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MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

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INSIDE



Upfront Q&A
Justin Norvell,
EVP Product, Fender



Dealer Survey
Smooth Operators –
Coated Guitar & Bass
Strings



Anniversary
A Golden Age – Elderly
Instruments Celebrates
a Half-Century

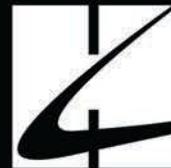
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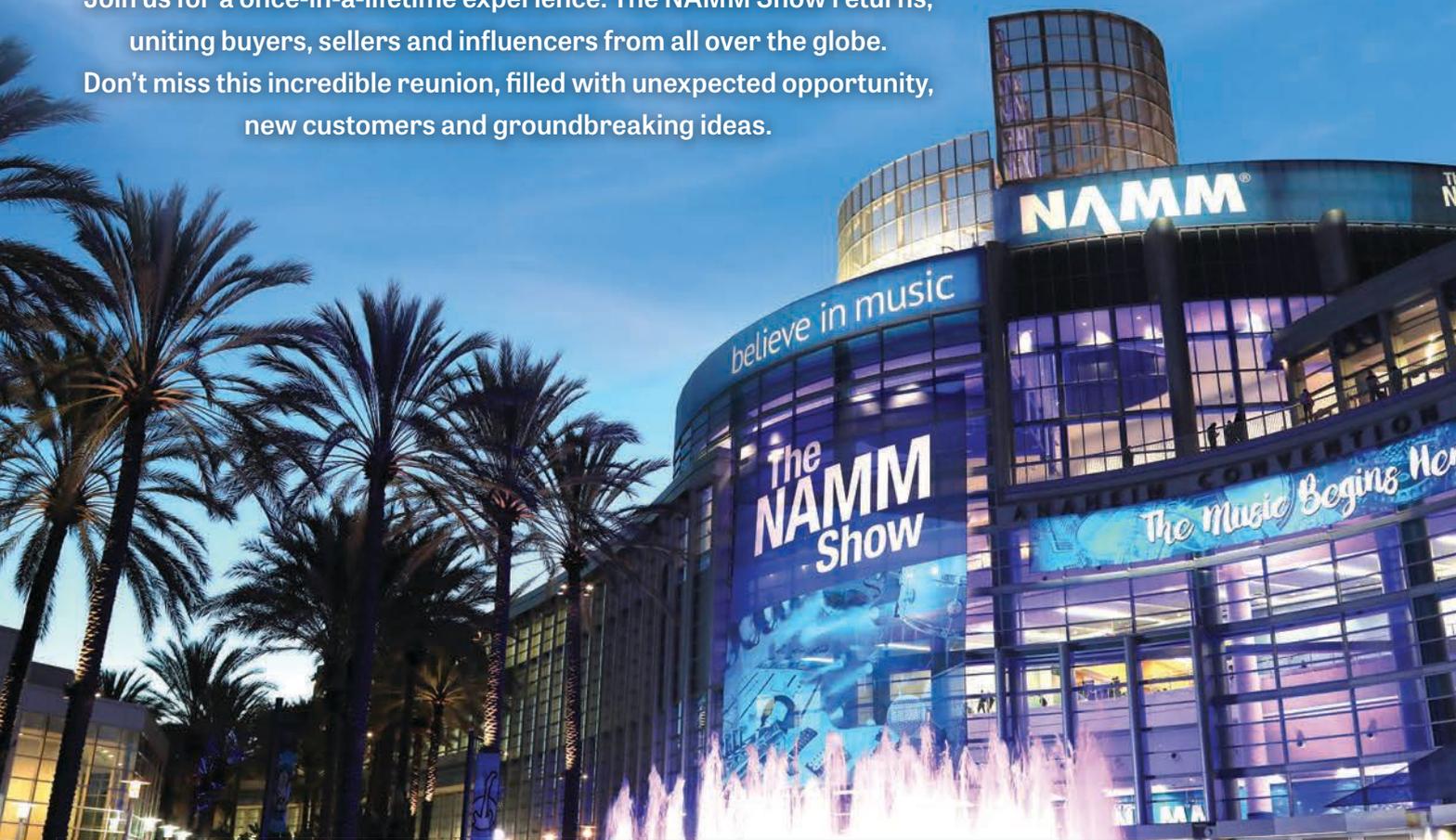
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C O N T E N T S



MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

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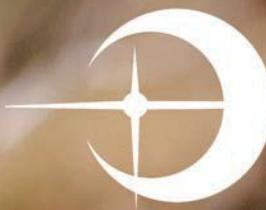
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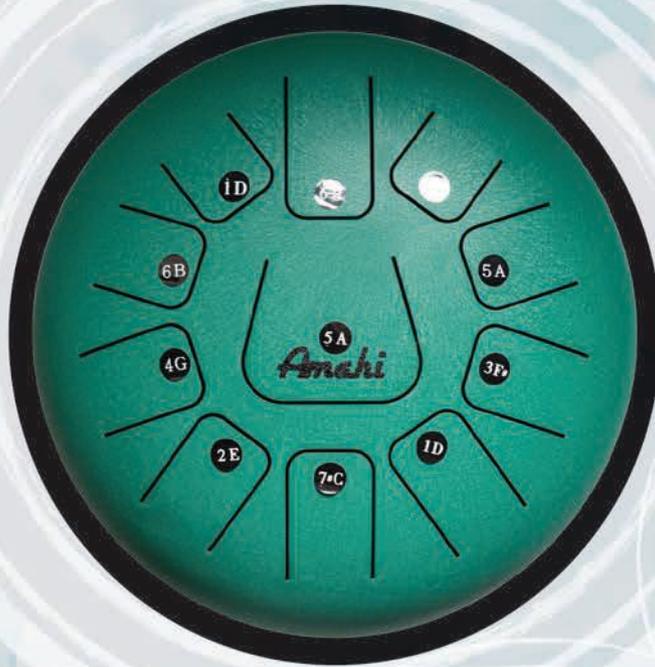
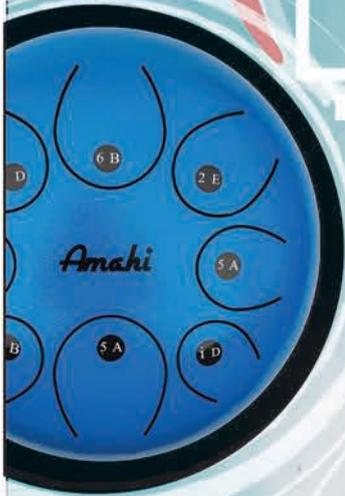
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People Suck; People are Excellent

By
**Christian
Wissmuller**

There are at least two sides to every story, two sides to every coin, two sides to... everything with multiples sides, I guess? Stands to reason. I dunno – math isn't my strong-suit.

In recent weeks, in events that directly – by design or otherwise – impact the advocacy of music education and the celebration of the culture of music-making, there were two (there's that number again) instances that illustrate both the worst and best of human-kind.

Let's get "the worst" out of the way, shall we?

People Suck

On the evening of February 27, some delightful individuals who no doubt make their mothers proud on a daily basis, took it upon themselves to break into the storage facilities of the Oregon Music Hall of Fame and walk off with 70 autographed guitars. These instruments, signed by the likes of George Clinton, Portugal the Man, The Monkees, and other well-known artists, were part of a collection headed to auction with the aim of raising money for music scholarship and education programs. The nonprofit's scholarship programs generally fund at least four college-bound high school graduates looking to further their music studies.

The estimated loss is in the neighborhood of \$130,000 (I'd wager it'd wind up being something higher than that. Have you ever spent time with serious Monkees fans? Those folks are *rabid* – in a good/endearing way). Also amongst the pilfered gear were guitars bearing the signatures of the latest local inductees, which would have ultimately been displayed as part of the Youth Music Project's Oregon Music Hall of Fame exhibit.

So, to summarize: some jackasses have denied much-needed funding to causes that would help advance the music scholarship of those in financial need *and* they've robbed deserving Oregonians who've made significant contributions to the development of the music industry and arts education of recognition for their efforts.

Law enforcement officials are encouraging the public to report any signs of the stolen instruments and to share any information about the burglary, but as of the writing of this column there have been no reports of note.

I could sure use a palette-cleanser. How about you? Along those lines... on to an example of "the best."

People are Excellent

In late February, The D'Addario Foundation – no rookie when it comes to charitable causes championing the culture of music-making – launched The Bridge Fund, an initiative geared towards bridging the gap between access to music education and the Black community which has historically experienced a shameful degree of inequity when it comes to this type of learning.

"The damaging consequences of COVID [have] only exacerbated the need to address the enormous gap in educational resources and opportunities," said D'Addario Foundation executive director, Suzanne D'Addario Brouder in a press release. "We honor the values and needs of communities by launching the Bridge Fund that very intentionally identifies and supports innovative, immersive, and accessible music programs in Black communities. In particular, we seek programs that take place after-school and are available multiple days per week – elements that very clearly contribute to higher levels of engagement and academic achievement as an actionable solution to 'bridging' this gap and giving every student a chance to reach their highest potential!"

A full 100 percent of donations to the Bridge Fund go directly to financing programs that aim to break down barriers to entry in the world of music scholarship and nurture youth development and leadership, with administration costs completely absorbed by D'Addario & Co.

How's that for a positive counterpoint to the recent, highly frustrating and rage-inducing tale from Oregon?

So, yes – there are at least two sides to coins, stories, individuals, et cetera. And, yes – people can either suck or be excellent. Happily, nearly all whom I've met in the MI realm tend to choose the latter option.

Be excellent.

Christian Wissmuller
christian@mrrmagazine.com

NAMM Announces 2023, 2024 Show Dates

As the full impact of the global pandemic comes into clearer focus, the NAMM Board of Directors, members, and staff have charted the path for The 2023 and 2024 NAMM Shows.

With the 2021 show canceled and the 2022 show moved to this June, The 2023 NAMM Show is now scheduled for April 13–15, 2023. Following that, the show will return to its traditional dates in January 25–28, 2024. The timeline was based on the prioritization of the health and well-being of the industry, member feedback on creating a “bridge” back to January and through a review of data surrounding current and historical pandemic activity, as well as related economic and supply chain pressures.

“No one person, company, or industry segment was left unchanged by the pandemic, NAMM included,” said Joe Lamond, NAMM president and CEO. “In my opinion, the true end zone was being able to find the opportunity that these challenges created. Although there was no perfect solution, the new dates – April 2023 and the return of The Show as the first event of our musical year in January 2024 – will encourage every NAMM Member to partner with their association to build the new and improved NAMM Show, ensuring that the platform remains an essential element of their company’s success and through our circle of benefits model – a catalyst of industry growth.”

Registration for The 2022 NAMM Show is now open. Additional information about The NAMM Show is available at NAMM.org

Future NAMM Shows

- The 2022 NAMM Show, June 3–5 – Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, California
- The 2023 NAMM Show, April 13–15 – Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, California
- The 2024 NAMM Show, January 25–28 – Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, California

Musikmesse, Musikmesse Plaza and Musikmesse Festival Postponed, New Event and Festival Concept Being Planned

The consumer trade fair formats Musikmesse Plaza and Musikmesse Festival will not be held in April 2022 owing to the current situation and the short lead time involved. Hygiene rules made planning very difficult above all for large-scale concerts by international artists, concerts in clubs and unusual locations, and music education events. The dramatic transformation in the instrument market, where over 70 percent of sales are now attributed to a small number of online retailers, has already had a very negative effect on the Musikmesse trade exhibition in recent years and is one of the factors driving the

transformation from a B2B to a B2C event. In view of this, Messe Frankfurt will no longer be continuing the B2B part of the Musikmesse, but instead will restructure music-related B2C formats at a later point in time.

As a specialist trade fair focusing on professionals in the event industry, Pro-light + Sound is not affected by this and will take place as planned from April 26 to 29 2022, kicking off the Frankfurt trade fair season on the Frankfurt exhibition grounds.

More information is available at www.musikmesse.com

American Way Marketing Announces Ownership Change

American Way Marketing LLC (AWM), a music accessory distributor and producer based in Elkhart, Indiana, is pleased to announce a transfer of ownership from longtime music industry leader John Musselman to vice president Tim Ricci. Kathy Donahoe, president and Jakob v. Wolff, both member owners, will continue in their current roles.



Kathy Donahoe, Tim Ricci, Jakob V. Wolff, and John Musselman

Ricci began his career in the music industry with Music and Arts, a band and orchestra retail company based in Frederick, Maryland. He started as a sales associate at one of M&A’s stores and worked his way up through various roles to director of merchandising.

Ricci left M&A in December 2017 after accepting the vice president role at AWM. “Along with Kathy and Jakob, I’m so grateful to be continuing on with John’s vision of what AWM could accomplish. It has been wonderful to learn the history of AWM and the music industry from John, since I started in January 2018. His passion for the industry and incredibly

detailed analysis of product and pricing have been great influences for me. We have a wonderful team of people that work hard to provide top quality accessories and premium customer service, and we look forward to continuing that tradition.”

Excelcia Music Publishing Adds Eight New Composers to its Roster for 2022 Releases

Excelcia Music Publishing announces that eight phenomenal new composers and arrangers have joined its ranks for its upcoming 2022 new releases of jazz ensemble, choral, concert band, and string orchestra music, increasing the publisher’s composer and arranger team to 78 people. The incredibly talented group of new composers and arrangers represent a wide range of experience, musical style and identity. These composers, many of whom are music educators, are particularly sensitive to and passionate about the needs and educational aspirations of young musicians, furthering the mission



of Excelcia Music Publishing.

The new composers are David Browowitz, Michele Fernández, Günther Filala, John Florio, Katie O’Hara LaBrie, Kim Noller, Anthony Susi, and Jorge L. Vargas.

Excelcia Music Publishing’s 2022 new releases in string orchestra, concert band, jazz ensemble, and choral, will be released this spring and available from music retailers and at excelciamusic.com.

PEOPLE on the MOVE

DAS Audio of America, the North American subsidiary of Valencia, Spain-based DAS Audio, a leading manufacturer of loudspeaker systems, power amplification, and related products for the sound reinforcement market, is pleased to announce the appointment of Michael Rodriguez to the position of marketing manager for



North America. Rodriguez' key responsibilities include deploying successful marketing campaigns from implementation through execution, ensuring effective marketing communication between the company and its customer base, oversight of all tradeshow management functions, supervision of the company's North American online presence, and more. Rodriguez is stationed in the Miami, Florida USA headquarters.

The Sound Start Foundation has announced that Terry Lewis has been named as executive director, following the organization's remarkable growth over the past three years. A highly respected music industry veteran with broad senior executive and not-for-profit experience, Lewis assumed his new role on February 14, 2022. He reports to Brendon Stead, CEO and president of Sound Start, and senior vice president of Product & Engineering at Sound United, a leading innovator of premium, high-performance audio products for consumers worldwide.



TRADE REGRETS

Thomas Lee, the co-founder of Tom Lee Music, passed away last month at the age of 101. Lee is one of the most famous names in the Asian market of music retail. With Tom Lee Music stores all around Hong Kong and parts of China, his name has been synonymous with music since the early 1950s. In addition to the stores that he established with his wife Betty, the Lees also formed a music foundation in 1967, which has provided greatly needed support to thousands of music programs. Four of their seven children work for the company, which has expanded into pro audio and music instrument wholesale and retail businesses in Hong Kong, China, and Canada.



The industry mourns the loss of **Juan "JC" Faxas**. A former employee of the ADJ Group of Companies and a beloved friend and colleague to many, JC sadly passed away unexpectedly on February 12, 2022.



Faxas joined the ADJ Group of Companies in 2016, where he worked until 2020 as audio product manager and was instrumental in the launch of the Avante Audio brand.

A GoFundMe campaign has been created to support JC's family with medical bills, funeral expenses, and life without his financial support: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/jc-juan-carlos-faxas-family-love-fund>

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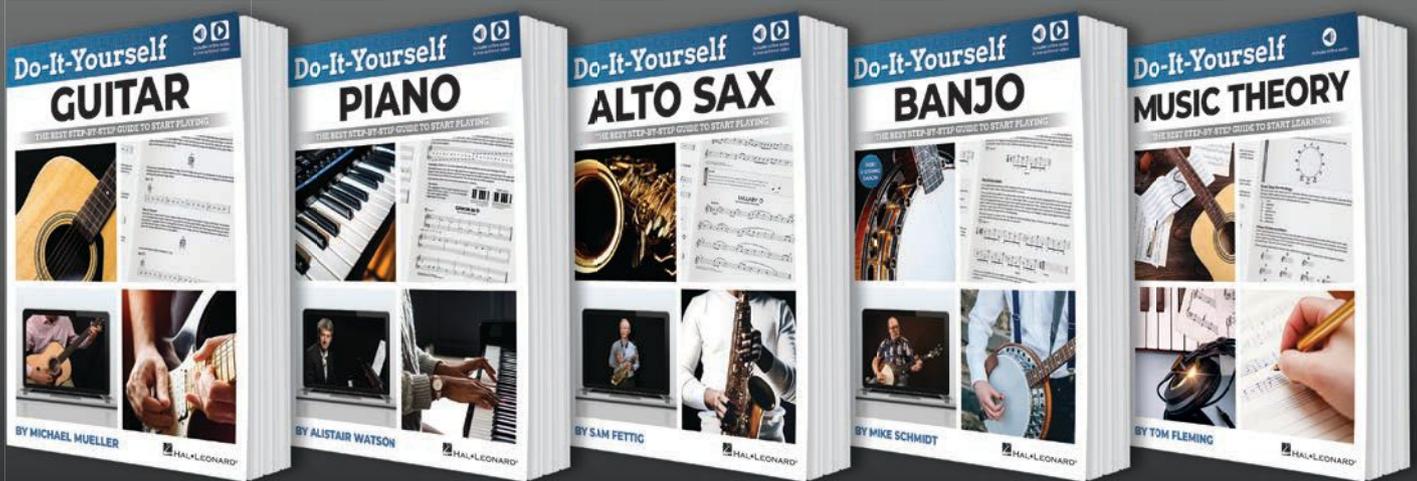
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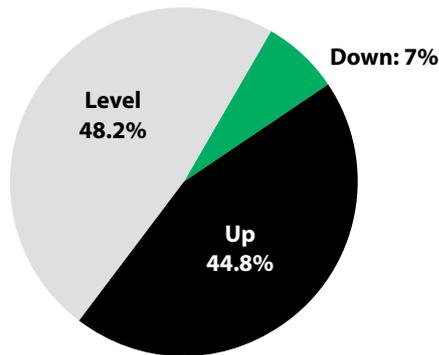
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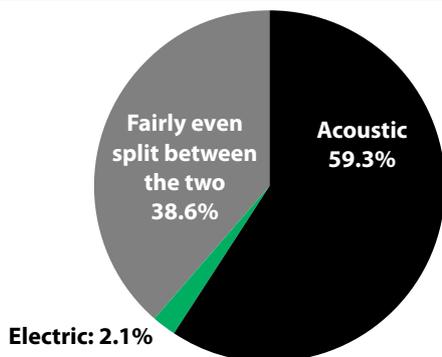
By Christian Wissmuller

With only seven percent of participants in this month's dealer survey on the topic of coated guitar and bass strings reporting sales trending downwards, things are looking pretty darnn solid in this realm of MI. Another definitive takeaway?

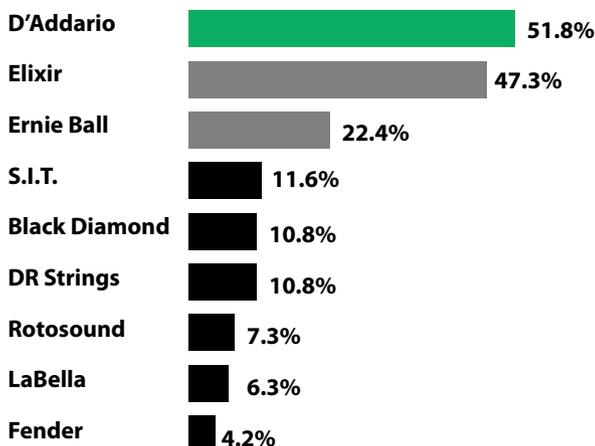
For your MI retail business, when compared to early 2021 sales of coated guitar and bass strings are currently...



Of coated guitar string sales, are the majority acoustic or electric?



What brands of coated guitar and bass strings are the hottest sellers at your store?



A lot of acoustic players *love* coated strings. Not only are nearly 60 percent (59.3%) of coated string sales acoustic in nature, but – as Dan Patterson of Fort Wayne, Alabama's Patterson's Music observes, "I think a lot of acoustic players try to get as much longevity out of a set of strings as they can, as compared to electric players who have a more scheduled string change regime."

Please expand upon your answer to the previous question, if you'd like to share your thoughts on pricing – or any other – buying trends when it comes to coated strings.

"Customers for the most part don't seem to want electric coated strings. It's definitely an acoustic market here for them. We have stocked them in the past, but they sat more than they sold."

Ryan King
Duncan Music
Duncan, British Columbia, Canada

"Coated are about 60 percent of all string sales."

John Barton
Friendly River Music
Cornish, Maine

"Everyone seems to want the best bang for their buck – not only with strings, but anything in life nowadays! Coated strings give you less trips to the guitar store and less money to spend, but you still maintain that new string crispness!"

Donny Saar
Robert M. Sides Family Music
Williamsport, Pennsylvania

"I think a lot of acoustic players try to get as much longevity out of a set of strings as they can, as compared to electric players who have a more scheduled string change regime."

Dan Patterson
Patterson's Music
Fort Payne, Alabama

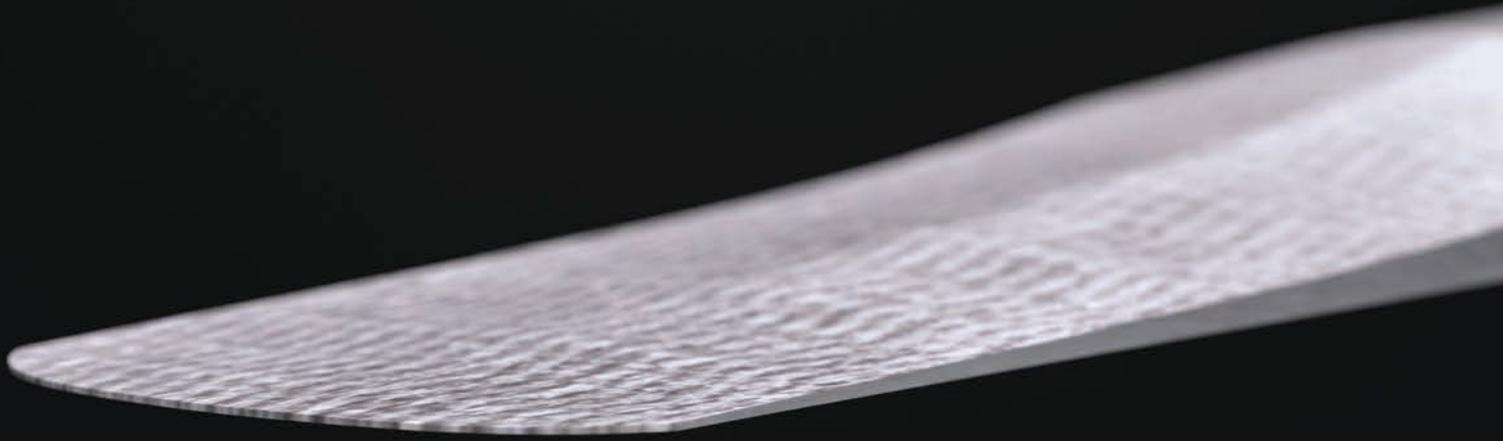
"Guitar string sales have remained strong through the pandemic. Coated strings have more than held their own. Elixir still dominates this field, but D'Addario and Martin have made strong in-roads in this area."

David St. John
Music & Arts
Glendora, California

"During the pandemic, other brands have stepped up their coated string game. Most notably in our store have been D'Addario and Ernie Ball, with D'Addario XS and XT series acoustic strings dominating the coated string sales here. On the electric side, the D'Addario NYXLs (which many people do not realize are a coated string) and the Ernie Ball Paradigms (also a coated string) are about neck-to-neck in sales. The coated string sales are now comprising about 20 percent of overall string sales in our shop."

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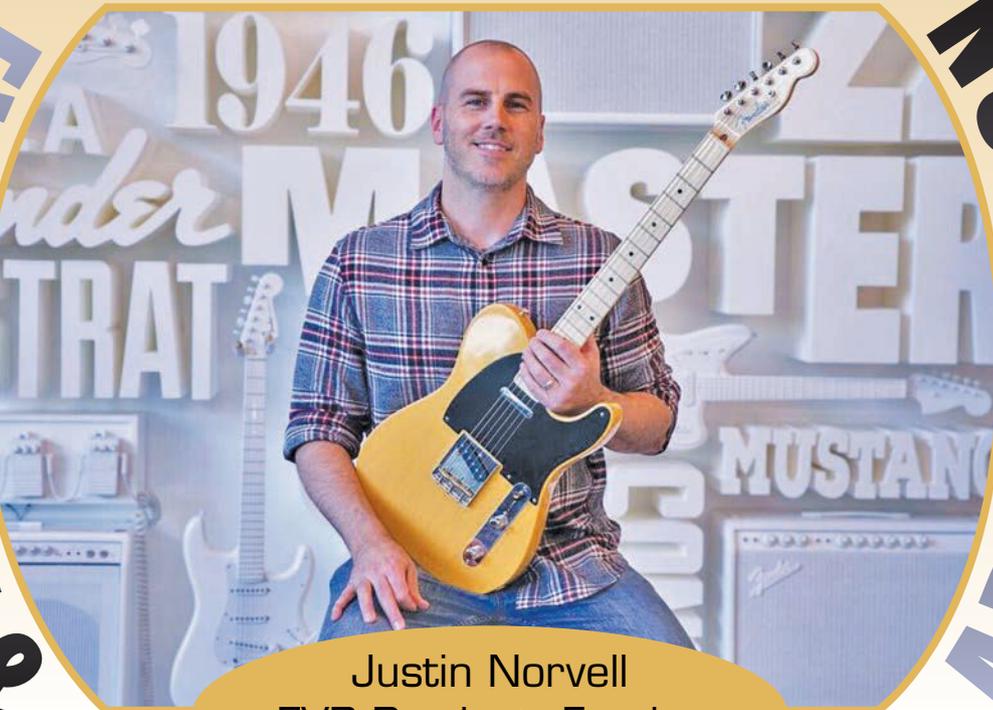


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Justin Norvell
EVP Product, Fender

By Christian Wissmuller

One “silver lining” of the past two-plus years has been folks either taking up a musical instrument for the first time, or rediscovering and re-embracing musical endeavors from their past. In particular, fretted instruments have enjoyed a surge in sales. Fender famously had its biggest year ever in 2020. Andy Mooney and I chatted about the then-emerging trend for a feature in the fall of that year. What are your thoughts on the long-term impact of this spike in both interest and sales?

Overall, we feel this is a long-term trend – even if only a percentage stick with it in the end, that percentage is incremental to the overall growth of the industry with a lifetime value of many instruments and accessories! Going back to Andy’s original premise several years ago, it was estimated that 90 percent of new players quit within the first three months of picking up guitar for the first time and the remaining 10 percent became players for life. His vision was (and still is) if that retention rate went up to 20 percent, it would double the size of the industry! That being said, I think this movement has legs, and the growth will continue – maybe not at the same rate that it was, but the waterline is now higher.

In addition to people buying and playing instruments, more and more individuals and bands are also recording, live-streaming, and so on – and gear that facilitates

such activities is evolving rapidly. Fender recently acquired PreSonus, a major player in this market segment. What are the plans post-acquisition and how do you see recording – specifically home recording or “budget” recording – impacting popular culture and MI retail?

We always think in terms of the user and tools they need to make music. With the PreSonus acquisition, we knew that a segment of players exist that are choosing to plug their guitars and basses into an interface over a traditional amplifier. We’ve been offering amps with direct outs and impulse responses for this same reason, but bringing them into the FMIC family just makes sense for where music is going and how people are creating music. In this social media dominant culture, capturing audio and video are massively important so it made a lot of sense to us. Anyone can record, and unlike “the old days” where the studio was something bands and artists aspired to after years, recording is immediate – people capture playing their first song, which is great and fosters community. The recording side of the business also opens up a whole new world of artists and creators – beat makers, et cetera – not just guitarists! Many new creatives are soloists – moving from an MPC or midi controller to a bass, to synth, and then guitar. For retail, this has great implications as each customer like this has a wider band of products potentially of interest to them. As players evolve we want to evolve and adapt with them.



“The MI industry, as a whole, has a real opportunity to do all it can to keep as many of these new players in the community as we can... it’s incumbent upon all of us.”

Speaking to both of the above points, Fender has been right on top of these trends with significant new product and instrument launches, as well as the wildly popular Fender Play learning platform. How did FMIC anticipate and react to the emerging/increasing demand and what's on the horizon to both satisfy the current market and continue to attract more new players and grow the culture of music-making?

On the product side, we are conscious of our selection and lineup speaking to a very diverse base – from age, genre, gender, et cetera. We truly strive to remain relevant and keep our heads in the “now,” despite being a 75-year-old company. Play continues to evolve and expand with a goal of continuing to add features and content to continue to be the best solution for new players.

How do you think retailers can best serve this growing number of MI consumers in terms of in-store experience, services offered, promotions, display, and so on?

That's a question with several answers. Many retailers are finding great success by specializing and building a reputation and community around that specialty. Many others have chosen to (or had to) embrace taking their business online during the pandemic. There's no doubt more and more of the business is transacting online. I think whether in physical or online retail, the word “experience” really matters – the look and feel of a storefront, the navigability of the selection and product information to help guide the sale is paramount.

Any general predictions for the coming months – for Fender and for the MI industry as a whole?

Right now it's more important than ever to stay current and relevant – respecting the past and history, but with the other foot firmly in the present. The business keeps evolving, and we have to evolve with it. We choose to keep pushing forward, even if we were to fail here and there. That just tells us we're not being complacent. The MI industry, as a whole, has a real opportunity to do all it can to keep as many of these new players in the community as we can... it's incumbent upon all of us. If we do that, the future is very bright indeed!

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LEADERS of the pack

Starter Packs for Fretted Instruments

By Christian Wissmuller

With the recent pandemic came a historic surge of interest in music-making, especially with respect to fretted instruments. With record numbers of beginning players, it stands to reason that most suppliers of guitars, basses, ukuleles, and the like would see increased interest in “starter packs” – bundled product that combines the instrument with relevant accessories and add-ons.

MMR checked in with six major vendors of these packs to learn what models are the hottest sellers in 2022, how dealers are leveraging savvy display and marketing tactics to increase sales even further, and what supply chain challenges mean for the near future of this market segment.

With the recent uptick in fretted instrument sales, have you also been noticing an increase in sales of starter guitar packs?

Rock Clouser: We have seen a huge spike in our entry sales. Perhaps one positive aspect of the pandemic has been a renewed interest in, and a return to, music – noticed in all skill levels, but especially in the entry level. The desire to learn, create, play music, and be a part of something bigger by sharing online, or just for personal enjoyment has boosted entry-level guitar and ukulele sales for us.

Thomas Appleton: We’ve noticed an increase across the board, including at the beginner level. This increase is being led by our standard entry-level products – however, it is not being seen in our package business. Currently we do not offer any starter packs in the electric guitar category. We recently introduced bass packs to our

lineup in 2021, so we have no comp sales to reference, but judging from current sales and comparing with other models in our line, we do not feel that packages are having a specific increase. We’ve seen a slight increase in acoustic packs over the last two years, but nothing extreme, especially when compared to the success other series are seeing.

Arthur Morin: Sales quantity: More than 2020, but less than 2019; Ordered quantity: More than 2020 and 2019. We’ve received more orders for the starter guitar packs, but we couldn’t fill all of these orders due to the lack of inventory caused by the long transport lead time.

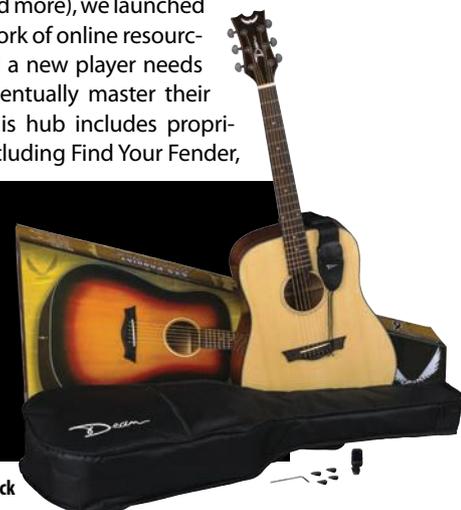
Billy Martinez: Yes, we have seen an uptick in trends towards starter packs. In October of last year, we released the results of “Fender’s New Guitar Player Landscape Analysis,” a study commissioned by YouGov® that revealed an incredible 16 million people (7% of the U.S. population) turned to guitar to fill their time in the last two years. We learned a lot from this study, including that 72% of new players are between the ages of 13 and 34, ushering in the next generation of artists that will be transforming the guitar and music industries.

Using these findings (and more), we launched the Beginner’s Hub, a network of online resources that includes every tool a new player needs to start, stick with and eventually master their guitar, bass or ukulele. This hub includes proprietary guitar technology including Find Your Fender,

“Whatever fretted Dean instruments had in stock sold out immediately across all price points – this, of course, including all of our starter guitar pack options.”

– Eric J. Stewart

Vice President of Product, Armadillo Enterprises





“All Epiphone player packs come with the tools players need to get started.”
 – Krista Gilley, Director of Brands, Gibson Brands

Fender Play, and Fender Tune, revolutionizing the brand’s product journey to cater to the experiences of the largest wave of new players ever seen. New players love the idea of having everything you need to start playing acoustic or electric guitar all in one bundle and that’s why we did this: to cater to those exact needs.

Eric J. Stewart: When the recent uptick in guitar sales hit during the pandemic it became feast or famine. Whatever fretted Dean instruments had in stock sold out immediately across all price points – this, of course, including all of our starter guitar pack options.

Krista Gilley: Yes, we definitely have noticed a global increase across the Epiphone brand and even into our family of brands with Gibson. The value of these guitar player packs is incredible to our fans and with the recent interest in fretted instruments – which has created a wide range of players including new players who now have time to pick up a new skill, or those that come back to playing again – the best place to begin is a player pack that comes outfitted with the right tools to get you started on your playing journey. Epiphone covers a diverse range of players across both electric and acoustic player packs.

For your brand, what specific starter packs are currently selling best?

TA: The best-selling pack in our lineup has actually been our best-selling pack for a number of years, the IJV50. Our best-selling bass pack is the IJSR190NBKN.

EJS: In our Dean line, we keep our selection limited when it comes to starter packs.

We offer one solid body electric guitar pack, one acoustic guitar packages in two different color options, and one solid body electric bass guitar package in two color options.

We like to keep these offers limited and focus our efforts on quality and availability.

BM: Our acoustic and Squier electric packs have seen annual growth as more and more people are interested in playing guitar. It really depends on what the new player wants out of their experience. Most new players tend to lean towards an acoustic pack.

KG: For Epiphone, we’re pretty equal sales-wise on both the acoustic player packs and the electric player packs. Just recently in the past year and a half, we have introduced the beautiful Starling acoustic guitar player pack that has been leading the group out of Epiphone for acoustics. The Epiphone Starling is an entry-level acoustic guitar that comes in a wide assortment of colors. The Epiphone Starling guitar player pack, itself, has a street value of \$199 and comes in four unique finishes. On the electric side, our wildly popular Les Paul player packs have been leading the charge. The Les Paul player packs have been a longstanding and versatile guitar for Epiphone fans at \$269. Recently, our newest addition that is building a ton of buzz in the market is our Epiphone Billie Joe Armstrong Les Paul Junior player pack, which is designed after the

iconic front-man for the rock group Green Day, Billie Joe Armstrong’s go-to guitar. The Billie Joe Armstrong Les Paul Junior is a higher-end player pack based on the preferences of an iconic artist, and coming in at \$399, it is accessible, and holds true to the Epiphone philosophy of high quality guitars at an affordable price.

AM: The Yamaha GigMaker Standard acoustic guitar package is our bestselling starter pack. This kit is a complete guitar package, including an acoustic guitar, gig bag, digital tuner, strap, and picks – everything you need to start playing immediately at home or on the go.

RC: The Ranchero by H. Jimenez ¾ size acoustic nylon string is our most popular, with the ¾ steel string a close second. Our ¾ size is a good size and shape for beginning players ages 8 to 13 or so when many players first have an interest. However, our ¾ size is also a good “travel” guitar for an adult looking to have a fun take-along instrument for camping, fishing, or hiking et cetera. Kohala ukulele packs have also been extremely popular. The smaller soprano and concert sizes are the most popular.

Other than the obvious – the guitar, itself – what other components of guitar packs (strap, strings, tuner, picks, amp, et cetera) do you feel are of greatest value to the consumer and why?

EJS: Of course all of our packages include the obvious – strap, picks, tuner, et cetera – but outside of the guitar, when it comes to an electric package I used to feel that the amp supplied would usually be considered the greatest value. However, nowadays, with all the amazing entry-level amps on the market today, we like to focus more on the quality and playability of the guitar itself. If a guitar is set up and plays extremely well, that keeps the customer engaged and excited to play the instrument. A poorly set up guitar causes the opposite to happen.

KG: All Epiphone player packs come with the tools players need to get started. The electric player packs even include an amp, and the acoustics are more focused on the tools like straps and picks, and a gig bag comes included with the full package as well. What is exceptional about Epiphone is these player packs cover every need of players that are geared towards the acoustic side, as well as those who prefer electric guitars, and each pack offers a great value in a wide range of prices.

The most valuable aspect of the player pack is it comes with many accessories and tools included for the player to learn to use on their own. From an overall value perspective, in our electric player packs the amp included is a portable combo amp and it is such a valuable addi-



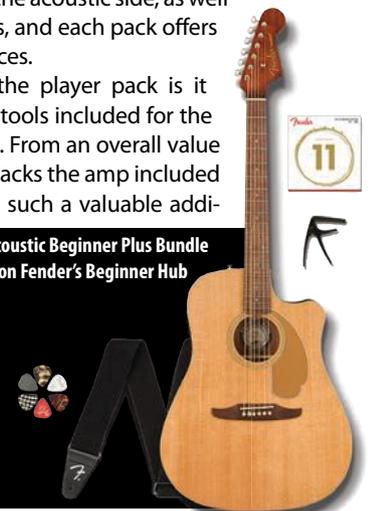
Epiphone’s Billy Joe Armstrong Les Paul Junior player pack



“New players love the idea of having everything you need to start playing acoustic or electric guitar all in one bundle.”
 – Billy Martinez

VP Category Manager – Acoustic and Squier Divisions, FMIC

Fender Acoustic Beginner Plus Bundle featured on Fender’s Beginner Hub





H. Jimenez LGR75N 3/4 Acoustic Guitar with Bag

“For brick-and-mortar stores that offer lessons, a package purchase can include a discussion about lessons to further enhance the pack sale for the beginning player.”

– Rock Clouser, String Instrument Brand Manager, Lanikai / Kohala Ukuleles and H. Jimenez Latin Instruments



tion to the package. Again, the Epiphone player packs are all packaged together in an easy to purchase format, so a parent who might be new to the music realm isn't stuck in an aisle of millions of amps and millions of guitars thinking, "What goes with what?" or "What can I bear in my own household when I'm starting to have a little rock and roller coming around?"

They might not think they need a tuner, and the same with guitar picks – everyone is individualized in how they like to use a pick and sometimes they don't use a pick at all. Altogether, the collective sum of all of the tools included in the guitar player packs is the most valuable component – it has everything they need. Then we tailor the package by model, so electrics like the Billie Joe Armstrong Les Paul Junior, or the classic Les Paul player pack both come with an amp, which is the perfect addition.

BM: With acoustic packs, the tuner, strap, and picks are essential to getting started playing guitar. They are the three essential components need when starting out. For electric guitar packs, the tuner, strap, picks, instrument cable, and amp are all essential to begin their journey. If you want to start your journey on an electric, you want to turn up the volume, so the amp is a crucial part of the experience.

AM: Gig Bag: This allows portability and protection for the guitar. It supports the player transporting the guitar outside of their home to play and/or learn with someone. These are all essential experiences to enjoy playing the guitar; Tuner: This is also a great value as it allows the player to keep their guitar always in tune; Pick: Using a pick gives the player a brighter and more consistent tone. It is also easier on the fingers when compared to fingerpicking. [For the] GigMaker Electric Guitar Package the amp is the tool to take customers to the "electric" world.

RC: We keep our acoustic packs focused primarily on the instrument and gig bag, [and] in some models we include a clip-on tuner. However, giving the entry player the best components and feature set on the instrument possible is an important part of the instrument's performance and fueling the musical inspiration. For example, our student designs incorporate features and components that a beginner may not know to look for initially such as, all models have large easily seen position markers, metal geared tuners for accurate tuning, name brand strings for best tone and intonation, and all of our acoustic guitar packs include truss rods for easy action adjustments and improved playability.

TA: The most important components of starter packs are sometimes the most overlooked. The tuner and the picks are very important as it provides the player everything they need to get start-

ed. Obviously amplifiers or headphones would be necessary for electric packs. When it comes to entry-level products I'm always surprised when the most important pieces are left out. For example, with drums most brands make entry-level drum kits, but there are none out there that include sticks. I always wonder how many kids get a drum kit for Christmas, but can't play once they get it set up and realize there are no sticks in the box.

How do successful retailers market and display guitar starter packs?

TA: The best displays usually involve a stack of the four-color boxes with the guitar on a stand in front, or next to, the display.

RC: "Retailers" now obviously means two things; online and brick-and-mortar stores (obviously many stores are both). Marketing packs online means showing the customer exactly what they are getting with detailed meaningful descriptions. We provide multiple product images and close-ups and detailed product specifications and descriptions for this reason. An online retailer can further enhance the consumer experience by video reviews and demonstrations. For brick-and-mortar retailers, successful marketing includes a clear segmentation of entry instruments. Displaying all guitars on a huge wall doesn't point out which have pack options and so many choices can confuse the first time buyer. Separating pack options either in a display or with additional signage is important for in-store displays. Also, for brick-and-mortar stores that offer lessons, a package purchase can include a discussion about lessons to further enhance the pack sale for the beginning player.

Reed Larrimore: Guitar starter packages are an excellent tool for welcoming new players to the instrument, as they make it easy for an aspiring musician to get everything they need in a grab-and-go package. While it is essential to merchandise guitar packages in high-traffic locations in the retail store, successful dealers leverage each guitar package sale as an opportunity to invite customers into their lessons and services programs. It can be as simple as making the offer directly during the sales process, by offering coupons for lessons or set-ups at the point of sale, or through direct marketing post-sale. For customers willing to upgrade, "staff selected" bundles can be a nice upsell to the standard packages and provide dealers with their unique offerings.

BM: We offer our packs in a variety of options, but none more important to retail than the artwork on the outside of the box. It's a selling tool in the retail environment and it shows the consumer everything they will experience as they unbox their new instrument. Most retailers have them stacked up and ready to grab-and-go!

KG: Our retail partners have a fantastic way of

“Guitar starter packages are an excellent tool for welcoming new players to the instrument.”

– Reed Larrimore

Sr. Director of Sales, Yamaha Corporation of America



The Yamaha GigMaker Standard acoustic guitar package

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Ibanez's Jumpstart Electric Bass pack

“We’re seeing more customers stepping up for more expensive products for their first instrument rather than the going for starter packs and expect this to continue.”

– Thomas Appleton

Sales Strategist / Guitar & Electronics, Ibanez



displaying the player packs in stores. Typically, the display is located in the front of the store and it creates a vivid pop-out. It is on us to make the Epiphone player packs an interesting and easy purchase on the floor. It can be difficult for a retailer to display a player pack because the whole package needs to be on a hook. It is best to showcase the strap, the picks, and all the other items that come with the player packs. At Epiphone, we package every player pack in a beautifully designed box that highlights all the tools available within it – it even has a handle on it. The Epiphone player pack displays are designed grab-and-go, creating an easy decision-making process. We also make our own Gibson App experience available with a fan friendly QR code. The new Gibson App is an all-encompassing guitar learning tool which features a whole suite to get any guitar player, even beginners, started on their playing journey. So, Epiphone has solved the merchandising side, the box aspect display element, and also the follow-up steps with the retailer. Epiphone guitar player packs are truly all a player needs to get started, or to continue their playing journey.

EJS: We offer all of our packages in full-color point of purchase display boxes that show every component on it, as well as what is packaged with the guitar. We also modified our packaging over the years to make sure they are extremely compact and retail-friendly when it comes to stacking and displaying, so they don't take up more retail floor space than necessary.

What are your expectations for these types of bundled products in the coming months?

RC: We are seeing a spike in entry level across the board in our guitars and our ukuleles. The future of bundles and packs is solid as people seek turn-key solutions for what can be an overwhelming selection of brands and models. Knowing a pack has the products to meet a beginning player's needs is comforting and makes the entry choice less daunting in a sea of options.

KG: Epiphone is so accessible to a wide range of performers from all levels of playing ability. If you are at home in your room, or on an arena stage – wherever you are, everyone's had the same starting moment. For player packs, the solid win is that we have strong connectivity and a personal touch with every player. We begin with the model of guitar itself. Are you gravitating more to the acoustic side?

Right now, we have just introduced the Starling acoustic. In the Epiphone line of acoustics, the Starling itself is an accessible, entry-level acoustic guitar. The Starling acoustic player pack comes in a fun range of colors including, a deep Ebony, Wine Red, a Starlight Blue, and even a Hot Pink Pearl model. The Starling has a lot of ap-

peal to younger players and as our new marquee entry-level acoustic, the Starling is a quality acoustic guitar that's available to all players at \$149. We've made it easy for a parent, a family member, or whomever the gifter is to be absolutely thrilled with their purchase. The Epiphone Starling is currently our only acoustic player pack, so I do see our acoustic pack collection expanding. We have many new musicians in the mix that are starting their playing careers. More acoustic player packs will be coming down the pipeline and elevated across an array of price points, as well as highly-desirable Gibson and Epiphone artist signature guitars.

On the electric side, we've already had great success including, the classic Les Paul player pack, and the recent addition of the Billie Joe Armstrong Les Paul Junior player pack. We also have a fantastic opportunity to bring iconic female players into the mix with our player packs on the electric side. Epiphone's is FOR EVERY STAGE, and its player packs provide a great tool for beginning players to get on stage and start their own playing journey.

AM: We want to continue to build upon the success of the Yamaha GigMaker guitar packages. Our goal with our bundled products is to inspire the player to create more music. We want our guitarists to believe that everything they do, like practicing, pushes them towards achieving their creative breakthroughs. We want them to think that Yamaha guitars are made to be played and feel like they have been empowered to express their creativity in ways they couldn't before.

EJS: As supply chain is still extremely challenging and lead times from factories are getting longer, we are working diligently with our sales channels to ensure forecasted orders are in place so we can meet the demand. We expect to sell every unit we have available no later than October. Currently we see no downward trend in starter guitar packs and are happy to see a resurrection of guitar-based music circulating out there again to help introduce a new generation of guitar players.

BM: We see continued growth in the pack business, especially for the players who are just starting out on their musical journey. Between our existing starter guitar packs, the new Beginner Hub tool, and what we are planning for the future, these options are key to the success of the consumers experience with the Fender brand.

TA: We expect sales to continue at about the same pace. We're seeing more customers stepping up for more expensive products for their first instrument rather than the going for starter packs and expect this to continue. To address this need we've created the AZ Essentials line which provides customers with some amazing guitars at a very reasonable price.

“Our goal with our bundled products is to inspire the player to create more music.”

– Arthur Morin

Marketing Manager, Yamaha Corporation of America



The Yamaha GigMaker Standard electric guitar package

Employee Sabotage



By
Jaimie
Blackman

Anyone that lives or has visited Charleston, South Carolina is familiar with the importance of its plantation history. For generations, Southern plantation owners relied on the forced labor of enslaved people.

My wife and I recently visited Joseph Fox of Charleston's Fox Music – an amazing store and even a more amazing human being. Fox encouraged us to visit Middleton Place while we were there. It was good advice.

For those that may not be familiar with Middleton Place, it was the home of a plantation that was almost destroyed by the Union army during the Civil War. It was plantations like Middleton that helped fund the military needs of the Confederate Army. Destroying the plantation was an important milestone to ending the Civil War. I was less interested in the story of Henry Middleton, who first acquired Middleton Place through his marriage to Mary Williams in 1741, than I was in the story of the 800 men, women, and children who were enslaved in the network of Middleton plantations.

As explained by Middleton's educator, the enslaved population was on the "task" system. In this system, each slave was assigned a specific task to complete for the day. After that task was finished, the slave could use the remaining time for their own needs. Of course, the "gotcha" was the task took 12-18 hours to complete, so there wasn't a whole lot of time to tend to the personal needs of the enslaved population. The compensation for their work was a menial diet of rice and corn, which was not enough to support their health. Many died of starvation.

This relentless brutality eventually forced the slaves to be creative, by sabotaging the task system.

Rebellious activities might include:

1. Faking sickness
2. Removing important agricultural tools necessary to complete tasks
3. Deliberately damaging tools
4. Deliberately working slowly
5. Producing shoddy work
6. Sabotaging crops

These tactics were difficult to observe and prove and it was easy for any enslaved person to utilize these methods as a form of protest.

When people are mistreated they will always find a way to rebel. For the enslaved, they slowed down, suddenly became sick, tools were missing – all designed to slow the tempo of their work.

You might even suspect that some of your employees have utilized at least one of these behaviors as a subtle form of protest. As one that has employed dozens of individuals, I know I have. Shifting the blame from employer to employee is easy. What's *not* easy is to look in the mirror and with complete honesty say to yourself, "I can do better." It's not easy. The challenge is that our ego gets in the way.

I remember whenever my mom made a mistake she would say, "Jaimie, I'm not perfect, but I'm wonderful." This pretty much sums it up. We are all wonderful, trying to do the very best we can to share our love of music. It's ok once in a while to admit that maybe the fault is not with our workers. Maybe it's the culture that was created while we weren't looking.

An excerpt from my March 2019 MMR column, "Strategies to Engage and Keep Your Best Employees," is worth repeating:

Barron goes to the whiteboard and draws a chart of the sales from last quarter. Barron isn't happy. He says, "Sales are down. Some of our top salespeople have left to work for our competitor and it's taking too long to get the new people up to speed. No one seems to be engaged anymore and I want to know what's going on. We have a real numbers problem." The room goes silent.

All eyes are now on Harmony, Barron's daughter. Harmony goes to the whiteboard.

"Dad, I agree with everything you said except your last point. We don't have a numbers problem. We have a culture problem." "Culture" comes from the Latin "cultus," which means to care. And what I mean by culture is a common set of core values shared by the group.

Employees are looking for things like purpose, opportunities to develop, ongoing conversations, a coach rather than a boss, and a manager who leverages our strengths instead of obsessing over our weaknesses. In the end, a strong culture will result in a stronger performance. Remember, Dad, to unlock the top performance in your employees, don't lead with compliance, lead with the relationship."

In David Friedman's *Culture by Design* the author wrote, "When we begin to see culture as behavior, we open up a whole world of actions we can take. In its simplest form, your culture is seen in the behavior of your people. It's what they do every day. If we change the way people behave, we change the culture." © 2015

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

“Shifting the blame from employer to employee is easy. What's *not* easy is to look in the mirror and with complete honesty say to yourself, 'I can do better.'”



An early shot (1975) of the staff at Elderly Instruments

A Golden Age



Martin Guitars' Chris Martin and Stan Werbin

Elderly Instruments

Celebrates a Half-Century

By Christian Wissmuller

Few music dealers are as beloved by patrons as Lansing, Michigan's Elderly Instruments. A mecca for bluegrass, folk music, and "twang," the store celebrates a major milestone in 2022 and *MMR* recently touched base with current president and co-owner Lillian Werbin to learn more about the company's history and present-day operations.

Early Days & Evolution

A half-century ago, Stan Werbin and Sharon McInturff "took the plunge" and opened their MI retail operation. But how did they get to that point? "At the time, in 1971, they had both just finished college and weren't really sure what would be next," explains Werbin. "Both were involved with The Ark, Ann Arbor's legendary folk music coffeehouse. There was much talk amongst musicians that the new fretted instruments coming from the major manufacturers were not as good, for various reasons, as similar instruments made in earlier years. When the question 'What shall we do now?' came up, the winning answer was to search for older guitars, banjos, and mandolins and see if they could buy and resell them at a profit. By 1972, they had done well enough at it, moved to East Lansing, and opened a small shop."

In those early days, the first retail store was a very small room in a downtown East Lansing basement, and it was just the two of them. The building had numerous other startup businesses, and when one would move (or closed its doors) Stan and Sharon would often expand into that space. By 1974, there were around six or seven employees, and by the time Elderly Instruments moved to the current location in 1983 there were 15 or 20 people on staff.

"Currently, our staff hovers just around the 40 mark and 35 are full-time, which is down from the '90s heyday of a little over 100 employees," says Werbin. "The entire building – a 'Frankenstein' of three buildings combined over the years – is roughly 36,000 square feet."

Elderly is particularly known for serving the acoustic/folk/bluegrass/"twang" community, but was that by design or did things just evolve that way?

"That describes our focus when we first started out," she says. "And I think it translates to how people perceive us. Over the years we've intentionally expanded our inter-



Lillian and Stan Werbin in February of 2020

ests to include other genres and music communities that use fretted instruments."

That expansion of interests is borne out by Elderly's inventory: The store typically has about twice as many acoustic guitars in-stock as electric, but they still carry a wide range of accessories and necessary equipment for both categories.

Making Customers Feel 'At Home'

A defining characteristic of Elderly Instruments is the business' "hands on" access to all gear. It's fairly uncommon for a store with such high-end and vintage instruments on the walls to be relatively casual about letting customers try out and play the instruments as they please – and yet that's the Elderly way of doing things.

"It's simple for us: we want our customers to feel at home," Werbin offers. "Our goal is for the shopping experience to be comfortable, so customers can explore our offerings without a sales rep breathing down their necks. Our staff is trained to treat people like family and help them find a good fit, which harkens back to what this company was founded on: the gratification of setting someone up with the perfect instrument for their needs. Many of our higher-end, vintage instruments are kept locked up in the 'Elderly Vault,' but are available in the showroom on request."

As to what lines are the hottest sellers for the store, the answer to that question is not exactly cut-and-dried.

"When we first opened our store, the plan was to find and sell great and interesting vintage instruments, and new instruments were quickly added to our inventory," she says. "We have long prided ourselves on carrying quality instruments from all over the world, in a range of price points – and we like to think they're all 'best-sellers.' Of course, the names you'd expect to hear remain best-sellers: Martin, Fender, Taylor, Breedlove, Collings, ESP, Gold Tone, Eastman, Ibanez, Kentucky, Recording King, et cetera. Our inventory also in-



cludes Northfield, Ohana, Furch, Deering, National, Kamaka, Cordoba, Blueridge, Guild, Farida, and more. There are really so many more good ones."

There's one glaring omission to that otherwise comprehensive list that sharp-eyed readers no doubt already noticed. "We have always loved Gibson instruments, and for over 30 years we were one of their most productive dealers," Werbin continues. "Unfortunately, a misunderstanding in the early 2000s drove us apart, but we currently sell both vintage and recently-made-used Gibson brand instruments. Given the new ownership [at Gibson Brands], we'd be happy to see a new relationship established between us and Gibson."

Elderly Instruments currently has seven full-time repair people and three full-time appraisers: "We see a wide spectrum of repair needs, but the repair techs work on a few hundred instruments in a month. Many are basic setups and minor repairs, but there are high-end repairs and restorations on vintage and modern vintage-grade instruments, as well."

Present-Day Success & An Eye on the Future

Back in 1979, Stan Werbin took on a record distribution venture, Old Fogey Distributing, which later became Sidestreet Distributing – although the nature of that has evolved. "There's hardly a need for a dealer/retailer like us to insert ourselves in the record distribution industry these days," says Lillian Werbin. "But when Sidestreet Distributing was created, it was mostly to distribute LPs (and later CDs) of hard-to-find recordings of our favorite genres, and some accessories to other stores, but that's not how recordings work anymore. We evolved Sidestreet [pre-pandemic] to have our own line of guitars and ukuleles manufactured and imported, but as of right now we have put most Sidestreet endeavors on hold to reinvest in the core of Elderly Instruments."

How does such a grass-roots operation so strongly defined by person-to-person interaction embrace internet commerce and the digital age?

"Online sales are something we never even imagined back in the 1970s," Werbin says. "Luckily for us, when the internet came along we found ourselves well positioned to sell through a website, largely because we had been selling through mail order catalogs beginning in 1975. For us, it also meant that any music store that wanted to could set up a website and ship orders. So it became a whole new world. eBay and Reverb gave us new competitors to watch for, it's true, and they also provide

a way for smaller stores like us to reach a wider audience. But they both have their benefits and drawbacks. We recently elected to temporarily remove our store from Reverb, and have never sold through eBay."

Fair enough. How about the much-discussed "soaring" sales of fretted instrument during the pandemic? What's been Elderly's experience during these times?

"We've learned to be more resilient than in previous years and adapt with the times a little quicker. The pandemic has allowed us to take a moment to reinvest in our staff, procedures, inventory, and frankly, the en-

tire business. While we all agree the last two years have been challenging, things have been good for us, and we at Elderly Instruments are looking forward to a bright future. We are grateful to all our customers, old and new."

So, will there be any special events, sales, or promotions to mark the 50-year milestone in 2022?

"We're planning a Birthday Block Party, Tuesday July 5, 2022," Werbin says. "So come visit Lansing (or our website) for specials, other events, and exciting new Elderly Instruments things!"

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Re-Awakening Your Originality!



By
Menzie
Pittman

When customers first walk into your business, what inspires them?

Which senses are you trying to awaken in your customers to keep them engaged?

As leaders in the music business industry, these are questions we must ask ourselves repeatedly because, as we all know, the retail landscape is ever changing. Therefore, to maintain the loyalty of our customers in today's market, we must connect to their emotions and, of course, offer product choices and competitive pricing.

Some music stores can incorporate a "wow factor," by displaying massive amounts of gear, but not all music businesses have the financial resources or the retail space to be able to do that. So, if you're not knee-deep in financial resources, how then do you create that "wow factor?" The answer is: one customer at a time!

A small box retailer truly can generate "wow moments" for their customers, but it takes a slightly different approach than you might think. The small box trick is customer engagement. If you can keep customers engaged with you, you will win their trust – and that's the biggest wow factor there is.

Besides having your gear displays looking as mighty as you can, a great way to win consistent customer engagement is with imagination! When you prioritize imagination, your business stays fresh. Creative individuals intuitively understand this idea; they intentionally fan the flames of imagination, fully embracing it and understanding that it is a gift and the secret code that opens the doors to unique expression.

As a matter of necessity and priority, big shops don't always incorporate a depth of imagination; they function from a pre-planned efficiency model. We probably all respect the massive gear "wow factor" in any music store – in fact, some of us may be a tad jealous. However, more than likely, smaller shops have been established on the spirited idea of providing unique services centered around the creative skills of the founders. So, we don't want to abandon that quality.

The gateway to your customers and families who support your business is through imagination in your displays and your overall creative store design. Owners of small businesses usually begin their enterprises with vision marked by enthusiasm, innovation, creativity, and readiness.

However, as time passes, businesses grow stale, imagination wanes, and occasionally the luster dulls. Eventually, the fire needs stoking. Entrepreneurs must find ways to rekindle that original passion – they must maintain a fresh, intriguing business model that repeatedly invites customer loyalty. How do you find affordable ways to achieve that?



The good news is, out of imagination springs the one tool smaller retailers keep close at hand: originality! The problem is that doubt is never too far behind. Usually, the discussion on originality centers around one question: How do I let go of fear and embrace my highest level of uniqueness? Many would tell you that you either are an original, or you're not. But I don't think it's quite that black and white. I think you simply need to let innovation out of its box.

Becoming an unprecedented retailer takes time, maturity, and evolution. The merchants of the greatest success stories have all gone through a gradual maturation. These superstars in our business evolved along their journeys. Somewhere on the path of development these proprietors reached a point where they learned to trust and just let go. They got out of their own way, and their originality simply flowed. This takes belief in your vision. It also takes lots of imagination, along with the courage to try things that at first may seem foreign or bold to you.

The door that allows you access to the house of originality is being as good at your craft as possible. It is a natural cadence for craft to precede originality, so the trick becomes developing your craft to your highest level first; then you allow uniqueness to develop as the natural aftermath of that process. Here the word "craft" is used in an all-encompassing way. For example, your craft could mean your store's design and presentation, sales, repairs, education, relationships, rentals, and so on.

A great tool that may keep you motivated is taking a page right out of the musician's handbook. Think about it, when we all first attempted to learn a musical instrument, or first attempted to sing, we were inspired by someone else doing it. We weren't great at it, but we wanted to be, so we mimicked those who inspired us, as we imagined our own creative personalities. So let that understanding make its way into the look and style of your business. Re-awaken though imagination. 

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."

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FRETTED

Dean Introduces Thoroughbred Select Floyd Quilt Maple Natural Black Burst Electric Guitar

Dean Guitars is off to the races with its first electric guitar of 2022, the Thoroughbred Select Floyd Quilt Maple Natural Black Burst. This new Thoroughbred model offers many tried-and-true features of Dean's Select Series, such as a satin-finished neck and exclusive Seymour Duncan pickups, as well as a Floyd Rose 1000 Series bridge system for increased tuning stability. Additionally, the Thoroughbred Select Floyd QM Natural Black Burst gives players who prefer an edgier aesthetic an appealing new finish on a tonally versatile instrument.



The namesake Thoroughbred body has a solid build of mahogany with an arched quilt maple top, a design that when combined with a natural & black finish, creates a rippling light-dark contrast. The visual effect is completed by a five-ply black-white binding – eye-catching features that are replicated on the matching headstock. Players will note the 24 3/4-inch scale length and easy access to high frets, which has the effect of making this guitar feel compact, yet wide-ranging.

Like other Dean Select Series models, the Thoroughbred Select is designed by professional musicians for professional musicians. This attention to detail becomes increasingly apparent at the neck and fretboard. The sturdy neck is crafted from three-piece mahogany and is extra comfortable with a C-shape, 12-inch fretboard radius, and 22 jumbo ebony frets with pearl block inlays. The fretboard is satin-finished to assist maneuverability, and single-ply neck binding adds stylistic flair and an extra splash of class.

To further improve the durability of this workhorse, Dean adds a dual-action truss rod into the set-neck construction, enhancing tonal transfer between the neck and body while enabling players to adjust the correct amount of relief. The Floyd Rose 1000 Series tremolo system at the bridge and corresponding Floyd Rose R3 nut (1 11/16-inch width) help keep tuning stable during heavy riffing or blistering solos. Grover 18:1 tuners provide added reliability and facilitate easy string changes when needed. It is equipped with Seymour Duncan TB5 and APH-1 pickups at the bridge and neck, respectively, both in a sandblasted zebra parchment finish. These exclusive pickups are sonically versatile, from cleaner classic rock and blues to deep crunches and blistering clear highs for solos. Dean keeps the controls simple with two volumes and two tones, controlled with black speed knobs. Price: \$1,099.

www.deanguitars.com

Jerry Cantrell 'Fire Devil' Songwriter – Ebony from Gibson

Whether you're writing a song at home, laying it down in the studio, or bringing it to thousands on stage, Gibson's Jerry Cantrell "Fire Devil" Songwriter delivers. Made to the Alice in Chains guitarist's specifications, the Jerry Cantrell "Fire Devil" Songwriter builds upon the traditional Gibson Songwriter platform. It adds several unique, personalized features, including a thinner body depth for playing comfort, a unique "Fire Devil" pickguard, Jerry Cantrell signature on the truss rod cover, Double J waterslide decal on the back of the headstock, "12" inlay at the 12th fret, gold hardware with gold Grover® Mini Rotomatic® tuners, and an L.R. Baggs™ VTC pickup and preamp, so it's ready to plug in whenever you are. Only 100 units will be hand-made by the expert craftspeople of the Gibson Acoustic Custom Shop in Bozeman, Montana, USA. MSRP: \$3,999



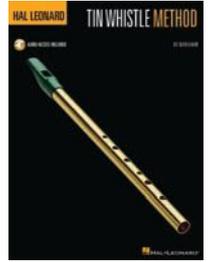
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PRINT & DIGITAL

Hal Leonard Publishes Two New Titles for Tin Whistle

Hal Leonard has announced two new resources for anyone interested in playing the tin whistle.

The Hal Leonard *Tin Whistle Method* is designed for anyone just learning to play the Irish penny whistle. This comprehensive and easy-to-use beginner's guide from acclaimed player Seán Gavin serves as an introduction to the instrument and its rich history. It includes access to online audio tracks with demonstrations of many of the examples in the book so beginners can confidently play at their first seisiún! Lessons include: articulation; scales; ornamentation; tune types; rhythmic feels; melodic variations; and more. The price of the book includes access to audio online, for download or streaming, using the multi-functional audio player **PLAYBACK+**, available exclusively from Hal Leonard.



After beginners get through the *Tin Whistle Method*, it's time for *First 50 Irish Songs You Should Play on Tin Whistle!* Compiled by L.E. McCullough, this book includes short historical notes so players can feel connected to the long history behind many of the songs. Titles include: The Banks of Lough Gowna • Boys of Blue Hill • Danny Boy • The Donegal Reel • Finnegan's Wake • The Foggy Dew • Joy of My Life • Lark in the Morning • Minstrel Boy • Morrison's Jig • The Parting Glass • The Rocky Road to Dublin • The Sally Gardens • Sligo Maid • Tabhair Dom Do Lamh • Wexford Carol • and more.

Both books retail for \$14.99. More info can be found at halleonard.com and retailers can call the Hal Leonard E-Z Order Line at 1-800-554-0626 to order.

www.halleonard.com



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Universal Audio Inc. (UA) introduces its first microphone lineup in the company's 60-year history.

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- Sphere L22 Modeling Microphone – Now Shipping – \$1,499USD MAP
- UA Bock Series – Premium, hand-built classic mic designs, made in Santa Cruz, Calif.
- UA Bock 187 Large-Diaphragm FET Condenser – Fall 2022 – \$1,249USD MAP
- UA Bock 167 Large-Diaphragm Tube Condenser – Fall 2022 – \$2,999USD MAP
- UA Bock 251 Large-Diaphragm Tube Condenser – Fall 2022 – \$5,999USD MAP

UA Standard Series and UA Bock microphones include presets for use with UA Apollo audio interfaces.

www.uaudio.com

DRUMS & PERCUSSION

Lizard 17-Key Flat Base Kalimba C from Luna

The earliest kalimba-style instruments evolved from the *mbira* family, a family of percussive instruments originating thousands of years ago in Zimbabwe. With deep roots leading back to African culture and musical traditions, the kalimba has played a variety of different musical roles throughout history. Today, the kalimba is not only used to accompany modern instruments on stage and appear on musical albums but also as a form of relaxation to escape the stresses of everyday life.



Moo means “lizard” in Hawaiian, to the early Hawaiians, a symbol of spirituality and good fortune. The lizards on the Moo Kalimba are set against the leaves of *Monstera deliciosa*, a plant found throughout Hawaii. Built with all-solid Okoume wood body, the Luna Moo Lizard 17-Key Kalimba features a laser-etched lizard on monstera design.

A perfect instrument for beginner to intermediate kalimba players looking to test the waters, ready for the next adventure. Keep your kalimba in-tune to the Key of C with the tuning hammer and instruction booklet to use as a reference. Gigbag with a strap included with a polishing cloth and an extra soft carrying bag inside. Be sure to take your Moo Kalimba on your next journey, wherever the music may take you. Join the Luna Tribe! MSRP: \$29

www.lunaguitars.com

ddrum Unveils NIO Electronic Percussion Pad with Full Kit Capabilities

ddrum introduces the NIO Electronic Percussion Pad with the capabilities of a fully functioning electronic drum kit. Featuring a broad surface of responsive pads, endless percussive options, and ample connectivity, the NIO is an ideal addition to acoustic or electronic kits in various settings, from at-home practice to live performance and studio sessions.



With the NIO Electronic Percussion Pad, players have virtually endless options to level-up their percussive creativity. The NIO is designed with nine isolated rubber pads and comes pre-loaded with 30 preset kits, including five ddrum series kits; 20 user kits; and hundreds of built-in sounds. Additionally, players have the option to utilize 512 MB of storage for loading their own sample drum kits, sounds, or loops via USB (Type-B) output.

Further broadening creative possibilities, the NIO has two built-in trigger inputs that enable the player to utilize external drum triggers or pads. Footswitch inputs allow the NIO to become a fully functional electronic kit, providing a great practice option in limited spaces or on the road.

The front panel controls on the NIO are simple and streamlined. Two dials, one on each side of the panel, allow for volume control as well as fast toggling through kits and sounds. A center digital screen shows menu options with adjacent toggle and selection buttons. Click and Record buttons allow the player to practice with a metronome and save their own creations. A quarter-inch headphone output enables private practice while quarter-inch stereo outputs L/R with volume control allow the player to hook up to an external speaker or PA system. Additionally, the 1/8-inch stereo Aux input allows audio in, so players can connect a music source and play along. Whether used for experimenting with samples and loops, or finding that perfect sound in a mix for a live performance, the NIO Electronic Percussion Pad from ddrum delivers a durable design, easy-to-use functionality, and professional-grade components. MAP: \$399

www.ddrum.com

PRO AUDIO

PreSonus Expands Revelator Family with new USB Vocal Mic, Interface

PreSonus Audio Electronics, Inc. has announced the global launch of two new products in its innovative Revelator line. The new Revelator Dynamic USB vocal microphone and Revelator io44 audio interface combine studio-grade audio recording quality with powerful onboard processing and a simple software-controlled mixer that can blend sound from multiple applications for monitoring and live streaming.



The Revelator Dynamic mic offers easy-to-use presets that let recording vocalists quickly customize their sound and create a polished mix for studio recording, live streaming, and podcasting. The Revelator Dynamic utilizes the same custom-built, dynamic microphone capsule found in the fan-favorite PreSonus PD-70 broadcast microphone. Like the PD-70, the Revelator Dynamic is designed to capture the human voice cleanly and clearly by eliminating breathiness, unwanted reverberance, and even ambient room noise. This allows the Revelator Dynamic to be set up in virtually any space, capturing the perfect vocal take, every time, allowing home recordists to set up their studio just about anywhere.

The Revelator io44 features a stylish design that fits in the palm of your hand. The new four-in, two-out audio interface is bus-powered via its USB-C compatible jack and can serve as the heart of an ultra-mobile recording studio as well as the core of a streaming rig. The Revelator io44 features a combo mic/instrument input with the clear, clean sound of PreSonus' famed XMAX-L mic preamp, as well as a 1/8-inch line-level stereo input for DJ mixers and mobile devices making it perfect for electronic musicians, guitarists, and streamers. A high-powered, 1/8-inch stereo headphone output works with regular headphones and TRRS gaming headsets (mic in, stereo out). Balanced 1/4-inch stereo main outputs are provided to connect to professional studio monitors.

Revelator-series USB microphones and audio interfaces offer extensive onboard signal processing, with the same Fat Channel EQ, compressor, gate, and limiter algorithms found in PreSonus' award-winning StudioLive Series III mixers, plus reverb and voice effects like delay, vocoder, and more. Professionally crafted presets deliver polished sound with a single click. Additional presets emulate concert halls, AM radio, robotic voices, and more. PreSonus' UC Surface software for macOS and Windows provides full access to the processor settings.

Every Revelator-series product offers a software-controlled mixer that makes it easy to blend audio from three different applications at once to add backing tracks, Zoom calls, or gameplay and create custom mixes with all available analog inputs while monitoring at near-zero latency and simultaneously streaming and recording with up to 24-bit, 96 kHz precision. Every Revelator-series product also connects directly to iOS, iPadOS, and Android devices. Because settings are stored onboard the hardware, every saved preset is accessible right from the physical button, so users can take their favorite voice effect presets with them wherever they go.

Revelator-series products come with a complete suite of software and are ready to record right out of the box. Each Revelator comes with PreSonus' Studio One Artist production and recording software for macOS and Windows. The Studio Magic software suite is also included and features more than \$1,000 worth of effects, instruments, sounds and more. The Revelator Dynamic USB microphone also includes a sturdy, extendable desktop mic stand.

The PreSonus Revelator Dynamic USB microphone and Revelator io44 USB audio interface are available immediately at street prices of \$199.95 and \$179.95 U.S., respectively.

www.presonus.com



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