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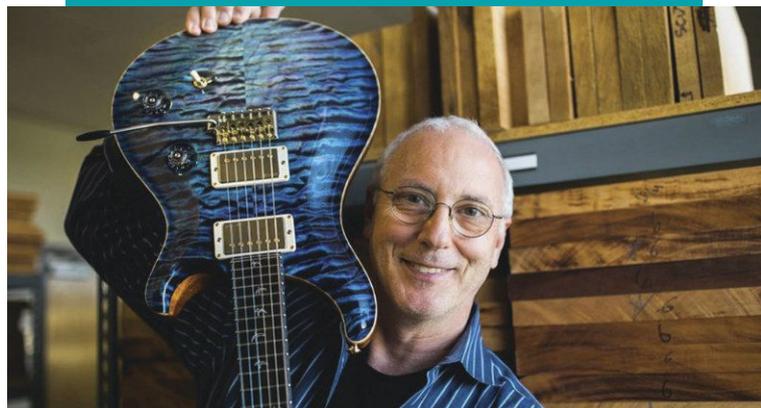
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– Paul Reed Smith, PRS Guitars

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Cover Photo: Courtesy Breedlove Guitars

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Don't Fret, but Do Pay Attention

While even the most strident supporters of funding for music education would likely agree that the subject takes a back-seat to far more immediately pressing national and international concerns, it's nonetheless one of many initiatives that potentially faces threats of various scope and severity under our nation's new presidential administration.

In mid-February, news was made when the White House budget office announced that it had included the NEA and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting amongst a group of programs it was attempting – or at least seriously considering – to eliminate.

As reported in *The New York Times* (yes, not exactly one of President Trump's favorite media outlets, but let's grant them the assumption that in this case, at least, their accuracy is not to be questioned) in late February, Broadway producer Daryl Roth said in response, "The concept of ending federal funding to the N.E.A. and to the many nonprofit arts organizations, artists, writers, cultural institutions, museums and all recipients that would be affected is of course of grave concern to me... Arts education in the schools, theater groups, music and dance programs help revitalize local communities, both spiritually and economically, across the country."

My guess is that, whatever the political leanings, most *MMR* readers would agree with Roth that funding of the arts – specifically music programs and music education efforts – are beneficial on personal, societal, and (no need to dance around the subject) financial (to us, anyway) levels.

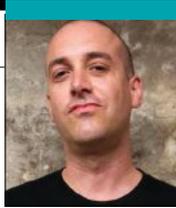
It's not just educators who may potentially feel the heat, either. Also in February, at the Grammy Awards presentation, Neil Portnoy, president of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, made the following appeal:

"The Recording Academy, together with America's music makers, call on the president and Congress to help keep the music playing by updating music laws, protecting music education, and renewing America's commitment to the arts."

It's too soon to throw down and get truly worried or nasty, as nothing concrete has happened yet, but I submit that it would be foolish to not at least be aware of the stated intents of those currently in power. Particularly after the historic passing of the "Every Student Succeeds Act" (ESSA) in 2015 – an important step that named music and arts as core subjects – the need to remain vigilant is, in fact, more important than ever. After significant forward progress, the temptation to sit back and assume "victory" should be tempered with an awareness of present realities and potentialities.

Once again: I'm not advocating for fear or anger or over-reaction – merely for awareness.

If you care about music education and the strength of music programs for all in an extremely volatile political and social landscape, then that's all the more reason to join NAMM members at this year's Music Education Advocacy D.C. Fly-In, taking place May 22-25. Having attended four previous gatherings, I can attest it is an inspiring and unique experience that provides an opportunity to truly participate in the American political process. If you've never been and if these causes are important to you, your family, your business, I hope you'll consider joining the NAMM team.



by Christian Wissmuller

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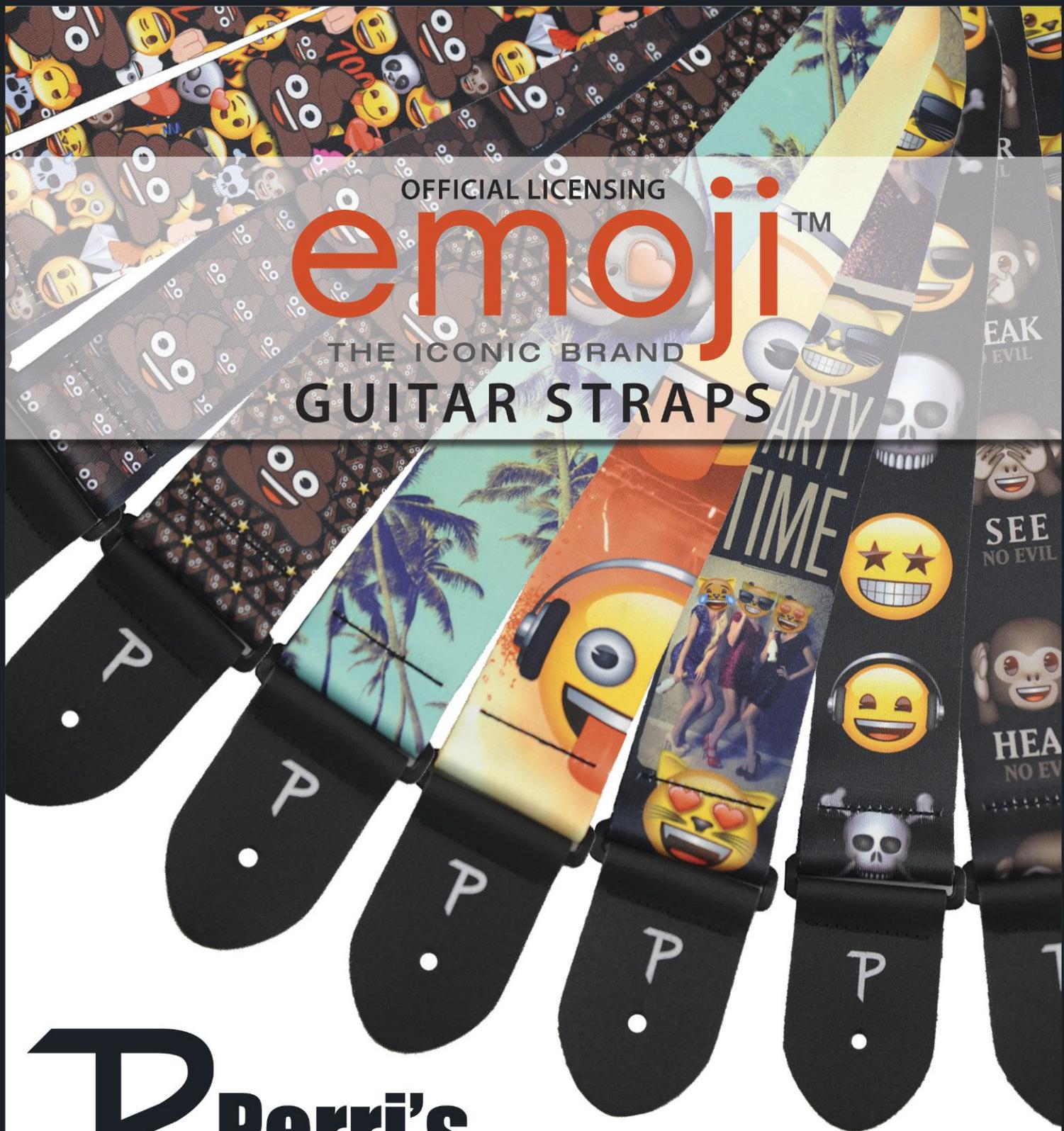


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Industry News

Hal Leonard Acquires Sheet Music Plus

Hal Leonard has announced that they have acquired Sheet Music Plus, a leading e-commerce website for music publications.

Sheet Music Plus will continue to operate as an independent business led by CEO Jenny Silva and her existing team in the Emeryville, California, office. Founded in 1997, Sheet Music Plus currently sells music from hundreds of publishers from throughout the world in both paper form and digital formats.

Hal Leonard will use their new relationship to develop the ability for consumers to order from the SMP website and pick up their products at their local music store. In addition, they will also launch a Retailer Partner Program that will feature the ability for retailers to order products using SMP's online platform.

"This next chapter will bring many advantages for our customers," said Silva. "We have worked closely together with Hal Leonard for years and I know that their team has a deep appreciation for the great service that Sheet Music Plus provides to musicians. We look forward to sharing our strengths to provide even more services to the greater music community as well."



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NAMM Members to Return to Washington to Advocate for Music Education

N A M M members will return to the nation's capital this spring for the organization's 13th Annual Washington, D.C. Fly In for Music Education, May 22-25, 2017.

As business owners and representatives, NAMM members will have the opportunity to advocate for the industry at-large to elected officials through a common mission to support the value and importance of music education to elected officials.

"I think there are two very different approaches that individuals tend to take in our democracy: either sit on the sidelines and pine away for a different outcome or jump in and help change it for the better," said Joe Lamond, NAMM president and CEO. "This May, NAMM Members from around the country will come to D.C. in one delegation with one voice to support our industry's core beliefs, won't you join them?"

The week of advocacy will begin on Monday, May 22 with a Day of Service, a chance for members to put advocacy into action with a visit to a local elementary school to meet administrators, teachers and students, and to provide musical instruction. On Tuesday, the Fly-In delegates will receive legislative briefings from lead policy experts and influencers, learn about the policies and priorities of the new Presidential administration, and receive advocacy training for meetings with elected officials both in D.C. and their home states.

On Wednesday, NAMM delegates will head to Capitol Hill to meet with Members of Congress and their staff

to engage in meaningful dialogue regarding the importance of music education in their own districts and

businesses. Delegates will ask for Congressional support with the implementation and funding of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which was signed into law by President Obama in 2015 and is moving toward state-level implementation. Later that evening, NAMM members will have the chance to continue their networking with other members and officials at a Celebration for Music Education Reception to be held in the U.S. Capitol Building.

On Thursday, participants are welcome to join the SupportMusic Coalition wrap-up meeting where the group will discuss the week's efforts and develop a plan of action for advocacy in their home states. This important roundtable will outline next steps for meaningful, local advocacy work.

NAMM members make up an important constituency for music education at the Federal level. By participating in the Fly-In, NAMM members show solidarity to work together for access to music education for over 50 million children in the U.S. public education system, and as advocates for the many NAMM member businesses based in the United States.

For detailed information on The 2017 NAMM Music Education Advocacy D.C. Fly-In, May 22-25, 2017, visit: www.namm.org/issues-and-advocacy/fly-in

To register to attend, visit: www.cvent.com/d/tvqtc3/4W



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UpFront

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Sweetwater's Surack Receives Legends of Leadership Award

Sweetwater founder and president Chuck Surack has been awarded the Legend of Leadership Award by the editors of the *Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly*.

He was honored with the award at a breakfast event on Tuesday, February 14. The annual award honors a Fort Wayne business leader who for decades has shown what truly great leadership can accomplish.

The Business Weekly stated, "As a husband and father, entrepreneur, philanthropist, community volunteer, and musician, Surack has spent his career not only serving as a leader in his profession, but also as a "servant leader" for non-profits and the community."



The Legend of Leadership breakfast featured speakers honoring Surack by providing accolades and anecdotes that paid tribute to him, and his wife Lisa, and his vast contributions to northeast Indiana. The speakers were Mayor Tom Henry, City of Fort Wayne; Bruce Boxberger, partner, Carson Boxberger; Joe Jordan, President and CEO, Boys and Girls Club of Fort Wayne; Eric Doden, CEO, Greater Fort Wayne, Inc.; and Brian Bauer, CEO, Lutheran Health Network.

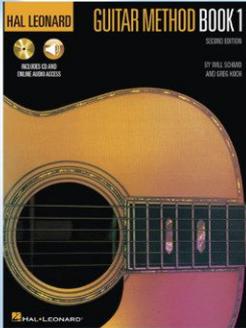
Surack also took the stage to express his appreciation, and to offer thoughts on his commitment to Fort Wayne and leadership philosophy. He offered this advice to anyone thinking of starting a business: "Remember, it's your passion and your idea. While there's nothing wrong with getting input and information and support from others, at some point, if it's what you believe in, you have to go for it."

In addition to the event, Surack was featured in the Friday, February 17 edition of *Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly*.

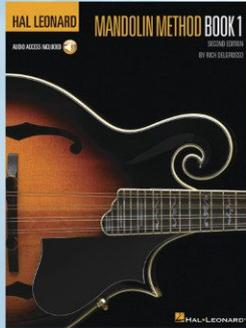
"Mr. Surack has made a significant impact on northeast Indiana," said Randy Mitchell, chief executive officer for KPC Media Group, publisher of *Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly*. "The editorial board of *Business Weekly* felt that his extraordinary leadership qualities and willingness to lend his influence, intellect and passion in helping to make northeast Indiana a better place to live and work made him the perfect choice for this annual award and we are privileged to honor him in this way."

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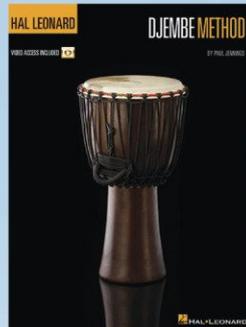
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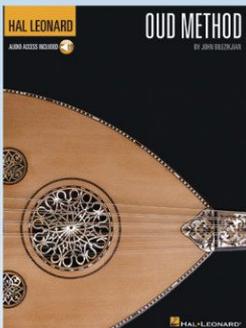
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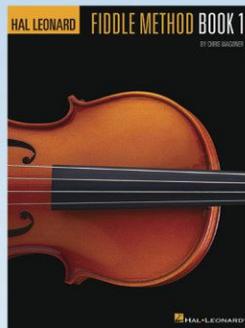
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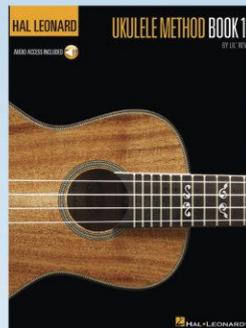
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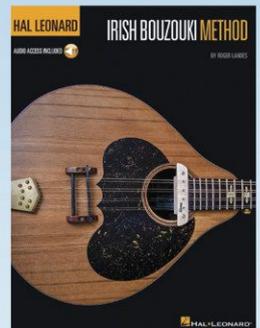
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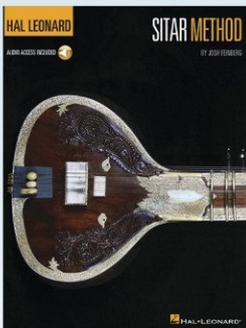
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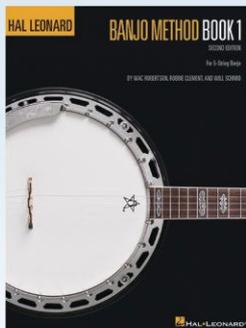
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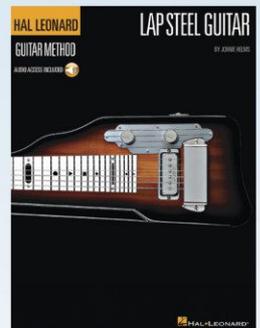
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'Musikmesse Insider' to Continue at 2017 Gathering

Once again in 2017, Messe Frankfurt is inviting qualified musical-instrument retailers to register for the "Musikmesse Insider" customer program.

Registered participants will be able to visit the international trade fair for musical instruments, sheet music, music production and music business connections, on all four days free of charge (April 5-8, 2017). They will be welcomed personally at the exclusive Reception Counter in Hall 11.1 – cloakroom service and fair catalogue are free for Insiders. They will further benefit from the new matchmaking program at Musikmesse which brings visitors directly together with those exhibitors who are of particular relevance to them.

Along with a wide overview of the latest products on the market, Musikmesse offers a comprehensive education program, focusing on dealers and distributors: At the "Business Academy inspired by SOMM", top speakers from



messe frankfurt

business, law, science and the media will pass on their strategic and technical expertise to cope with current and future challenges in the musical-instrument market. Among the speakers will be Dr. Gerald Koch (Thünen Institute of Wood Research), who will talk about the proper way of dealing with woods affected by the CITES Convention, and Mathias Dubbert (German Chamber of Industry & Commerce) with a talk on Brexit and its consequences, opportunities and risks. All program items will be available by simultaneous translation in German and English. The Business Academy will be held in Hall 11.1

(Business Area & Full-range Companies), to which only trade visitors have access, and which makes it possible to have business meetings in a quiet atmosphere.

Following successful registration at www.musikmesse.com/insider, participants in the Insider Programme will receive their personal entry ticket by post. It entitles them to entry during the whole period of the fair and to use public transport in the area covered by the RMV public-transport authority. Participation is open to qualified retailers in musical instruments and sheet music with up to 50 staff.

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D'Addario Foundation Awards 107 Music Education Grants

The D'Addario Foundation, a 503(c) nonprofit that is a global leader in finding, funding, and partnering with transformative music education organizations, has announced the results of its first two grant application cycles.

"107 passionate not-for-profit organizations spread out over 30 states have been awarded grants for the first half of this year," says Suzanne D'Addario Brouder, foundation director. "We're thrilled because a great majority of these states have the lowest high school graduate rates in the U.S. and face significant challenges in their education systems, challenges that compromises the ability for students to receive a well-rounded education." In total the D'Addario Foundation has awarded \$210,000 in monetary donations and \$57,000 in D'Addario and Company product.

Of those 107 organizations, 45 are new to the D'Addario Foundation. "We prides ourselves on funding programs in the early stages of development when support is most critical and difficult to come by," Brouder adds. "Many of these new organizations are boosted by the support from the D'Addario Foundation and are able to leverage the credibility and track record with securing other forms of support." In addition, the D'Addario Foundation partners with a diverse array of programs, believing that musical inclusion does not come in a one-size-fits-all package. With these grants, the Foundation has committed support to programs including inner-city free

orchestral instruction; rock band instruction at schools and at Boys and Girls Clubs; guitars for teenagers incarcerated in juvenile detention centers; jazz instruction for at-risk and incarcerated teens; and others.

"We're unique in that we're grant makers, proving support to programs that are not just teaching music but lifting human aspirations, improving quality of life, and strengthening disadvantaged communities," Brouder says. "The goal is to use consistent, engaging music

education to awaken the potential in students, and we're looking forward to these recent grants inspiring students who need it the most." Since these programs began, there have been impressive results. In neighborhoods where the high school dropout rate hovers at 50 percent, over 95 percent of participating students in D'Addario-funded programs are graduating on time and applying to college. Many are the first generation in their family to attend college.



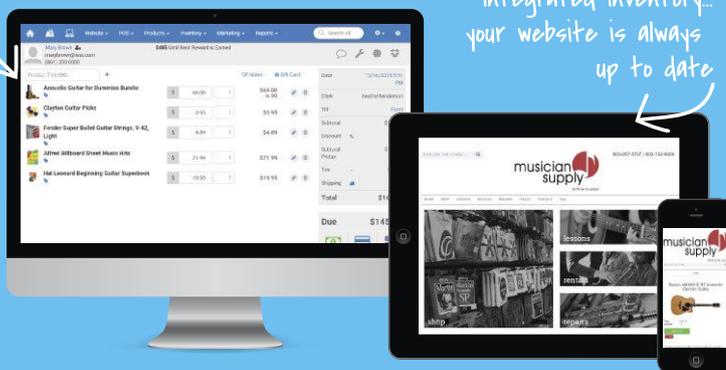
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LETTERS

Hi Christian,
[re: February, 2017
Editorial, "R.I.P. Jim
Mouradian"]

Thank you for the acknowledgement, it was very warm and heartfelt. Even though I didn't know Jim, I appreciate men like him that go out

of their way to help other guitar enthusiasts.

Best regards,
Jeff Wong
Director of Artist Relations
Asst. MGR Kawai Piano Gallery -
Concierge Service

**Grand Opening of
Jordan Kitt's Rockville
Showroom and Music
Education Center**

On January 25th, Jordan Kitt's Music celebrated the grand opening of its flagship showroom and Music Education Center in Rockville, Maryland with a special concert and reception.

In an effort to expand its showroom, recital facility and Music Education Center, as well as consolidate it's warehouse from a separate facility into an adjoining one, Jordan Kitt's Music moved into this new location in December, and became fully open in mid January. The new space is more convenient to customers accessing the store from the beltway, and offers more than 5,000 square feet of new & used pianos from manufacturers such as Yamaha, Bosendorfer, Mason & Hamlin, Roland, Cristofori, and others.

The facility also has a greatly expanded 1,500 square foot Music Education Center, offering piano instruction to hundreds of students weekly. It includes private teaching studios complete with performance grade pianos, a large group teaching facility, a waiting area for parents, and a recital hall for seating of up to 90 complete with a Yamaha CF series concert grand piano.

The store expansion in Montgomery County marks Jordan Kitt's Music's 105th year of continuous service to the customers, institutions and piano students in metropolitan Washington, D.C. and continues to be the area's (and one of the nation's) oldest continuously operating music stores. Jordan Kitt's Music has matched the perfect piano with over 250,000 customers since 1912, as well as having taught over one million piano lessons.



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

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Submissions for 2017 Top 100 Dealer Awards Now Open

NAMM welcomes its global retail members to be recognized for their contributions to retail excellence as part of the annual Top 100 Dealer Awards. Now in its seventh year and held during the Summer NAMM Show (July 13-15, 2017) in Nashville, the awards honor music products retailers who have demonstrated a commitment to best-practices, creativity and innovation in music products retailing.

Current NAMM retail members are welcomed to apply now for a position on the Top 100 Dealers. Each submission will be evaluated for effectiveness in marketing, customer engagement, and innovation in retail by a panel of independent judges. The panel will also make a selection for several "Best of" category winners, including "Best Store Turnaround," "Best Customer Service," "Best Store Design," "Best Marketing and Sales Promotion," "Best Online Engagement," "Best Emerging Dealer," the "Music Makes a Difference," award and the coveted, "Dealer of the Year" award. By entering, retailers are automatically considered for the "Best Of" categories as well as for "Dealer of the Year."

Music retailers interested in the Top 100 recognition are welcomed to submit their entry for the Top 100 Dealers awards online. The submission period will close on Saturday, March 31.

The list of Top 100 Dealer nominees will be announced in May, with the "Best of" and "Dealer of the Year" awards to be announced during the Top 100 Dealer Awards gala on Friday, July 14 at the Summer NAMM Show

KMC Named U.S. Distributor for Natal Drums

KMC has announced that it has been appointed to serve as the exclusive United States distributor of Natal Drums & Percussion, according to KMC Music vice president of Merchandising Roger Hart.

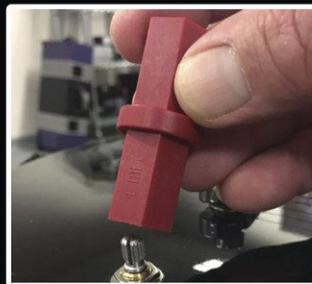
"Natal is renowned for their stunning range of drums, snare drums and hardware, and we are honored to be able to represent the line to our network of 6,500 resellers," said Hart. "We are fully stocked and ready to ship. The addition of Natal to our portfolio effectively reinforces and strengthens KMC's position as the one-stop source for everything having to do with percussion."

Natal is known for tailoring their drum kits' sound and attack through the use of choice tone woods. Whether a player desires the pure projection of Maple, the dark voice of Walnut, or the vintage, buttery tone of Tulip, Natal makes a drum where all artists can find their sound. Natal also carries Pro Series and Standard series hardware, as well as a full line of Metal Meta snare drums. Additionally, they offer a full selection of tone-colors where one can paint their own masterpiece. From Led Zeppelin to Bastille, Natal has become the player's choice.

KMC's growing percussion portfolio also includes Rhythm Tech, Remo, Vic Firth, Vater, Gibraltar, LP, Paiste, Toca, and Innovative Percussion among others.

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Photo of Anthony Jones, Pink Martini

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D4



D6



ADX51



i5

Supplier Scene

Fishman Launches New Online Product Sales Training

Fishman has launched Up To Speed, a new product sales training program for authorized Fishman dealers. Up To Speed provides the necessary information needed to effectively understand, discuss, and sell Fishman products.



Company President Larry Fishman greets participating salespeople in the training program's introduction video: "Our goal is to create a communication directly with you, our dealers and our salespeople that benefits you on an ongoing basis to become the most confident and trusted salespeople in the industry."

In an easy-to-use, mobile friendly online environment, Up To Speed offers four training courses: Amps, Pickups/Onboard Preamps, Pedals/Preamps, and TriplePlay. Each course provides a study guide and corresponding quiz. The courses are effective and concise but salespeople have the option of going deeper into Fishman product knowledge and accessing marketing assets in the optional "Resources" section. Fishman ships a prize to each salesperson for every course they pass.

Fishman is also offering a Sweepstakes for all eligible salespeople who pass courses before March 31, 2017. Various prizes will be given away, including a Loudbox Mini Amplifier, Fluence Pickups, Aura Spectrum DI Preamp, TriplePlay Wireless MIDI Guitar Controller, and the grand prize: a Martin D-16GT guitar with a custom installed Fishman Matrix Infinity Pickup and Preamp System.

For more information about Fishman Up To Speed, please contact your Fishman sales representative.

fishman.com

Chauvet Creates Interactive USITT Booth

Visitors to USITT have the chance to see (and touch) for themselves the Ovation LED fixtures by CHAUVET Professional. Displays at the company's booth (1923) will make it easy to have hands-on experience with the Ovation E-260WW and Ovation E-910FC ERS-style fixtures, as well as the new RGBA-Lime batten-style Ovation B-2805FC and Ovation B-565FC fixtures.

"Our USITT booth has been set up to be interactive," said Albert Chauvet, CEO of Chauvet. "We've accomplished some real breakthroughs with our Ovation line, innovations that make LED stage lighting a reality. A good way to appreciate these new advances is to see them firsthand at our USITT booth."

With an output exceeding that of the leading 750W HPL ellipsoidal, the Ovation E-260WW will be hard for anyone at the conference to miss. USITT visitors who work with this fixture will not only be impressed by its brightness, they'll also appreciate its extremely smooth dimming down to the very bottom of the curve, as well as its flat and even field of light. In addition to the standard warm white version of this fixture, Chauvet Professional will be displaying an IP65-rated outdoor version and a cool white version.

Chauvet Professional will also be using its USITT booth to showcase the color rendering capabilities of its RGBA-Lime fixtures. The Ovation E-910FC utilizes the full RGBA-Lime system to produce a rainbow of rich colors. It also has color temperature presets of 2800 to 6500 K that match the output of a tungsten source to perfection.



The new Ovation B-2805FC and Ovation B-565FC on display at the Chauvet Professional booth are batten-style fixtures with an RGBA-Lime color-mixing system. Both fixtures have a holographic filter that locks into place for enhanced wall/cyc grazing ability. The two fixtures also offer the flexibility of RDM, Art-Net™, sACN and standard DMX control options. "Our booth is the only place where USITT visitors can see RGBA-Lime batten style fixtures," said Chauvet. "This is one of many new ideas we are offering in stage lighting."

chauvetlighting.com

Yamaha Joins Forces with Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation

Yamaha Corporation of America, in partnership with the Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation, presented students and teachers at Dale Jr. High School in Anaheim, California, with 22 new Yamaha keyboards to help support music education programming at the school.



The presentation event, which took place on February 16, 2017, celebrated the culmination of the Yamaha "Share the Gift" campaign to help underfunded music programs throughout the United States.

Yamaha vice president and Keyboard

general manager Paul Calvin, along with Tricia Steele, program director for the Studio-City based Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation, personally delivered the keyboards during a music class at

the school.

This donated instruments will offer students the opportunity to practice their musical skills every day, rather than taking turns practicing a couple of times a week, as they had previously.

"Yamaha believes in the transformational power of music, so it is gratifying to contribute to the *continued on page 20*

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Ebony Polish



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Mahogany
Polish-Sapele



GH160R

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Premium Medium Grand.
Ebony Polish,
Mahogany
Polish-Sapele,
HR Ebony Satin



GH170R

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Premium Living Room
Grand.
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GH188R

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Ebony Polish



RB

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Studio.
Ebony Polish



R8

4'11"
Conventional
Grand Piano.
Ebony Polish,
Mahogany Polish,
White Polish



R9

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White Polish



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Mahogany Satin



UP121RB

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Studio Upright.
Ebony Polish,
Mahogany Polish,
White Polish,
Walnut Polish



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Yamaha Joins Forces with Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation

continued from page 18

success of the music program at Dale Jr. High School," said Paul Calvin of Yamaha. "With ready access to high-quality musical instruments, these students will not only accelerate the mastery of their musical skills, but they will also have a greater opportunity to enjoy the proven social, emotional and intellectual benefits that music education provides."

Yamaha placed a rallying call to music makers everywhere, asking them to join its "Share the Gift" campaign to support music education in schools throughout the U.S. during the 2016 holiday season. The campaign encouraged musicians of all levels to create a short video of themselves

playing one of 15 classic holiday songs on either a Yamaha piano or keyboard, and then posting it to Twitter or Instagram.

For every video that was posted with the hashtag #YamahaShareTheGift, Yamaha committed to donate a keyboard (up to 300 total) to the Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation, who are committed to providing the musical instruments to underfunded music programs nationwide, giving economically disadvantaged youth access to the many benefits of music education. 183 qualifying videos were submitted on Twitter and Instagram, meaning 183 total keyboards will be donated to schools throughout the country. Watch some of

the submissions at <http://4wrd.it/Share-TheGift>.

"We're thrilled to work with the Yamaha team this year to give a big boost to Dale Jr. High's stellar music program with this keyboard donation," said Felice Mancini, president and CEO, Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation. "Yamaha created a meaningful way for fans to express their holiday gratitude and share the joy of playing music to others. We're happy to have chosen the schools to receive this bounty of exceptional instruments that will be played by students for generations to come. Well done, Yamaha!"

usa.yamaha.com

Alfred Music Announces 2016 Premier Dealer Awards

Alfred Music announced the 2016 winners of the Alfred Music Premier Dealer Awards. The recipients of the awards are AMC Music, Popplers Music Store, Stanton's Sheet Music, and Twigg Musique. These awards honor dealers for building strong relationships with Alfred Music over the past year and achieving excellence in the music products industry.

Established in 1974, AMC Music has enjoyed 43 years in the print music business.

Specializing in piano, vocal, and choral music, AMC's dedicated staff is committed to the print music industry and service to its customers.

"The team at AMC Music provide their customers with an unmatched level of customer service and dedication that should be seen as an example across the industry," said Paul Melancon, sales representative. "They take the utmost care with each client and always go above and beyond to make

sure AMC Music is always front of mind for their needs."

"Popplers Music has been an important partner of Alfred Music for many years, but the primary reason they should be recognized is their longtime and continuing commitment to music education," said Danny Smolenski, sales representative, key accounts, and instrumental specialist. "In short, Popplers Music is a key advocate for what Alfred Music has always stood for—helping people to learn, to teach, to play, and to experience the joy of making music."

Popplers Music, established in 1909, is associated with numerous local, state, and national organizations as a member or underwriting exhibitor. Owner Don Langlie has been a board member and is the current president of the Retail Print Music Dealers Association. They also host workshops and reading sessions, both in their store and in partnership with various organizations and institutions, for teachers at all levels, from elementary through college. The staff at Popplers Music includes many former educators who understand the unique challenges of music education today.

Stanton's Sheet Music is a full service print music and gift store and provides excellent recommendations from their talented staff. Teachers rely on their expertise in the areas of band, orchestra, choral, and piano and know that whatever they need they can get it there. Stanton's supports Alfred Music by hosting numerous clinics and by bringing our products to all of the music conventions where they exhibit. They also have an extensive listening library and virtual workshops

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on their website so educators can always find what they need.

"Stanton's Sheet Music always goes above and beyond to ensure the customers receive the best possible service. They are an invaluable resource and we are fortunate to work with such an incredible partner who is constantly reviewing new products and are so well-versed in all areas of music education," said Pam Hendricks, senior director of sales, USA.

Twigg Musique started in 1958 as a repair shop. Eventually it expanded to selling instruments, and in 2013, it acquired Musi Club which was an established band music store. Together Dany Lamothe and Jasmin Boily have grown this business impressively over the last three years.

Christie Smith, senior sales representative for Canada said of Twigg Musique, "I have been so impressed with the grand projects that Dany Lamothe and Jasmin Boily work on. They have two full-time staff members and one part-time and they handle everything from receiving, sales, marketing, and events all by themselves. They are responsi-

ble for the website, all marketing pieces, and any events or promotions that take them outside of the store. They put hours and hours of their time into pulling these things off and the end result has been impressive." Christie goes on to say, "I think in this day and age where sometimes it's easy to get cynical and down about the future of print music, it's refreshing to see these two people who are excited about the potential of print and have used their creative energy and personal commitment to their community to grab an impressive amount of the market share in the Quebec print music market."

Alfred Music congratulates these four tremendous dealers and thanks them for being solid partners in music education.

alfred.com



Twigg Musique



Stanton's Sheet Music



AMC Music



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Fischer Joins D'Addario Orchestral Artist Roster



D'Addario adds German violinist Julia Fischer to their Orchestral artist roster.

Fischer has performed with countless top orchestras around the world including the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra under Jukka-Pekka Salonen, the Berlin Philharmoniker under Sir Simon Rattle, the Bavarian State Orchestra under Kirill Petrenko, the Tonhalle Zurich Orchestra under David Zinman, the St. Petersburg Philharmonic under Yuri Temirkanov, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Riccardo Muti and the Cleveland Orchestra under Franz Welser-Möst. Julia Fischer has been Artist in Residence at the Konzerthaus in Berlin, at the Dresden Philharmonic and the Wigmore Hall London, where she is a

regular guest with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, as well as leading the Julia Fischer Quartett or even being heard at the piano. Additionally, Fischer has recorded over 20 albums, with recent recordings featuring the Brahms Violin Concerto with the Cleveland Orchestra and Franz Welser-Möst, as well as the first joint Duo-CD with Daniell Müller-Schott. Previous recordings earned Germany's coveted ECHO Award, the Diapason d'Or; the CHOC from Le Monde de la Musique and a BBC Music Magazine Award. Fischer was also named ECHO "Instrumentalist of the Year" 2007, the Gramophone "Artist of the Year" 2007 and "Instrumentalist of the Year" at the 2009 MIDEM Classical Awards.

Most recently, Fischer received Germany's Federal Cross of Merit, Germany's highest civilian award, for recognition of her work as a cultural ambassador and her musical reputation around the globe.

Throughout her musical career, Fischer has always maintained her piano studies, and she continues to be a proficient piano

soloist. During the 2016-17 season, Julia Fischer is Artist in Residence at Lugano Musica as well as in her hometown with München Musik. Apart from orchestral concerts, the residencies feature performances at the piano in chamber music settings and reunite her amongst others with long-term collaborator Daniel Müller-Schott. The season in Munich further sees her perform in a highly anticipated concert with her former teacher and rare performer Ana Chumachenco. Alongside her teaching, Julia Fischer gives regularly scheduled masterclasses at the Musikferien am Starnberger See. Julia Fischer plays a Giovanni Battista Guadagnini violin (1742) as well as a Philipp Augustin violin (2011).

"We are thrilled and honored to welcome Julia Fischer to our Orchestral family," Lyris Hung says, product manager of D'Addario Orchestral Strings. "Her incredible musicianship, passion, and artistry, as well as her extraordinary commitment to teaching, is inspiring to us."

Julia Fischer uses Kaplan Amo Strings and currently teaches at The Munich Academy of Music.

daddario.com

On-Stage Awards Dealer of the Year Award to American Musical Supply

On-Stage/TMP announced their 2016 On-Stage Dealer of the Year is American Musical Supply of Oakland, NJ.

AMS is the first two-time winner of this award. On-Stage sends a special thank you to Jim Hovey, Russ Mack, Mike Kane and the rest of their organization for their dedication.

"We are fortunate to be in such a great industry with passionate, creative people who we call friends. Congrats AMS! You make doing business together fun." - Sharon Hennessey, Co-President, The Music People.

on-stage.com



Left to right, Top - Michael Hovey, Aleks Miglowiec, Jessica Wong, Russell Mack, Fiona Lenaire, Josh Berger, Ann Hennessey, Bob Murray. Bottom - Jim Hennessey, John Hennessey, Jim Hovey, Sharon Hennessey, Mike Kane

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"Absolutely genius, all the gain you could possibly want with zero noise. Well done ISP!" - Jason Hook - **Five Finger Death Punch** "The Beta Bass PreAmp Pedal put my global touring into a suitcase. I can rock an arena or stadium with a tone that fits into my suitcase!" - David Ellefson, **Megadeth** "The Theta Pro DSP simply sounds amazing. Exceptional tone-sculpting capabilities" - Allan Holdsworth "What a great pedalboard with stellar presets. The stereo sounds are amazing for live and studio recording!!!" - Brad Gillis, **Night Ranger** "Other than my guitar and amplifier, the ISP Decimator is the one piece of gear I value the most. It is the greatest noise suppressor on the market." - Mike Spreitzer - **Devil Driver** "I've spent years dialing in the Stryper TONE and using many pedals and effects to do so. The Theta Pro allowed me to create the perfect Stryper tone, all in one box - pre eq, distortion, post eq, effects, noise reduction and global eq's for direct signals and cab signals. I'm truly blown away by the capabilities of this unit! Everything is amazingly usable in this box and it's one of the best sounding guitar rigs available today - period! A Godsend" - Michael Sweet, **Stryper** "What an amazing piece of equipment, an unbelievably powerful precise and full sound in such a compact case, these aren't a compromise they are the way forward, almost too good to be true.

Where have you been all my life? I'm blown away by it!" - Andrew Craighan, **My Dying Bride**. "The Theta Pro DSP from ISP Technologies possibilities are seemingly endless. My favorite part is how responsive it is to the input from the guitar. I can control it, just as I do a tube amp. Truly amazing!!!" - Chris Deacon, **Matt Farris Band** "The ISP Decimator is the most effective noise/buzz/hum reduction I've ever used. Either as a rack mount unit, or in pedal format, it has never failed me. highly recommend it for everyone."



Danley Installed in Rice University's Brian Patterson Sports Performance Center

Rice University, located in Houston, Texas recently invested \$31.5 million in the new 60,000 square-foot Brian Patterson Sports Performance Center, which includes offices, locker rooms, student athlete lounges, a sports medicine center, an auditorium, and a strength and conditioning center. Baton Rouge-based A/V integrator Technical Services Group (TSG) installed Danley Sound Labs loudspeakers and subwoofers in the auditorium and in the strength and conditioning center.

TSG designed the A/V systems for both rooms. Noted Patrick Meek, senior account executive with TSG and leader on the Patterson Center job. "We've done a lot of work in other college football facilities, and we've learned that we get the best responses when the systems are incredibly high-impact. You can think about it this way: they're coaching 18 to 22 year olds, and there is a certain way those kids associate with media these days. They're immersed in video games, blockbuster movies, booming stereos; and now, as coach, you need to get them pumped up! The system has to go beyond what they're used to."

He continued, "In our experience, Danley Sound Labs loudspeakers and subwoofers deliver the kind of fidelity – clarity of highs and definition of lows – and impact that the student athletes can really immerse themselves in. Danley is of a magnitude that's outside their day-to-day experience." The auditorium can accommodate the entire football team and all its staff, and it's where the



team holds its pre- and postgame meetings. TSG installed a pair of Danley SM-100F loudspeakers for left and right output and a Danley SM-96 center channel. The SM-100Fs include a 15-inch driver with substantial low-frequency output. In the expansive strength and conditioning center, TSG installed four Danley SM-80 full-range loudspeakers augmented by two Danley TH-212 subwoofers.

The Danley boxes are backed by QSC Q-SYS processing. In both facilities, Crestron DM8x8 matrix switchers anchor the video systems. The auditorium uses a Planar 3x3 video wall, which creates a 165-inch high-definition screen. Five Sony 65-inch ultra-HD screens populate the strength and conditioning center. In both systems, Crestron control systems integrate the Q-SYS and Crestron video management to provide Rice staff with intuitive control.

danleysoundlabs.com

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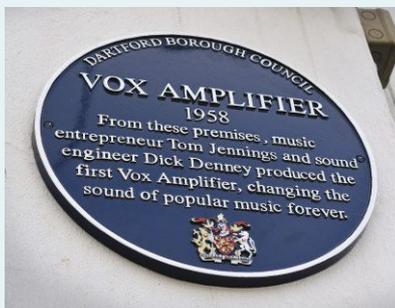
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Dungan

Home of the Blues

It was nice to see the original Vox factory in Dartford, Kent, being recognized by the inclusion of a blue plaque on the building. Even if it was from the local Borough Council and not one of English Heritage's official plaques, which are normally reserved for scientists, authors and the like. They're only amps, not life saving drugs, after all. But, still, it was nice to see it remembered. The AC30 was and is a great sounding amp.



Maybe the industry should celebrate the UK's rich contribution to the musical instrument industry by launching its own landmark scheme? Sadly, over at Denmark Street, where there is so much of the UK's musical history there won't be much of the original place left to stick a plaque on soon. The MIA can have that idea for nothing.

The problem for the UK industry and, in fact, the problem for the UK generally is that it cannot move on from past glories. The next chapter, which will probably see it exit the EU, will not herald a return to the glory days of manufacturing, no matter how many people wish for it, because those days are gone for good. Limited manufacturing can be successful in certain niches of course, but Britain has for a long time been better placed as a gateway to Europe, a place for companies to use as a stepping-stone to the continent. For US companies the shared language is a big plus factor. That was the UK's niche.

All that looks likely to change now, because the UK will no longer be at the heart of Europe. There will be easier access to the EU through actual members of it.

One day maybe they'll construct a blue plaque where the UK once was, but that really won't be cause to celebrate.

Another TC Director Joins LunaStone

Former director of finance at TC Electronic, Jesper Dalum, has become the latest TC recruit to Danish guitar pedal brand LunaStone.

Dalum will head the finance operations and has also invested in the company as part of a long-term commitment. Last year, TC's former VP of Marketing, Allan Strand, became CEO of LunaStone.

He said: "It's a great pleasure to welcome Jesper here at LunaStone. Jesper and I have been working together for many years in the past, and I have great confidence that he will be a massive asset to our company on many different levels. Especially considering the huge interest we received when we launched the True-OverDrive 1 at the recent NAMM show, we will definitely benefit a lot from having Jesper join the team."

"I first heard about LunaStone Pedals through Allan," commented Dalum. "And I instantly had a wish to become part of the company after Allan invested and took the lead. I am very excited to now have made the decision to join, as we have worked together on many projects

at TC Electronic and they always turned out successfully. I am sure we will be able to once again make great things happen with LunaStone Pedals."



Jesper Dalum

The last member of the LunaStone ownership is head engineer, Steen Grøntved, who founded the company in 2012.

"During 2016, things really started to pick up and I realized that additional knowledge, skills and manpower was necessary to continue the positive growth path," said Grøntved. "And the recent success has only increased this need, so I am very happy to welcome Jesper.

"I have very positive outlooks for the future of the company, and with the addition of Jesper to the team, I will get even more time to focus on what I do best and enjoy the most – designing great-sounding guitar pedals that inspire great music."

JHS Launches New-Look Trade Site

JHS has launched a 'Trade Only' area of its website – www.jhs.co.uk – allowing UK and Irish customers access to exclusive trade info by logging in.

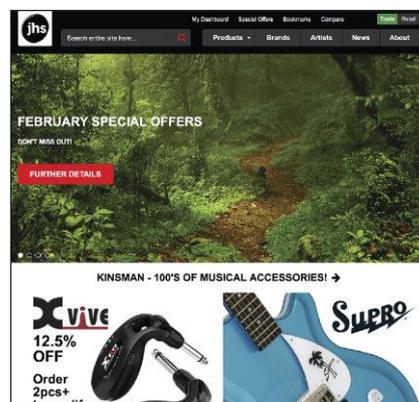
The desktop and tablet/mobile friendly site allows trade customers to view and use additional features including:

- Trade Prices (alongside each product)
- Main Dealership Prices (if applicable)
- Stock Item Availability (updated every three hours)
- Stock Due date if out of stock (where applicable)
- Bookmark Products
- Add to Compare Products

There's also a 'My Dashboard' page with links to special offers, Excel price lists and item data, quantity discounts, dealership forms, product training, JHS staff contacts and more.

Another feature is the Trade/Retail toggle switch (located top right hand corner once logged in), which allows the retailer to switch to consumer view hiding trade prices before showing products to their customers.

To access the site, customers will have to register, which they can do from the



main JHS site's home page. The new Trade Only area at www.jhs.co.uk replaces the previous www.jhstrade.co.uk website which will be discontinued at the end of the month.

Alan Smith, JHS sales and marketing director said: "We were really pleased with how our new website was received when we launched it last year, and now we're hoping our trade customers will enjoy the latest release of new trade only features. We're currently working on the next phase of additional functionality which we're planning to release soon."

U.S. Distribution Deal for Analogue Solutions

Momentum Audio Sales has added British synth maker Analogue Solutions to its line of MI/Pro Audio products for exclusive distribution in the U.S. market.

The company joins UK-based audio manufacturer Audient, German loudspeaker manufacturer EVE Audio, and British synth maker Modal Electronics under Momentum's distribution umbrella. The company was founded by audio industry veteran John Devins.

"We had many options to consider for distribution in the US," said Tom Carpenter, founder of Analogue Solutions. "We wanted an independent distributor for a more personal relationship and chose Momentum Audio Sales for their passion for synthesizers as well as their knowledge of the market. Momentum will present our products to a wider audience and give us the ability to concentrate on bringing new products to market."

Analogue Solutions creates hand-built analog synthesizers, sequencers and Eurorack modules. The synthesizers have a full analog audio path as well as analog LFOs and EGs. They have no internal memory which means nothing in the audio path is made sterile by CPU control. When a musician turns a knob, they are directly changing the voltage or current in an actual synth circuit.

"Tom Carpenter has been at the front edge of boutique synthesis for many years," said Momentum founder, John Devins. "Analogue Solutions is a great fit on the creative side of our MI market focus."

ADG/Filling Partnership Adds Another Pedal Line

Audio Distribution Group and Filling Distribution have added another new brand to their ongoing distribution alliance, in the form of Fulltone Pedals.

Founded in 1991 by session guitarist, composer, performer and electronics engineer Michael Fuller, the idea of Fulltone pedals was to create vintage-sounding pedals that were sturdier and more reliable than their originals.

The firm designs and manufactures components such as the Fulltone 3PDT (the world's only super-duty Triple Pole Double Throw footswitch), custom potentiometers and even its own 22 gauge copper stranded wire with no tin-coating. All Fulltone pedals, from the best selling OCD to the high-end custom shop products, are hand-built and tested by Fulltone at its factory in Southern California.

The deal covers the UK, Italy, France, Spain, Portugal and Switzerland.

ADG and Filling Distribution announced a strategic distribution alliance in April 2016 and are responsible for brands across several European territories including EarthQuaker Devices, Maxon, Two notes Audio Engineering, Emma Electronic and Dynaudio PRO to name some.



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Meinl Unveils 2017 Cymbal Range

Cymbal specialist Meinl's new launches for 2017 include a new Pure alloy range, Artist Concept models and new magnetic cymbal tuners.

If you want to know what they sound like, apparently it is: "They feature a velvety wash, combined with a full tonal spectrum, extending through all dynamic levels. The hi-hats cover all dynamics from a quick, responding staccato to slight sizzle, to a full-bodied energy.

"The crashes hit you with a bold punch, filled with highs, mids and lows, followed by a medium to long sustain. The rides push your sound with an upfront mix, cushioned by fundamental lows, along with a cutting bell."

Pure Alloy range

Hi-hats:

- 14 inch Medium HiHat Cymbal £250 RRP
- 15 inch Medium HiHat Cymbal £278 RRP

Crashes:

- 16 inch Medium Crash Cymbal £166 RRP
- 18 inch Medium Crash Cymbal £200 RRP
- 20 inch Medium Crash Cymbal £233 RRP

Rides:

- 20 inch Medium Ride Cymbal £233 RRP
- 22 inch Medium Ride Cymbal £278 RRP

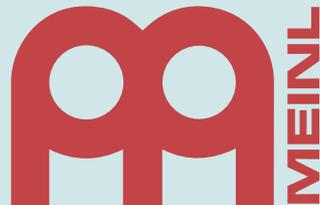
The Artist Concept Models are a collection of cymbal voices, products of Meinl Cymbal Artists and the Meinl R&D team. The range consists of:

Artist Concept Model
Thomas Lang

- AC-BULLET Meinl Artist Concept Models Luke Holland – Bullet Stack Cymbals £283 RRP
- AC-DEEP Meinl Artist Concept Models Anika Nilles – Deep Hats Cymbals £558 RRP
- AC-FAT Meinl Artist Concept Models Matt Garstka – Fat Stack Cymbals £475 RRP
- AC-SUPER Meinl Artist Concept Models Thomas Lang – Super Stack Cymbals £275 RRP

Finally, Meinl is launching magnetic Cymbal Tuners, offering drummers an easy way to tweak the sound of cymbals, simply by placing the magnets on the cymbal (mated up top and bottom). By positioning the Cymbal Tuners in different spots on the surface, players can control the sustain, dampen the tone, adjust the volume, and optimize the sound of a cymbal. RRP is £16.

The range is available from UK distributor D'Addario.



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Yamaha Adding to Indonesian Manufacturing Capability

Yamaha plans to invest approximately \$43 million developing another musical instrument manufacturing factory in Indonesia.

The Japanese music giant has established a new subsidiary in Indonesia: Yamaha Musical Products Asia (YMPA), which will manufacture various digital music instruments, such as piano components, both for the domestic and global market. The factory will be located in Bekasi (nearby Indonesia's capital city of Jakarta) and is targeted to start operations in August 2018.

The new plant is Yamaha's sixth production facility in Indonesia. The five other plants are a piano manufacturing facility (Yamaha Indonesia), a guitar manufacturing facility (Yamaha Music Manufacturing Indonesia), an electronic musical instruments manufacturing facility (Yamaha Music Manufacturing Asia), a wind instrument and melodic manufacturing facility (Yamaha Musical Products Indonesia), and an audio-visual products manufacturing facility (Yamaha Electronics Manufacturing Indonesia).

Besides Indonesia, Yamaha also plans to develop a musical instrument plant in India. This facility should start operations in early 2019. Yamaha said it detects rising demand for musical instruments, especially from emerging markets. Therefore, the new plants in Indonesia and India are regarded a strategic investment that will benefit the company, particularly by trying to expand in these markets.

Achmad Sigit Dwiwahjono, director general for Chemicals, Textile and Miscellaneous Industries at Indonesia's Industry Ministry, is content to see Yamaha expand its business in Indonesia and to make Indonesia its production hub for musical instruments. He added that Yamaha already exports various instruments overseas (including to Japan). With the new production facility it should contribute to rising exports, which would have a positive impact on Indonesia's trade balance.

Tanglewood Launches New Sundance Line

Tanglewood has launched a new guitar line called the Sundance Performance Pro series – designed by Swedish luthier Michael Sanden.

The new range of six handcrafted models boasts all-solid wood combinations in a variety of acoustic body shapes. First to market will be the heritage inspired Dreadnought X15 at £699, two Superfolk cutaway models at £799 in the X45AVE and X45E, finishing with the all-solid Mahogany X47E.

Each will feature all-solid construction and Custom Master design parallel and fan tapered bracing patterns.

All electro models will feature Fishman Presys Plus electronic systems. The range and tone of the final two X70TE and X15SDTE models are enhanced by Torrefied tops - a drying process that helps replicate the sound of a vintage instrument.

“The wood is heat-treated in an oxygen-free kiln, making it highly resonant and extremely stable, it’s as if the wood is pre-aged,” explained designer Michael Sanden. “It looks and sounds



like wood that’s been broken in for many years.”

All models are now available at specially appointed Tanglewood dealers.

In addition, the firm announced a total price freeze on its Crossroads guitar series.

The firm says it has taken the decision to suppress and absorb the big increases in price, caused by the weakened pound against the dollar and “give their loyal customer part-

ner base a fighting chance in hard times”.

Crossroads Folk acoustic guitars will remain at £99 retail, with the travel version at the same price.

Based on American guitars from the early part of the last century, the Crossroads series features instruments with a rustic, weather worn cosmetic which has been defined as Whiskey Barrel Burst and the premise of the range is simply to offer “the very best sound at the very best price”.





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Trade Regrets

On February 16, **Josef Lausmann**, a longtime producer of mouthpieces in Nauheim, Germany, died. He was the president of Lausmann Musical, a small factory that supplied products to many leading horn makers, globally.



Organ Exchange founder **Curt Carter** passed away on February 13. His chain became a powerhouse in the California market thanks to the company's innovative methods of selling and advertising. After the organ fad of the late '60s and '70s passed, the operation's name and focus was changed to Piano Exchange.



Founder of Eau Claire, Wisconsin's Morgan's Music, **David "Bud" Morgan**, died on February 2. As NAMM's Dan Del Fiorentino noted: "Morgan's Music followed the mission to serve the music makers who come through the door with the same passion that founder Bud Morgan established within the store and staff."



Richard Ash of Sam Ash Music penned a touching tribute to his friend and industry icon **Elliot Rubinson** who passed away on February 6. A portion of that message is below:



I first met Elliot when I auditioned to be in his band back in the early '70s. We practiced in my parents' basement. He played bass. I played lead guitar. He was bright and witty with a great sense of humor. We were both big fans of

the band Cactus and basically rehearsed playing all the songs on their album. We also had something else in common. Elliot, at the age of 19, already had a thriving business buying and selling music gear out of his house, listing the items on Buy Lines, which was the eBay of its day. I was subsequently thrown out of the band and we lost touch.

Six or so years later I find out that he had opened a major music store in Tampa called Thoroughbred Music... In a relatively short time he had become one of the largest musical instrument retailers in the country. He had six powerful stores and a thriving mail order business. He had no partners and no family in the business. He did this all by himself, he was a brilliant businessman. I admired him greatly. During this time he also got into the wholesale side and started acquiring brands including the Dean guitar and DDRUM brands...

Elliot was a true genius. He would have been successful in any business, but he went with his passion for music and built a business around it... He has left us all too soon. My condolences to his family and all the people he touched along the way.

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ON THE MOVE

The Avedis Zildjian Company has announced that **John Stephans** has been appointed presi-



dent, reporting directly to CEO, Craigie Zildjian, effective February 1, 2017.

Stephans formerly was CEO of Ide-aPaint, creators of an innovative dry erase paint for workplace collaboration. Stephans brings significant experience in managing and growing global brands, having previously held senior leadership roles in Marketing and General Management for Monster, Ocean Spray, and Gillette.

In his role as president, Stephans will lead all Sales, Marketing, Product Development and Manufacturing efforts for both the Zildjian and Vic Firth brands. "John will be instrumental in developing a long term growth plan for our core cymbal and drumstick businesses," said Craigie Zildjian. "He will develop strategies that leverage our brand equity to incubate emerging technology products and services."

"Throughout my life, I've had a passion for music, so it is an honor to join a truly legendary company. I hope to use my experience to grow these great brands now and in the future," said Stephans.

Jim Mack has joined the **Ashly Audio** team in Webster, New York as CEO. He will help expand business in exist-



ing markets and forge paths into new markets that leverage Ashly's history and reputation for building affordable, high-quality amplifiers, signal processors, and user interfaces.

Mack will report directly to Marty Szpiro, president & CEO of Jam Industries, Ashly's parent company.

"On top of being a great person

to work with, Jim has a depth and breadth of experience that makes him a real asset to Ashly, especially at this moment in Ashly's history," explained Szpiro. "He has proven people and recruiting skills, and a tactician's instinct for the right moves at the right times. Ashly is an essential and strategic asset in Jam Industries' portfolio, and we're thrilled to have Jim on the Ashly team."

"With the full backing and blessing of Jam Industries, I'm looking forward to growing Ashly by taking it in new directions and by growing its share in existing markets," said Mack. "Jam is one of the best companies in the industry and has an excellent record of finding great people and then stepping back to let them do what they do well. Ashly has a great brand. It's one of the old, iconic brands that has held strong for decades. Indeed, Ashly's stable, passionate, and talented team was a big draw for me. They've done fabulous things with the company, and I'll add to their strengths, not change them. I'm especially excited to work with Mark [Wentling], whom I've known for a while." Wentling will remain as Ashly's president.

Hal Leonard has announced the promotion of **David Jahnke** to senior vice president - National Sales.



Jahnke joined Hal Leonard in 1992 as a telesales representative and progressed through the ranks of district sales manager to national sales manager and, since 2002, vice president - National Sales. His new title reflects the ongoing expansion of his responsibilities for the domestic sales area as well as the development of various B2B initiatives, and more. Prior to working at Hal Leonard he managed Tony's Drum Shop in Appleton, Wisconsin, and was a private drum teacher. Jahnke is also currently serving on the Retail Print Music Dealer Association Board of Directors and is an active gigging musician in the Milwaukee area.

Shure Incorporated has promoted **Bruce Skof** to vice president and chief financial officer.



He will oversee the Company's financial planning and budgeting process and lead the Enterprise Risk Management Program. Skof will be responsible for all key financial and investment matters for Shure Incorporated and its subsidiaries.

"I congratulate Bruce on this well-earned promotion," said Chris Schyvinck, Shure president and CEO. "Bruce has been instrumental in refining Shure's business processes to ensure that our financial plans align with our strategic goals. He has made many significant contributions to the company, and I look forward to working with him in this new, expanded role."

Skof joined Shure in 2000 and has held numerous positions during his tenure in corporate finance, including controller, manager of financial analysis, and senior director of FP&A and treasury. He is a member of Shure's Corporate Management Committee and serves as chairman of the Corporate Projects Governance Committee.

DANSR, Inc. has promoted **Michael Fenoglio** to Vandoren brand manager.



Fenoglio has been with DAN-SR since 2013 with responsibilities in Artist Relations and Sales and Marketing. For the past two years, Michael has been Vandoren product specialist where he played a central role in the development and implementation of the Vandoren Regional Artist program that provides hundreds of free clinics to middle schools and high schools across the U.S. each year. Fenoglio has also played an integral part in trade show management, the creation of new Vandoren sales and marketing online video content, ad placement, web design, new product evaluation and other marketing initiatives.



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Note From Joe

Now is Our Time

If there was ever a time to have our industry's voice heard in Washington it is now...

No question, we are living in interesting political times and I believe as concerned citizens we have an obligation to get involved. Perhaps one of the most direct ways to do that is to exercise our constitutional right to go and meet face to face with our elected officials. Going to your state capital or to Washington D.C. to express your opinion and to advocate for things that are important to you gets you off the sidelines to become a part of the solution.

This May, your industry peers and colleagues will travel from all over the country to join in the NAMM Music Education Advocacy D.C. Fly-In. What started as a fledgling group of NAMM Board Members just a few short years ago has grown into a movement with members and our many partners in the music and arts field convening in our nation's capital. They come to achieve our industry vision of a world where every child has a deep desire to learn music and a recognized right to be taught.

Those attending will participate in an opening "Day of Service" where NAMM members volunteer in a D.C. school. It is amazing to see NAMM members teaching music to these young people, often from very disadvantaged circumstances, and leaving the school equipped with thousands of dollars in donated instruments setting up the school for future success.

It is the perfect metaphor for our week in D.C. and cements our commitment to changing lives through music.

The following days are filled with advocacy training, briefings to prepare the message we'll be taking to our elected officials and visiting with members of the Senate and House of Representatives to insist that music and art remain a part of a well-rounded education. Most newcomers arrive with a feeling of trepidation and uncertainty but they leave after their week in D.C. feeling like true patriots, fighting for something greater than themselves.

"We always hear about the rights of democracy, but the major responsibility of it is participation."

The part that is hard to describe is how life-changing this is to each individual NAMM member. For most of us it's a once-in-a-lifetime chance to participate in our democracy. And even for those veterans who have been many times, the experience of walking the halls of Capitol Hill, all in the cause of music and music education, is truly a career highlight.

The NAMM team invites you to be a part of our next Fly-In held May 22–25. Call 800-767-6266 or visit www.namm.org/fly-in for more details.

Perhaps Wynton Marsalis put it best, "We always hear about the rights of democracy, but the major responsibility of it is participation." Now is our time!



Joe Lamond
NAMM PRESIDENT AND CEO



Participate in the Music Education Advocacy D.C. Fly-In

Attending the Fly-In, held May 22-25, 2017, is a life-changing experience. Don't miss this opportunity! Registration is now available for this one-of-a-kind event.



Be a Part of the Movement and Teach!

Attendees will not only be able to meet with law makers about the importance of music education, but will also help local children experience the joys of making music at the annual "Day of Service."



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Justin Norvell with the new American Professional Jazzmaster in Mystic Seafoam.

Fender's Maverick Spirit Endures with the Launch of the American Professional Series

By Christian **Wissmuller**

Fender Musical Instruments Corporation (FMIC) took a bold step – and one which caught some by surprise – when, in January of this year, the company retired the venerable American Standard series.

Rumors of the move began to bubble up on chat boards and social media in the fall of 2016. While Fender had previously altered the name of their flagship series from “American Standard” to “American” at the beginning of the millennium (it reverted to “American Standard” in 2008), this is no mere rebranding. Replac-

ing the line – interestingly, essentially 30 years to the day (give or take) from American Standard’s introduction in 1987 – is an entirely re-tooled and re-engineered series of instruments: the American Professional Series.

Justin Norvell, Fender’s VP Category Management – Electric Guitars, Basses, and Accessories, recently spoke with *MMR* about the reasons for this major change for the brand and what significant features distinguish American Professional guitars and basses from their predecessors.

Can you talk about the origins of the American Professional Series?

At Fender, we’re always striving to serve the player and improve on every instrument that we make. It’s a very intense and detailed process that never ends, but it’s worth every bit of effort. We literally are always looking at ways to improve our instruments, and that goes back to the genesis of the company. Leo was tirelessly tweaking, changing, and improving. The American Professional has been two years in the making and we looked to improve upon our American Standard series with modern, elevated features for today’s players. We tapped our internal R&D team, and also went out into the field and got feedback from the artists themselves on neck shapes and the smaller, yet still significant, features that make a big difference as they create and perform their music. This new family is representative of where Fender is today, what we stand for, and are capable of.

Specifically, in what ways is the American Professional Series distinct from the outgoing American Standard Series? Should this new line be seen as a straight-up replacement for American Standard?

American Professional replaces the American Standard as the new flagship series of electric guitars and basses for Fender, but it’s not without saying that we are very proud of our American

Standard instruments and the quality music players continue to make with them. With American Professional, everything of consequence is different and we looked closely at features that impact tone and feel. There’s a different neck, pickups, bridges, and electronics. In setting out to create American Professional we really thought about “revolution via evolution.” Overall we made changes to almost every feature that directly relates to sound and playability, so while a Stratocaster still looks like a Stratocaster, under the hood it’s very different and optimized. We took great care with very small details, like reversing the taper on left handed potentiometers, creating different treble bleed circuits for each instrument to match the unique pickup configurations, et cetera. In short, we did the deep dive and did the work to make these the best they could possibly be, further optimizing our iconic platforms.

Regarding that last bit of my previous question – is this truly “the end” of American Standard or might dealers and end-users expect to see reissues of those instruments?

At NAMM, Fender CEO Andy Mooney presented the last American Standard, which officially marked the end of production for that series. American Professional is the next step on Fender’s journey to create the best guitars and basses to empower musi-

cians. As a 70-year-old guitar company, we have such a rich product history and American Standard is a big part of that. We've learned something from each instrument that comes out of our factory with the aim to honor our past, while moving forward into the future with American Professional's improvements for today's modern musician.

Specific to the American Pro Tele Deluxe, what was behind the choice to go with the "standard" headstock shape, rather than the larger, "Strat headstock" of the classic '72 Tele Deluxe?

We wanted to treat this as a new instrument and not a reissue of the old Telecaster Deluxe. So, it has a Telecaster headstock, and also normal-sized humbucking pickups unlike the vintage model, though we kept the pickup cover design as a nod to the past.

With the official launch of American Professional line in January, what has been the early reaction to the new series, both from retailers and players?

The pickups might be the most talked about feature – with pickup guru Tim Shaw's V-Mod designs, which custom voice our instruments with a variety of alnico magnets. All the rules were out the window – who says a pickup should have all one kind of magnet? What if we could optimize the blend of a pickup like the pickup was a mixing board? This "outside the box" thinking took us on a great journey that got us to a place that both Fender and our customers are very excited about. We also continue to receive great feedback about the new neck shapes and colors (Mystic Seafoam, Antique Olive, and Sonic Gray) and many were excited about the offsets, in particular the Jazzmaster, in our flagship line. We haven't offered an American-made Jazzmaster or Jaguar in our flagship line for a long time, so it has been long awaited and well received.

What are your expectations for the coming months with respect to the American Professional line?

The American Professional flagship

	AM STANDARD	AM PROFESSIONAL
NECK SHAPE	MODERN C	NEW "DEEP C" SHAPE
TUNERS	STAGGERED MODERN	STAGGERED MODERN
HEADSTOCK	SMALL/CLASSIC	SMALL/CLASSIC
FRETBOARD RADIUS	9.5"	9.5"
FRETS	MEDIUM JUMBO	NARROW-TALL
TRUSS ROD	BI-FLEX DUAL ADJUST	BI-FLEX DUAL ADJUST
PICKUPS	CUSTOM SHOP	NEW V-MOD / NEW SHAW
BRIDGE	AM STD 2 POINT	AM STD 2 POINT W/ POP-IN ARM
NUT	SYNTHETIC BONE	GENUINE BONE
NECK JOINT	4 BOLT/MICRO TILT	4 BOLT/MICRO TILT
BODY CONSTRUCTION	2-4 PC	2-4 PC
CASE/BAG	MOLDED CASE	ELITE MOLDED CASE

line has been received with open arms – not only by dealers, but also players and modern artists, such as Duff McKagan, Local Natives, Mac Miller, J Mascis, and Ty Dolla \$ign. We expect this momentum to continue as we work to get American Professional guitars in the hands of more artists and consumers.

Is there anything else about the new American Professional instruments that we haven't yet covered, but which you'd like to share with MMR's readers?

It's easy for large, well-known companies like Fender to sit back and rely on a nostalgic musical legacy, but we come into work every day striving to make our instruments better by looking at all of the details, new sounds, and materials. We still hold onto that maverick spirit associated with Leo Fender. We didn't necessarily need to make all of these improvements, but we have our eye on progress and continuous improvement for the player's sake. The little things are everything and I believe that all of those small details and adjustments together helped us create some of the best guitars Fender has ever made.

line has been received with open arms – not only by dealers, but also players and modern artists, such as Duff McKagan, Local Natives, Mac Miller, J Mascis, and Ty Dolla \$ign. We expect this momentum to continue as we work to get American Professional guitars in the hands of more artists and consumers.

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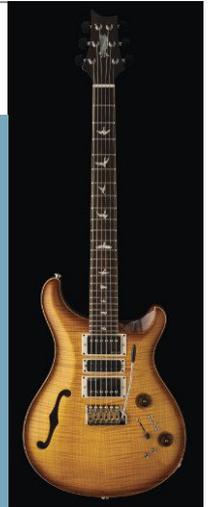
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The Un-Usual Suspects

Custom-Shop Guitars Continue to Offer Dealers and Consumers Unique Opportunities

By Christian **Wissmuller**

Many professional guitarists, guitar aficionados with money to burn, and even art collectors are drawn to instruments that aren't in a given brand's standard lineup. Whether called "master built," "private stock," or any other variant, the appeal of individually designed and built guitars (for the purposes of this article we'll go with the catch-all of "custom shop guitars") is unique and compelling.

MMR recently caught up with six of the most significant players in this field – both acoustic and electric guitar suppliers – to get a better insight into what's driving sales of these instruments in 2017, who's buying them, and how custom shop guitars can mean big profits for MI retailers who play their cards strategically.

While the basic concepts behind "custom shop" guitars are fairly universal – higher quality components, greater attention to detail, better fit and finish, or simply instruments made to a customer's preference – what characterizes these custom instruments for your brand, specifically?

Tom Bedell: First of all we get the tree trunk and we individually select trees – we never use clear-cut wood. We make sure that we are protecting the forest especially, so we have a very broad collection of really exotic tonewoods that were all thoughtfully, carefully harvested and that means that we can tell people the story of where the wood came from. So that's number one. Number two: we do a thing called Sound Profiling, which nobody else does. What everybody else does is, they cut their woods to an established dimension. So they have a set, pre-described dimension for how big it should be when in fact there's as much as a 30 percent variance in the frequency and density of tonewood cut to the same dimension within the same tree. What we do is we actually frequency test and we sand to the thinness that will give us the targeted frequency that we want to be at in order to maximize the potential of that wood, to make a beautiful sounding musical instrument.

Now, the other difference from certain companies, but certainly not all, is that we let people check out their design for what kind of effect they might want to have, what materials they want us to use. Then we take photographs of the instruments that are handcrafted by our craftsmen, and people can see the progress of their guitar as it's being made.

Matt Masciandaro: All of our custom instruments are made at the ESP Custom Shop in Tokyo, Japan. The luthiers at the ESP Custom Shop are widely regarded as some of the world's very best. An ESP Custom could be, but is not limited to, a modified version of one of our existing models. Or it could be a completely original work of art, with artistic sculpting, inlays, graphic designs, exotic materials, and more. The ESP Custom Shop's motto has long been, "If you can dream it, we can build it."

Mike Lewis: For Fender Custom Shop, it's not as much about specs, as it is the ingredients and how they are prepared. Even more, it's about our tenured builders and the tools and processes they use to bring each player's dream instrument to life, creating a bespoke experience from start to finish.

Fred Greene: High quality components, extraordinary attention to detail and superior fit and finish are universal to all Martin instruments. I believe your last "universal" example – instruments made to customer's preference – is what primarily draws customers to purchase a custom instrument. We work very hard to accommodate any custom request within reason. I believe that is what truly sets us apart from other instrument makers. We have an incredible pool of talented builders working within our facility. Their ability to handcraft components combined with the resources of a company the size of C.F. Martin allows our customers the freedom to let their imagination run wild and tap into the inner guitar designer that lies within them.

Monte Montefusco: Taylor Guitars' custom guitar program offers the discerning guitarist the ability to personalize over 40 attributes

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of a Taylor instrument. They have unique access to tonal and aesthetic options not available on our standard models. While our commitment to delivering an heirloom quality instrument with superior playability is consistent throughout the entire product line, personal choice and option accessibility are the mainstays of our custom program.

Paul Reed Smith: The PRS Private Stock program combines the highest quality of materials, the most personally crafted instruments, and the greatest level of customization available from PRS Guitars. Customers, through their dealers, can choose their top wood, back wood, neck blank and fretboard wood, headstock veneer, inlay materials, pickups, hardware, and finish. In the end, they have pretty much designed their very own heirloom-quality instrument using our criteria and materials. We also make some Private Stock models to stock and many of our dealers come to the factory often to pick out their own wood.

Jimmy Lovinggood: As many people know, John D'Angelico is one of the most respected builders of the 20th Century. Our master built guitars are hand-built one at a time in New York City. Our goal is to maintain the craftsmanship and level of quality that John set when he was building these guitars himself, as well as honor our roots in New York City. The characteristics that make our guitars unique are hand-crafted, original, and built to each customer's specifications.

For how many years has your company been offering these types of instruments?

FG: Martin has always accepted custom instrument requests and they were traditionally built through the standard production process. It was not until 2005 that we formally established a team of craftsman who were dedicated to specialized custom orders.

JL: We have been offering Master Built D'Angelico guitars for over four years.

PRS: The PRS Private Stock program is 20 years old.

Montefusco: The historical sales documents of Taylor Guitars show that Bob and Kurt (Taylor and Listug, co-founders of Taylor Guitars) offered customization starting at the beginning of the company in 1974. The program has evolved over the years and in addition to custom guitars we offer a modified standard model program with a condensed option list.

TB: Well, Breedlove was doing custom work well before I bought it six years ago, but Sound Profiling work just started in the last year.

MM: Over 40 years. ESP started out in 1975 as a small shop in Tokyo selling parts and hot-rodding instruments, and quickly began creating fully custom instruments under the ESP brand.

How are sales of custom shop guitars so far in 2017, compared to last year?

PRS: The sales for Private Stock are better than they have ever been. We have about a year backorder at this point.

Montefusco: We started off 2017 with a record-breaking custom guitar event at NAMM. More custom Taylor instruments were ordered in four hours than in any other previous single month. Our industry-leading craftspeople will deliver the majority of these guitars within 60 days.

TB: That's been a hot subject in the last couple of days. We have, right now, about 60 in-progress, unique custom guitars that were designed by individuals or retailers and that would be a little bit larger queue than we normally have. We are probably about twice as busy with the custom shop now than we usually are.

JL: We build each guitar individually and customize each guitar to the customer's specs and needs. We are only able to produce one or two Master Builders per month, and the wait time is 12-18 months. Recently, we have seen a marked increase in demand.

MM: For ESP that can be answered in two ways. First, each year, the luthiers in our custom shop create a special batch of guitar and bass models that we unveil at NAMM. This is called the Exhibition Limited Series, and each instrument is a one-of-a-kind creation, making them very rare and valuable not only as instruments but as collectible pieces. Many of these guitars generally sell almost immediately to our dealers during and shortly after NAMM.

Regarding individual orders of custom guitars, it's something that's spread out throughout the year, and really can't be measured on a month-by-month basis. It's typical for the ESP Custom Shop to require eight months or more to create each instrument, depending on the level of complexity of the design.

FG: Very good. We are beginning 2017 with more Custom orders than 2016. The Custom Shop has shown tremendous growth over the last 10 years.

Given the higher price of these guitars, it's generally a safe assumption that customers are not of the "budget conscious" variety, but beyond that how would you describe the consumer demographic – pros, well-heeled hobbyists, collectors?

ML: Fender Custom Shop's customer demographic includes professional players, well-heeled hobbyists and collectors, with the addition of the "guitaraholic." One is never enough! Many of our players have purchased dozens of Fender Custom shop guitars.

FG: Artists are certainly customers. All of our brand ambassadors regularly use Custom Shop guitars in addition to their vintage in-



Paul Reed Smith,
PRS Guitars



Jimmy Lovinggood,
D'Angelico Guitars



Monte Montefusco,
Taylor Guitars



Fred Greene,
C.F. Martin & Co.



Mike Lewis,
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Matt Masciandaro,
The ESP Guitar Company



Tom Bedell,
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“In a time when many retailers are reporting lower foot traffic, the customer with the ability to significantly raise the average sale price becomes increasingly important.”

– Monte Montefusco, Taylor Guitars

struments. I would describe the majority of our Custom Shop customers as, “sophisticated guitar enthusiast.” They have owned multiple instruments of various brands and they know what they like and what they don’t like. Like all of us, they are looking for that “holy grail” instrument. I know people think that money is no object to those buying a custom Martin, but that is definitely not the case. These individuals are very value conscious when deciding what they want on a guitar.

MM: All of the above. A good number of our ESP Custom Shop customers are indeed professional recording/touring artists who’ve dreamed of a certain type of guitar or bass that best fit their style, musically and aesthetically. Some of the artists’ custom designs end up being made available on a more widespread basis with our ESP and LTD Signature Series. Other customers of the ESP Custom Shop do include people who are not professional musicians, but have a passion for guitar or bass and are willing to spend more to get the exact instrument they want.

JL: The customer of our Master Builders are collectors and professionals. They could be serious players who play only the finest instruments built by the finest brands, or collectors of museum-quality art pieces.

Montefusco: We feel we attract several groups of customers for our custom guitars. There are the serious musicians who have developed their playing style to a point where further technical progress is possible by specifying architectural and performance modifications. These options may include bracing, nut width, scale length, or neck profile choices. We can offer these customers a custom guitar that will deliver personalized performance improvements without breaking the budget.

Other players want to showcase their personal expression through their guitar. They may want to combine inlays, bindings, and visual aspects from our standard models into a unique one-off creation. They’re highly involved in designing their dream guitar, they have a healthy but not unlimited budget, and often they are celebrating an important milestone in life.

The third type of customer is not at all budget conscious and is accustomed to perfect playability, quality, and service. These players own several guitars and are looking for an instrument they haven’t encountered before. They appreciate fine tonewoods along with the hard work and stories connected to sourcing them. Perhaps most important, the level of service provided by the dealer must be exceptional. Dining options include professionally curated wine lists. Automotive choices incorporate beautiful showrooms, loaner cars, and pickup/drop off services. Higher-end shopping malls offer valet parking, personal shopping assistants, and pet grooming. Why should their guitar-buying journey be any different? In a time when many retailers are reporting lower foot traffic, the customer with the ability to significantly raise the average sale price becomes increasingly important. Deliver an experience that rivals their best restaurant, clothing store, or golf course and you’ll win their business.

TB: Well, this is a really good question. It’s all of those things, but what happens is, when you think about it: Why does somebody need a custom instrument? It’s about the experience that customers have when they are going through the exotic wood library that we have. We are going to build a guitar, let’s say, out of Sapele, but then the customer starts looking at this very beautiful piece of Cocobolo and all of a sudden, they are following up with one and that connection just happens. I don’t know – it’s not always sound related as much as visuals.

To me, it’s just people realizing they are creating art. Yes, it’s a musical instrument, but it’s going to reflect their personality by the appearance of the wood they chose, the design work that they decided that they wanted to have, and they fall in love with the whole process of creating something very special.

For your brand, what’s currently the best selling custom shop model or body type?

MM: Per our previous responses, all ESP Customs are individual creations in varying degrees, so it’s not really possible to mention a specific model. The ESP Eclipse,



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Martin's 2 Millionth Guitar

which is a single-cutaway body, is consistently one of the most popular shapes that customers use as a starting point to create their customs, and the Horizon Series and M Series are also often chosen.

TB: Okay, so based on the credentials it would generally be the Concert body shape.

Although, we just did a new body shape, called the Concerto, and in the past

two months over half of our custom shop orders have been based on that, so that's been a surprise.

PRS: A significant percentage of our Private Stock orders are custom versions of our McCarty 594 model, which is a vintage-inspired instrument.

Montefusco: We're seeing smaller-bodied guitars dominating. The custom guitar buyer is either replicating something from their past or filling their collection with the guitar they don't have. Most players do not own an extensive assortment of comfortable, compact guitars. Our Grand Concert body shape is the perfect musical companion for the nightly living room

performance.

FG: Since each custom is unique instrument that is a hard question. The most popular platform is a dreadnaught shape with some choice of exotic rosewood for back and sides. The 1937 D28 Authentic which is built in our Custom Shop is the most popular single model.

JL: We really don't have a "best-selling" Master Builder model. Our master luthier

works with each customer to customize his/her guitar. Often times, it is based on a John D'Angelico original – whether it's a New Yorker, Excel, or another traditional archtop. Each customer's individual specifications tend to change the build of the guitar, so that each model is unique.

ML: What you'll see a lot of in the shop are personalized pieces of Fender history. Players will start with a model from a certain year and customize it to their own taste or need. Our Artist Signature models have always been a hit – from Clapton to Hendrix – and our customers know they can come to us for the best relic guitars.

Do you have any upcoming or recent custom introductions or developments you'd like to share?

PRS: We made one hundred John Mayer Super Eagles in Private Stock, which were all sold immediately after they were announced. I look forward to more of that in the future where the PS team can apply their craftsmanship on a larger scale.

Montefusco: Last year we piloted a program allowing our dealers to design and stock smaller runs of custom instruments. We're going to develop this further. With an easily digestible option range, the retail pricing falls within the boundaries of our standard model lineup. This offers the dealer the ability to differentiate inventory and create exclusive customized instruments. Many players just look for an excuse to purchase their next guitar; exclusivity is a great reason.

FG: The D-200 which is based on the custom instrument we built to celebrate our 2,000,000 instrument is an incredible guitar. They come with a custom RGM watch and retail for around \$150,000. We are also building our first aged guitar, a 1937 D-28 Authentic.

TB: I think the Sound Profiling we were discussing earlier is a huge breakthrough.

We can take, for example, three sets of Sitka – all the same species – and tap on them and you will see completely different curves in terms of the frequency response and it just demonstrates the uniqueness of every piece of wood. Just like your own kids are all unique, every piece of wood is, as well. It just adds to the individuality or the connectivity that a person has with his or her instrument. That's in addition to the way the guitar is going to look and the way it's going to be finished and all the rest, so there is a connection that makes it so much fun to do.

ML: Most recently, as part of our 30th anniversary celebration, we introduced what

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“It’s about our tenured builders and the tools and processes they use to bring each player’s dream instrument to life, creating a bespoke experience from start to finish.”

– Mike Lewis, FMIC

we call Founders Design. This included inviting eight of the original Custom Shop Founding Master Builders to come back and design their dream guitars— all built by the Shop —for players and collectors. What came of it are eight amazing guitar designs, each in the distinct style of the individual Founding Master Builder – as obvious as a Picasso or Monet! The shop will build 30 of each design to be released each month starting in March through October 2017.

MM: Our ESP USA Series, which are built at our facility in Southern California, has recently started a “Made Your Way” program. While not a custom shop per se, we are allowing customers to choose among a selection of body shapes, woods, finish colors and styles, and pickup types. We work with our dealers so that customers can place the ESP USA orders through them.

JL: We have recently begun working with a new master luthier whom we are tremendously excited to be building guitars with. The first of his models will be completed in the coming months.

Finally, what are your expectations for sales of these types of guitars in the coming months?

JL: As mentioned previously, the demand has increased for our Master Builders in the last few years. Sales may increase, but production will most likely not. If we increase production, we run the risk of quality and uniqueness suffering, and we will not allow that for these instruments. The Master Builder Series is an homage to our roots, which are of the utmost importance to our brand.

MM: ESP has such a long history of building custom guitars and basses that it’s always going to be part of what we do and who we are. Orders for instruments from our Japan-based ESP Custom Shop are generally steady throughout the year, and we anticipate that the ESP USA facility will be building more and more guitars that are based on the personalized orders of individual customers over the course of 2017.

Montefusco: Each year we examine our custom guitar business and work to enhance the programs we offer. The guitar-building world is constantly and in-

creasingly challenged, especially when it comes to sourcing exotic raw materials. 2017 will see us adding tonewood options, aesthetic choices, and enhancements to the consumer facing materials we offer. We’ll maintain our commitment to responsible forestry and quality business while continuing to help players navigate the buying experience. We’re looking forward to making custom instruments an even larger part of Taylor Guitars in 2017.

FG: We are only making 50 of the aged D-28 Authentics in 2017. They sold out immediately upon introduction at the January NAMM show. We are also only making 50 of the D-200’s however there is no time frame regarding availability. Sales were strong. Given the price we anticipate it will take several years to sell all 50.

TB: Yeah, there has been kind of a turn in interest. I don’t know why. It seems there is more demand than in the last few years.

PRS: With a year backorder in Private Stock, my current expectations are more about making the guitars than about getting more orders. Our builders are focusing on fulfilling orders while applying experienced attention to detail, skill and passion to make sure each and every PS instrument dearly pleases these special customers. Paul Miles, PRS Director of Private Stock, and I personally play and sign every Private Stock guitar before it leaves PRS as a final check that we’ve all done our job. I get a lot of joy in handing a great guitar back to the team and seeing that guitar head out the door to the dealer. **MMR**

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Hamer Guitars Returns



'The Original Boutique Electric Guitar Custom Shop' is Back! By Christian Wissmuller

Anyone who grew up listening to – and watching – rock artists of the '70s and '80s is familiar with Hamer Guitars, whether or not they even know it: The likes of Cheap Trick's Rick Nielsen and Def Leppard's Steve Clark burned the image of guitar models such as the Hamer Standard into the brains of an entire generation.

By the late '80s, Hamer had gone from what had begun as a small Illinois-based operation to one that had caught the attention of Kaman Music Corporation (KMC), which bought the brand in 1988. Five years after KMC's acquisition by Fender Musical Instruments Corporation (FMIC) in 2007, the brand was discontinued and Hamer's future – if, indeed, there was one – was uncertain, at best.

But, in February of 2015 FMIC sold KMC to JAM Industries and almost from the get-go there were rumors of an eminent Hamer revival – rumors which proved to be quite true when this January KMC reissued six of Hamer Guitars best-selling Import Series guitars (featuring 50% dealer margins).

We recently got on the horn with Gil Soucy, vice president & general manager of Hamer Guitars, to get a brief refresher course on the brand's history, the origins of its resurgence, and plans for the future...

Many of our readers are, of course, familiar with the brand's history, but could you briefly discuss the origins of Hamer back in 1973 and bring us through to the acquisition by Kaman in the late '80s?

Hamer Guitars started in Chicago in 1973 when Paul Hamer and a small group of builders set out to create new instruments that would nevertheless have a "vintage soul." Hamer was always passionate about innovation, pushing the envelope in design, performance, and finish. They may not have known it at the time, but Hamer and his team created the boutique electric guitar category. In the years that followed its inception, Hamer introduced a number of industry firsts. Hamer was the first guitar to come standard with exposed pick-up coils and black hardware. It was the first guitar to feature a Floyd Rose tremolo system, and the first guitar to be offered with a reverse headstock. Throughout the '80s and '90s, the taste for different styles of guitars was constantly on the move. Many of us refer to this time period as the "pointy guitar era." During this time, Hamer continued to evolve and was on the forefront of giving guitarists what they needed in cutting-edge designs while still employing exemplary build quality and materials.

Cue to more recent news – essentially two years ago – and KMC was sold to JAM Industries. How soon after that transition did talk of reviving the Hamer brand begin and when did you decide to "pull the trigger," and why?

Bringing Hamer back to market was part of the plan from the start when JAM acquired KMC. With the product and marketing teams that we already had in place, Hamer became a perfect fit within our portfolio, and the amount of inquires we were getting from both dealers and consumers as soon as the KMC acquisition was completed fueled the decision to fast-track a substantial investment into the reissue of the line. From there we worked to create a well-defined lineup of exciting, great playing, great sounding, high quality guitars that is easy for the consumers to understand and easy for the dealers to purchase and support.

The current marketing tagline for Hamer, "The Original Boutique Electric Guitar Custom Shop." Obviously this draws upon the brand's rich history, but can you talk about how emphasizing that angle is going to be helpful to retailers and end-users?

Through many of the changes in guitar designers and builders that have worked on the Hamer brand as its changed hands over the years, there have been a ton of features and options used on a wide variety of models. While some of these features may have made it into select models that were mass produced at one time or another, many were only on custom shop "one-offs." Our goal with all of the models in this reissue was to incorporate the most meaningful features that positively impact tone and playability into all of the models being reissued and in a way that keeps the guitars affordable. We have put an incredible amount of work into our neck feel, wood pairings, pickups, and overall build quality to pull the best of what has been tried and tested into the current lineup. For end users, the results are guitars that look, sound, and play great for professional guitarists that want boutique performance without laying down thousands of dollars. At the same time, dealers will benefit high margins on guitars that are sought after and easy to sell through. Truly a win-win for everyone!

At Winter NAMM 2017, you reissued six well-known, classic Hamer models. What went into choosing these specific guitars as an initial re-entry into the market?

The decision to start with these six guitars stemmed from a combination of dealer and consumer feedback. We also studied the sales history for all of the past Hamer guitars that were once offered, plus what is currently available from a wide range of other manufactur-

“Bringing Hamer back to market was part of the plan from the start when JAM acquired KMC.”

ers. The one thing our product and marketing teams unanimously agreed on was keeping the lineup simple for both the dealers and consumers. Rather than adding dozens of models to an already crowded electric guitar marketplace, our research shows that these six models will

be the most sought after and will sell through the best. Dealers can be confident when adding all six guitars to their assortment. Additionally, we designed the pickup for all six models to give each guitar its "own voice," and the initial positive response to their tone has been just incredible.

The six guitars we've relaunched include the "Vector" which originally debuted in 1973 and the "Standard" which was originally released in 1974. These two models have become some of the most sought after guitars the brand ever produced. Both feature a solid mahogany body with a solid maple cap and highly figured flamed maple veneer. The amazing sunburst finish on both make the Vector and Standard stand out as a must-have for any Hamer enthusiast or collector. The pickup pairings for these models include two custom voiced Alnico 5s. The neck pickup delivers that classic tone these guitars were known for, and we've stepped up the output of bridge pickups which boast a crisp overdrive that has well-balanced tone well suited for any genre ranging from classic rock to modern metal.

Next are two versions of the bestselling Arch Top which was originally released in 1977; one with a traditional tune-o-matic bridge and 24.75" scale length in a trans-black finish and one featuring a

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Hamer's new 2017 models: The Monaco, The Archtop, The Standard, and The Special Jr.

Wilkinson tremolo and 25.5" scale in a dark cherry sunburst finish. Both of these guitars feature a solid maple cap on a mahogany body with a flamed veneer. This maple/mahogany combination paired with a custom set of an Alnico neck pickup/ceramic bridge pickups makes these guitars sound incred-

ibly close to some of the original models but with a more "kick" and wider range of tone. The iconic Monaco flame top boasts a beautiful flame maple top with a solid maple cap on a mahogany body, with two specially designed and voiced classic sounding Alnico 2 humbuckers.

The sixth and most affordable model is Special Jr. which was originally released in 1980. It features a flat top double cutaway solid mahogany body with a custom designed P90 style pickup. It's "retro-cool," sounds great, and is a ton of fun to play.

Are there more models on the way and, if so, will there also be reissues of familiar Hamer guitars or will you be pioneering new instruments, or both?

Our plan is to only promote and sell these six for all of 2017. In 2018 we will be releasing a couple of additional iconic models that we are continually being asked for, since releasing the first six. As far as pioneering new models, we've discussed that at some point we may and we've batted around a few ideas, but that is a long way off. Until then our primary focus is to give the Hamer fans the guitars they are seeking first.

Back in the late '70s, one of the factors that really put Hamer on the map was its association with some big-name artists – I'm thinking Cheap Trick's Rick Nielsen, in particular, but also Def Leppard, Kiss, and many others. Are you actively pursuing endorsement partnerships with artists at the moment, either former Hamer players or new and upcoming musicians?

The artist program is incredibly important to us and something we will continue to expand and build upon. We are currently in discussions with a number of artists that have reached out to us since hearing about the brand becoming available again. Some of these discussions are with players that were meaningful supporters of the brand in the past, some discussions are with well-respected players that have become interested after seeing the new models, and we have quite a few young, upcoming artists that we will be featuring as well. While all of this is still in the very early stages, Hamer fans should be on the lookout for announcements as this develops throughout the year!

Any other Hamer-related news or upcoming events on the horizon that you'd like to share?

We are currently rebuilding the Hamer website which is scheduled to be launched in Q2. We have also expanded our Social Media team, and up to the minute product news, artist news, fun facts, and other updates for Hamer will be posted frequently throughout a number of Hamer media sites. **MMR**

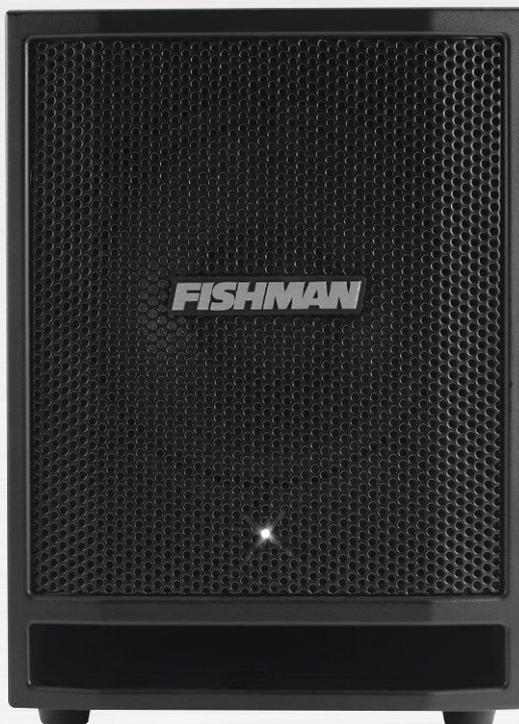
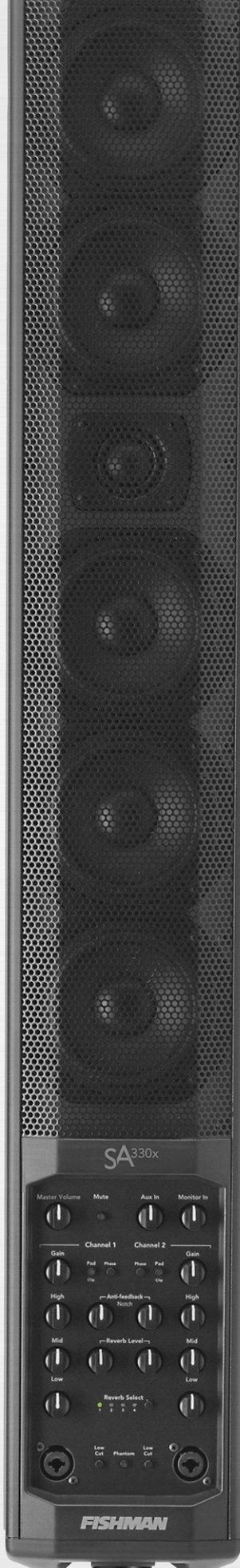
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Special FX

Guitar & Bass Stompboxes Take Center-Stage

By Christian **Wissmuller**

While the overall tally wasn't as clear-cut as some recent *MMR* dealer surveys have been when it comes to shedding light on the overall "health" of a particular market segment, this month's poll regarding guitar and bass effects pedals did indicate an overall positive assessment: more than 68 percent of participating retailers indicated that sales of these stompboxes

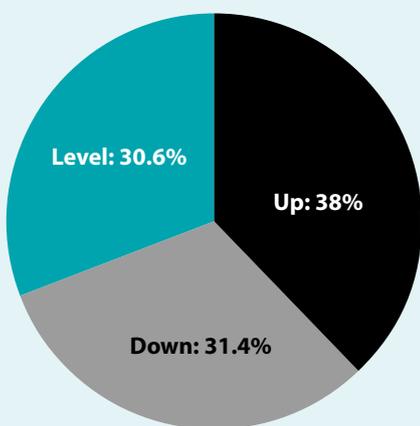
are currently either level with or exceeding numbers from this same time in 2016.

Some trends that were repeatedly cited as being significant are an increased interest in "boutique" pedals, a preference for stand-alone (rather than multi) effects units, and a move towards pedals with a smaller footprint. Additionally, many remarked at the in-

creased participation of bassists in this area. As Tom Dube of Dube's Music in Freeport, Maine observes: "More bass pedals are being sought." Backstage Music's (Starkville, Mississippi) Allen McBroom agrees, noting that, "More guys are asking for bass pedals."

Read on to learn about what's hot – and what's not – in guitar and bass effects pedals so far in 2017...

Compared to this time in 2016, sales of stompbox effects pedals for guitar and bass in your store are:



When it comes to effects pedals, what price points are doing best for your store? (choosing more than one category was acceptable)

High-end (over \$250):

"I get a lot of customers offering \$50 for a pedal that I'm supposed to be selling (MAP) at \$139."

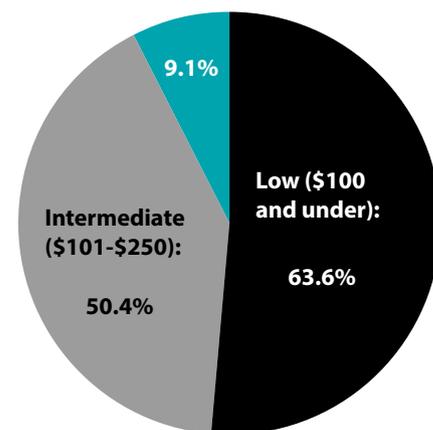
Dale Gerschutz
K and C Music
Smithville, Missouri

"Like with everything else, 'used' is what we do best with, since the customers are looking for a deal and we make better margin on used vs. new. We try to buy as much used gear of all kinds as possible."

Darren Patrick
Mountain Music
Chattanooga, Tennessee

"It's hard to compete with the big boys in the upper price range of pedals because of them buying direct as opposed to buying from distributors. We do well with the under \$100."

David St. John
Gard's Music, LLC
Glendora, California



"A lot more requests for 'boutique' branded pedals."

Mike Canady
American Music Co.
Fresno, California

What larger trends have you been noticing in the guitar and bass effects pedals market?

"Pedals are in and multi-effects are out. More and more people are looking to going 'amp-less.' Especially in churches where players want to get all of the sounds they hear in contemporary Christian music and still not use an amp."

Ken Cefalo
Main Street Music, Inc.
Tracy, California

"Effects pedals are the hard candy of the music retail world! They are eye-catching, fun in a slutty and superficial way, and ultimately if you buy one you will end up wanting another and another et cetera thereafter."

I have noticed that our customers are increasingly informed when it comes to

selecting the right one for them. Some of them are hip to the component level qualitative superiority of a lot of vintage pedals. They can talk transistors and diodes and will educate you too given the chance. They are also into modded pedals. It is how I learned about the 'Keeley mods' for the BOSS distortion pedal and so on. Beyond this looping pedals are the wah wah pedal of this generation and continue to attract interest and money. It's a great space for us and we try to stock both vintage and new pedals of all types...

I personally like to sell value and feel that the \$100+ price point for pedals demands either innovation, tone exclusivity, or breadth of features in order to represent positively. Throwing out a

fuzz pedal at \$200 and expecting it to fly off the shelf is unrealistic and lazy. The same goes for reverb, flange, tremolo and chorus et cetera."

John Middle
ACME House of Music
Oakland, California

"People Are pretty sick of the multi-effect, no-life sounds of the digital age. They want simple again."

John Donovan
Yin Yang Music
Wilburton, Pennsylvania

"The staples are still staples. Everyone still wants the standard BOSS pedals, Crybaby, Phase 90. The top sellers include loopers and delays. Trending

right behind that is some of the newer companies like Wampler and Earthquaker. Graphics and sounds are interesting and, as always, we're listening for something new!"

Philip Leitz
Leitz Music Co., Inc.
Panama City, Florida

"Even though multi-effects units out now are incredible values and sound better than ever, we still seem to be in the midst of the trend toward individual stomp boxes. I think players are drawn to the idea that their setup is unique to them and can be tailored to any particular gig from night to night."

Tony Harrison
The Cape Fear Music Center
Fayetteville, North Carolina

"We tend to sell a lot of high-end pedals... heavy emphasis on the word 'sell'. We don't just throw a bunch of

pedals on the shelf and hope somebody buys something... and that's exactly what a lot of retailers do. We treat would-be pedal customers the same as guitar, amp, et cetera, buyers. We have had customers spend in excess of \$1,000 at a time on pedals because we took the time to qualify them properly and we had the product knowledge to help them achieve their stated goal."

Tim Bascom
Morgan Music
Lebanon, Missouri

"Newer players seem to like the simpler 'singles' effects (overdrive, distortion, et cetera) They also show interest in 'classic' effects (Rat, et cetera) Advanced players seek out boutique pedals, as they are looking for a specific sound to match their amp and guitar."

Frank Karnes
Lynchburg Music Center
Lynchburg, Virginia

"One trend is the downsizing of the physical dimensions of pedals as guitar and bass players try to cram more effects into a 'carry-able' pedal board. These pedal boards can often be one of the largest and heaviest pieces of gear the guitar player carries to gigs as amplifiers become smaller, lighter and more powerful. I see effects companies putting more effort into making pedals that are small, but that may do more than one effect at a time. It makes me wonder how long it may take before we go full circle back to multi-effect racks. Maybe something that combines a more intuitive pedal-like, guitarist-friendly interface with the power of a pro rack unit. 'What's old may become new again' someday."

Joe Chiappone
Northfield Music
Pittsford, New York

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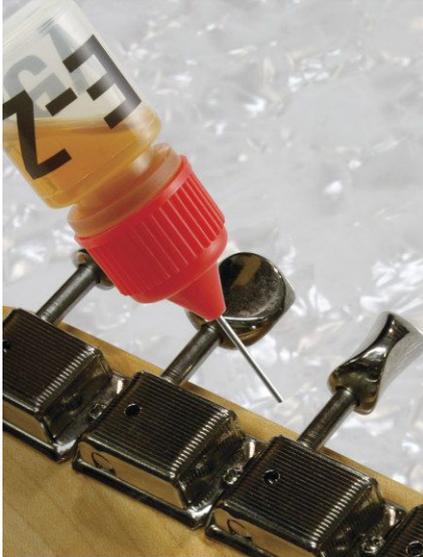


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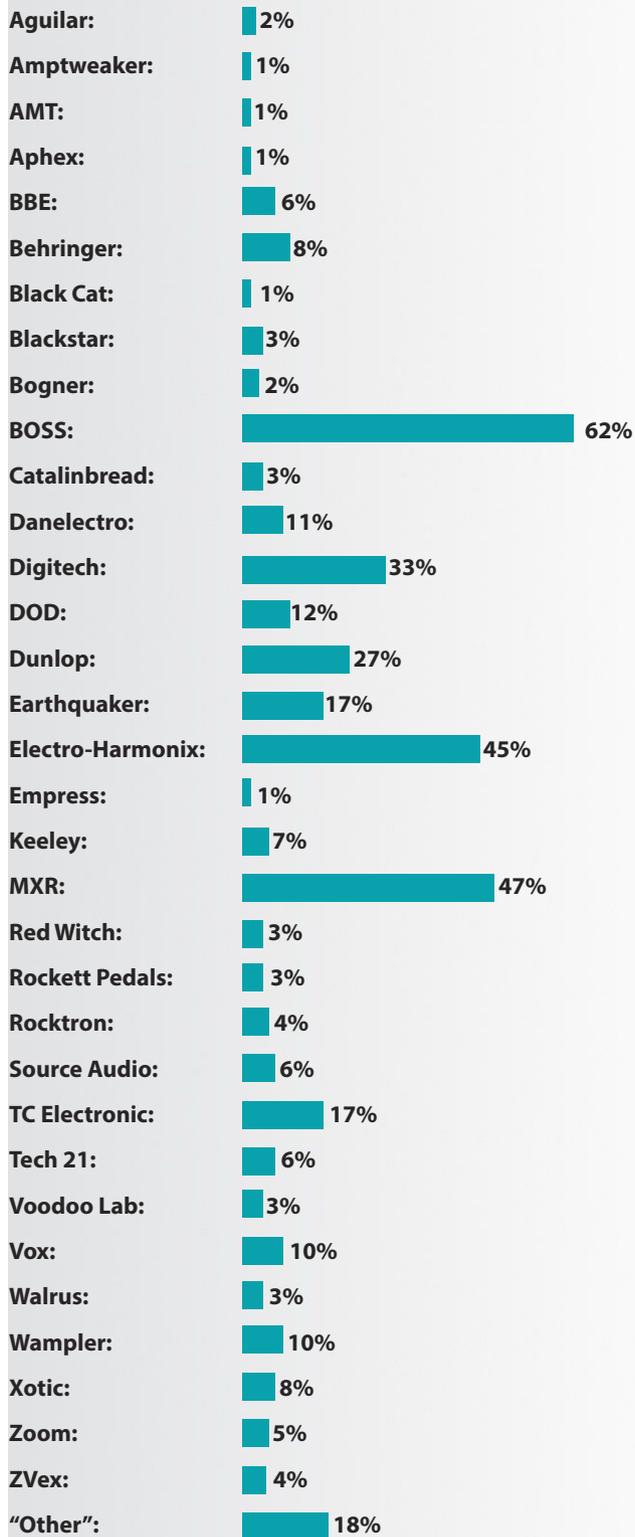
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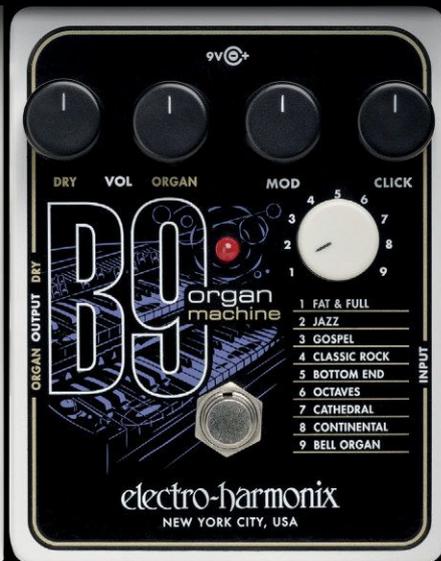
Survey

What brands of stompboxes are the strongest sellers for your operation in 2017



(Those who selected this category most commonly cited, in order: Strymon, Whirlwind, Blaxx, and JHS)

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Tracy Hoeft of Michael Kelly Guitars

A guitar manufacturer finds success targeting a niche market By Eliahu Sussman

Tracy Hoeft founded Michael Kelly Guitars in 1999 after seven years of working for Gibson and Dean Guitars. Before launching his own company, Hoeft had noticed that the major guitar brands were focused almost exclusively on the most popular market segments. This, he realized, left a number of potentially profitable niche consumers and product areas underserved. At the same time, the Internet boom of the late '90s was opening up new means of targeting and connecting with a broader base of consumers, allowing for more efficient and effective marketing to these specific segments.

Starting out with mandolins and acoustic basses, Hoeft and his team quickly found that the demand for niche products was far greater than they had anticipated.

Nearly two decades later, Michael Kelly Guitars has expanded its product line to include a variety of specialized electric and acoustic guitars, basses, and mandolins. Staying true to its founding strategy, the company continues to thrive by catering to niche market segments, using a suite of sophisticated digital marketing tools to identify and connect with customers.

Would you talk about the growth of your product line since the initial mandolin and acoustic bass offerings?

Tracy Hoeft: Over time, we have expanded our product line and continued to use the reach of digital marketing to allow us to explore more specialized products. Acoustic basses and mandolins continue to be key products for us and we continue to surprise our dealers when they see how big the

potential really is for these categories. However, one product category that really benefited from our approach was what we call the Hybrid: a solid body model with both traditional magnetic pickups and an acoustic pickup in the bridge.

When we first introduced it, we expected it to be a nice little product. In 2017, we will celebrate the 10th anniversary for our Hybrid Special and over that decade it has been one of our top sellers. Thanks to the reach that we have built, we were able to find the players who wanted one instrument with that diversity. I am not sure we could have done that a few decades ago.

Recently, we have added more specialized designs in acoustic guitars and electric models that have found an audience despite being something far from cookie-cutter.

You say that digital marketing allowed you to explore more specialized products – can you elaborate on your strategy behind market research and discovering new product opportunities?

Digital marketing has helped us with specialized products through its ability to offer more niche products due to reach. A product like a 5-string fretless acoustic bass is for specialty applications and needs, so that is hard to offer if you cannot find those players that it would appeal to. We use digital marketing and the granular level of targeting it makes possible to allow us to offer those niche products. We have found this key to the growth of our brand and an increased demand at retail.

How did you start down the digital marketing path?

From our founding, we have focused on having a tight, direct communication with consumers. We always wanted to be the more reachable guitar brand. As digital tools like social media and highly targeted digital ads became available, we were early adopters. We take a highly experimental approach to digital marketing: we try lots of stuff, use the vast array of data available to analyze the results, and then we refine and move forward with it. Digital changes rapidly and is constantly evolving. The larger guitar brands are slower moving and simply cannot be as nimble with these mediums. This has been a way to enjoy a competitive edge, so we prioritize it.

Are there specific marketing tools that have you found to be most useful, in terms of cost versus benefit?

My favorite tool is more a capability rather than a specific medium. We are seeing the best results from the mediums that allow us to target consumers based on their interests and location. We use social media, remarketing, and search engine marketing digital ads because they allow us to triangulate the consumers' interests and location to deliver the right creative to best convert them to buyers. We are seeing these marketing tools deliver a great ROI.

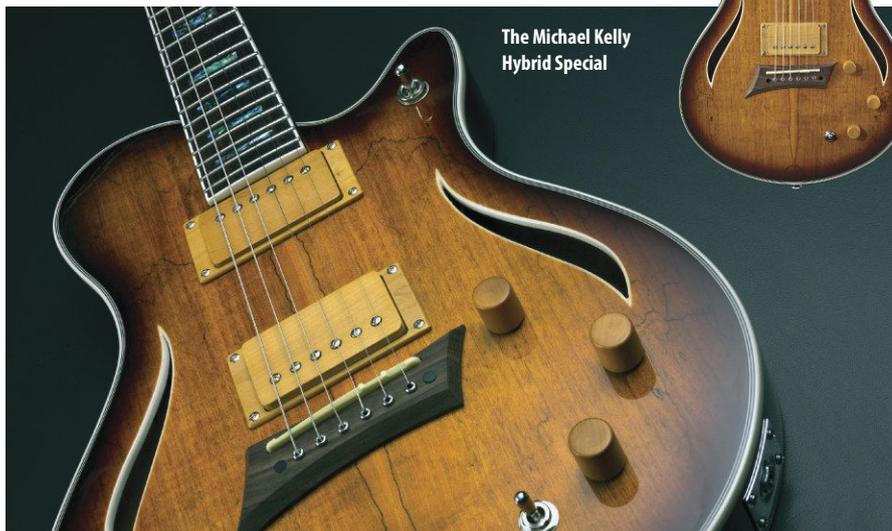
How does your social media strategy play into this?

Our strategy is to use social media to build relationships with guitarists around the world. We see social media as a way to have a dialog on a regular basis with these consumers. It gives us the opportunity to more clearly convey what our brand is all about. It also allows us to listen to our consumers, and that has provided untold insights. Tactically, for our social media efforts we use a carefully crafted combination of paid and organic exposure on sites like Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube.

In each case we have found the formula to reach the right customers and then create a lasting connection. This allows us to build relationships and develop demand. These tools also allow us to specifically direct a majority of our outreach to guitarists in cities where we have dealers. The goal is to drive the right customers into the right stores—it is really exciting.

What are the latest new developments that you and your team are excited about?

In 2016, we started a collection of instruments with upgraded electronics. This was a combination of some slick electronics mods that our team cooked up along with some great pickups made by makers like Seymour Duncan, TV Jones, Lindy Fralin, and Bare Knuckle Pickups. The success of these has increased our average selling price and brought MK to a new group of consumers. This has been a really gratifying evolution.



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“We have developed strategies to maximize our online success, but we have also been very intentional about driving consumers into our dealers’ stores.”



Tracy Hoeft

What do you see in the pipeline for Michael Kelly Guitars?

We continue to explore interesting products that appeal to a specific group of players. We launched three new acoustic guitars at NAMM 2017, including a cutaway with a torrefied top that will explore some new territory. We will also launch our first full line of solid body electric bass guitars. We will have our largest selection yet of 7- and 8-string guitars, yet another niche that we feel is a fit for our approach. You will also see some additional models that we are developing with Lindy Fralin and Seymour Duncan. We continue to seek ways to delight guitarists and work to be in touch with the community constantly to find the instruments that are in demand.

Thinking both at your company and the broader MI industry, what are your expectations for the coming months?

We are excited about the future. The last 18 months have been the best in our company’s history and we are stoked about what is ahead. The core of what is working so well for us is also a positive path for the industry. The unprecedented reach that we now all have to consumers around the world allows us to do some great

things. We can use those to grow our brand and to help our dealers enjoy increased success and that is exactly what we plan to do. Beyond that, the reach presents an opportunity for us as an industry to tell consumers why music making is so great.

As a manufacturer, how do you balance online sales versus supporting brick and mortar?

There is a lot of talk about buying online and without a doubt that trend will continue. However, it is undeniable that the experience of visiting a great store and getting help picking the right instrument is the most comfortable way to buy. We have developed strategies to maximize our online success, but we have also been very intentional about driving consumers into our dealers’ stores.

Specifically, we are investing a majority of our marketing dollars focused on the cities where we have dealers. We support that with programs and technology that drive consumers in those markets into that store to see their Michael Kelly selection.

Tell me more about the marketing programs that drive consumers toward their local retailer?

We start with some technology that we have integrated into our website that features the local dealer with a high profile call-out on every single product page on our site. This technology detects the location of the consumer visiting the Michael Kelly site and customizes their view based on their location. We then use the digital marketing capabilities to run millions of digital ad impressions each quarter on sites like Facebook, Instagram, and a network of top content sites, all delivered only in the cities where we have dealer partners. This is just one of five different programs that we have to focus on helping our dealers enjoy increased traffic and sales.

Last question. Who is Michael Kelly? You are the founder, so why is the brand called Michael Kelly Guitars?

When founding the company, I wanted the brand to carry a family name, one that would give me added motivation and commitment to protect and cultivate the brand. I was pretty sure calling it Tracy Hoeft Guitars was not a good idea—heck, who would even know how to pronounce it? I have two children and at the time of founding they were quite young. My son is Michael and my daughter is Kelly. Naming the brand after them gave me the ongoing commitment to excellence that I was seeking. **MMA**

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The Michael Kelly Triad Port

Embracing the Pain of Growth and Entering 'the Gap'

Four Observations on How to Adapt to Change

By Menzie Pittman

This year my business, Contemporary Music Center, enters its 28th year and, while that's young by some standards, I am aware that I have beaten some of the odds in business statistics. According to several sources the overall consensus is:

- 75% of small businesses fail in their first ten years.
- 50% fail after five years.

So making it to 28 years indicates we have overcome some typical challenges. In that period of time, I have witnessed many shifts and trend changes – actually more than I could possibly list, but a few of these will likely humor you.

Although it was only 28 years ago when I decided to open my business' door, at that time there was no official Internet. When Contemporary Music Center opened, no one had ever heard the terms "Skype," "Cloud," or "Dropbox." How could anyone have possibly prepared for such changes? Of course, we all know the truth: no one can.

We can, however, be quick to react and incorporate new paradigms and embrace major changes; or like some people, we could deny them and say the automobile will never replace the horse and carriage, but by now, I think it's fair to say, "Never say never." Honestly, how do we embrace different thinking and try to take advantage of major shifts in business and align with new ways of conducting business?

1. We can begin by embracing the pain of growth

That will most likely mean expanding your comfort zone and original skill sets. When I opened CMC, I had already developed certain skill sets, and I still incorporate many of them to this day. But what has enabled me to sustain success in my career is accepting the fact that I will continually always need to expand the very skills with which I began. Success means we continually need to embrace having an open mind, and we need to strive to seek new and fresh ways of accessing and solving nagging problems that cost our businesses opportunities to grow.

2. Admission is a productive new skill set

Granted we all miss some of the timing of new trends, but a well-run business doesn't shrink from admitting the truth of when we are wrong or behind on a trend. To paraphrase a quote from Quincy Jones: It's usually the cash register that indicates that it's time to check our ego at the door. Our fundamental skill sets usually check off the first box of how to get things done. They are the ones of craftsmanship and foundation. But what about the other boxes or quadrants? For example, the box of growth. What is the best tool or skill set to accomplish that?

If we only grow in the original box that we start in, sooner or later we will reach capacity. So we must learn to embrace the pain of growth, and that means accepting new and perhaps different ways thinking and entering into what I would call, "the gap," which connects us to the next level or quadrant. We will often hear musicians and artists refer to the term, "the gap." However, their reference is in a different context. Stealing a term from Buddy Rich, they refer to "the gap" as a space where the "creativity hatches." There is also a gap between creative levels, so I will apply the term here in a few ways.

To get into "the gap" you have to be willing to leave the comfort zone of your current creativity level. Years ago, I heard an analogy that has always stuck with me. In essence, it was the idea that you can't swim to the other side of a pool if you're holding on to the side you're on. The truth is that in order to advance and embrace growth, we have to let go of being comfortable. Crazier yet, we have to embrace that our discomfort is an indication that we are heading in a new and exciting direction, and there's a good bet that the more un-comfortable we are, the more creative our experience will be. One fact we must also embrace is that growth certainly takes fresh thinking and an open mind.

3. Reasons we fail

We fail because we embrace fear, and we fail because we embrace lack, and, therefore, we doubt that we have the gifts to achieve the next creative level. We don't spend enough time investing in ourselves thus creatively blocking "the gap" and the opportunity to move into the next creative zone. We morph back into our business application and don't apply the concept of bridging the gap between where we are now in our business development and where we think we would like to be. We unintentionally postpone striving to get to the next quadrant creatively.

4. But when we embrace the pain of growth...

We realize complacency must die. And we realize that expressions like, "That's the way we've always done it" must also die. The music retail business is as upside-down as the rest of the music business. Nothing is safe, nothing is dependable, and certainly nothing will remain the same going forward. So if you are quivering in the corner, sweating, and feeling scared to death, but still showing up and reviewing possible solutions: congratulations! You are bridging the gap and heading into quadrant 2 and your next creative box.

Final thoughts

Embracing the pain of growth is not comfortable, convenient or easy, but as the stakes gets higher and higher, it will be the path that enables you to stay in the game. In the end, it truly is how you play the game that matters because that will determine your final score. **MMA**



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

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The PHA-50 progressive hammer-action keyboard with features hybrid keys constructed of wood and molded materials designed to combine classic feel with rugged durability.

Offering the most extensive controller features of any RD-series piano to date, the RD-2000 is ideal for commanding a large stage or studio setup. A newly designed interface offers a massive range of control with Scene memories, LED knobs and sliders, eight internal/external zones, and more.

Via the built-in USB audio/MIDI interface, it's easy to integrate computer-based software instruments. Users can control them with zones along with the internal sounds, and route their audio through the RD-2000. In addition to main stereo outputs on XLR and 1/4-inch jacks, there's also an assignable stereo sub output for flexible sound routing on stage.

roland.com

BAND & ORCHESTRA

Dakota Saxophones SDA-XR 42 Alto and SDT-XR 52 Tenor

Dakota Saxophones SDA-XR 42 Alto and SDT-XR 52 Tenor are two new models designed to combine all the features of Dakota Saxophones XR and XG series.

Features include a large 6.26 inch graduated tenor bell size, and a large 5.32 inch alto bell size with low profile key cups/pads, fast taper neck design, double key arms, and a triple position neck-strap ring on the tenor. The body/bow/bell are plated in a semi matte dark olive onyx finish over bronze alloy. The inside of the bell is a contrasting bright black onyx. All keys and trim are 100 percent raw bronze alloy with no lacquer finish. The necks of both models are finished in silver triple plate with hand engraving in the classic tradition of French artisans. Stainless steel long rods are designed to provide instant closure and rapid response.



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CASE & STANDS

Manhasset Stands Noteworthy Music Stand Collection

Manhasset Stands announced the new Noteworthy Music Stands Collection for 2017.



Noteworthy Music Stands are known for creating "Elegant Images for the Artist" combining great style and function.

"The Noteworthy Music Stands Collection from Manhasset Stands has a wonderful assortment of 14 designs, from musical instruments, to more general musical symbols. These fine quality music stands are crafted of heavy duty aluminum and are laser cut with designs ranging from baritone horns to violins," according to Dan Roberts, Manhasset president and general manager. "Noteworthy Music Stands are built using the famous Manhasset Symphony shaft with Magic Finger Clutch and Symphony base for outstanding stability. The oversized desk designs provide even more space for reading music, too. These beautiful music stands are designed to provide many years of dependable performance and aesthetic pleasure," Roberts continues.

Lastly, Roberts adds, "the reception of the Noteworthy Music Stand Collection at shows and events in December through February of this year has been fantastic! Everyone, from our Distributors to Music Industry Retailers to Musicians, has been very impressed with the beauty of these stands and their inherent quality." Roberts concludes, "One attendee at the TMEA convention commented that these stands are the perfect gift for any musician! One look at these stands and we are know that they will go to the top of musicians' gift lists all over the world." Product is now available for immediate shipment though the company's distributor network.

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Whirlwind's Cyclone™ Case Series is built using the finest Colson® casters, flush mounted MOLTM latches and built around their Marine grade HDPE panels resulting in a road worthy, incredibly sturdy road case. Cyclone cases won't soak up water, are easily cleanable, and won't rot like traditional plywood cases. Well designed and over-built Cyclone Cases from Whirlwind are offered in a range of stock options including easy access and extremely rugged Cable Reel Cases, Pocket Cases, Rack Cases and Utility Cases. Of course their Cyclone case department build in-house so they can also handle custom case work as well.



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PIANO & KEYBOARD

QRS Wireless Integration PNOmation3

QRS Music Technologies, Inc. wireless integration PNOmation3 enables Bluetooth MIDI capabilities, allowing communication between the piano and third party MIDI players, editors, and recorders.



The new wireless card allows both stand alone and network modes to run simultaneously, giving customers the ability to toggle between the two modes by changing their network connections. Setup becomes a two-step process of scanning the network and entering a password.

"These new wireless capabilities may seem simple on the surface but they have a profound impact on the customer experience and the dealer's confidence," said Thomas A. Dolan, president, QRS Music Technologies, Inc. "While our mobile app allows customers to control their player piano from any mobile device, we recognized quickly that getting to the web-app and using third party applications and products had to be quicker and easier. With our latest innovation, customers and dealers can enjoy a seamless player piano experience without worrying about intermittent Wi-Fi coverage or complicated wiring schemes."

Watch the video demonstration of the PNOmation3 and Amazon Echo and Echo Dot integration: www.youtube.com/watch?v=YPkeltncXxM&t=10s

qrsmusic.com

ACCESSORIES

Ortega Sea Devil Pedal Tuner and Lights

Ortega's Sea Devil is a pedal tuner featuring connectable LED lights for dark stages. Running on 9V DC Sea Devil is a fully chromatic pedal tuner with calibration options from 436 to 445 Hz and a bright, adjustable pedalboard light in one box. The Sea Devil is compact in size and LED lights are attached and powered via USB. Lights can be disconnected from the pedal and the tuner can be employed as a standalone device or charge the battery of a smartphone. MSRP: \$69.95



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By Dan Daley

Got Wood? Then Get Some Paper – You’ll Need It

Charles Foster Kane, the protagonist of the single best American film ever made, “Citizen Kane,” left us with one cryptic word that, if parsed correctly, would completely explain him: “Rosebud.” Just as the NAMM Show was getting under way in Anaheim this year, MI retailers, manufacturers, and customers encountered a similar, and similarly Rosetta Stone-like word: “Rosewood,” the intersection of the next generation of regulation and conservation.

On Jan. 2, new regulations stemming from the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) went into effect, with a particular emphasis on rosewoods, a prime tonewood for guitars. The new regulations stipulate the highly specific documentation now required when shipping instruments internationally that contain any amount of *any kind* of rosewood or certain types of bubinga. The conference, which was held in Johannesburg last October, decided that all species of rosewood under the genus *Dalbergia* and three bubinga species (*Guibourtia demeusei*, *Guibourtia pellegriniana*, and *Guibourtia tessmannii*, if you’re into horticultural taxonomy) will be protected under CITES Appendix II. Kosso – sometimes called African rosewood (*Pterocarpus erinaceus*) – will also be protected. The new regulations are an extension of the protections already afforded Brazilian rosewood varieties under CITES’s Appendix I.

The new regulations come with substantial paper work – and penalties. When applying for a CITES re-export certificate for products or wood that were imported on or after January 2, 2017, the applicant must provide a copy of the CITES document that was presented at the time of importation into the United States, as well as documentation showing the chain of custody, such as invoices between all parties involved in the domestic sale of the product or wood. Without this documentation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the U.S. agency responsible for monitoring compliance, will not be able to issue the required re-export certificate.

Shipments of CITES-listed rosewood arriving at one of any of the 18 U.S. ports qualified to handle CITES shipment on or after January 2, 2017, without the required CITES documents may be held and seized or refused clearance, depending on the outcome of further discussion with the exporting or re-exporting country. MI manufacturers who currently have stockpiles of the newly regulated wood must document their inventory and apply for pre-convention certificates.

(However, these regulations don’t apply to instruments shipped *within* the borders of the U.S. or to instruments carried for personal use while traveling internationally unless they contain more than 22 lbs. of the regulated woods. That exemption is critical and an acknowledgement of the uproar that the original Appendix I rulings caused among musicians who feared that their instruments could be seized at airports. For more information, contact FWS at (703) 358-2104 or at managementauthority@fws.gov.)

Down The Food Chain

These regulations follow the raw material down into the retail chain – and beyond. When shipping musical instruments that include any amount (i.e. fingerboard, back, sides, binding) of *Dalbergia* or the other newly regulated woods out as part of a commercial transaction, each one must be accompanied by a CITES re-export certificate. Even if the instrument was made with *Dalbergia* or the other regulated woods that were acquired before January 2, 2017, such as a used or vintage instrument, it still must be accompanied by a CITES certificate and marked pre-convention when shipping internationally.

Even for noncommercial, individual sellers who use portals like Reverb.com or eBay to sell personal instruments, if that instrument has, for instance, East Indian rosewood back and sides, and the buyer is in Canada or Mexico, the seller must apply for a re-export certificate, pay the application fee, receive the certificate, and include that document with the guitar when shipping. The document process alone could take months, making a day at the DMV seem like a walk in the park.

(A similar situation was recently mitigated, thanks in part to activist musician organizations. Rules governing travel with musical instruments that contain small quantities of African elephant ivory were broadened at the end of last year, clarifying that legally-crafted musical instruments are not contributing to the African elephant poaching and trafficking crisis. The League of American Orchestras played a major role in getting the FWS to change those rules.)

Combined with a growing international body of regulations regarding how electronics can be disposed of, the new rosewood regulations are a reminder of how the MI and pro audio industries have become much more sensitive to, and about, environmental issues, from energy efficiency to how and where wood used for guitars and other instruments is sourced. These new rules are burdensome and expensive to makers of musical instruments and, ironically, may be less predictable than originally thought because of the profoundly anti-regulatory bent of the new sheriff in the White House. It’s possible CITES 2.0 isn’t on President Trump’s radar yet, but if it winds up there it could be one executive action away from invalidation.

The new CITES regs also come at a time when guitar sales have been soft – NAMM’s own stats reflect a 10-year mostly downward trend as of 2015. New regulations incur new costs that are passed down the line through retail to the customer. That’s not an equation that’s going to help reverse that trend. On the other hand, the overarching goal of the regulations is to help conserve and preserve the supply of tonewoods that are so integral to quality guitars and other instruments. That’s what you need to keep in mind while you’re waiting for the application to clear. **MMR**

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