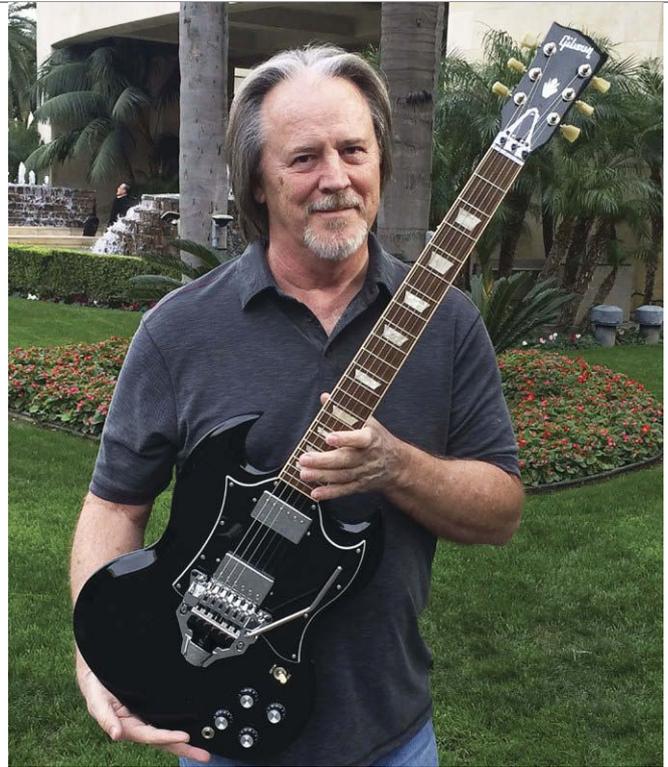
A lifelong musician who has played with the bands C.O.R.E. and Q5 and is lately writing country songs, guitarist and technological guru Floyd D. Rose developed the locking tremolo for guitar in the late '70s, ushering in a musical innovation embraced by the likes of Eddie Van Halen, Neal Schon, and Joe Satriani. His latest breakthrough, the FRX Tremolo System, designed for Les Paul, SG, and Flying V-style guitars, is a direct swap for the Tune-O-Matic and stopbar type bridge system. It has a locking nut that can simply be mounted in place of the truss rod cover. Rose spoke with *MMR* about his latest invention.

Over how many years was the FRX Tremolo System in the making?

Floyd Rose: Since the Kramer days I've always wanted to have one that you could install on a Gibson guitar, like a Les Paul, where you didn't have to route it. Back then I had talked to Helmut Schaller about maybe making one of these, and he took it upon himself to make the one that you will find on the web that sits on top of it and is form fitted to the top. It didn't work very well for a few reasons, mostly because you couldn't get enough spring pressure and some other technical reasons. It never worked to my standards. There were a few of them sent out, and then we discontinued it pretty quickly. A few years after he did that one, I decided to try to do it the way he did it only make it a little bit bigger so you get more springs on it. I did that with one prototype and still wasn't satisfied with it because it was pretty big and heavy and wasn't aesthetically very cool, so I pretty much dropped it until I started thinking about it again recently. I think I started a year and a half or two years ago. The spring problem came up again, and I realized that you only have about 3/4" to work in and how are you going to get a strong enough spring to work in that kind of room. You can't, and that's when I started thinking about putting the spring in back, and the key invention is what I call the transfer rod, which transfers the spring pressure to the base plate.

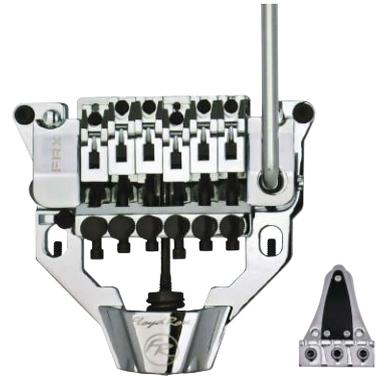
Do you find that time is a main factor in figuring out problems like this?

Yeah, when I start thinking about what the problem is then I just try to imagine mechanisms that will accomplish what I need. Obviously in the original Floyd the problem was friction – when you released the tension on the strings, the strings would move over the bridge saddles and the nut, and when the springs returned the bridge back to its original position



Floyd Rose with an FRX-equipped Gibson SG.

the strings would drag and not come right back into tune. That was a problem, so my idea was how do you get the least amount of friction? Well, if there's no movement, there's no friction. That's where the clamping came from, to keep the strings from moving over the nut and the bridge.



The FRX Tremolo System with Locking Nut.

The FRX features a new function called "assisted floating," which offers better tuning stability. Could you talk more about that?

That has been an issue from the beginning that people have had with my bridges because they are so delicately balanced on the knife-edges. Just a slight touch on the bridge would make you go sharp if you had to rest your hand on the bridge. So you would have to do what Eddie Van Halen does and put a block under it so when you rest your hand on it, it doesn't move. But then you can only push down or just have to learn to play [it the way it is]. I never had that problem because I never rested my hand on the bridge really heavily. I had two versions – one thing I called a spring-loaded stop back in the Kramer days, and it basically did what this new trem assist post and spring does on the new bridge. But on this bridge it's very small and very simple and works perfectly. The good thing about this bridge is that all of the adjustments are done right from the top of the guitar. You don't have to take a plate off the back and mess with anything in the back.

How have people responded so far to the FRX Tremolo System?

The response has been great so far. We've had a couple of issues because of the space issue. I put it on three different Gibsons: an old gold top, a brand-new Les Paul, and a brand-new SG. The clearance was pretty close on my old gold top to not getting the action low enough, but it worked on all of them. Now that we've gone out in the field, apparently the neck angle on the Gibsons changes slightly, and a slight change in the neck will affect it, so we've addressed that now. A couple of guitars that went out had the little thing that protrudes below the base plate, the transfer rod cone, too close to the face and would hit the face of the guitar when you dive, so we shortened it.

Every new generation of bands tends to have its own styles and sounds. What concerns or requests have younger players come to you with in terms of guitar technology?

It's never happened. I seem to be the only one that wants to move it forward. People complain about things in the bridge, for instance, like the floating and the fact that there are clamps and you have to cut the ball off the string. It's something I'd rather not do, too, but you have to decide what's more important, perfect tuning while you use the tremolo or not, or the trouble you have to go to to string it. Back in 2004, we came out with the SpeedLoader bridge. We had to stop making them because of a [patent] lawsuit, so that's why you haven't seen many of them. We made these strings and are about to start making them again – there's

a bullet on each end and the strings are made so accurately that when you put them into the bridge it comes back to the previous strings' tuning. That way you don't have to cut off the balls, and it's a really simple bridge to restring because there are no clamps.

Are there any new projects on the horizon at Floyd Rose?

Right now the only thing we're working hard on is getting the SpeedLoader strings back in production, now that we're allowed to make them again, for the people who bought those guitars with them. They love them, but we haven't been able to make the strings, so we are gearing up to do that again. We're going to decide if we're going to start manufacturing the SpeedLoader and putting them on guitars again.

Which guitarists have you liked in terms of their tremolo technique?

Jimi Hendrix was the first one that I went, "Whoa, what was that!" And Ritchie Blackmore was the guy I played the most like and liked his style, and I thought the way he used the whammy bar was great. Interestingly enough, once I invented it [locking vibrato] and was able to stay in tune myself, I had a bigger repertoire of whammy bar licks than anyone for a year or two until they caught up. It was kind of nice for a while. I had the jump on everybody there. You couldn't do the tricks on a regular Strat tremolo that I was doing. You certainly couldn't do that and come back in tune. **MMR**

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Bass Guitar Suppliers Discuss the Market

By Christian Wissmuller

As March is one of *MMR*'s two annual "fretted" issues, we figured we'd turn our attention towards a segment of the overall market that we haven't explored in depth for a couple of years: bass guitars.

To get a bead on what's driving this segment of the industry, *MMR* reached out to several key bass suppliers to participate in a roundtable discussion of trends, sales, and developments that have been making an impact. The results were wide-ranging and varied, but overall outline a vibrant section of MI that's looking up (or at least holding steady).

How would you describe the overall "health" of the bass guitar market in 2015?

Roger Sadowsky: For us, sales are relatively steady, as we are a very small business and are always operating at our maximum capacity. Our gross sales have been almost identical for the last five years.

David McLaren: The electric bass market appears to be holding



Chris Walker
Warwick Bass



David McLaren, BBE Sound/
G&L Musical Instruments



Elliott Rubinson, Armadillo
Enterprises/Dean Guitars



Justin Norvell
Fender



Scott Ball
Ernie Ball/Music Man



Roger Sadowsky
Sadowsky Guitars Ltd.

up better than the electric guitar market, which has been difficult, as you know. Over the past year, our ratio of basses to guitars was about 30/70, which is a bit more in favor of basses than it has been historically. Despite the performance of the electric guitar market, our business is up for both basses and guitars. The economic headwinds in overseas markets hurt export sales quite a bit, but we more than made up for it in the U.S.

Jeff Moore: At ESP, we've seen significant growth in bass sales over the past several years and have definitely increased our market share in that space, which has been a focus for our team here, so I have to believe things are looking promising when it comes to all things bass moving ahead.

Elliott Rubinson: Bass sales are very similar to the prior year. The market is very competitive and there are many established companies in this market that have instruments that are cornerstones.

Ned Steinberger: It's hard for me to say since I have only been back in the bass guitar business for about two years now, with the introduction of the NS Radius Bass Guitar. Our sales are coming on strong, but we don't have enough history to draw any meaningful conclusions about the market in general.

Scott Ball: In 2014, things may have been down just a little bit, but this year we came out with the neck-through Stingrays, so our bass orders have been really strong so far.

Justin Norvell: The bass market has strata within which it breathes up and down – we see it as stable at this time. It's got the same fragility and cautious optimism that the electric guitar market

has – we have released many new products and refreshed our core lineup in an effort to help create some newness, excitement, and discussion at retail and in the market at large (forums, media, et cetera). I think there are some artist happenings that could help drive bass interest and sales: newer buzz bands like Royal Blood (a drums/bass duo where the bass covers the space that a bassist and two guitarists would otherwise occupy via an extensive effects and amp chain), and Disclosure (an EDM duo where one of the two members often plays live bass). The bass is often more back in the ensemble in modern music, so it's always a great thing where it's featured front and center as the primary driving voice.

We have been experiencing steady and healthy bass sales, likely bolstered by our recent expansion of the active Dimension Bass and Jaguar Bass platforms... and the Precision and Jazz Bass are ever-green must-haves, but we are looking to make sure more basses are covered that address all types of players.

Chris Walker: We are finally seeing a rebound in consumer demand after a long downward trend. We are flat with a positive in-

coming order trend. For Warwick, I think that we will grow this year with the new Pro Series line coming out. Many of our *top* bass dealers have pre-ordered the new German Pro Series models after seeing them at NAMM 2015.

Michael Smith: The bass market maintains solid and consistent sales in an otherwise volatile market. We've definitely seen a huge uptick in the past few years as we've increased our focus on bass guitars. I also think we've seen a bit of a change in regards to the customers, whereas eight or nine years ago there weren't that many bass players that started out wanting to play bass. Now I talk to a lot more young players that specifically went into music to play bass guitar. That's a good thing.

Tom Appleton: Overall the bass guitar market for 2014 was roughly flat. We did quite well, however, as we've seen a double digit increase over 2013's results. Looking at 2015 so far we are going strong with a healthy double digit increase in incoming orders.

Armando Vega: Well the bass market in the U.S. has been on a slight decline over the last few years. On the average, since 2009 it's dropped 2.1 percent per year, by volume and price. The sector of the electric bass market that is trending down is from "\$500 and below" but there is actual growth in "\$500 and above" categories. Interestingly enough... We are experiencing a great year in electric basses. Sales are considerably up over last year, particularly in the \$250 - \$500 price range, which is largely due to our New TRBX line and continued success with our RBX series. We've also noticed a boost in high-end signature model basses, as well.

Are there any significant trends you've noticed lately with respect to bass design and manufacture?

JN: Similar to the guitar market, the feature sets and looks of basses keeps pushing – where you can get what looks like what used to be a \$2,000 bass for \$200 today – exotic woods, active circuitry... which creates an increased need for clear differentiation and education to the value proposition of higher price points.

NS: From my perspective, not much has changed. Leo Fender remains the number-one bass guitar designer, as variations of his seminal work continue to dominate the marketplace.

CW: More than ever, manufacturers are leaning towards lightweight. In other words, road cases for the "Road," but gig bags for local performances. The same definitely goes for bass amplifiers where the 3-10 lb. lightweight/high powered amp is a go-to for the road and the local gig.

SB: It seems most brands are adding lower-priced models to their lineups, whether it's foreign-made or just less expensive options. Brands have also been reintroducing classic designs, which we also did a few years ago.

TA: The trends I see right now in bass guitars are spec-driven by the consumer. Bass players are demanding very specific tools for their needs. I see bass players being more open to trying new offerings. They are not as brand focused as guitar players and are much



Ned Steinberger
NS Design



Jeff Moore
ESP Guitar Company



Michael Smith
Peavey Electronics

more interested in what the instrument can add to their particular playing style, rather than playing the same old instrument or brand.

AV: I'm definitely noticing that the "vintage vibe" is rising in popularity, even down into the starter price points. Exotic tops are still widely accepted across the board. I am noticing more 5 and 6-string models showing up in the top 20, per se. Playability and quality construction are still king. As far as colors and finishes are concerned, there aren't any radical changes that I've noticed, except for a significant spike in brown colored basses, more so this year than in years the past.

MS: There's definitely been more in the way of natural wood satin finishes in the marketplace, as well as a trend towards more body mass with basses. However, true innovations are hard to come by when talking about guitars and basses in general. A few years ago, we started including a unique invention called the PowerPlate on our basses. The PowerPlate is held on by the machine heads and is very effective in removing any dead spots on the neck as well as adding sustain and volume by adding mass to the headstock and projecting the string energy through the neck. We include the PowerPlate in all of our basses, from the entry level Milestone to the Rudy Sarzo Signature Cirrus.

JM: There are many good companies out there that are always pushing the envelope and trying to find ways to be more innovative. We make sure to pay attention to what everyone is doing, as well as finding our own niches to create great instruments. Our line of 8-string basses is a good example of that.

RS: Nothing I would really call significant. I see a small trend with regard to headless guitars becoming popular again and it will be interesting to see if that happens with basses as well. I think the most significant one is probably the continuing trend for bass makers to go "down market" with Asian import lines.

ER: Dean has been successful with edgier shapes and our Edge series that was started back in 1997. We have been more successful with bolt-on basses and passive pickup systems – maybe due to the lower price point.

DM: I see increasing diversity of design – not just in the high end, but across a wide spectrum. I have always believed that bassists are more open to exploring new and different things than guitarists are. With the U.S. economy slowly but steadily improving, this promotes increasing diversity as makers are more willing to take chances. Likewise, as consumers become more confident, they become more adventurous in their choices.

How about purchasing trends – both with respect to orders placed by retailers and purchasing habits of end-users?

AV: The average selling price in the market overall is \$380. The high volume zone average selling price is around \$200. Packaged bass models (starter kits) are not as popular as they used to be, which is largely due to custom bundles that are created by dealers.



Armando Vega, Yamaha
Corporation of America



Tom Appleton
Ibanez Guitars

This is a trend that is growing across the board, not just for the bass business.

ER: Dealers order less [nowadays], but more frequently. We have been successful with many of our niche items like the upright Pace basses, 8 and 12-string

basses, and 6-string price point basses.

MS: Bass players are usually a little faster than guitar players to try new things, however the classic stuff still reigns supreme. A couple of years ago, we revisited some of our finishes and took some of our instruments down a more traditional road and it really paid off. Our dealers bought into the idea and their customers responded with their wallets. At the same time, you see more varied shapes now with basses than 10 years ago, with larger top bouts and a tighter waist in some cases. Bass guitar players also seem less concerned with price point than guitar players, probably because there are fewer of them. They tend to buy based on a specific need rather than just a want.

SB: I think forecasting fears are a big deal for retailers. I don't think anyone knows what's going to happen, so they're kind of playing it safe due to the constantly changing landscape.

RS: For Sadowsky, one of our niches has been lightweight instruments, so we see more and more dealers and end-users focusing on the weight of our instruments. As my clientele continues to age, doing a long gig with a heavy instrument is not appealing. I began to pioneer lightweight instruments as far back as 1980.

DM: The Internet continues to grow its influence on the ways in which end-users gather information and make purchasing decisions, and this lends itself to the diversity I mentioned earlier. Through discussion forums, social media, online magazines, and dealer websites with sophisticated product presentations, musicians learn about alternative choices which may better suit them. As musicians, we all respect and are influenced by our roots, but we derive satisfaction

from expressing our own ideas and individuality. We do this through notes and phrases as well as the gear we choose.

Retailers are also diversifying their offerings to provide more compelling choices for musicians, because of a strong business incentive. Twenty years ago, one music dealer would stock much of the same gear as the next, but in today's market where every dealer has a website, email list, and so on, they can't all compete [by] selling the same things.

At G&L, we offer a wide variety of options, with something like fifty finishes, neck options, pickguard options – all sorts of ways an instrument can be individualized. Musicians love this flexibility, and this offers a dealer an opportunity to provide additional value through personalized service, helping the customer tailor a G&L instrument to his or her taste. Likewise, G&L retailers carefully choose their inventory, choosing combinations of models and options they feel would be most attractive to their customers. As a result, the instruments on the wall command attention and

get customers engaged. The gearhead in all of us wants to be inspired, so walking into a store and seeing gear that looks like the same stuff as in the next store is mundane. It's vital for dealers to understand the importance of stimulating the imagination and creativity of their customers.

NS: I really don't know much about bass guitar trends, since we only have a couple of years' worth of experience in this market. I can report that the demand for our upright electric basses is very strong and steady.

JN: Lower-end basses have been strong sellers for several years. While the bass market for bass players is steady, we are seeing a good amount of project studio guitarists looking for affordable basses for their studio projects.

CW: I am seeing a trend of bass players looking to save their money and get a higher-level bass. Much of this may be due to musicians trying to go back to rehearsing more and honing their skills. In the early 2000s, many musicians just simply relied on Pro-Tools and they felt that they could get away with less skill and lower quality gear. Partially because of musicians wanting to hone their skills more, I think that we are at a rising point for both retailers and end-users wanting to spend more money. Being a Warwick product manager, I have noticed an increase in bassists looking to save up their money, do more research, and get a higher-level bass – something that is timeless. Each day this year, I feel that I am getting more and more requests for Custom Shop models.

JM: Higher-end sales tend to be steady. However, we're seeing more value-added basses being sold when it comes to the 6 or 8-string models. I think it's because that player is looking to branch out and try new styles without having to break the bank. We've done a good job covering that range of instruments.

For your brand, what's currently the hottest seller (and why)?

JM: One of our most successful bass product launches for 2014 was the RB-1000 series which was designed from the ground up with legendary funk bassist Rocco Prestia. Rocco had very specific



objectives for what he wanted in an instrument, so we came up with a line of 4, 5, and 6-string models that, in the end, all of us were very happy with. It was a very fun project to be a part of and these basses are still doing very well for us.

JN: Coming off the holiday season, our Squier starter packs are Q4 leader, with our core American Standard and Deluxe Precision and Jazz Basses ruling the Fender-branded roost. As a bassist, you just need a P Bass and a J Bass – those are go-to sounds.

SB: The Stingray – the regular black maple one. It's iconic, that's what we're known for basses and players just love it.

TA: For Ibanez we are seeing huge growth in two areas. In the entry level market the GSR200 has long been the best selling entry level bass, but this year we augmented that series with flat finishes and Spalted Maple tops, which has really helped push our entry level sales through the roof. At the same time, Our Ibanez Bass Workshop series has been selling incredibly well. Each Bass Workshop model fulfills a very specific need and players have really responded to that kind of approach.

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construction, high-end preamps and pickups, and sexy stage-ready looks... at a very reasonable price. It is the no-brainer choice, not only for bass players, but also for guitarists and tracking engineers looking for a great bass to add to their arsenal of tools.

DM: For over thirty years, our top-selling bass has been the L-2000. Leo Fender declared this his best bass ever. Its design was revolutionary and its versatility remains brilliant. A few years ago we introduced our M-2000, which is a modern interpretation of the L-2000. With a simple, intuitive control setup and studio grade preamp, our goal for the M-2000 is to attract players who like the L-2000, but weren't comfortable with its fairly complicated switching system.

Anytime you introduce a modern variant of one of your popular classics, you run the risk of it cannibalizing sales or simply not getting traction. From what we've seen, there's not been much overlap – the hardcore L-2000 fans still gravitate toward that model, while the M-2000 is bringing new customers into the Leo Fender/G&L experience.

RS: Unlike larger manufacturers, we do not have any particular "hot sellers," nor do we feel the need to introduce something "new" for every NAMM show. But if I had to name one instrument that has been a "best seller" for us, it would be the Will Lee Model bass, which we introduced in 1972. It represents about 15-20 percent of our NYC bass sales.

ER: I would say the Zone basses and Edge basses at \$249 and down have been very strong sellers. The entry-level market has been very good for a while now. Also, our acoustic basses continue to be a category leader.

NS: Right now we only offer only one model, the CR Series, made in the Czech Republic. I believe it sells well for several reasons. The balanced headless design and ergonomic body shape combine to make the player feel great when he or she plays it. The sound is unusually versatile. The EMG pickups, designed specifically for the radius bass, provide a rich magnetic tone second to none. These are complimented by our own Polar piezo pickup for a crisp, deep,

All three releases from 2014 have done incredibly well. The Crossover – our six string guitar/bass hybrid, the fretless Portamento, and single cut BTB Terra Firma basses have all been very well received by our dealers and the public at large. Again, I think that speaks to the fact that players are demanding the right tools for the job.

MS: Peavey's bass guitar lineup actually sells quite consistently from model to model. Since we don't have 200 different bass guitar SKUs, we don't see quite the peaks and valleys within the segment that some others might see.

CW: Warwick Custom Shop Thumb Bolt-On 5-String – Natural Oil Finish. Model # 1225080000BZBUBWWW. Why? Because it features many of the Warwick trademarks that truly make them a great manufacturer: Tonal woods, including a Bubinga Body, Wenge Neck, and excellent hardware such as the Brass Just-A-Nut, Brass Frets, MEC Pickups. This bass is a go-to for many of today's top bass players in all genres of music.

AV: Hands down, the hottest bass line for Yamaha is the TRBX series. In fact, it was recognized as "Electric Bass of the Year" by MMR earlier this year. The TRBX models feature a slick contoured design that is optimized for playability and comfort, quality

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Note From Joe

Lessons From the Craft Beer Industry: Innovation and Collaboration

I recently read an article titled “Small business advice: What your company can learn from the rise of craft beer” about how, in the midst of the recession, craft beer sales skyrocketed and small companies experienced significant growth even as overall beer sales were flat. Based on writer Drew C. Marshall’s perspective, some basic concepts were at the foundation of this success: *small business innovation*, *a group effort in promoting the industry* and *friendly competition*. You can read the article on www.washingtonpost.com.

It occurred to me that these ideas could easily translate to and, in many cases, describe the music products and sound industry. After all, both industries have long and storied histories dominated by major brands that have enjoyed a significant portion of the market share for years. And yet, both industries are on the move, offering great opportunities for innovation and shared excitement as these new brands work to build and define their unique segment in the larger industry.

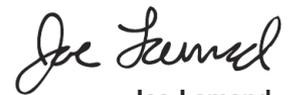
Small business innovation is exploding in the world of music products. New NAMM exhibitors are creating handcrafted and custom-built instruments, and pushing the boundaries of music with new technologies. While there will always be deep respect for larger household brand names, these new folks are seeing success as retailers and consumers seek specialized products with a unique story to tell, just like the craft brewers are doing. This mindset of innovation and new products excites consumers and drives market growth.

Leading **a group effort in promoting the industry** is something NAMM has been doing for awhile now, but we can learn a lot from the craft brewers about how to work together more

effectively, especially on the local level. In my opinion, promoting the benefits of music and advocating for music education is the responsibility of everyone who makes their living in our industry. There are many opportunities for you to work with your fellow NAMM members to promote music in your community, in your schools and on a broader stage by joining us in our lobbying trips to D.C. Will this be the year that you connect and get more involved?

Friendly competition is, from my perspective, one of the things that makes our industry the one that people *want* to spend their lives in... We’re passionate people who love music and everything about making it. Marshall describes a similar camaraderie that exists in the craft beer industry: “...as experiments succeed, brewers don’t hoard their secrets. Many smaller breweries build on loans and advice from larger peers.” NAMM members help each other every day: They volunteer to teach NAMM U sessions and share their hard-earned lessons, they form associations like GAMA to promote guitars in school music programs, and they participate in the annual NAMM Shows, which feed our “Circle of Benefits” business model that promotes the industry for everyone.

We have always been an industry of entrepreneurs, and it seems the trend is only increasing. And although we cannot predict the future, lessons from the craft beer industry make a lot of sense to me as we continue to promote innovation and collaboration within our own community.



Joe Lamond
NAMM PRESIDENT AND CEO



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and dynamic response. Another important factor for any instrument, of course, is the way that it looks. Despite the inherent advantages of headless design, many players find it visually hard to accept. For the Radius Bass, I worked hard to overcome this objection by integrating the neck and body into an overall design that is in the comfort zone for most players. I think this has had a very positive impact on sales.

What are your expectations for the bass market in the coming months?

DM: If the U.S. economy holds up, I expect sales of mid- to high-priced basses – say, \$600 street price and up – to pick up modestly. Bassists tend to be serious about gear and more methodical about planning their purchases. I don't expect improvement in the low-price starter segment, as we're not seeing enough kids taking up combo instruments. Retailers don't seem to be too keen on them, either, as they often find they make it more work to get a customer, especially mom or dad, to step up to a bass that would be better suited to their child's growth as a musician.

Again, if the economy holds up, this will be good for diversity in the choice of basses offered by manufacturers and retailers alike. We've got some new models in the works that we're excited about and,

we'd like to think, would make Leo Fender proud.

SB: This year I think the neck-through version of the Stingray is really going to bump our sales up. It may cannibalize the sales of bolt-ons a little bit, but overall the numbers will be good. The neck-throughs may even overtake the bolt-ons this year. I see things pretty much staying the same with the market, overall. Nothing's showing me that things are going to get worse, certainly.

CW: I think that the business will increase. The tools for the online retailer for every level of dealer are becoming much more user-friendly on the backend. The online presence and content is also becoming more professional looking and trustworthy for the consumer. This will continue to get more people searching online, or actually going into the local store that has a great online store, as well. As a brand manager, I am all for helping to get the dealers the content that they need to help their business and our brands grow.

JN: We continue to be focused on the bass market – it's one of the cornerstones of our business. We have several great models we just released: the Adam Clayton and Geddy Lee Jazz Basses, our active Okume Deluxe Basses, and we have some really great product in current development that we hope will make waves in 2016!

RS: I think one of the biggest reasons to experience disappointment in life is to have unfulfilled expectations... so to stay happy and grounded, I try to keep my expectations to a minimum!

TA: It's hard to speak to the market at large, but the year should be very strong for us. This year we added new models to the already incredibly popular Bass Workshop Series and we've already had tremendous reactions to our new Fanned Fret offerings as well as the new 33" Scale BTB.

AV: Our expectations are to have continued success with our TRBX line, which is fairly new and well received. We will continue to build the line with more options, like our new exotic wood models that we just launched at Winter NAMM, the TRBX-174EW. We also have big plans for the rest of our models like the BB series in coming years. We have a rich and dynamic bass artist roster featuring iconic musicians like Nathan East, Billy Sheehan, Michael Anthony, and John Patitucci and a strong product offering. There really are no limits to where we can go in the bass world as a manufacturer. Now the market itself will probably stay flat for a few years, the growth potential is at the youth level. This something we all need to work at for the future of the bass market, as a collective. Plain and simple, we need to inspire the next generation of bass players. Whatever happens in the near future, bands will always need bass players. Backing tracks and synth bass just don't have the same impact in the live setting. But, then again, maybe I'm old school.

ER: I expect the bass market to maintain, but not necessarily grow. Manufacturers are putting more and more features in their instruments at very competitive price points. 4-string basses continue to outpace 5-strings by a wide margin.

JM: We see opportunities in continuing to bring great, new, quality instruments to market that our customers expect from ESP... and maybe a few that they didn't see coming. We also are seeing a trend of very relevant artists coming to us asking to design instruments that will satisfy their high demands for quality and innovation. You will definitely see some new products launching mid-year that cover these trends that we are pretty excited about!

MS: I'm hugely optimistic about the next few years. The desires of the customer are an elusive, ever-moving target, but providing a rock steady product, excellent customer service, and a synergistic product line really helps to keep it in focus. **MMR**

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Retailers Chime in on the State of the Bass Guitar Market

By Christian Wissmuller

Well this one was really all over the place – MI dealers who participated in this survey were in agreement on ... almost nothing related to the bass market. While, overall, folks report that low end instruments are what's selling, it certainly felt like for every dealer who stated with conviction that inexpensive basses are where it's at in 2015 and upscale sales are "dead," there was an opposing viewpoint asserting that high end model basses are the hot sellers this year. Are sales up, down, or level compared to last spring? The

replies amount to a whole lot of "eh?" with a virtual three-way split amongst those retailers polled (although, to put a positive spin on it, the "Up" replies were slightly in the majority).

Bass sales seem to be very much dependent on where you're selling, to whom your selling, and – as is always vital – how you're selling.

Read on and dive into the murky waters of this schizophrenic market... **MIMR**

Compared to this time in 2014, sales of bass guitars in your store are:



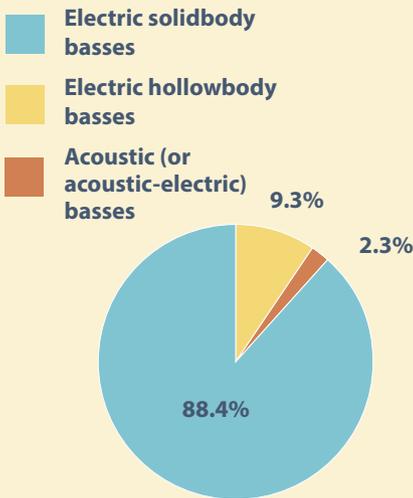
"I think people are saving more now for schooling, and there don't seem to be as many bands in the area as last year, also."

Allen Fike
Fikes Music Ltd.
Clarion, Pa.

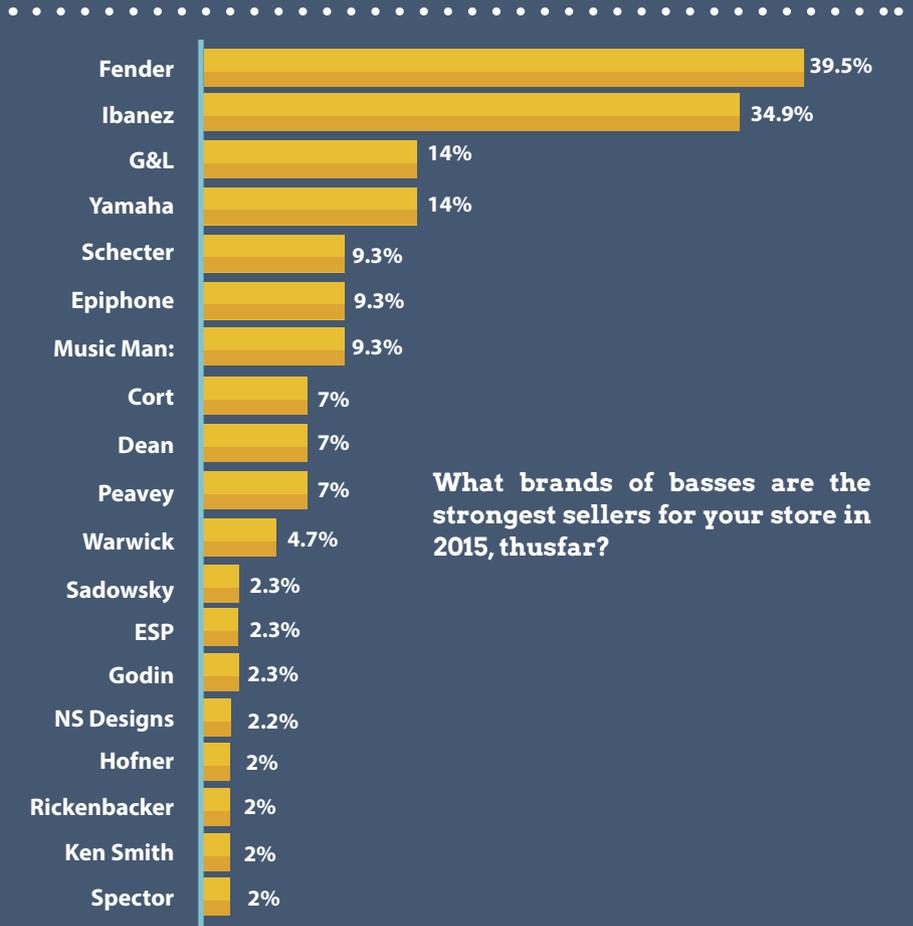
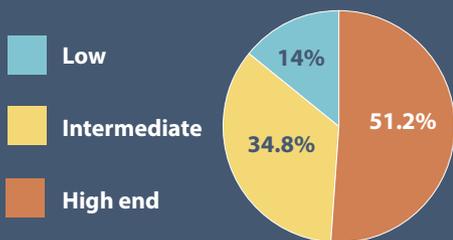
"All guitar sales are down in my family store. The guitar market has been so flooded with guitars that now they are not selling, even at below cost."

Rodney Lindner
Lindner Music
Watertown, S.D.

The bulk of bass guitars sold in your store are:

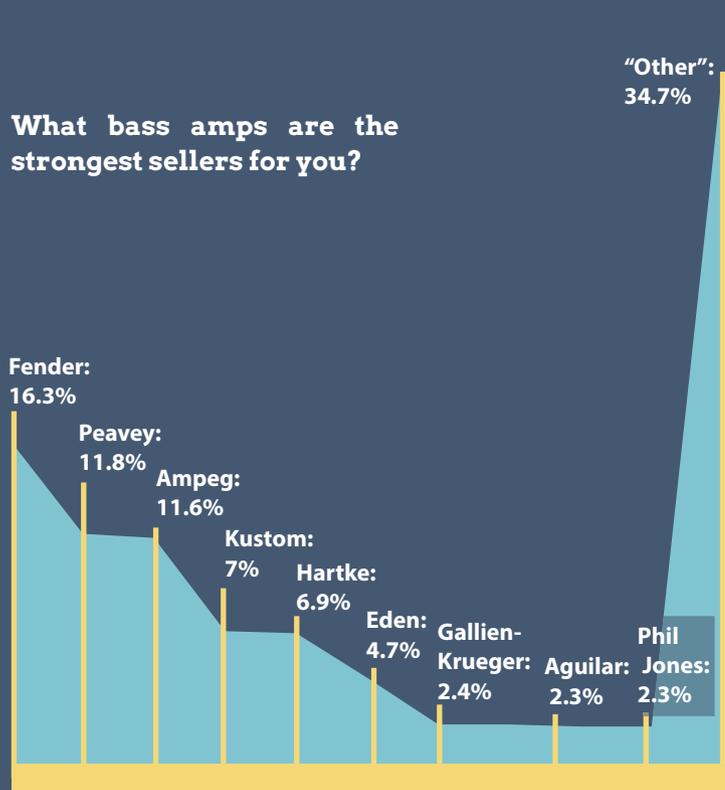


With respect to basses, what price points are doing best for your operation?

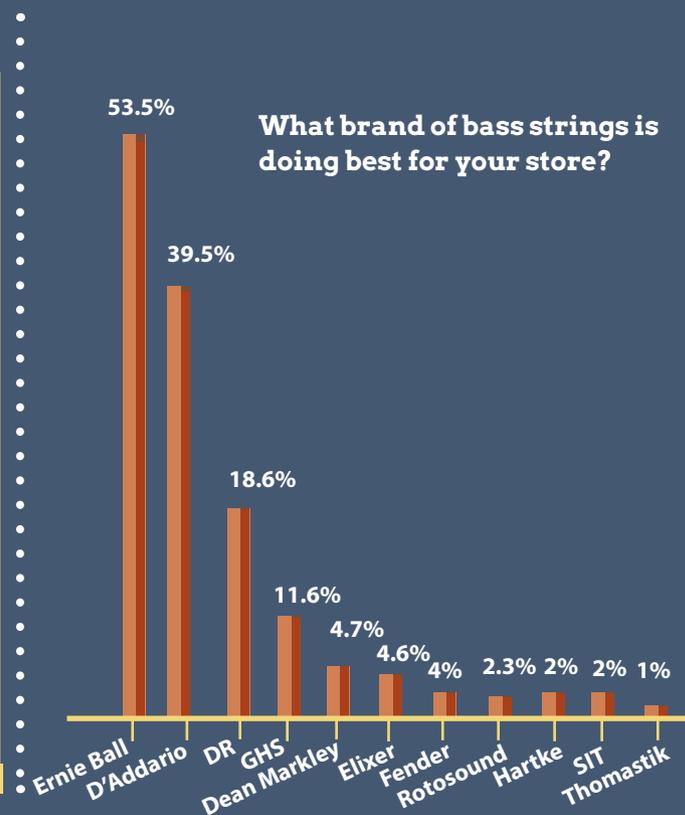


What brands of basses are the strongest sellers for your store in 2015, thusfar?

What bass amps are the strongest sellers for you?



What brand of bass strings is doing best for your store?



What larger trends have you been noticing with respect to the bass guitar market?

"There are less 6-string players, and some 5-string players are going back to 4-string. Also, more passive basses are being sold, and more players playing flatwound strings."

Jay Jacus
New Jersey Guitar & Bass Center
Edison, N.J.

"The ratio of guitar to bass guitar sales is about the same [as usual] – percentage wise, seven to one. The overall price is lower, per unit, by 15 percent."

Dionne Hauke
Ziggie's Music
Phoenix, Ariz.

"Cheap rules and packs sell best."

Paul Lewis
Lewis Music Store
Kissimmee, Fla.

"Anybody in this city can get a new bass at 10 percent over cost at this point – often they are sold at cost just to get them off the books. There is more gear for sale than there are people to spend money on it and the customers know it."

Rusty Olson
Rockhaus
Milwaukee, Wis.

"More bass players are looking for pedals."

Tom Dube
Dube's Music
Freeport, Maine

"It's flat after the downtrend of the past two years."

Parker Daniels
Springfield Music
Kansas city, Kan.

"I'm seeing a bit more interest in the bass market in the past year."

Bryan Loy
Paradise Music
Franklin, N.C.

"There are more sales on the web, customers save the sales tax – same story and getting old."

Reese Marin
Bellevue American Music
Bellevue, Wash.

"People know it's possible to have big sound, big power in a tiny package and they're less inclined to purchase big rigs, even when they're priced right."

Jeff Simons
Watermelon Music
Davis, Calif.

"There are less entry-level buyers, probably due to Amazon, and more people looking for step-up instruments."

Creedence McNabb
Boothe Brothers Music
Spanish Fork, Utah

"Vintage is 'in.'"

D. Law
Crossroads Music
Sierra Madre, Calif.

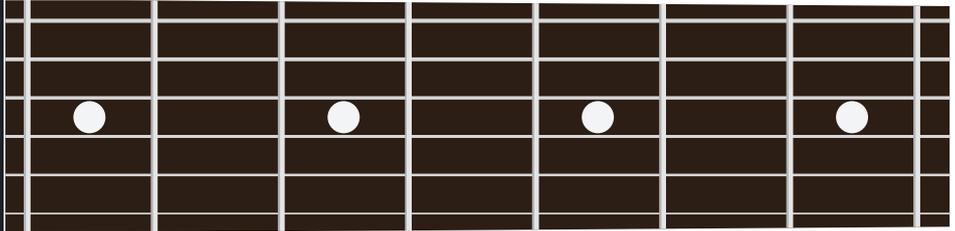
"The low end is dropping off, the high end is increasing. Hand-built U.S.-made product is the best seller."

John Files
Bass Emporium
Austin, Texas

"Usually the cheaper the better, especially for guitarists who were 'elected' to play bass."

Mark Scrufari
Coconut Grove
Kailua, Hawaii

Fretted Product Spotlight



ACCESSORIES

Levy's Leathers M17GRD, M17CXD and M17SRD

These straps are available in dark brown only. The distressing treatment on this leather has the look of a dry cracked riverbed. The strap is lined soft suede and features a guitar, cross, and star applique respectively.



levysleathers.com

LM Products Viking Line Guitar Straps

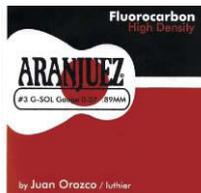
LM Products introduces their Viking line of guitar straps. Each strap in the series features thick, belt-weight leather, metal hardware, and strength from simplicity. The series of four straps are positioned at a price range of \$29-\$59 MSRP.



lmproducts.com

Aranjuez Fluorocarbon Strings

These strings are brand-new and are constructed from heavy polymer (1.6 sg compared to 1.3 sp for nylon). The polymer is tough, and the strings have a smaller diameter. The sound is loud, lively, bright, and crisp, which makes the instrument really become assertive. They sound brighter than nylon, due to the string being slightly smaller than its nylon counterpart. Fluorocarbon is also favored because like nylon, it holds up well to humidity, and also is less susceptible to change in temper.



aranjuezstrings.com

QickPick Headwear New Colors

QickPick's "The Leader" style cap is now available in charcoal, in addition to four current stock colors. "The Trucker" style cap will now feature navy/white and black/white color combinations, to go along with the black/dark grey, cardinal/white, and light grey/white combinations already available. QickPick customers will benefit from the company's shift to air freight shipping. Custom caps will now be delivered in 4-6 weeks (after sample approval). QickPick caps are customized with a brand logo through both the stock and custom headwear programs. The stock cap program has four cap styles available in a variety of colors, all ready to ship with your embroidered logo. The custom cap program allows customers to design a cap from top to bottom.

qickpick.com

EVH Red D-Tuna

The new Limited Edition Red D-Tuna is machined from the highest quality materials and designed for smooth action and precision tuning. Go from E to D on the fly with your locking tremolo. Effortless action and spot-on tuning make the new Limited Edition Red D-Tuna a "must have" for your locking tremolos. Retail price: \$59.95



dtuna.com

AMPLIFIERS

Ashdown Woodsman Range of Acoustic Amplifiers

Ashdown's Woodsman family of amplifiers, combines traditional, wooden cabinets with modern features for live performance and recording. With inputs for microphones and acoustic guitar, Woodsman amps are ideal for duos, or solo singer/guitar players, delivering clear, acoustic tone and performance tuning features, including phase reverse and feedback eliminating notch filters. Three compact models are available: 25W Parlour, 40W Classic, and 65W Jumbo. Each model features a custom-designed 8" Celestion driver. The Classic and Parlour model also feature a horn for increased full-range sound. The 15W Parlour model features a mic channel with independent volume control, guitar channel with volume, bass, mid and treble controls, studio-quality digital reverb, and a master volume. The 30W Classic model builds on the Parlour, adding a tone control for the mic channel, active and passive inputs on the guitar channel, phase reversal switch, notch filter, and an XLR DI out for recording or connecting to a PA. The Jumbo model includes full 3-band EQ for the mic channel, enhanced reverb algorithms (including hall and spring settings) and a transparent effects loop for use with external devices. All models include aux in jacks for connecting an MP3 player.



ashdownmusic.com

Bugera 2,000-Watt VEYRON Bass Amps



Bugera announced the company's new 2,000-watt VEYRON Series bass amplifiers along with a pair of Turbosound-fueled speaker cabinets – the BT115TS and BT210TS. The VEYRON-M BV1001M and VEYRON-T BV1001T amplifiers pack 2 kW of lightweight, Class-D power into a super-portable chassis, with a classic (M) or optical (T) compressor; high-voltage MOSFET (M) or 3 x 12AX7 tube (T) preamp; and Behringer's proprietary dynamizer Technology. Both models offer versatile EQ, an integrated balanced DI, dedicated FX loop, headphone out, and comprehensive connectivity. The ideal companion for any high-powered amp or as a combo extension, Bugera's new, ultra-compact BT115TS and BT210TS cabinets each offer 1,600-watt power handling capability. The enclosures feature 1 x 15" and 2 x 10" LF drivers respectively, for deep, rich bass and mids, plus a high-resolution 1" HF driver for articulate highs. Estimated street price: US\$399.99 (BV1001M); \$499.99 (BV1001T); \$299.99 (BT115TS); \$249.99 (BT210TS).

bugera-amps.com

BASS

Ohana Acoustic Compact Bass

Introducing the all-new Ohana Acoustic Bass – an acoustic bass that marries compact ukulele size with full bass sound and sustain. Play it just like a bass guitar, but in uke size! Instrument features include a solid spruce top, mahogany back and sides, gloss finish, Fishman Presys+ Bass pickup with built-in tuner, metal round-wound bass strings, and a backpack-style padded gig bag.



ohana-music.com

G&L MJ-5 Active Bass

The new MJ-5 brings all of the features of the MJ-4 into a 5-string platform, with re-engineered Bi-coil Alnico V pickups paired with the MJ-spec preamp/control system for a wide range of single-coil tones from classic jazz to far beyond, all without single-coil hum. A G&L Alnico Bi-Coil pickup looks just like a traditional Alnico single-coil pickup, but under the cover are two side-by-side coils configured in series-humbucking mode. These new pickups are optimized for a specially tuned version of G&L's studio-quality M-spec preamp and control system, dubbed MJ-spec. The 18v system features volume, pan and +/-14dB 3-band EQ with center detents, and is powered by twin 9v batteries housed in an easy-access compartment. With an LF442 chip, 100v poly caps, 1% metal film resistors and big, fat signal traces on the mil-spec circuit board, this preamp reveals everything the player and the instrument have to offer.

glguitars.com



ESP LTD BB-1004QM and BB-1005FL

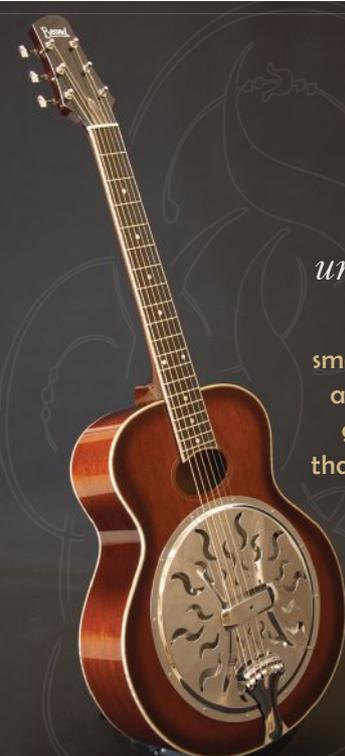
Jazz fusion bassist Bunny Brunel has helped design the 4-string BB-1004QM and the 5-string fretless BB-1005FL. Both basses make use of Aguilar MM (neck) and J (bridge) passive pickups with active EQ, and feature high-end design features such as a quilted maple top and ebony fingerboard, along with components like Hipshot bridge and tuners. The BB-1004QM is being offered in See Thru Black Sunburst finish, while the BB-1005FL is available in a translucent Burnt Orange finish that highlights the highly figured wood grain.

BB-1004QM (MSRP: \$1,855.71, Expected "Street Price": \$1,299.00)

BB-1005FL (MSRP: \$1,998.57, Expected "Street Price": \$1,399.00)

espguitars.com





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George Gruhn

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Guitars

Lâg Guitars Occitania Pack

The sapele back and sides and spruce top of the Tramontane 44 are adorned with a subtle wood binding. The Tramontane 44 Pack includes a gig back, strap, and picks. (Available in standard, $\frac{3}{4}$, and $\frac{1}{2}$ sizes.)

The OC662 ($\frac{1}{2}$ size) is designed with beginning players in mind, the 66 series is a remarkably easy to play and maintain nylon string classical guitar, resulting in a satisfying playing experience, regardless of experience. The OC663 boasts the same qualities in a $\frac{3}{4}$ size.

The Occitania 80 is enhanced with a solid spruce top and African Sapele back and sides finished in Old Port Mahogany. The 80CE features a cutaway body style and a DirectLâg Plus electronics system.

Best described as a "folk nylon" guitar, The Occitania Country is ideal for the traditional acoustic guitar player who is transitioning into the nylon world. The Nylon Western features a solid Western Red Cedar top, African Sapele back & sides, and a satin finish.



laguitars.com

Washburn Guitars Woodline Series Acoustic Guitars

The WLG16S, WLG16SCE, WLG26S, WLG26SCE, WLG66S, and WLG66SCE are Grand Auditorium style acoustic guitars featuring book-matched solid cedar tops. The 16 models feature mahogany back and sides, the 26 models feature rosewood back and sides, the 66 models feature spalted maple back and sides and all feature mahogany/maple bound body and headstock. The mahogany neck has a rosewood fingerboard devoid of inlays. A maple/mahogany/maple strip splits the book-matched rosewood back as well. The rosewood-capped headstock features a pearl inlaid Washburn logo and stylized W as well as Washburn-branded die cast tuners with ebonite buttons. The rosette is made of alternating maple and mahogany.

In addition, the WLG16SCE, WLG26SCE and WLG66SCE have a Venetian cutaway for superior upper fret access and the addition of premium Fishman electronics.

Suggested retail price for the WLG16S is \$712.90, the WLG16SCE is \$890.90, the WLG26S is \$801.90, the WLG26SCE is \$979.90, the WLG66S is \$890.90 and the WLG66SCE is \$1,069.90.



washburn.com



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PHOTOGRAPHY



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The new Ibanez AVN2OPN is a charming parlor guitar with a short scale mahogany neck and 12th fret body joint that recalls the instruments so popular in the early 20th Century. Featuring all solid-mahogany construction (top, back and sides) with an open-pore finish, the AVN2OPN produces a warm, open sound with volume and tone that belies its intimate size. Also features bone nut and saddle, a rosewood fretboard with maple inlays, a Herringbone rosette and a set of Grover die-cast tuners for superior tuning stability. MAP: \$500.



ibanez.com

PEDALS & EFFECTS

Boulder Creek Guitars EBR3-N4

THE EBR3-N4 has a freely-resonating top due to our patented Suspended Bracing System. Monitor the instrument acoustically via the side-supported sound hole (no leaning over the front to hear it). There's need for a feedback buster because the large middle sound hole is eliminated. This instrument delivers stand-up bass volume without the hassle of having to transport one. It also features low and high impedance output jacks. Both can be used simultaneously. No D.I. box needed. MSRP: \$1,099.



bouldercreekguitars.com

Fishman Platinum Analog Acoustic Preamps

The all-analog Platinum Pro EQ and Platinum Stage universal instrument preamps deliver accurate sonic detail for any acoustic instrument. Their discrete, high-headroom Class-A preamp uses precision high-speed circuitry for the highest fidelity and low distortion. Classic Fishman tone centers with sweepable mid are combined with a switchable guitar/bass EQ mode, making the Platinum preamps more musical for bass instruments and more universal for recording and performing musicians. They integrate critical performance features such as adjustable volume boost and balanced XLR D.I. outputs. MSRP Platinum Pro: \$399. MSRP Platinum Stage: \$194.



fishman.com

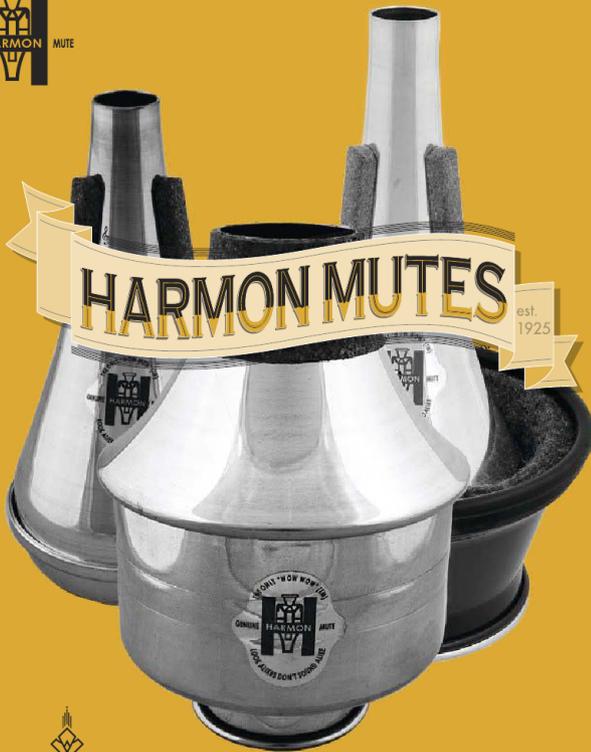
MODTM Kits DIY The Contortionist II

The Contortionist II kit is an all-analog high-octane fuzz box. It produces fuzz with layered octave overtones similar to those produced by an electronic bow. The frequency multiplier circuitry creates harmonics that swell and recede depending on the gain setting, pick attack, neck position, and pickup. This high gain circuit can put out up to two volts and provides ample amounts of sustain. Added features include a tone control and LED.



All kits use point-to-point wiring, and all effect pedals and amplifiers come with a pre-drilled enclosure and all necessary parts are included. All you need to provide are hand tools, a soldering iron and solder. The effect pedal operates on a 9V battery; for a longer lasting option, a 9-volt adapter can be purchased separately.

modkitsdiy.com



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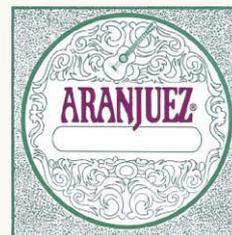
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don't sound alike.

8 new products to delight your customers!



ARANJUEZ STRINGS



With Aranjuez's 50th anniversary three years away, Juan Orozco looks back on the empire he's built

By Paige Tutt

Juan Orozco has been developing and manufacturing strings since the late 1960s, but his guitar education, both as a player and a luthier, began a lot earlier. Orozco started not only playing flamenco guitar, but also working on guitars with his father at the ripe age of seven. The two of them left Spain in 1950 and headed to Sao Paulo, Brazil. There, Orozco continued to work alongside his father. From Brazil, Orozco traveled to Uruguay in 1956 to continue his studies of the classical guitar with Abel Caldevaro, a Uruguayan classical guitar composer and teacher, and Atilio Rapat, a Uruguayan musician who is considered by many to be a true master of the instrument. Four years later, Juan made the decision to stop working for his father, but stayed in South America. He decided to go solo and started working out of a small industrial building, paying \$1,200 a month in rent.

By the early 1960s, specifically 1963, things in South America started to become complicated. The military took an increasingly larger and larger involvement in not only civilian life, but also the very structure of the government. Orozco traveled to the United States in 1964 to stay. In October of that year, Orozco met the Los Índios Tabajaras, a guitar duo of two brothers from the Northeast region of Brazil. With the money he had



The factory where Orozco worked in Uruguay in 1962.



Juan Orozco, Rose Augustine, Pepe Romero, & Mario Escudero



At a reception – Andres Segovia and Singer Maria de los Angeles, Juan Orozco, and his wife.

amassed from building guitars, Orozco was able to finally start his own business – the Aranjuez Strings we know today. This was a decision Orozco made after hearing complaints from musicians about the imperfections of string brands already on the market, specifically in regards to tone and intonation.

There are many manufacturers creating guitar strings in the market, but Juan Orozco doesn't worry about them and just focuses on his own product. "In the market today, there are very good strings," he says. "Aranjuez has always stood by our brilliant sound. We specialize in classical guitar and we just try to make the best sound you can give the instrument... [We] try to make each string provide the tone that suits you." When he first started trying out guitar strings of competitors, he noticed they lacked brightness and color, something he knew he could restore. After a few years and multiple tries, Orozco was onto something. "In the research process, I could decipher the string represents 50 percent of the good sound of a good guitar. A good guitar with a malformed string results in lost sound. After two years, many experiments, and collaboration with guitarists like Alfredo Gil, Los Panchos, Rey de la Torre, Narciso Yepes, and Celedonio Romero and Sons, our strings

were selling worldwide."

Years later, Orozco would organize a concert series that not only established up-and-coming musicians, but the concerts also allowed him to keep in touch with those musicians and ask them for feedback. "There was never commitment to having to use only and exclusively Aranjuez strings. Artists who emerged from this series include Manuel Barrueco, Edward Monge, and Manolo San Lucas, among others. Manuel Barrueco serves as an example that I did not restrict guitarists to the exclusive use of Aranjuez strings... The only ones who gave me unconditional support were Carlos Montoya, Celedonio Romero and sons, Narciso Yepes, [among others]."

One of Juan's main priorities in those early days of Aranjuez Strings has carried over to now: the production of a new monofilament. "In 1980, the house Dupont visited me asking for a collaboration to develop a new monofilament for guitar," he said. "We developed a product called 'Dimetrol,' - I called Narciso Yepes to participate in this collaboration with me. That Dupont



Orozco with Carlos Montoya, February 1968.

nylon was manufactured until 1994. He stopped producing it because there were only two brands, including Aranjuez, who felt the quality was worth the high cost of the material." After production shut down for Dupont nylon, Orozco still desired quality strings made from quality materials. "This is our next project," he says, "trying to produce other materials, which give us a better sound."

It's clear that Juan Orozco's father's dedication and love for guitar making carried over to his son. It's in his blood. The next few years for Aranjuez, and for Orozco, will include celebrations, new product releases, and of course product development. "We are celebrating this year the 50th anniversary of Juan Orozco Corporation and waiting three more years to celebrate 50 years of Aranjuez Strings," says Orozco. "We again start with The New Talent Guitar Strings series, presented by Aranjuez." When asked what Orozco still hopes to achieve with Aranjuez, he answers, "I will concentrate on trying to produce our own metals and trying to develop the new monofilament." **MIMR**

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Setting the Standard – Literally!

NAMM Standards: Developing and Promoting Best Practices for Electronic Commerce

By Christian Wismuller

Adopting, adapting to, and competing with online commerce has been one of the major hurdles facing traditional brick-and-mortar retailers since the '90s. The NAMM Standards committee is comprised of a group of MI leaders who strive to create and promote best practice standards that improve efficiency and keep the "playing field" level for all.

MMR recently spoke with the committee's system architect, Dan Kessler, to find out a little more about the organization's background, current makeup, and goals for the future.

Can you talk about the catalyst behind NAMM Standards – who and what were the driving forces behind the beginnings of the group?

The NAMM Standards committee is an outgrowth of NAMM's technology committee that originally, way back when, espoused the adoption of bar codes in the industry. In 2006, an "ad hoc" committee was formed to restart the development of B2B XML standards. This has morphed into the NAMM Standards committee, which is a more appropriate name for the activities of the group. There have been many contributors to the effort over the years including significant efforts by Paul Ward (Roland) and MaryAnne DelMundo (Guitar Center). But there are some on the committee such as Bill McGloine (Korg) that have been involved longer than I have. I have to say that the selfless collaboration on the behalf of the industry by everyone involved has brought us to where we are. Thank you committee, past and present!

Who currently makes up the committee?

- Presently:
- William McGloine – Korg USA (chairman)
 - Robin Walenta – West Music
 - Joel Menchey – Menchey Music Service
 - Gordon O'Hara – Retail Up!
 - Pat Murphy – Tri-Technical Systems
 - David Rice – Omacro
 - Amy Pearson – Sweetwater
 - Jacci Brandt – West Music
 - Mindy Czaplewski – Hal Leonard Corporation
 - James Puddicombe – Voodoo
 - Josh Koehler – RapcoHorizon
 - Jens Sorensen – Guitar Center
 - Doug Fraser – Alfred Publishing
 - (and me!)

Can you briefly summarize the mission statement of NAMM Standards?

Our mission statement is exactly this: "To develop and promote best practice standards for electronic commerce that improve efficiency between trading partners in the global music products industry."

We will provide a neutral environment for open discussion, encourage collaboration between industry members, and promote the continued evolution of electronic commerce."

There are three components of the NAMM Standard that are designed to work together. First there is a standard for product information. This is designed to interchange all of the data that would comprise an electronic cat-



Dan Kessler

alog. It contains all the details about the products including marketing information and shipping information as well as pricing. NAMM Categories is the second component. It is designed to generally categorize the product information for both internal and external use. Finally, we have a number of document specifications for transactions such as Purchase Orders, Invoices, and Shipping notices. These are meant for system-to-system transactions (although they can be used in other contexts to some degree).

Can you talk about NAMM Standards v2015 and when it will be released?

The 2015.1 version contains new documents that have previously been in draft state. It also has some small changes to some documents that we think are just fixes. Finally, we will now support line-level shipping info that should accommodate both drop-shipment as well as multi-ship-to locations within one purchase order. We are presently finishing the final touches. I expect it to be publicly released in March.

What are the benefits of NAMM Standards to MI suppliers? To retailers?

Benefits to retailers:

- Improved accuracy and efficiency in product maintenance.
- Improved efficiency for purchasing and receiving.
- Timely availability and price updates for systems and for end users.



Benefits to suppliers:

- Give your resellers greater catalog reach
- Potential access of sell through information
- Lower overall costs and improve accuracy in taking and processing orders
- Discrete, individualized and timely wholesale pricing



Making Business More Efficient
Through Technology Standards

What's on the horizon for the NAMM Standards committee in the coming months?

This year we are focused on improving our operation in order to better facilitate our long-term goals. We are thinking about changing how the committee is managed in order to make sure we are doing the absolute best we can do to meet our goals.

As we are doing this we will continue with our present pattern of teleconferences and face-to-face meetings at the NAMM Show and Summer NAMM.

Can you talk more about those long-term goals?

The committee has specific goals in two areas:

Awareness. We think that everyone in our industry should be aware of the existence of the Standard and generally understand where it might be applied.

Adoption. We would like to see Standards used throughout the industry. This is a case where the more users there are, the more value it has for everyone who adopts it. The committee is working to facilitate and support those who are implementing the standard.

Any final thoughts you'd like to share with our readers?

In the long run, B2B e-commerce will be as normal and expected as consumer e-commerce is today. The benefits and efficiencies that result will help create more profitable and enduring companies in our industry. NAMM Standards will help to make this happen. **MIMR**



Hear Tony and Pete Levin on
LEVIN BROTHERS
The New Cool Jazz Release



Tony Levin

Dion Ogust



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Educators Highlight the Best Teaching Tools from the NAMM Show

By Mike Lawson

For the fifth consecutive year, *MMR's* sister publication, *School Band & Orchestra (SBO)*, enlisted a team of music educators to scour the exhibits at the NAMM Show, looking for the best products for music classroom use in an array of different categories. Below are the 2015 Best Tools for Schools from the recent gathering in Anaheim.

This year's panelists again included the chair of the panel, Dr. Karen Childress-Evans of the San Diego Unified School Dis-

trict, Dr. Floyd Richmond of Valley Forge University, Jim Evans, retired music educator from La Mesa Spring Valley SD, Mark Nicholson interim VAPA director for San Diego unified school district, David Rouillard, elementary instrumental music teacher, San Diego USD and Richard Ciaverelli, instrumental music director at the San Diego USD School for the Creative, Performing, and Media Arts (CPMA) middle school.

Best Teaching Tool for Young/Elementary Students



Everyday Improvisation from Alfred Music

Address the National Standards while using your interactive whiteboard! Integrate technology into your classroom with these well-constructed interactive lessons that provide a smooth and easy way to teach improvisation and composition to elementary students (grades 1-4). Each plan starts with a song, chant, or poem, then provides prompts for active listening, invites students to improvise as a group/individually, and concludes with a rubric-measured assessment.

alfred.com

Best Teaching Tool for Beginner Students

Clarinéo in C from Nuvo Instrumental, Ltd.



The Clarinéo is a clarinet in the key of C. It is made from lightweight polymer resins, which makes it easy to handle, extremely durable, and

100 percent waterproof. It is assembled from just three parts, which makes it quick and easy to set up and put away at the beginning and end of lessons. The bell has a simple bayonet fitting while the mouthpiece has O-ring seals. The Clarinéo uses traditional cane reeds (E♭ clarinet) as well as synthetic beginners reeds, both of which are provided with each instrument. The instrument requires little to no maintenance as it has durable silicone rubber pads and the springs are integral with the keys. The range is fully chromatic over three and a half octaves.

nuvo-instrumental.com

Best Intermediate Teaching Tool

Augmented Sheet Music from Weezic, SAS



Augmented Sheet Music is an intelligent and interactive sheet music format, available on all connected devices. It motivates music students to practice more at home and have more fun while

practicing. It is free for all teachers, with the possibility to upload Finale, Sibelius, or MusicXML files, convert them into Augmented Sheet Music, and share them with students.

weezic.com

Best Advanced Teaching Tool

Mixcraft from Acoustica, Inc.



If you use a Windows-based computer in your music program and can't use GarageBand, Acoustica has the solution. Mixcraft is a powerful music production and multi-track recording workstation with thousands of music loops and dozens

of audio effects and virtual instruments. Record audio, arrange loops, remix tracks, score and edit video, and mix and master tracks to create polished, professional compositions. Free teacher's home license is available along with a detailed, excellent curriculum for classroom use.

acoustica.com

Best Student Reward Incentive

SmartMusic from Make Music, Inc.



SmartMusic transforms the way students practice and learn. This interactive tool provides a way to dramatically improve students' skills. As students play along with music on-screen, SmartMusic gives them immediate feedback on their performance by showing correct pitches and rhythms in green and incorrect in red. They are also able to hear their part in context with SmartMusic's background accompaniment of a full ensemble. Create and send assignments to each of your students. And since you can easily follow, document, and grade their progress, individualized instruction and evidence of student achievement all become a reality. The reward incentive given by SmartMusic is the grade. Students use the program to rehearse, and prepare their part over and over until they are ready to submit it for their grade.

makemusic.com

Best Innovative Teaching Tool

Xkey³⁷ from CME-Pro

This keyboard is made of lightweight brushed aluminum chassis with piano-size velocity sensitive keys and it's compatible with Apple iOS, Android, Windows, and Mac devices. It features enhanced MIDI functionality with the Xport feature. Xport enables the Xkey³⁷ to connect directly to external MIDI controllers without connecting to a PC or tablet.

cme-pro.com



Best Percussion Teaching Tool

Heavy Hitter Quadropad Practice Pad from Vic Firth



The Heavy Hitter series of practice pads was designed to provide the most authentic feel possible. And with features that help the player maximize practice time and avoid developing bad drumming habits, the Heavy Hitter pads are a perfect choice for players of all levels and musical styles! The drum pads are laid out accurately and cut for all playing areas, both standard and scrape. Vic Firth Heavy Hitter Laminates can be added to the pad for a greater articulation and better simulation of the response and feel of a marching drum. Because of the easy peel and stick feature, the laminate can be added, replaced, or upgraded at anytime.

vicfirth.com

Best Jazz Teaching Tool

Play Along Series from Hal Leonard Corp.



For use with all B-flat, E-flat, Bass Clef, and C instruments, the *Jazz Play-Along Series* is the ultimate learning tool for all jazz musicians. With musician-friendly lead sheets, melody cues, and other split-track choices on the included CD, these first-of-a-kind packages help you master improvisation while playing some of the greatest tunes of all time. For study, each tune includes a split track with: melody cue with proper style and inflection, professional rhythm tracks, choruses for soloing, removable bass part, removable piano part. For performance, each tune also has an additional full stereo accompaniment track (no melody) and additional choruses for soloing.

halleonard.com/jazzplayalong

Best Concert Band/Orchestra Teaching Tool

Sound Innovations Series for Concert Band or Orchestra from Alfred Music



Sound Innovations for Concert Band or Orchestra is a revolutionary new method that combines time-tested educational concepts, input from thousands of teachers, and advances in modern technology. Using solid pedagogy that follows state and national music education standards, the methods can be customized by teachers to use their own experiences in creating the best approach for their unique classroom. Sound Innovations is available in two versions: Standard Edition and the custom Director's Choice Edition.

alfred.com/soundinnovations

Best Marching Band Teaching Tool

ErgoSonic Marching Bass Drum, from ErgoSonic Percussion, LLC



This innovative design allows performers to face forward with the same body orientation as the rest of the percussion battery and eliminates the blind back up move for the bass drum section. It has a horizontal playing surface that you play like every other matched grip percussion instrument, on one head with a vertical stroke so all the traditional percussive strokes, hand dampening, and muting techniques can be used.

ergosonicpercussion.com

Five Content Marketing Truths You Need To Know

Content marketing is everywhere. It's the engine behind the majority of all marketing. Our customers have so many options when it comes to getting the information they need to make buying decisions, and if you don't have the most interesting, most helpful content to solve their problems, you may get left out of the buying process entirely. Here are five key content marketing truths that are critical for your business to start planning for today.

1. A customer relationship doesn't end with the payment.

The absolute best reason to create content for customers is to encourage loyalty and retention. The oldest content marketing examples on the planet (like John Deere's *The Furrow* magazine) were developed to help keep customers... well... customers (*The Furrow* was created in 1895 and is still produced today, sent to 1.5 million subscribers in 40 countries and 14 languages).

How can you develop a better relationship with your customers when they don't necessarily want to talk to you all the time? By delivering relevant, helpful, and consistent information to them in a format that they want. Think of ongoing blog posts, an e-newsletter, or a video or podcast series.

2. Printed marketing doesn't stop with the full-page advertisement.

Print is making a comeback, but in a new way. As less and less mail gets delivered through the post, it is opening up an opportunity to communicate with our customers and prospects in print... but not with an ad. Print custom magazines and newsletters are coming back into style. For example, TD Ameritrade's magazine *thinkMoney* is delivered six times per year to customers. They've found that those customers who read *thinkMoney* trade five times more than those that don't. That is one program that the CEO will never get rid of.

3. Focusing on what the customer wants is more important than what you have to sell.

Repeat after me: "My customers don't care about me, my products, or my services... they care about themselves".

This is the cardinal truth of content marketing. Sure, every once in a while they might need something you have, but what about the other 99 percent of the time? It's in those moments when we need to focus on how to solve

their everyday pain points as it relates to what we sell.

Guitar Center Sessions are a great example of this. They add over 2,000 subscribers a week to their YouTube channel by showcasing amazing music experiences. Not once do they say, "buy this at Guitar Center." But it happens just the same.

4. The competition can copy everything you have except your brand. The way you communicate is the differentiator (the only one).

You probably sell products that your customers can get pretty much anywhere. How are you any different? What would make someone want to shop with you over one of your competitors? The only thing you can do is communicate in a different way. Like the great Peter Drucker said, "There are only two ways a business can be different – marketing and innovation."

Note that he didn't say "products". So focus on how to tell a different story, at least as much as you focus on what you actually sell.

5. Without content, community is improbable, if not impossible.

Anything you try to do on the web to build a community does not happen with content that lacks substance. Amazing and relevant content is what makes social media go. Instead of focusing so much on your social channels, spend more time figuring out what goes into those channels. Maybe a more concentrated focus on fewer channels is just what the doctor ordered. **MMR**



Joe Pulizzi is the founder of the Content Marketing Institute, a leading education and training organization for content marketing, which includes the largest in-person content marketing event in the world, Content Marketing World. Joe is the winner of the 2014 John Caldwell Lifetime Achievement Award from the Content Council. Joe's third book, Epic Content Marketing:

How to Tell a Different Story, Break through the Clutter, and Win More Customers by Marketing Less, was named one of the "Five Must Read Business Books of 2013" by Fortune magazine. You can find Joe on Twitter @JoePulizzi. If you ever see Joe in person, he'll be wearing orange.

The competition can copy everything you have except your brand.



Demand a Higher Standard

Introducing the **NEW CSVR**

The Yamaha Custom CSVR clarinets are the result of years of development dedicated to a clearly focused concept: crafting a Custom clarinet that has a beautiful sound, consistent quality, and an affordable price. Both student and professional clarinetists require a rich sound and comfortable playability. These qualities were combined with the high level of consistency that only Yamaha can provide, allowing clarinetists to demand a higher standard than ever before.

- Redesigned keys offer comfortable, ergonomic hand placement. In addition, the new keys have thicker silver-plating for a dark and resonant sound quality.
- Durable leather pads ensure a precise seal between pad and tone hole for ease of response throughout the entire range of the clarinet.
- A new Custom barrel design provides the CSVR with a well-balanced response and rich, warm tonal colors that will elevate the progressing clarinetist's playing.



Learn more now at www.4wrd.it/csvrmmr



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Yamaha Releases Custom CSVR Clarinets

by Paige Tutt

The clarinet as an instrument has roots dating all the way back to Ancient Greece, Egypt, the Middle East, and Europe since the Middle Ages. Back then, though, they were more single-reed instruments and hornpipes than clarinets. The modern clarinet as we know it today has come a long way since then, and Yamaha's newest release hopes to expand upon and further the progression of the instrument.

At the Yamaha 2015 NAMM Clarinet Celebration on January 25, the company launched their CSVR clarinets. "The new CSVR was developed over the course of actually about four years, those four years are a culmination of 40+ years of custom clarinet work for Yamaha," said Brian Petterson, marketing manager, Yamaha Winds, Band & Orchestral Division, Yamaha Corporation of America.

According to Petterson, there were three major goals behind the development of the CSVR clarinets. The first goal was consistency. "What Yamaha is able to provide is the greatest consistency, largely due to the great ability of the Japanese-style production process," said Petterson. "We wanted to come to market with a clarinet that was the most consistent option that we could provide at this level... We wanted to provide an instrument that if you play it, you have a good idea of how they're all going to play." The second goal was to create an instrument that could suit any player's needs. "We also wanted to provide an instrument that is very expressive. We used to hear that our clarinet was too bright or brighter than the consumer preferred them to be," said Petterson. "We wanted to provide a clarinet that is warm, and expressive, and the player can color their performance to any way that they see fit – an instrument that can be used in many different genres." The third and final goal was quality. "At this particular price point and for this particular customer the options available are very inconsistent. It's hard to find a 'good one,'" said Petterson.

The result was the Yamaha CSVR Custom Clarinet, which features thick silver plating, durable leather pads, a 65 mm traditional barrel shape, an adjustable thumb-rest with strap ring, and a new more ergonomically designed C#/G# key. Numerous product evaluations were held in major cities across the country, including New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Antonio, and Boston. The Custom CSVR clarinets were designed with the input of several clarinet educators in mind. "We really wanted to develop an instrument with a focus on educators," said Petterson. "What we did is tweak our approach – we still went to artists for feedback, but what we also did is specifically cater to educators to participate and give feedback during the process." The quest for educator input brought the CSVR to the Midwest Band Clinic, in

“ We really wanted to develop an instrument with a focus on educators. ”

– Brian Petterson,
marketing manager

addition to some contact with the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA). "Texas is such an important state as far as music education in the United States," said Petterson. "It was a great place to focus on to get a whole bunch of feedback in a short amount of time... We actually took the clarinet to TMEA twice. We took it to the Midwest Band Clinic twice. We reached out to high school-, middle school- band teachers, we reached out to clarinet lesson teachers... Long story short, the clarinet was developed with the focus on appealing to the needs of clarinet educators along with artists, and the reason for that is the market this clarinet appeals to is a broad range of players: everyone from dedicated middle school players who are looking for their first step up instrument to orchestral professionals. We wanted to come to market with a clarinet that really fit the needs of that player and specifically their teachers. The CSVR model clarinet really is a great option for those players."

Since the clarinet's release, the dealer reaction has been nothing but positive. "To say the reaction has been above and beyond expectation would be selling it short," said Petterson. "We're excited about the great introduction we had during NAMM week. We've gotten all kinds of dealers who are excited to be able to offer this clarinet for their customers. There is demand for a consistent, high-performing clarinet at a great price." And Yamaha feels they've really provided something the market is craving. "We have the instrument now and the dealer network and support, and the



Front row, left to right: Garth Gilman, general manager, Yamaha Corporation of America, Band & Orchestral Division; Jonathon Breen, national sales manager, Yamaha B & O; Roger Eaton, director of marketing, Yamaha B & O; Bob Malone, Director of Ateliers, Yamaha; John Wittmann, director, Artist Relations and Education, Yamaha Artist Services Indianapolis. Back row, left to right: David Shifrin, Paquito D’Rivera, Minda Abair, Rory Mazzela, Bil Jackson

customer demand is there to be able to succeed with the CSVR clarinet,” said Petterson. The Yamaha YCL-CSVR Custom B-flat clarinet has an MSRP of \$4,200 and will ship in March, while the YCL-CSVRA Custom A clarinet has an MSRP of \$5,200 and will ship in May of this year.

After a few days exhibiting at NAMM and a successful NAMM week launch event, Yamaha is gearing up to ship out the CSVR, but don’t think that doesn’t mean there isn’t work left to be done. “We have lots of plans in place and some things in motion now to provide the dealers with all the tools they need to subsequently introduce their customers with the clarinet when they receive it,” said Petterson. “We’re working to prepare for the summer, and the summer is really important for educators because that’s when a lot of the professional development conferences take place. We’ll be going to the international clarinet conventions over the summer. We’ll be appearing at some regional clarinet conventions with the clarinet as well.”

Petterson and the Yamaha team only hope to build off of their NAMM show momentum. “We kick-started a great week at NAMM,” he said, “but that was only the beginning.” **MMA**



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New Products

AUDIO & VIDEO

Audio-Technica AT5045 Cardioid Condenser Microphone

The AT5045 is a stick-design, large-diaphragm electret side-address condenser instrument microphone with a cardioid polar pattern. The AT5045 features a large diaphragm, fast transient response, low noise, the ability to handle high sound pressure levels (149 dB SPL), and one of the widest dynamic range specs available (141 dB). These specs make it an ideal instrument microphone, designed specifically for use on overheads, percussion, acoustic guitar, strings and other acoustic instruments. The two-micron-thick, vapor-deposited gold diaphragm has been aged to achieve optimum sonic characteristics that will remain constant over years of use. The cardioid polar pattern is more sensitive to sound originating directly in front of the element, making it effective in reducing pickup of unwanted sounds and providing isolation of the instrument. Another key AT5045 design feature is its advanced internal shock mounting, which decouples the capsule from the microphone body.

The AT5045 is enclosed in a housing of aluminum and brass, allowing it to be used for live-sound applications. An AT8165 windscreen and custom hard-shell carrying case are also included. The AT5045 (single microphone) and AT5045P (stereo pair) are currently available with U.S. MSRP pricing of \$1399 for AT5045 and \$2499 for AT5045P.



audio-technica.com

CASES & BAGS

SKB GoPro Case

The newest GoPro cases are available in either a compact single camera configuration (3i-0705-3-GP1) or in a double camera configuration (3i-0907-4-GP2). Both cases feature camera pockets that can accommodate any generation of GoPro camera up to the Hero 4 version. Both offer a separate storage compartment for accessories as well as slots for batteries. Foam interiors are constructed with high-quality Stratocell foam with a contrasting red-capped foam top. The 3i-0705-3 will have a MAP of \$39.99 while the 3i-0907-4GP2 will have a MAP of \$69.99. Both cases are backed by the SKB Unconditional Lifetime Warranty.



skbcases.com

ACCESSORIES

Airturn PED

The AirTurn PED is the perfect controller for Bluetooth SMART READY-equipped Mac, PC, iPad or Android Tablet. Music reading, scrolling lyrics or guitar tabs, teleprompting, slide presentations, instrument effects or media control, and many more fun options are available. Configurations are also available for assistive technologies and common desktop document or presentation applications.



airturn.com

JodyJazz JET Tenor Model

JodyJazz has announced the introduction of a new saxophone mouthpiece, the JET Tenor. An addition to their JET Series of mouthpieces, the new JodyJazz JET Tenor offers many of the same performance characteristics that made the JET Alto so popular. The new JET Tenor is available in 6, 7, 7*, 8, & 9 tip openings. The JET models are constructed from a proprietary polycarbonate alloy with a synthetic rubber mix. The new JET Tenor features a new chamber shape delivering a noticeably more powerful sound. The shorter facing curve delivers effortless altissimo. The company intends to develop baritone and soprano models next to add to the alto and new tenor models. Manufactured in the USA, each mouthpiece is individually hand-crafted and fully gauged and play tested before it leaves the factory. They have an MSRP of \$189.



jodyjazz.com

Intellitouch PT10C Chromatic Tuner

Intellitouch Tuners have always been known for their tuning precision and now the folks at OnBoard Research have included a precision digital clock into the new PT10C Tuner. This feature allows a musician to discreetly check the time during a gig without having to look down at their watch or mobile phone. The clock will help a music instructor be aware of their class time with just a subtle glance at their headstock. In addition, enhanced mechanical properties offer a truly rugged instrument tuner suitable for all occasions.

IntelliTouch

onboardresearch.com

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P. Mauriat Tenor Sax

PMXT-66R

The unitary rolled tone hole saxophones are P. Mauriat's signature instruments. This patented design uses a method which draws & rolls the tone holes from the existing material in the body itself. This creates a warm & centered tone quality different from that of a straight or soldered rolled tone hole saxophone.

P. Mauriat Artist

Reggie Padilla

plays P. Mauriat PMXT-66R Tenor Saxophone



Hawaii-Based Saxophonist Reggie Padilla

"They Come And They Go"

Available from Pass Out Records



photo by Aaron Yoshino

ACCESSORIES

KORG Inc. and Noritake Co., Limited Release Vacuum Tube: the Nutube



KORG Inc. and Noritake Company are proud to announce Nutube, a new miniaturized and high performance tube. In cooperation with Noritake Itron Corporation, KORG INC. has developed the Nutube to offer reliability and efficiency while still generating the same rich harmonics which vacuum tubes are known for.

As with previous vacuum tubes, this newly developed Nutube is structured with an anode, grid, and filament, and operates as a complete triode tube, generating the same rich harmonics that are distinctive of conventional vacuum tubes. By applying technology from Noritake Co., Limited's vacuum fluorescent displays, the structure of the vacuum tube has been modified, dramatically reducing its size and allowing it to consume less power.

Miniaturization dramatically reduces power consumption, allowing the Nutube to operate using less than 2% of power required by conventional vacuum tubes and making it easy to power the unit on batteries. The Nutube occupies less than 30% of the volume of a conventional vacuum tube. Its small size and low thermal output allows it to be easily mounted directly on a high-density circuit board without using a socket. The unique design and state of the art Japanese production facility ensures the Nutubes are built to the highest standard and offer up to 30,000 hours of continuous operating life. The high reliability means that it can be attached directly to the circuit board with confidence knowing that it will not need to be replaced regularly like a 12AX7.

korg.com

Apogee Groove

Apogee is pleased to introduce Apogee Groove – a new portable USB DAC and headphone amp. Built upon Apogee's 30-year history of digital audio technology for music creation, Groove unlocks the highest possible quality of any headphones or powered speakers, allowing users to listen to the music they love with incredible clarity.

The Groove features: USB 2.0 connection to Mac and PC, Up to 24 bit / 192kHz audio, ESS Sabre DAC, Constant Current Drive, ultra-smooth frequency response for any headphones, Quad Sum DAC, 4 DACs per channel for highest dynamic range and lowest distortion, and more.

To commemorate Apogee's 30 years of digital audio excellence, a limited edition anniversary model of Groove will also be available. The Groove 30th Anniversary Edition will feature an aluminum body, upgraded audio performance and will be available in silver and gold.



apogeedigital.com

SOUND REINFORCEMENT

Turbosound iX Series

Equipped with an onboard two-channel digital mixer fully remote controllable via dedicated iPhone / iPad app or locally via dedicated LCD-based user interface, the iX12 and iX15 speakers also feature wireless Bluetooth stereo audio streaming. DSP presets have been optimized for a wide range of applications and speaker orientations, ensuring seamless integration with subwoofers and enhanced intelligibility for floor-wedge monitor applications. Consisting of the 1100-watt iX12 and iX15 models, iX Series two-way powered speaker systems utilize a sophisticated, but easy to use Klark Teknik Digital Signal Processor, which provides a wide range of useful presets and dynamic EQ for impressive full range response at low volume levels and transparent limiting for the utmost clarity at high output levels. The Turbosound iX12 and iX15 will be available at an estimated U.S. street price of \$ 349, and \$449, respectively - and are covered by a three-year warranty.



music-group.com

HK Audio Lucas Nano 600

Lucas Nano 600 is the world's first crossover PA. The Lucas Nano 600 relies on a pair of small, powerful (up to 123 dB) satellite speakers for the high and midrange frequencies. A dedicated subwoofer powers the satellites with a mixer and frequency-shaping controls built right in. This allows the Lucas Nano to remain versatile for a wide variety of applications, yet packs down into a small cube. The Lucas Nano 600 may be used either as a space-saving mono or stereo system by adding the desired speaker pole set. Both configurations produce detailed sound with wide dispersion. In addition, two Lucas Nano 600s can be paired to create an even more powerful PA, and mixers on each sub duplex to double your mixer inputs.

One of the new technologies in the Lucas Nano 600 is the MultiCell Transformer, which maximizes sound pressure gain, improve directivity, and minimize high-frequency distortion. Utilizing a sophisticated simulation technology, it has a lightweight subwoofer housing with the bass response of a heavy wood enclosure.



hkaudio.com

PIANO & KEYBOARDS

Behringer Motör 49 and Motör 61

With 61 and 49 keys respectively, the Motör 61 and Motör 49 combine all the features of a professional-quality keyboard controller, plus separate banks of nine touch-sensitive motorized faders and drum pads.



The motorized 60 mm faders are centrally located for easy control of soft synths, drawbar organs, effects and DAW parameters. Additionally, a separate bank of eight backlit, velocity and pressure-sensitive drum pads are available. Behringer also offers free user presets for a variety of specific software/hardware combinations. The Behringer Motör61 and Motör49 are available at a suggested U.S. MAP of \$299.99 and \$249.99, respectively.

behringer.com

BAND & ORCHESTRA

Row-Loff Production's Blast Off Series

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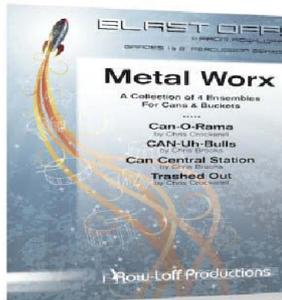
Metal Worx - A collection of four grade I-II metal trash can and bucket pieces.

Item#BOS015 \$25.00

Bucket Worx - A collection of four grade I-II 5-gallon plastic bucket pieces.

Item#BOS016 \$25.00

These are great for teaching beginning rhythms in a fun and educational way.



rowloff.com

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peavey.com

Harman Soundcraft Ui Series Digital Mixers

The Ui Series mixers feature cross-platform compatibility with iOS, Android, Windows, Mac OS, and Linux devices, and can use up to 10 control devices simultaneously. In addition, the Ui12 and Ui16 each feature built-in HARMAN signal processing from dbx, DigiTech and Lexicon, including dbx AFS2, DigiTech Amp Modeling, and more. Both models feature fully recallable and remote-controlled mic gain and phantom power, along with 4-band parametric EQ, high-pass filter, compressor, de-esser, and noise gate on input channels.



The Ui12 also features four XLR combo mic/line inputs, four XLR mic inputs, two channels of Hi-Z/instrument inputs, as well as a stereo RCA line input. A 2-channel USB media player is included, along with two balanced XLR Aux outputs, two quarter-inch headphone outputs with level control, plus balanced stereo XLR and quarter-inch main outputs. Two-channel USB audio playback is compatible with MP3, WAV and AIFF formats.

The Ui16 boasts eight XLR combo mic/line inputs, four XLR mic inputs, two channels of Hi-Z/instrument inputs, as well as a stereo RCA line input. A 2-channel USB media player is included, along with four balanced XLR Aux outputs, two quarter-inch headphone outputs with level control, plus balanced stereo XLR and quarter-inch main outputs. Two-channel USB audio playback is compatible with MP3, WAV and AIFF formats, and 2-channel USB Record direct-to-memory devices functionality is possible as well. The Ui16 also has an HDMI display connection output.

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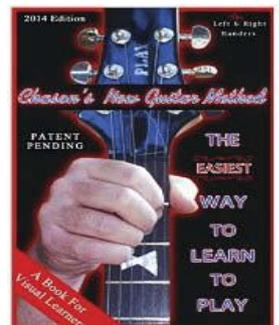
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By Dan Daley

Five Things I Learned at Winter NAMM 2015

Another Winter NAMM is in the books. The cymbals have crashed, the LEDs have flashed, several checks have been cashed, fretboard fingers mashed, cookies cached (didn't see that one coming, did you?), snare drums bashed, hotel rooms trashed, et cetera. You get the idea. But what the long plane rides home offer is an opportunity for reflection on what just took place. Here are five takeaways one writer took back from Anaheim.

• **Speakers** – Five years or so ago, NAMM was a winter wonderland of boutique microphones. Scores of them, ranging from pricey and stylish evocations of classic German transducers to utilitarian USB models that worked with iPhone podcasts and survived falling into bowls of dorm room Ramen noodles. This year, the focus had shifted to the other analog end of the wire: the loudspeaker. In January, in numbers that rivaled and likely exceeded the microphone frenzy of a few years ago, speakers were all over the place. There were the new entries from OEM providers like JBL and B&C, and tons of new PA products, especially portable PAs, like those from Electro-Voice (EKX Series), Yamaha (CBR Series), and Yorkville (EXM400). As performance stages appear in places you never saw them before, to host the surge of Ed Sheeran knock-offs and hipster duos of a scaled-back music biz, the portable, personal, wireless PA system will be a major product category to watch this year.

• **Free (or close to it)** – Avid's announcement of Pro Tools First, a free version of its industry-standard Pro Tools recording platform, was much more quietly matched by Apple's price drop for its latest version of Logic down to \$199. And Logic now can scale seamlessly down into Apple's Garageband, which comes loaded for free on most Apple laptop and desktop computers. As more music moves into a software-based model, prices will do what they do everywhere else that software rules: they will go down. Music's become increasingly free, like it or not; making it, at least to some extent, is inevitably headed down the same road. But as a corollary to that, at a time when YouTube is the Johnny Appleseed of music instruction, apps – most of which are free or cost so little they are

virtually free – have become the saplings, offering little upfront for retailers but sparking enormous interest in new instruments and other items that will translate into future sales.

• **The pros from Dover have arrived** – Pro audio was plenty evident at the show, with nearly 300 qualified pro audio exhibitors, according to one source's reading of NAMM's unfiltered pro-audio exhibitor spreadsheet. The TEC Awards – the Grammy Awards for the soldering-iron set – abandoned their long-time AES Show slot three years ago for Winter NAMM, and that's all the real signal anyone should need: recording music is now inextricably intertwined with playing it, learning it, teaching it, performing it, and writing it. There is no real wall between the two domains anymore.

• **Jump into the net** – Not just pro audio, but *all* audio is moving towards a networked paradigm. Networked audio has been around for a quarter of a century, but has been limited

“Not just pro audio but *all* audio is moving towards a networked paradigm.”

to commercial environments like broadcast. But in the last several years the number of options and markets for it has markedly increased, most notably in live sound, such as Turbosound's UltraNet or Harman's HiQNet. The market leader in the category, the Dante networking platform from Australia-based Audinate, was walking the show in advance of the release later this year of Dante Via, a software bridge that turns any PC into a networked device, without the need to buy any Dante-enabled devices. It might seem far beyond the realm of MI at the moment, but MIDI seemed that way once, too. (Mackie announced a Dante card for its DL32R wirelessly controlled digital live sound mixer at the show.)

• **The elephant in the room** – Didn't happen at NAMM, but rumors were flying there and they turned into actual news barely two weeks later, when new C-suite management at Guitar Center eviscerated much of the company's middle management tier and rearranged the flowchart for their pro audio arm, GC Professional. Guitar Center's travails have been a lesson in progress, but it's too soon to read the end-of-chapter summary. Is big-box retailing a dead end for the MI business? Probably. Is 10-figure debt dangerous? Definitely. **MMR**



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