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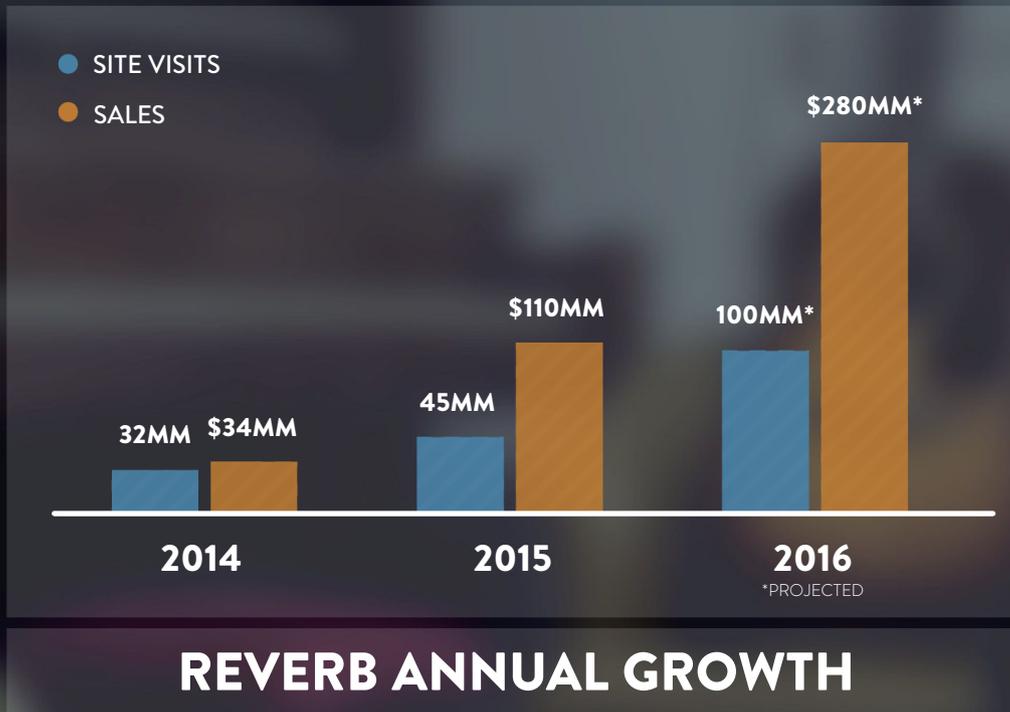
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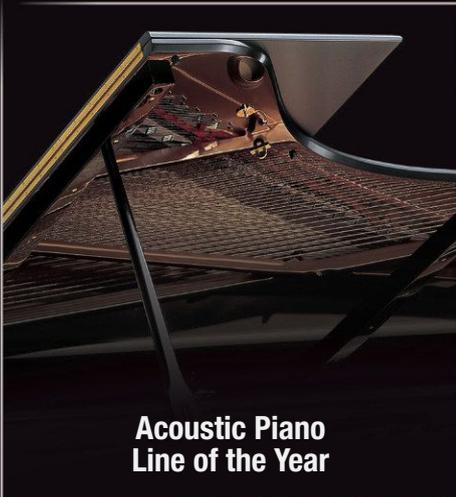
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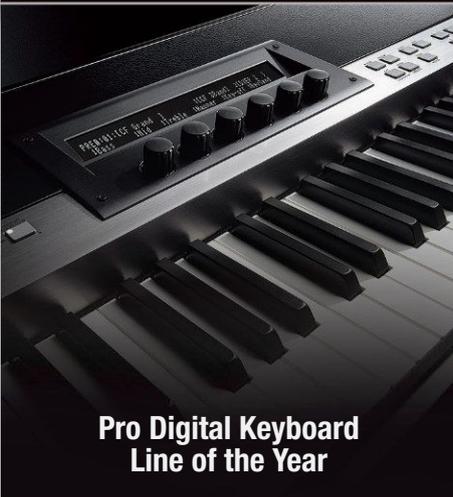
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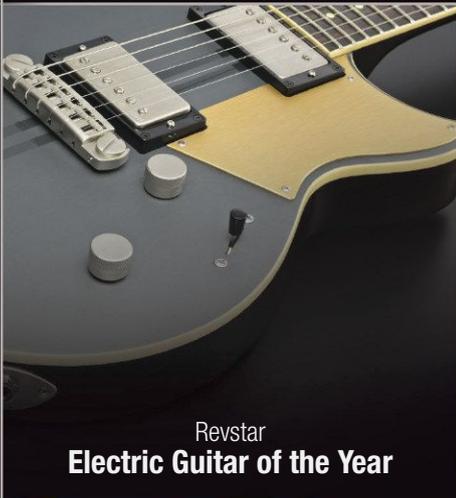
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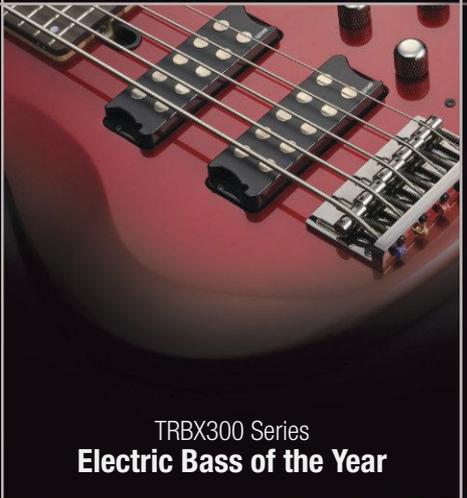
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Line of the Year**



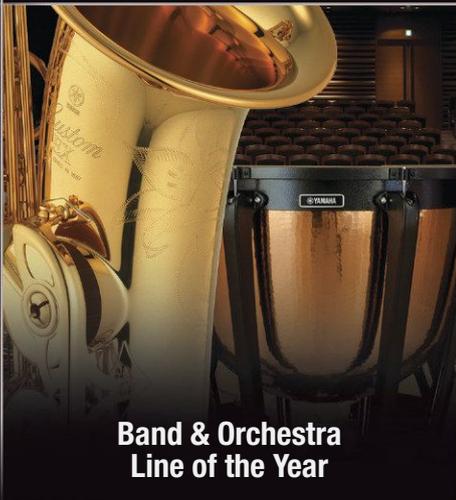
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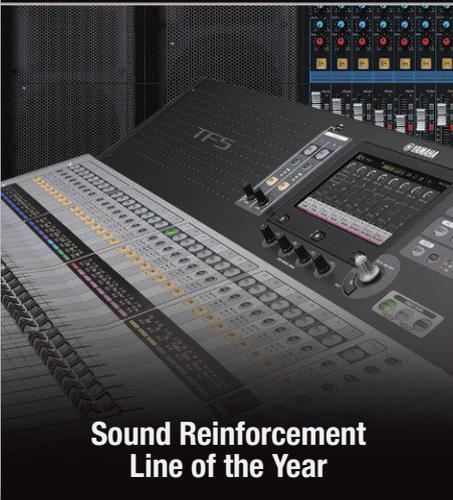
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Thank You Yamaha Dealers



SHARING PASSION & PERFORMANCE

Go East, Young Man! (Well, Not Necessarily *Physically*)



by Christian Wissmuller

I'm writing this issue's editorial from the Music China show in Shanghai and, just as in previous years, what I'm struck by – not just at the Expo Centre, where you'd of course expect to hear non-stop music (or at least "musical noise") – as I walk around the city, is the ubiquity of music. Not that life in the States doesn't have its own non-stop soundtrack via songs piped through overhead systems at supermarkets and malls, street musicians, TV and movie soundtracks, et cetera. Something about the re-contextualization of it over here is striking, though.

Not to say that the *quality* of most tunes in China is somehow "superior." In fact, not in the least (in my opinion). The most commonly heard music is the PRC's current version of pop, which most closely resembles the overwrought epic numbers off of soundtracks from late '80s American films. I've – no joke – twice stopped short, convinced I'm hearing Survivor's "The Search is Over" (that was from a soundtrack, right?), only to find I've been duped by some contemporary Chinese hit.

But there's an undeniable passion and excitement that's palpable and invigorating. It's likely related to the still-fairly-new exposure to Western art/music, this exuberance for pop music and culture, but whatever the reason or reasons, it's unquestionably restorative.

It's all too easy to become jaded about things that were once thrilling and most folks I know do, at least to some extent, grow to be blasé about playing music, somewhat bored by instruments and gear, "ho hum" about performing or attending concerts, "meh" about exhibiting at or covering trade shows... So it's pretty cool to see so many people of all ages not in any way worried about appearing "goofy" in their fandom and enjoyment. I'm not making a blanket statement about Americans ("We're all jaded and bitter!") or the Chinese ("They're so innocent and simple!") – it's of course way more nuanced than that. I simply appreciate being reminded, by coming face-to-face with it, of how gnarly/dope/righteous/et cetera our industry and everything connected to it is. I think it's a refresher course we should all embrace when we happen upon it.

The same thing happens to me when I see a friend's younger brother or daughter pick up an instrument, or when some random catalyst reminds me of how that song I loved in 12th grade is still, objectively, beyond amazing – or when I attend something like the NAMM Show with a jaw-on-the-floor newbie.

It feels great to be an unabashed, "goofy" fanatic of this "music stuff" – and the ones who affect real change and make lasting contributions to MI are just that (I bet you can think of a handful who fit this bill on both the retail and supply side of things).

To paraphrase one of the great tenets of Manifest Destiny and a powerful slogan from our nation's history: "Go East, Young Man (or Woman)!" At least in spirit – or to any time, experience, or place where *you* were forcibly reminded of how rewarding being involved in the music industry and the culture of music making is.

Goofy is good.

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Industry News

- Industry News
- People on the Move
- MMR Global
- Trade Regrets
- Supplier Scene

Line 6 Now Exclusively Distributed by Hal Leonard

Hal Leonard and Line 6 made a joint announcement that effective October 1, 2016, Hal Leonard is the exclusive distributor of all Line 6 products in the U.S. The deal coincides with the release of the new Line 6 Spider Amp V.

Line 6 has become a popular manufacturer thanks to their ability to engineer innovative, amazing-sounding gear that's ready to go right out of the box. They have a track record of designing category-defining products that shatter technical barriers, from the world's first digital modeling amp, to Variax digital modeling guitars, to a myriad of wireless accessories. The new Spider V promises to be the best-sounding edition of this industry leading amp-modeling line yet.

Senior sales and marketing manager Brad Smith said, "It's an exciting time to become the exclusive US distributor for Line 6.

With all their recent releases and their continued commitment to support their legacy products, Hal Leonard is ready to expand our dealer

support and sales programs to make this a must-have line for all retail. Simply put, Line 6 and Hal Leonard can expand the guitar playing market. We are eager to work with retailers who share this vision."

Hal Leonard has been a non-exclusive distributor for Line 6 since 2011. Any retailers who previously purchased Line 6 elsewhere can call the Hal Leonard E-Z Order Line at (800) 554-0626 for more information and to set up an account if they're not already a Hal Leonard retailer.



Eastman Music to Distribute Backun Clarinets

Eastman Music Company has announced that they have entered into a long-term exclusive distribution agreement with Backun Musical Services, manufacturer of clarinets and woodwind accessories, to bring the Backun line of products to Eastman dealers in North America.

The Backun line of products joins the Eastman family, which includes Eastman, Wm. S. Haynes Co. and S.E. Shires instruments. The agreement leverages Eastman's outstanding brand and strong dealer relationships, while offering dealers access to a premium line of clarinets – from student through professional models.

Qian Ni, CEO of Eastman commented, "Backun clarinets have earned a reputation of being among the finest in the world. We are excited to be able to work with our Eastman, Wm. S. Haynes



Co. and S.E. Shires dealers to represent these instruments. We are confident that Eastman dealers and their customers will benefit from the innovations and craftsmanship that Backun is known for."

On the recent agreement, Backun president, Morrie Backun said, "In partnering with Eastman, we recognize the enormous potential for Backun in the U.S. market. Eastman provides exceptional dealer support, with industry leading financing and terms that will help Backun products reach more dealers and artists. This relationship is a natural fit for both companies."

Effective immediately, the entire Backun product line of clarinets and accessories will be available through Eastman, with the company offering financing, inventory and domestic shipping to qualified dealers from its Pomona, California headquarters.



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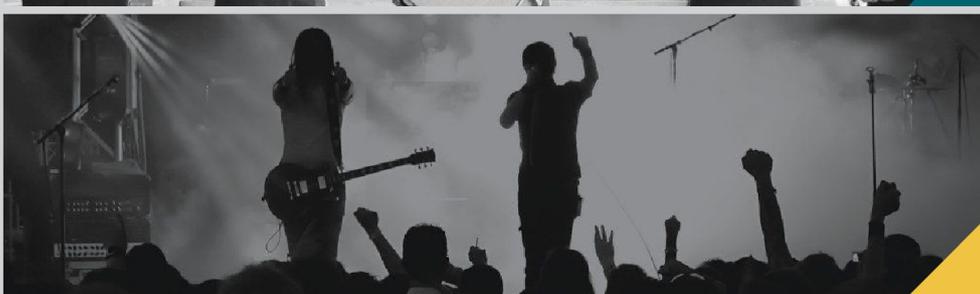
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Buffet Crampon Acquires WIND

Jérôme Perrod, president of Buffet Crampon, recently announced that from now on WIND (BEIJING WIND MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS MANUFACTURING Co., Ltd.) is

a member of the Buffet Crampon family.

This acquisition consolidates the presence of the group in China, with its own commercial and marketing team, its own distributor network throughout the country, and two factories (one for the assembly of Prodigie clarinets and the other for brass) in Beijing, with a staff of up to 80 people.

After Besson and Antoine Courtois in 2006, B&S in 2012, the acquisition of WIND comes to strengthen the position of the group on the brass instrument market and as world leader in woodwind instruments. Based on the knowledge of excellence, the group objective is to develop new student brass instruments of quality in China.

Buffet Crampon, present in China for many years, will continue pursuing its strategy of development.



NAMM Musikmesse Russia and Prolight + Sound NAMM Russia Sees Growth

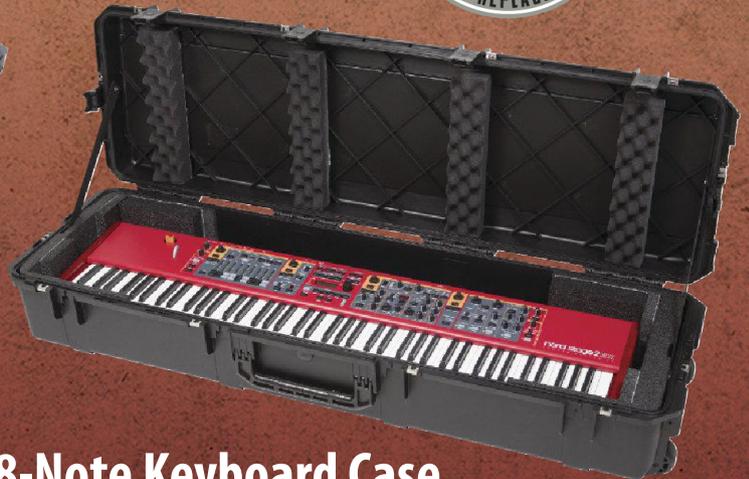
NAMM Musikmesse Russia and Prolight + Sound NAMM Russia (September 14-17) concluded after four days of events, demonstrations, meetings, professional development opportunities, and exhibitions.

Now in its fifth year, the annual exhibition took place at the Sokolniki Exhibition and Conference Center in the heart of Moscow and attracted 144 Russian and international manufacturers and distributors to present the latest in musical instruments, products and pro lighting and audio technologies to a crowd of over 16,000 unique visitors, an 11 percent increase from 2015. Visitors attended multiple days of the show to enjoy nearly 200 different events curated by and for industry professionals and to meet with top brands across both musical instruments and professional light and audio.

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ADJ Group Opens New Facility Near Mexico City

In order to adapt to a growing and changing Mexican market for entertainment technology, the ADJ Group has opened a new distribution center facility near Mexico City that will serve all ADJ Group brands: ADJ, Elation Professional, Acclaim Lighting, Global Truss America/Duratruss, and American Audio.

“Due to a high demand for our brands in Mexico, we are very excited to announce that we have formed ADJ Products Group Mexico,” stated Toby Velazquez, president of the ADJ Group. “We have strong brand names in Mexico and the new facility will allow us to establish an even stronger connection between sales, service and our customers. This will help get our products in the hands of our customers quicker and offer our dealers a factory-direct sales and service experience.”

The ADJ Products Group Mexico facility includes extensive warehousing and shipping areas with a quality control and service department with on-site technicians. An in-house sales department serves all ADJ Group brands and a state-of-the-art showroom allows for customers to experience real world lighting setups. “We have always enjoyed and appreciated our relationship with our distributors in Mexico,” Velazquez says. “The opening of ADJ Products Group Mexico is an opportunity for us to extend the

same high level of service that our customers in the USA and Europe have enjoyed for years.”

The new facility, conveniently located near transportation services in the town of Lerma, just outside of Mexico City, will be headed by Abraham Levit. Managing Elation Professional’s and Acclaim Lighting’s sales rep network in Mexico is International Sales Manager John Lopez while Ernesto Velazquez manages the region for ADJ.

The new ADJ Products Group Mexico facility is located at AV Santa Ana 30, Parque Industrial Lerma, Lerma, Mexico 52000. With its opening the ADJ Group now operates warehouse and showroom facilities in Mexico, the Netherlands, and on both U.S. coasts.



Vandoren Opens Chicago Advisory Studio

Vandoren has officially opened doors to the new Vandoren Musician’s Advisory Studio in Chicago.

The grand opening was on September 20 with numerous local artists and teachers in attendance including John Yeh, Teresa Reilly, Ernest Dawkins, Rose Sperrazza, David Tuttle, Michael Holmes and more. After years of success at the NYC studio and a successful launch of the LA studio in January of this year, Vandoren is very

excited to provide Chicago musicians with a space to rehearse, hang out, and try out all that Vandoren has to offer.

“This is simply an extension of the Vandoren philosophy,” said DANSR president Michael Skinner. “Staying close to the musician has always been our principal objective. Not only can these studios be used by any clarinetist or saxophonist for trial purposes, but it serves as a great research base for us. Some of our best products have come from the hundreds of musicians we see at our studios.”

Stocked with the complete line of Vandoren products, the Chicago studio is open to all players, teachers, and students who are interested in finding the perfect setup. It is located at 818 W. Evergreen, Chicago, Illinois. Those interested in setting up an appointment can contact one of the studio advisors at vandorenchicagostudio@gmail.com.

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"We've now been exhibiting for the last four years, and we can say the show is getting better every year, there's continuous improvement in terms of quality and quantity of attendees," shared Christian Kaemmer, International Sales Manager of Koenig & Meyer, Germany. "We're now positioned in the Prolight + Sound NAMM Russia area, however, we also get to see the MI folks who come to the show, both trade and public. We will definitely be back next year."



Participants across both shows included manufacturers and distributors of musical instruments and accessories, light, audio and video equipment from Austria, Belarus, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Russia, Taiwan, Ukraine and USA. Notable names included Sennheiser; Aris Pro; Slami; Stagemarket; Serapid; LTM; Clay Paky; Martin Professional; Pro-Audio and Lighting Systems; Show Atelier; Robe, SiM; SoftLight; Verlinde; OKNO-Audio; Sundrax; Kvant Ltd; Dealercenter; DOKA Center; Stroytsirk Yoga; BAM; Artimusic; Grand Mystery; Arsenal Music; Pearl River; Salvi Harps; as well as dozens of other leading brands. Russian companies, such as Asia Music; Stroytsirk; SoftLight; Theatre Technical Systems; Universal Acoustics; Hokens; TDA-audio; B&A and many others debuted their latest creations.

The show received support from the Committee for Culture of the Russian State Duma; Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation; the Department of Culture of Moscow; Tchaikovsky Moscow State Conservatory; The State Academic Bolshoi Theatre of Russia; the Brass Band Centre of the Russian Ministry of Culture; Creative art and music and aesthetic education center for children and youth; the Glinka National Museum Consortium of Musical Culture; Culture and Art Education Development Institute; Theatre

Managers Guild; Theatre Workers Union; and the Russian Music Theatres Association. MF-group and EuroShow served as technical partners of the shows. Sennheiser electronic GmbH & Co was the general partner of Prolight + Sound NAMM Russia 2016. A new generation online event calendar KudaGO.com was NAMM Musikmesse Russia and Prolight + Sound NAMM Russia's general partner of promotion.

Yamaha Music served as a strategic partner of NAMM Musikmesse Russia. During the shows, the company operated an educational center and welcomed popular artists including keyboardist, Katsunori Ujii, and drummer, Sean Browne to perform.

In 2017, NAMM Musikmesse Russia and Prolight + Sound NAMM Russia will return for its sixth year, September 14 – 17, 2017.

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NAMM Foundation Seeks Best Communities for Music Education

School districts and schools with an exemplary commitment to music education curriculum are encouraged to apply for a national distinction as a Best Communities for Music Education.

Presented by The National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Foundation, the Best Communities for Music Education (BCME) and its counterpart, the

SupportMusic Merit Award (SMMA) recognize the outstanding efforts by teachers, administrators, students and community leaders at the district and individual school level who share in the common goal to ensure access to music for all students in the classroom.

Now in the program's 18th year, the Best Communities for Music Education (dis-

trict level) and SupportMusic Merit Award (school level) offer national honors and visibility for district and school music programs which support music education in their curriculum. Through a school or district submitted survey process, the awards program evaluates responses about funding, staffing of qualified teachers, standards, curriculum, community support, participation, facilities, and other factors that affect access to comprehensive music education. Once the responses are verified, The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas reviews the survey data and offers this designation to districts and schools that demonstrate a high commitment to music education.

District officials, music educators and school staff in the domestic United States are invited to complete this survey by January 31, 2017 by visiting www.nammfoundation.org/bcme.

Manhasset Acquires Noteworthy Music Stands

Manhasset Stands recently announced its acquisition of Noteworthy Music Stands, a manufacturer of decorative music stands known for creating "Elegant Images for the Artist."

"The acquisition of the assets of Noteworthy Music Stands is a great fit for the company. Manhasset will add the Noteworthy Music Stand line to its assortment of music stands that are currently manufactured and marketed by the company," according to Dan Roberts, president and general manager. Bob Meyer, president of Noteworthy Music Stands adds, "We are very excited about the potential growth of our Noteworthy Music Stand designs as a result of their acquisition by Manhasset... and we are especially delighted that Manhasset will continue to manufacture our music stand designs in the USA, maintaining the standard of excellence inherent in all of the music stand products that we have made over the years."

Details of the acquisition are not being disclosed per the agreement with both parties. Manhasset Stands plans to debut the Noteworthy line of music stands at its NAMM Show booth in January 2017.

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Supplier Scene

Eminence Launches Custom Shop for End Users

Eminence has expanded their custom design capabilities to include modifying stock models for end users.

Eminence has over 170 unique pro audio and musical instrument loudspeaker and compression driver models in stock. That said, occasionally a stock model with ideal performance parameters is not offered in the impedance needed for the job. That's where the Eminence Custom Shop comes in.

Subject to parts availability, Eminence can create alternate impedance versions of existing stock models, and can even revive an older discontinued model.

"Recently we had a guitar player call and tell us his go-to speaker has always been our Legend GB128," said Anthony Lucas, design engineer. "But he had just acquired a 2x12 cabinet and was dismayed to learn we don't offer a 16 ohm version of that speaker. In the past I would have tried to guide him to a different speaker, but as a guitar player myself, I know the tone I'm most happy with. We expect the Custom Shop will be a great resource for our loyal customers. If we have the necessary parts on hand, we'll go out of our way to get you what you need."

Once only available to session and touring guitar players, Eminence is now offering a guitar speaker break-in service through the Custom Shop. A new guitar speaker takes some playing time to fully break in. The soft parts of a speaker will eventually loosen up slightly, which results in the tone becoming even sweeter. "It all started with helping out our A-list artists in Nashville," said Lucas. "I guess the word spread. We get a lot of calls for it, so I think this is going to be something a lot of players will take advantage of."

www.eminence.com

Nicholas Gunn Deploys Chauvet DJ Intimidators in New Video

Instrumentalist and double platinum recording artist Nicholas Gunn enlisted lighting designer Jeff Hinton of 815 Productions to help him with a music video that they shot in an historic Chicago home in late September. The LD surrounded a small stage with circular truss and mounted 12 Intimidator Spot 255 IRC moving fixtures from Chauvet DJ on the structure.



Gunn, whose new age recordings like *Thirty-One Nights* have become classics in the genre, arranged for Hinton to capture his performance on the flute, as well as interpretive dance numbers, with an improvisational lighting display.

Constructing his circular structure with truss from Chauvet DJ's sister company Trusst, Hinton spaced his 12 60-watt LED Intimidator Spot 255 IRC fixtures evenly around the unit to create even cross lighting on Gunn and the other performers. "We were going for a more natural look, something very fluid and high level to highlight emotions of the music," he said. "The Intimidator had many good features that made it well-suited for this project,

but two things that stood out were its very clean, crisp gobos and its split beam 3-facet prism capabilities. They gave me a lot of coverage in the area inside the circle. I ran the whole thing DMX and was able to get a seemingly endless variety of looks."

In addition to the dozen Intimidator Spot 255 IRCs, Hinton used an assortment of 20 Chauvet DJ par units as well as the Hurricane 1800 Flex water-based, DMX-controlled fog machine. "The fog was very crucial at different times in the performance," he said. "We used it to create the image of recent rainfalls, which really reflected the mood of the music very well."

www.chauvetdj.com

JodyJazz Exhibits at ExpoMusic in Brazil

JodyJazz, Inc. recently exhibited at the ExpoMusic trade show in Sao Paulo, Brazil, the largest musical instrument fair in Latin America.

Every year the show attracts over 50,000 visitors from over 50 different countries and features over 200 exhibitors representing musical instrument brands from all over the world. It was JodyJazz's third year exhibiting at the show and once again the JodyJazz stand was a hive of activity with appreciative and enthusiastic sax players and dealers from all over Brazil swarming the booth.

"After three years exhibiting at this show, we have established a robust network of dealers throughout the country," said Jody Espina, president of JodyJazz. "We've also built an impressive Artist Endorser roster consisting of some of the most popular and talented Sax players in Brazil," he continued. "Certainly the challenges to import products from the



USA are not inconsiderable, but we have found a way to make it work."

In addition to his duties at the ExpoMusic trade show, Espina also found time to sneak in a gig with the great Brazilian drummer Carlos Ezequiel at the famous 'Jazz Nos Fundos' Jazz Club in Sao Paulo. Jody was joined by the young up-and-coming sax player Josue dos Santos who plays the JodyJazz HR Soprano and Alto models.

www.jodyjazz.com

KMC Music Debuts Bundles for In-Store Pro Audio Departments

KMC Music introduced KMC Studio Bundle and KMC Solo Performer Bundle. Available for immediate delivery, each bundle is custom designed to appeal to specific consumers in a practical and affordable way. The bundles, feature brands like JBL, AKG, Soundcraft, Stageline, Quiklok, Monster, DigiTech, and DOD, also include free added-value product that make them even more profitable for the dealer.

"Our commitment to helping dealers create profitable in-store Pro Audio departments is a total one," KMC Music vice president of Merchandising, Roger Hart, said today. "These two bundles, targeting the solo performer and the studio maven, are the first in a series of creative packages that will feature a broad range of Pro Audio brands uniquely configured and backed with high value added incentives."

www.kmcmusic.com



Riversong Guitars Gift Royal Family Guitars

When the province of British Columbia, Canada was looking for a special gift to commemorate the coming of Their Royal Highnesses Princess Charlotte, Prince George, Prince William and Duchess Kate, they turned to Riversong Guitars to provide one of their patented Riversong Tradition Canadian guitars.



Premiere Christy Clark, Prince William, Duchess Kate and Mike Miltimore with Riversong Guitars

Riversong uses domestic woods located in British Columbia in their products - from woodlands high alpine forest ranges, to old growth giant spruce and cedar, and broad leaf figured maple trees.

"It's such an honor to build these instruments for Their Royal Highnesses," said Mike Miltimore, CEO of Riversong Guitars. "Music is the perfect alternative to screen time, where the whole family can enjoy being creative together. From my family to theirs, we hope the Royal Family enjoy these instruments."

www.riversongguitars.com

Prestige Guitars Engages Blaze Music as Canadian Reps

Prestige Guitars announced that the company has engaged Blaze Music to represent the line across Canada. Blaze has an established team of reps that will bring the line directly to dealers across the country.

Formed by MI industry veteran Rod Bader of Calgary, Alberta, Blaze was established as a professional representative and distribution agent, with an aim to deliver innovative musical instrument brands to the Canadian marketplace. The company handles high-end and boutique lines such as Bogner Amplification, Trussart Guitars, Egnator Guitar Amps, Clayton USA, Tone-Pros, and many more.

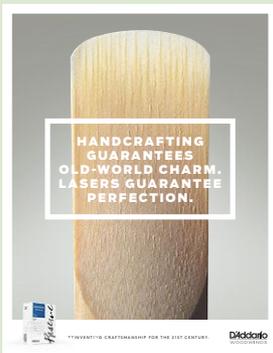
"We are very pleased to have our guitars properly represented from coast-to-coast across Canada. Canada certainly represents a very large territory, and it was crucial for us to establish a rep force that would be able to bring the line to each and every dealer in major and not so major centers. Blaze can deliver just that and their team is comprised of some of the best reps Canada has to offer. We also feel that the lines represented by Blaze, truly compliment Prestige and we are surely in good company," - said Adrian O'Brien, VP Prestige Guitars Ltd.

www.prestigeguitars.com

www.blazemusic.ca

D'Addario Launches New Print & Digital Campaign

D'Addario Woodwinds launched their newest campaign – the D'Addario Woodwinds Story, an initiative celebrating D'Addario Woodwinds. The campaign includes print ads, video content, social media images and videos, and an interactive video display to be featured at events such as the Midwest Band & Orchestra Clinic and various music educator conferences. This is the company's first official campaign as a global woodwind brand.



The new campaign, launched this past summer, shares D'Addario's practices from their cane fields in France to their machinery in California, framing the way they're revolutionizing how reeds are made. The campaign incorporates and focuses on brands such as Reserve (reeds and mouthpieces) and Select Jazz (reeds and mouthpieces) as premium products from D'Addario Woodwinds.

www.daddario.com

Buffet Crampon Partners with Kibo Online Sales Platform

Buffet Crampon USA, North American distributor of Buffet Crampon student, intermediate, and professional woodwinds, announced a new partnership with Kibo Commerce, the Cloud-based online order commerce platform.

Kibo is the strategic merger of industry leaders MarketLive, Shopatron, and Fiverun and their services are designed to help retailers and Buffet Crampon USA unify the customer experience.



With this partnership, Buffet Crampon USA will now be able to offer online shopping to customers directly through its website (www.buffetcrampon.com). Authorized dealers in Buffet Crampon's dealer network will have the option to become a "Buffet Crampon Fulfillment Partner" through Kibo. Orders placed on the Buffet Crampon website are assigned to the participating retailer that has the desired instrument in stock and geographically closest to the customer. The dealer then ships the purchased item to the customer and receives guaranteed payments for all fulfilled orders.

Authorized dealers are invited to enroll by visiting partners-usa.buffetcrampon.com. Purchases through the Buffet Crampon website will initially be available only to customers in the United States.

www.buffet-crampon.com

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sound culture



by Ronnie
Dungan

So, Sue Me*

It's fair to say that over here in the U.K. we have a somewhat less litigious culture than in the U.S.

There are ambulance-chasers and unscrupulous lawyers in increasing amounts, and the criminal practices of the press have included phone hacking murdered children and "fake sheikh" journalists setting up stings on various public figures, resulting in many cases in their imprisonment and even (fingers crossed) the imminent imprisonment of the Fake Sheikh journalist himself.

So U.K. lawyers are not starving by any means, but it's still not quite the major industry it is in the U.S., which is a much more mature market, you might say, for that sort of thing.

It's rather surprising therefore, to read about the Gibson vs. JHS case, only in the sense that it seems (and I'm no legal expert) to be rather poor counsel to try to prove that something that does not bear your brand name or registered trademark in any way, shape or form, is an attempt at counterfeiting.

There's plenty of genuine counterfeiting that goes on in the market, as any one that has been to Music China will attest, but I'm not sure JHS' labeling of all its guitars with the Vintage brand was an attempt to pass them off as Gibsons. I mean, JHS boss Dennis Drumm is many things, but even he ain't that dumb.

Perhaps this David vs. Goliath affair was a test case? If Gibson had proven its claims against JHS it would surely have been open season for the guitar maker against pretty much any guitar brand that has existed over the last 50 years, all of which have adopted those very familiar body shapes from it and other manufacturers. Without which, frankly, there wouldn't have been much of an industry. And that's before you even get into the other lot from Arizona.

I've heard some people say the boss of Gibson is crazy. I would never say that. He's a great guy, witty, and urbane – But then I don't want to get sued.

*(Please don't)

Victory for JHS in Gibson Counterfeiting Case

U.K. distributor JHS, has won a legal victory over U.S. guitar giant Gibson, in a case of alleged counterfeiting against its Vintage guitar brand.

Gibson Brands sued JHS alleging that it owned trademarks in certain body and headstock shapes and that Skewes has violated those trademarks in using them in its Vintage range of guitars.

According to Gibson, Skewes used counterfeit versions of the shapes at issue. Skewes argued that it should be granted judgment as a matter of law on the counterfeiting count, since all its guitars prominently display the Vintage brand name and all advertising and packaging states that the guitars came from John Hornby Skewes.

The Court granted summary judgment in favor of Skewes on the counterfeiting claim. In so doing, the Court eliminated Gibson's ability to collect \$8 Million in statutory damages.

It concluded that: "no reasonable jury could find that [John Hornby Skewes]'s guitars were counterfeits of Gibson's guitars."

The Court further explained that "counterfeiting is the 'hard core' or 'first degree' of trademark infringement that seeks to trick the consumer into believing he or she is getting the genuine article, rather than a 'colorable imitation.'" Counterfeiting also

gives the aggrieved party "wider range of statutory penalties and remedies.

"[The] guitars in question cannot be deemed identical or substantially indistinguishable from each other. Aside from certain visual distinctions between the guitars, as both [John Hornby Skewes] and Gibson acknowledge, guitars are typically identified by the branding on the headstock. Here, [John Hornby Skewes]'s guitars are marked with the Vintage branding on the front and the [John Hornby Skewes] trademark on the back."

A number of remaining guitar shape trademark claims, set for trial in February 2017, limit damages to profits on the sale of, as the Court noted, about "300 such guitars."

Skewes has asserted counterclaims of cancellation of the trademark registrations for the body and headstock shape, citing to rampant third-party usage throughout the guitar industry for fifty years.

Sound Technology Snaps up Gator Cases

Sound Technology has taken on exclusive U.K. distribution of Gator cases and other accessories.

The deal includes Gator Cases, Gator Rackworks, and Protektor Cases, together with the Gator Frameworks range of stands and accessories already distributed by the company. The range was previously distributed in the U.K. by Freestyle Music.

David Marshall, managing director of Sound Technology, commented, "Having been the distributor for Frameworks by Gator for a couple of years we were already aware of the quality of Gator product and the company behind it, so it was an easy



decision when the offer was made for us to take on distribution of the whole range. As Gator crosses over both the MI and Pro Audio markets, there is a natural fit with our current brands and our channels to market. We look forward to representing this great brand in the U.K.."

Crystal Morris, president/CEO of Gator added: "We are thrilled to have the professional team of Sound Technology now representing our entire Gator brand portfolio in the U.K.. Aligning our accessory products with the great brands they already represent is for sure a recipe for success."

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ADG Adds Four New Product Ranges

Audio Distribution Group has added four new ranges to its growing range of MI and audio products over the last month.

The latest deal sees it distributing Emma Electronic exclusively across Europe.

The deal follows quickly on the signings of LunaStone Effects, Two Notes Audio Engineering and Caroline Guitars. ADG was formed last year by a trio of former TC Group management – Steve Russell, Peter Bager, and Bruce Davidson – and has gathered momentum with a number of pan-European deals since.

Founded in 2000 by Jan Behncke, an electronics engineer and retailer in Denmark, Emma's first release was the DiscumBOBulator envelope filter which is used by musicians including Ida Nielsen, Pino Palladino, Felix Pastorious, and Adrien Belew to name just some.

The firm has also produced some ambitious amp-like and organic drive pedals over the years, such as the boost and crunchy drive of the OnoMATOpoeia and StinkBug to the heavier grind of the ReezaFRATzitz and PisdYAUwot. The TransMORGrifier compressor is also part of the line-up.

Emma Electronic owner and founder Jan Behncke, said: "I'm really happy that Steve,



Bruce and the other nice people at ADG will now be taking care of the distribution of Emma Electronic in Europe. The timing is perfect since it allows us to concentrate on developing all the new Emma products that will be in the pipeline shortly. I believe that ADG with their partners are already the specialist in pedal distribution in Europe, therefore the perfect guys for us. I'm really excited about the future".

Bruce Davidson, ADG's COO added: "The Emma Electronic line is much more than 'just another range of boutique guitar pedals', the products also sound amazing even on other instruments like keyboards/synths and bass. Furthermore, the planned product map in the near future makes us really excited to work with the brand. The product names may be hard to pronounce, but the tones are more than easy to love and with pedal prices now starting at just €139/£125,

they're affordable too. With Emma now being much more accessible in Europe, along with the new pricing structure, it means everyone can now put a piece of real Danish-sonic-dynamite on their board".

Established in the south of France in 2008, Two Notes Audio Engineering was born from the idea that guitar and bass players should be able to achieve professional recorded tones in their own home studios.

This has seen Two Notes develop a line of cab simulation software and hardware, plus pre-amp pedals. Each of these are designed for the gigging and recording musician who want to use their existing valve/tube amps and effects, but find that either mics or cabs are getting in the way of getting a consistent sound.

The LunaStone range is also now exclusively distributed by Audio Distribution Group across the entirety of Europe.

Lastly, the partnership is also now responsible for sales of Caroline Guitar Company's products for the whole of Europe. The brainchild of former pro-musician, Philippe Herndon, Caroline Guitar Company was formed in 2010.

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Italian Job for Mackie

Loud Technologies has chosen MPI Electronic to handle the distribution of its Mackie brand in Italy.

All Mackie sales, marketing, customer service and warranties will be carried out by MPI with immediate effect, with the entire Mackie catalogue available from MPI's warehousing near Milan.

"We are very excited to begin distribution for the Mackie brand, it's a dream that becomes a reality," said Marco Mazzi, managing director of MPI's Pro Division. Tony Williams, director of sales, EMEA at Loud, added: "We look forward to our new re-focused distribution strategy in Italy and we are very pleased to welcome MPI on-board with Mackie."

Ampeg bass amplifiers will continue to be distributed by M. Casale Bauer.

ROLI Boosted by New Signing

Henrik Lorensen, a senior executive at Bang & Olufsen, has joined ROLI as COO, further strengthening the London-based music creation start-up's leadership.

ROLI has expanded rapidly since 2015, when it introduced the Seaboard RISE. An evolution of the piano keyboard, which remodels it as a soft, touch-responsive silicone surface that lets musicians shape sound through pressure and other natural movements. Stevie Wonder, Hans Zimmer, and Meghan Trainor are among the musicians who have enthused about the Seaboard RISE.

Since 2011 Lorensen has led B&O PLAY, a division of Bang & Olufsen that has propelled recent growth at the storied maker of high-end music systems. B&O PLAY introduced a range of premium speakers and headphones that are accessibly priced and designed for people who want to take their music devices anywhere. B&O PLAY has extended world-class sound quality and design — the hallmark of Bang & Olufsen — to a broad range of consumers.

Roland Lamb, founder and CEO of ROLI, said: "I'm delighted to welcome Henrik to the ROLI team. He has led a global music brand that is custom-made for our digitally connected world. His experience will be hugely valuable as we expand our Connected Music ecosystem and provide a new experience to anyone who loves music."

In May ROLI raised \$27 million in a Series B investment led by US-based Foundry Group. In September the company acquired FXpansion, a developer of audio software and virtual instruments.

Lorensen said: "I'm tremendously excited to be joining ROLI, whose products and plans are defining the future of music creation. The way we make music is shifting, and ROLI is at the forefront of creating a new category of music-making devices and experiences that will empower millions of people to become music creators themselves."

AAA Brings in Pacific

Scottish distribution specialist Access All Areas Music is launching the Pacific range of entry level guitars and ukuleles to the U.K. market. Despite being designed in Scotland, they have so far only been available in the U.S. That will all change come mid October.

"First-time buyers are now looking to a diverse range of places for their first instrument – department stores, supermarkets, toy shops," says AAA Music's director, Sean Kelly. "The Pacific range sits brilliantly in these types of location, and provides extremely strong sales."

Built with first time players in mind, the Pacific guitars come in three quarter, and full sizes, with natural, blue, and purple color finishes, while the ukuleles are soprano sized, and are available in natural, blue, and pink.







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Trade Regrets

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Trade Regrets

Longtime Guitar Center vet **Richie Pidanick** was born in Kenmore, New York on July 18, 1952 and passed away on September 27, 2016. As vice president of Culture and Values at GC, Pidanick instilled in the company's staff a strong sense of the importance of customer service. During his three-decade run at GC, Richie was an integral part of helping growing the retail operation into the largest MI chain in the world. A passionate and talented drummer, he was a much-admired advocate, not only for the company for which he worked, but also for the whole industry, as well as the importance of music making.



We received the following from NAMM's Dan Del Fiorentino, about **Tony Capalbo** passing on October 4th:

I'm very sorry to report the passing of our friend Toby Capalbo. He passed away with his family around him on October 4 at the age of 86.



He formed La Habra Music in Southern California back in 1960. Over the years he built up strong relations with local band directors and created a popular lesson program. When Toby started, the big craze was accordions and he worked hard to bring his customers the high quality products they requested. Throughout the years he focused on customer service and insisted that all of his employees take the time to listen to the customer's needs before rushing for a sale. Today this approach to business is being carried on by his son and his grandson, both of whom work in the store.

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ON THE MOVE

LOUD Technologies, Inc. (LOUD) has announced the appointment of **Thom Stalcup** to the position of vice president of Operations.



Stalcup comes to LOUD with 30 years of experience in operations, engineering, and program management, including deep expertise in new product introduction and supply chain management. His lengthy resume includes VP positions in highly competitive industries including solar, telecommunications, and data storage, and he has overseen large-scale operations in China, Malaysia, and Taiwan. In Stalcup's new role, he will oversee operations for all of LOUD's brands.

"We're very pleased to bring Thom on board," remarked Mark Graham, CEO of LOUD Technologies Inc. "His extensive background in highly competitive industries and complex product development is a perfect fit for the business. And his passion for detail, communication, and customer satisfaction makes him a perfect fit with the rest of the LOUD team."

"I'm very excited to join the executive team at LOUD, a creative and innovative company delivering the products and system solutions needed by the pro audio community," added Stalcup. "LOUD provides me the opportunity to use my 30 years of experience to guide the operations organization to deliver on our commitments and delight our customers and partners."

Stalcup will be based out of the Woodinville, Washington headquarters.

Buffet Crampon USA, North American distributor of Buffet Crampon's ten woodwind and brass brands, has announced a realignment of its sales territories and welcomes three new division managers.

Miriam Ward joins Buffet Crampon USA as division manager of the new Rocky Mountain territory, encompassing Arizona,



Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming. Miriam previously served as store manager of the Music & Arts location in Katy, Texas and has also held retail and management positions with Guitar Center. In addition to her sales and retail experience, Miriam has worked as a music instructor and repair technician and attended the Berklee College of Music. She will be based in the Denver, Colorado metro area.

The new South Central territory will be serviced by **Scott Rife**. Scott's territory includes dealers in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee.



Prior to joining Buffet Crampon USA, Scott served as an inside sales & customer relations specialist for KHS America and senior sales associate for Music & Arts. He also has an extensive performance background, earning a performance degree from Middle Tennessee State University (under the tutelage of Buffet Crampon Clarinet Artist Todd Waldecker) and serving as a regional performing artist for Vandoren USA. He was also a student at the 2012 Buffet Crampon USA Summer Clarinet Academy and later served as the Academy Student Assistant.

Jeffrey Smith assumes control of the Mexico territory and is based out of Xalapa, Veracruz. Jeffrey joins Buffet Crampon USA from an extensive performance background,



acquiring degrees in trumpet and orchestral performance from the Manhattan School of Music. An avid educator, he has served as professor of Trumpet at the University of Veracruz and at The Superior Institute of Music of the State of Veracruz. He has also performed as the principal trumpet of the Symphony Orchestra of Xalapa since 2008 and is producing his first solo recording.

The three new division managers assumed their new positions and territories October 1st and will be calling on dealers in their respective territories in the coming months. For any inquiries about Buffet Crampon USA's new territories or Division Managers, please contact Al Maniscalco, director of sales and marketing, at al.maniscalco@buffetcrampon.com.

KHS America has announced the appointment of **Rob Welch** to the position of Combo Business unit manager.

In this newly created position, Rob will lead the U.S. marketing and product team for Hohner Harmonicas, Hohner and Anacleto Accordions, Lanikai and Kohala Ukuleles, H. Jimenez Latin Stringed Instruments, Mapex Drums, Sonor Drums, NFUZD Audio, and Hercules Stands.

Welch is an industry veteran with twenty years of experience in a wide range of responsibilities, spending eight years as a buyer for ecommerce retailer Musician's Friend and four years as a category manager at brick-and-mortar retailer Guitar Center becoming an expert in many aspects of supply chain, merchandising, marketing, and product management. He is a multi-instrumentalist, having played guitar and bass in local and touring bands.

"We're grateful to have Rob join the KHS team." States Mike Robinson, VP of marketing. "Given the rapid growth we've experienced, having his experience from the brick-and-mortar and e-commerce worlds will be invaluable. In his short time at KHS, he's already proven to be a vital part of the team and fits well with our culture of teamwork and transparency."

MMR
MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

on the iPad

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Radial Engineering's Peter Janis



By Christian Wissmuller

Boning Up on All That's New for Tonebone

With a history tracing back into the late 1970s, Tonebone has long been the

go-to brand for any number of professional, performing musicians who appreciate and depend upon well designed effects pedals that can withstand the wear-and-tear and abuse that goes along with life on tour. The likes of Eric Johnson, Kirk Hammett, Neal Schon, Steve Lukather, Trey Alexander, and Vivian Campbell – among many others – rely on Tonebone, and with a number of significant new product introductions and upgrades in the works, that list will no doubt grow to include even more guitarists and bassists.

MMR recently touched base with Peter Janis, president of Radial Engineering, Tonebone's parent company since 2001, about the brand's history, the new pedals, and expectations for the market in the near future.

For those who aren't familiar, can you briefly describe the history of the Tonebone line – when was it launched, who were some of the key folks involved?

The Tonebone history goes way back to 1976 when Peter Janis I and my friend Denis Rozon built our first distortion pedal. It was an all-tube affair that sounded terrible! Denis learned from this and in 1996 built the two first Tonebone pedals; the Classic and the Hot British which he originally sold online. In 2000, Denis started doing some contract work for Radial and in 2001, a deal was struck for Radial to purchase Tonebone.

Radial started to market the brand and in no time at all it attracted the attention of some of the biggest names in the business including Eric Johnson and Kirk Hammett.

In the following months, Radial added a number of Tonebone products to the range including the Switchbone ABY amp selector, Headbone head switcher, Cabbone cabinet switcher and Loopbone effects loop switcher. All of these are still in production 15 years later!

It is worth noting that Tonebone has always focused on the pro or the working player, so these products have been built to be very robust and to produce very low self-noise.

Can you talk about some of the new product introductions? Why are these pedals significant?

There are a number of new Tonebone products on the horizon. The Regency is a unique overdrive that caters to guitarists that already play with distortion. This allows the artist to push the signal harder for soloing without losing definition. The Switchbone V2 ABY switcher allows the artist to select between two amps and a tuner or three amps, if needs be. It also adds remote controllability to switch on or off an external device when selecting amps. Another is the TwinLine effects loop controller. The TwinLine is designed for guitarists that use the amplifier's effects loop and when switching between two amps, allows his effects pedalboard to follow the active amp. There are more... in fact we have about 30 new Tonebone products in the works!



Keeping busy! Additionally, there are a number of already established Tonebone pedals receiving upgrades, such as the Bigshot ABY. Can you discuss that?

Yes, we recently updated our popular HotShot ABY amp selector, i/o instrument selector, and EFX effects loop selector with LED indicators. This provides the user with an instant onstage status readout so that they can get visual feedback of how their setup will be affected. This not only makes it easier for the artist, it makes for a more professional show. Best of all, we added the features with-

out increasing the price!

Are there any other developments on the horizon for Tonebone in the coming months that you'd like to share with our readers?

As mentioned, yes, there are tons of new pedals coming out. We have a series of super compact instrument and amp selectors that step through the ins and outs using a single footswitch. This allows the switcher to accomplish much more while using less space on the pedalboard. A cornerstone of Radial's technology is the ability to connect multiple amplifiers without noise. For instance, the Shotgun lets you plug a stereo chorus into as many as four amps while retaining the stereo effect and because the outputs are isolated, you are not

“Tonebone has always focused on the pro or the working player, so these products have been built to be very robust and to produce very low self-noise.”

plagued with the noise that is typically encountered. For Tonebone, it is all about ease of use, flexibility and noise-free performance.

Both for Tonebone and for the market, in general, what are your expectations for the remainder of 2016 and the early months of the next year?

Although a very busy category, the pedal market continues to be robust. There appears to be a shift away from super-small “one hit wonder” pedals to pedals that provide the guitarist with more control over the tone. There also seems to be a shift towards pedals that cater to much more specific needs. Guitarists are realizing that unless they find their own voice, they will be caught in a quagmire of indifference. On a slightly different front, we are seeing strong demand for our Headload and Headload Prodigy load boxes. These allow the player to turn up the amp for best tone, yet reduce the output to a comfortable listening level. And with a built-in direct box, the Headload eliminates the need to have a mic in front of the amp. From a resale perspective, we are pleased to be working with dealers that understand the power of a strong brand name with products that have true longevity in the market. **MMP**



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5 String Banjo • A-Mandolin • F-Mandolin



'Start-up' Drum Kits in 2016
By Christian **Wissmuller**



John Palmer, Tama Drums



Stephen Fisher, Yamaha Corporation of America



Kevin D. Packard, Pearl Corporation

First things first: for the purposes of this roundtable, “entry-level” doesn’t refer to full drum kits (minus hardware, cymbals, throne – yes, yes...) that can be purchased for under \$300 or even under \$200. In this particular case, we’re taking a closer look at those “real” kits used by actual gigging, performing drummers that don’t require a sizable savings account or a personal loan for purchase.

Truly entry/beginner-level kits – there are plenty for well under the \$700-and-under cutoff we instituted for this feature – are absolutely valid and present a meaningful stepping-stone for plenty of aspiring drummers who ultimately wind up being lifelong music-makers, on whatever level. So, to be clear: the parameters set in this article are not meant to diminish the validity of those instruments.

However, since the mid-’80s, major drum suppliers have been finding more and more ways to provide high-quality sets that can prove to be not only the “first” genuine set of drums for serious musicians, but in some cases, the drum kit that remains in the arsenal for years to come – even if only as a backup.

We recently spoke to a few such suppliers about the current state of these “start-up” kits and where they think the market is going in the coming months.

Have you been noticing any significant trends with respect to the design and manufacture of “entry-level” drum kits – per the definition as it pertains to this article? Materials used, features being included, et cetera?

John Palmer: Regarding the sub \$700 price category, there have been a couple of noticeable trends – drum set configurations and the influx of unconventional entry-level brands on Amazon. Let’s start with configurations, the market has experienced an

increase in the offerings of a four-piece set up with a smaller diameter bass drum. These kits are not the traditional “entry-level” kit with hardware and cymbals, but due to their price point, find themselves positioned against the typical five-piece kit with hardware and cymbals. I’m sure more than a few of these kits have found their way into the home of the entry-level drummer... and that’s not a bad thing. Things get a bit more interesting regarding the entry-level drum set category on Amazon. This appears to be a classic “make it and they will come” scenario, and is a fascinating study of online consumer behavior. Unconventional drum brands are dominating sales here due to one thing... price. Not big news, I know. But being a passionate MI guy, I see a disconnect in the consumer ratings for these type of kits. Most of these kits are receiving ratings of four-to-five stars. Given the quality build of the shells/hardware components/drum heads compared to established drum brands... Well, I’ll leave it that. But this does inform me that the industry (manufacturers and retailers) needs to do a better job to educate the basic drum consumer. Given the drive of consumers today to spend as little as possible, I can understand if they still end up purchasing an off-brand at the lower cost, but I am hopeful we can plant the seed in their minds toward the aspirational product and give them an idea how a kit with four-to-five stars should functionally perform and sound.

Stephen Fisher: We have seen manufacturers offering more upgraded components and features with the more affordable kits, but a more obvious trend we see is the bundling of the kits to make complete packages. Some of it is coming from manufacturers, some from dealers. We think this is a bonus for the customer, since it’s a complete package and gets the customer everything they need to start drumming.

Kevin D. Packard: Pearl was a sort of pioneer in this segment with the introduction of the Export kit back in 1984. This was the first drum set with pro features for a low price, and this – combined with the rise of the MTV era – created a flood of new drummers with Export as their first rig. Since then, there has been a constant race among the manufacturers in our industry to get more to the entry-level player at a lower price. With more companies making more drum sets for fewer drummers, there is a lot of pressure for us to stay competitive for the retailer and relevant to the player. That being said, there has never been a better time to be a drummer, especially an entry-level player. There are more resources for learning and ways to connect with players of all skills than there have ever been, and your dollar gets you a lot more gear than it ever has. Pearl is excited to be a constant part of this segment, but is cautious about how we brand and feature the lower-priced gear in this sea of cheaper choices.

How would you describe sales of such kits in the past year, compared to 2015?

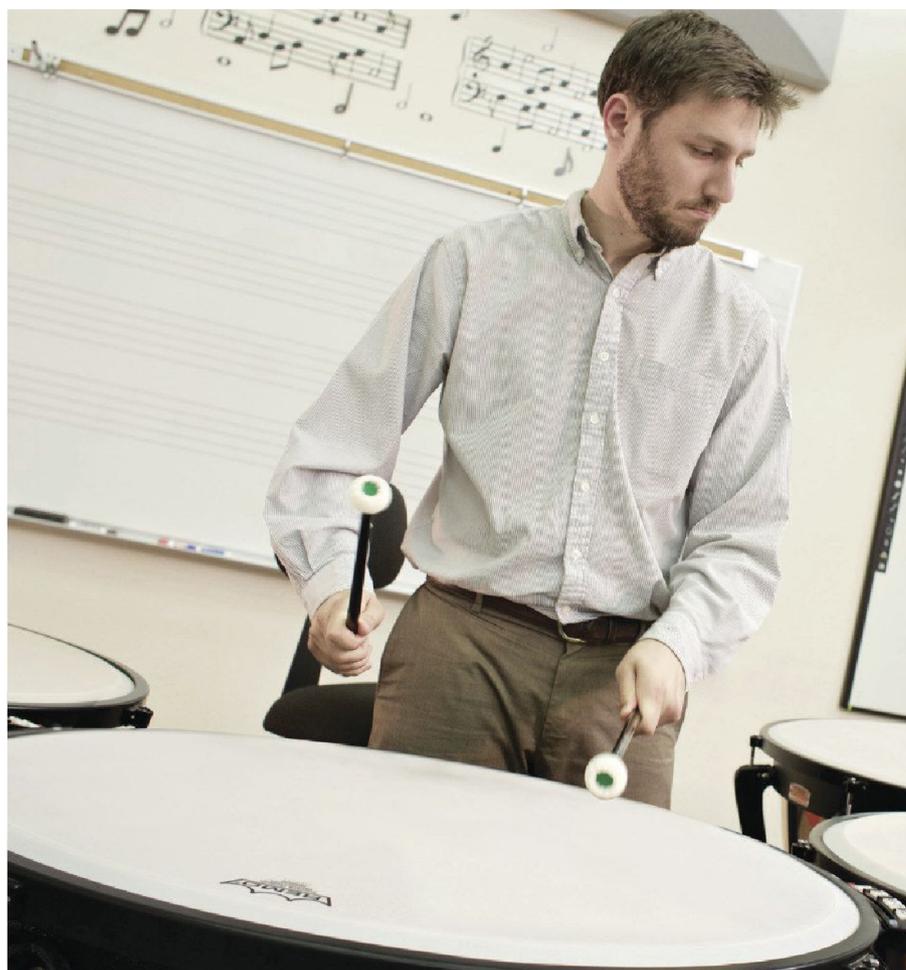
KP: Our entry-level sales are up, but it involved a lot more than just creating an affordable drum set. We are seeing a much more informed buyer coming to the table to make their first drum set purchase, so our goal has been to create connectivity with entry-level players through every channel. Whether directly, through the dealer, our artists, or even the gear itself; we have seen success in connecting actively with new drummers and helping them find the best fit for their playing personality. This *continued on page 32*

“There has never been a better time to be a drummer, especially an entry-level player.”

– **Kevin D. Packard**
Pearl Corporation



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SUPERIOR	Increased Tuning Stability

Comments

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“We see this segment continuing to grow as long as the market grows and new players enter the market.”

– **Stephen Fisher**

Yamaha Corporation of America

mers, and though it's held steady with dealers and players since it was reintroduced in 2009, its features are a better fit for the “step-up/student” category.

SF: The Stage Custom Birch is doing very well for us. Although the Stage Custom Birch name has been around for over 20 years, this year we are exceeding sales numbers from all past years. With the upgraded features we've added, it's a lot of value for the money.

Have you noticed any particular marketing or promotional techniques on the part of dealers who are doing particularly well selling these types of kits?

KP: Making the experience as personal as possible in this budget level is important. Pearl has created extensive video content for these products, as well as resources for parents and first-time players at our MyFirstDrumset.com website, specifically so dealers can incorporate them into their lesson plans and online presence. From the local music shops to the big box stores, dealers that use these tools – or even make their own video content – are moving Roadshow and Export aggressively. Though our products are not the “low-price leaders” in this segment, we back them up with our exceptional warranty promise and active customer/consumer contact. Plus, our web-based contact portal at www.pearldrums.com and our Pearl Drummer's Forum have created platforms for unprecedented communication with players and dealers alike, which is surprisingly uncommon in our industry.

SF: In my opinion, it's not only been the bundling of extra goods that come with the kit. It's the dealers who, first of all, have knowledgeable sales staff, and also offer additional value like free intro-

way we are not just selling a drum kit, we are encouraging a lifestyle!

SF: Our sale of the entry-level kits is up this year, especially with our Stage Custom Birch kit.

JP: Our entry-level kit in the U.S. – Imperialstar – is having a solid year. We are pleased with the consistent feedback we receive from dealers and consumers that our Imperialstar series represents a quality build, quality overall performance (with Meinl cymbals included) and quality sound at a very competitive price. We've been doing it so well for so long that we have earned something we truly value – trust. Consumers trust the true long-term value with our Imperialstar drums.

For your own brand, what specific model(s) in this price range is/are selling best?

JP: IP52KC has been very well received.

KP: Most parents and educators want an all-in-one solution (or a kit with hardware and cymbals included) so we introduced the entry-priced Roadshow Series complete kit to better flow with the market. These kits come with everything, including artist-guided video set-up and lesson content. Export Series has a legacy and is still a staple with early drum-

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Pearl EXX725C21 Export Series



Pearl RS525SCC91 Roadshow Series

ductory lessons, or setup and delivery to the customer's home. In addition, creating store events, getting involved in community activities, etc. have differentiated them from their competition and made them successful.

JP: Brick and mortar dealers with strong lesson programs typically see very nice results with Tama Imperialstar. Again, this turns back to the trust dynamic. Our dealer partners know they can confidently offer the Imperialstar their students to support their mission to nurture long-lasting customer relationships. We also wanted to add some promotional excitement for Q4 this year and created a national promotion for all dealers with value-adds. Working with our branded partners Meinl and Pro Mark, we launched a promo that includes a free 10" Meinl HCS splash (with Tama cymbal mount) and free Pro Mark Select Balance 5A drum sticks. This promotion launched on Sept. 1 and is planned to continue through December of this year.

What are your expectations for this segment of the drum & percussion market in the coming months?

SF: We see this segment continuing to grow as long as the market grows and new players enter the market. That's why we're very involved with organizations like the Percussion Marketing Council (PMC). At Yamaha, we want to be competitive with our price, but we also know that quality is going to cost slightly more. For us, quality goes beyond how well the instrument is built; for example, for kits made by our OEM manufacturer, we wipe the shells of our kits with a sealant that prevents any formaldehyde from escaping from the shells. We've tested other manufacturers' shells, drum thrones, etc., and we exceed other companies'

products as well as government safety standards that we are required to follow. One of our goals is that we want customers to have a good experience with their first instrument so they continue to be inspired to play. A good-quality instrument will achieve that. If the customer ends up with a lower-quality instrument that doesn't perform well, we'll possibly lose that customer to other, unrelated pursuits.

JP: We are expecting very robust sales in the coming months for this product segment. The response to our current Imperialstar promotion has been well received and we will have a couple of new finish options which will be unveiled at NAMM. We expect these to have con-

sumer appeal and build on our already rock-solid Imperialstar product offering.

KP: We are seeing an opportunity for growth as the product and the market advance. As quickly as things shift it is essential for us to make the product continually evolve to meet these players' needs. I think an oncoming challenge will be creating ways to keep drummers actively engaged in drumming, so the Student-Level kit they just bought doesn't turn into tomorrow's passing fad. We are taking significant steps to craft online and dealer content that encourages this kind of continued interest, and are constantly working to assure that our product offerings in each feature/price bracket are advancing with each drummer. **MMR**

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Note From Dan

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Everyone Has a Story (and they are all fascinating)

The NAMM Oral History program is unique, unlike any other collection in the world. This library of video interviews, now 3,000 strong and always growing, contains the story of our industry told by those who helped to shape it and have watched it expand and develop through the years.

Since June 2000, we've interviewed company leaders, factory workers, engineers, retailers and wholesalers, as well as salesmen, road reps and publishers.

This is about our relationships and who we want to be. It's our story!

The heart of the collection is the depth of its narrative that covers innovative creations, the evolution of musical instruments, the ever-changing world of music retail, as well as our collective quest to improve music education around the globe. In capturing this history, we are also honoring those who paved the way, those who inspired us, and those who provided us with the foundation on which we currently stand.

What we have is a comprehensive reflection of who we are, what we stand for, and what we care about. Oral History participants have come from 46 different countries, 49 U.S. states and were born between 1903 and 1988. This collection is our journal, our own way of chronicling ourselves and our community—the community we so eagerly embrace at the NAMM shows and so proudly celebrate throughout the year.



What we have is a comprehensive reflection of who we are, what we stand for, and what we care about.

This collection is our journal, our own way of chronicling ourselves and our community.

I invite you to listen to and enjoy these personal histories for yourself. Thousands of them can be found in the Library section of namm.org. You can take a peek at our latest interviews, or click on the Oral History interview link to scroll through the interviews alphabetically. You can even type in the name of the individual whose interview you're most interested in seeing. Don't see them listed? This collection continues to grow because we listen to your ideas and seek to include the people most important to you. Simply drop us an email at dand@namm.org and tell us who you think we should interview next.

Thank you for your enthusiastic support of the NAMM Oral History Program.

Sincerely,
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“Historical accounts in the first person are only available for gathering for a limited time, but they are a gift that can be preserved forever.”

Evan Brooks
Co-Founder Digidesign

“My grandparents lived above the store, which was open from 9 am until 11 pm. If they were eating dinner and the door opened, someone ran down to take care of them.”



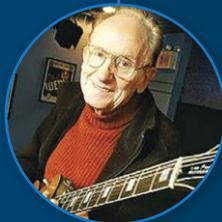
Sammy Ash
President of Sam Ash Music

“Tom Oberheim, Dave Smith and others met and we discussed the need for an industry standard and all agreed. Implementing MIDI was easy once we met and agreed.”

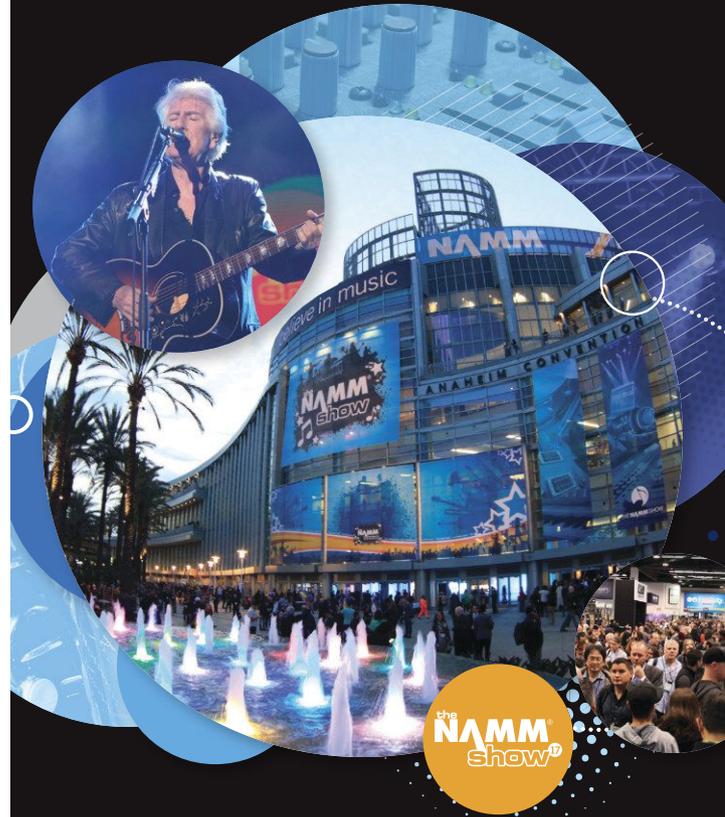
Ikutaro Kakehashi
Founder of Roland Corporation

“The older I get the fewer notes I need.”

Les Paul
Songwriter, Luthier, and Inventor



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We've Got the BEAT

With nearly as many dealers participating in this month's survey reporting lower sales of drum, percussion, and related gear in 2016 compared to last year (38.8%) as those reporting an increase in traffic (40.9%), it'd be fair to say the results of this poll point to a "mixed bag."

Lower and intermediate-priced full kits are accounting for the bulk of business, over-

all (over 80%) and sticks and accessories make up of the majority of sales volume in this category, suggesting that for whatever reasons folks are not looking to make those big-ticket purchases in the current climate. Part of this could be chalked up to the same malady that was oft-referenced in our recent surveys about the electric guitar market: a dearth of younger people starting up bands.

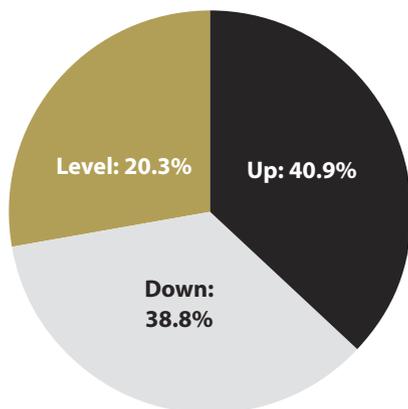
The school and church markets remain vibrant, though, and a host of musical genres are inspiring certain individuals to take up the drums (or percussion instruments) in 2016...

Drum & Percussion Sales in 2016

By Christian **Wissmuller**

Compared to this time in 2015, your drum & percussion sales are:

"We re-designed our percussion rental kit program to focus on step-up equipment and that is really making a difference. Our long-time support of Ludwig Musser with the North Carolina manufacturing connection also is significant."



Drew Parker
Separk Music
Lewisville, North Carolina

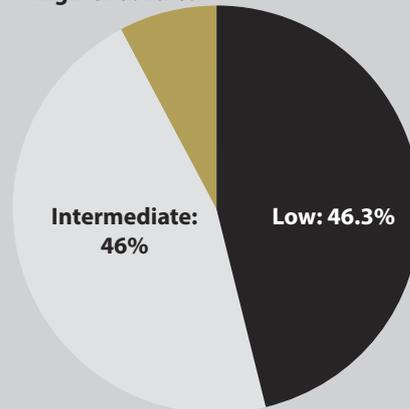
"Although sales of higher priced school bid items are mostly flat, percussion accessories are performing really well, YTD."

Kurt Witt
Woodwind & Brasswind
Frederick, Maryland

What price points are doing best for your operation?

"Hand-held percussion is great, because customers can buy a bunch of small items and have a little collection of fun instruments."

High-end: 7.7%

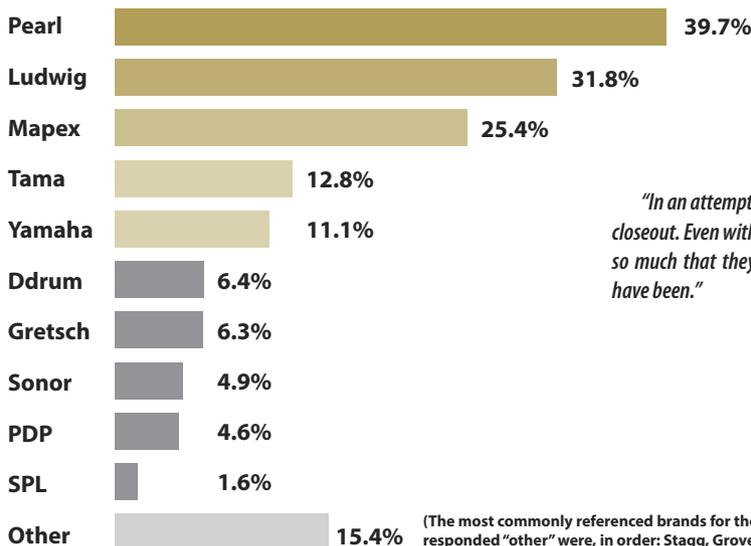


Ted Parrish
Parrish Music
Viroqua, Wisconsin

"Overall, business is very strong in all three markets due to expansion into the drum category within the last 18 months."

Randy Pratt
Sweetwater
Fort Wayne, Indiana

With respect to 'entry-level' (\$700 or under, actual sale price) full drum kits, which brands are selling best for your store?

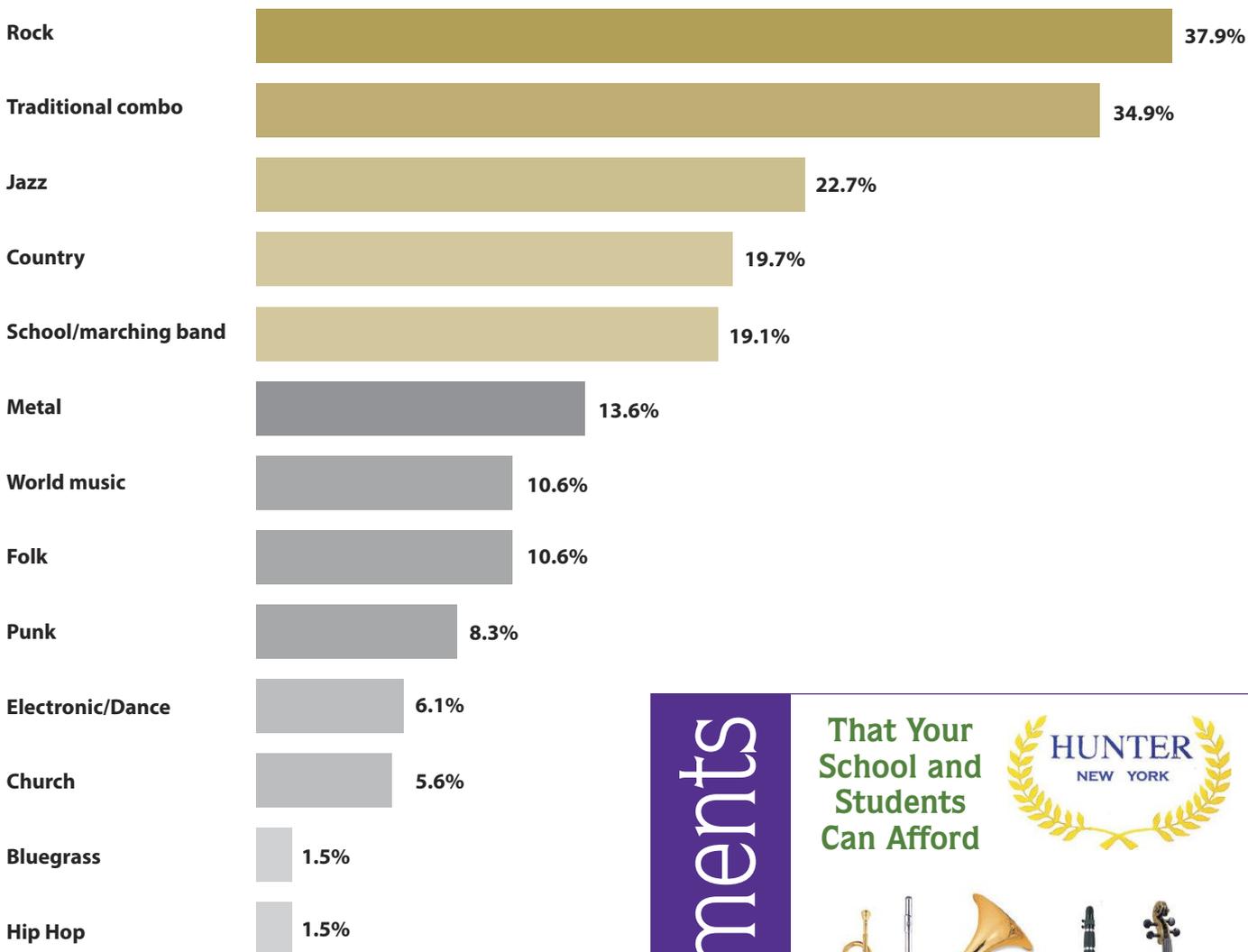


"In an attempt to make money, I buy what I can find on closeout. Even with MAP pricing, freight costs have climbed so much that they take most of what profit there would have been."

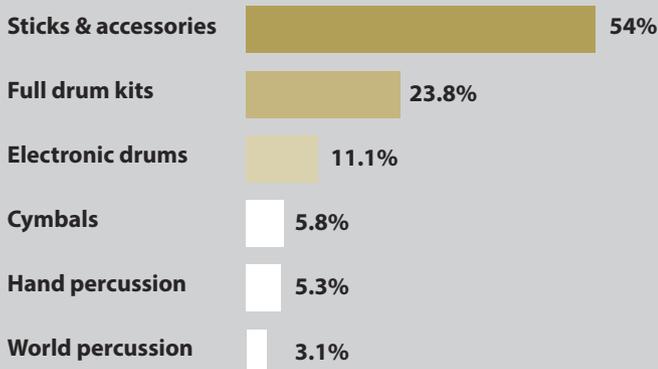
Kerry Gheesling
Atlanta Band Center
Decatur, Georgia

(The most commonly referenced brands for those who responded "other" were, in order: Stagg, Grover, Taye, Percussion Plus, and Peace)

What genre of music has been driving the most "new customer" traffic to your drums & percussion department in 2016?



What have you been selling the most (volume) of in the past year?



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What larger trends have you been noticing with respect to the drum & percussion market?

"Drum sales are slow – age factor of the people in the area, and no business growth. The young people are all leaving the area."

Adrian Janoska
Classical Art Fabricators
Ironwood, Michigan

"School band business has been seeing an uptick, which drives a bit of all of the percussion business for us."

Anthony Lapsansky
Music & Arts
Frederick, Maryland

"Stackers are on the rise in the cymbal world, and cajon growth seems to have plateaued in hand percussion."

Mark Palmer
Guitar Center
Westlake Village, California

"Electronic Drum Kits sales are growing."

Chris Teesdale
Willis Music Company
Lexington, Kentucky

"We have seen a nice increase in new cymbal sales this year. We just added two lower price point kits for the holiday season (\$199 and \$399). Previously we were starting at \$439."

Kevin Headley
Uncle Ike's Music & Sound
Dubuque, Iowa

"Like everything musical it seems that online retailers are grabbing more and more of a shrinking pie."

Michael Cedarquist
Music Box
Shelby Twp, Michigan

"Customers don't mind spending money on high-end Sonor kits because they know they are of the highest German quality!"

Sam Galizia
Sam I Am Studios
Santa Clara, California

"Not as many high school rock bands starting up."

Terry Nirva
Leithold Music
La Crosse, Wisconsin

"Poor forecasting on vendor front. They are unable to deliver the product during the holiday season, creating missed opportunities. We're also seeing people buy cheap e-drums from the chains and they dispose of them shortly thereafter and thusly leave our industry, which frustrates me."

Shane Kinney
Drum Center of Portsmouth
Portsmouth, New Hampshire

"No one comes to actually try merchandise it seems. They would rather buy blindly off the Internet for no other reason than simplicity of purchase."

Greg Allen
Long Island Drum Center of Nyack
Nyack, New York

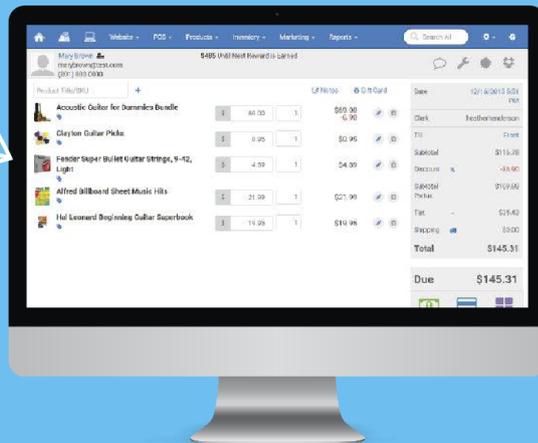
"In our area, there is an increased abundance of 'open mic' performances, and fewer venues hosting full bands. Drummers and percussionists have been using scaled-down kits, or making cajon-centered hybrid set-ups."

Steve Barone
World of Music
Erie, Pennsylvania

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MANHASSET

Stands

In 1935, Otto Lagervall, an inventor, entrepreneur, and musician, created a folding music stand that was unlike anything else on the market at the time. This breakthrough was key to the founding of the Manhasset Specialty Company in Lagervall's hometown of Manhasset, New York. Today, the company is headquartered in Yakima, Washington and, some 81 years later, a refined version of this same music stand remains its flagship product.

As the Manhasset Specialty Company has grown over the years, significant changes include the introduction of new products and accessories, upgrades in materials and manufacturing processes, and a major transition to becoming a fully employee-owned entity.

Dan Roberts, president and general manager, proudly trumpets Manhasset's unwavering commitment to quality, noting that all products and materials are sourced and assembled in the USA, using a process that is both efficient and environmentally friendly. "No waste is generated in the production process," he says.

MMR recently caught up with Roberts for a deeper look into the past, present, and future of the Manhasset Specialty Company.

Musical Merchandise Review: What are some of the more significant milestones in the company's history?

Dan Roberts: In the 1940s, Otto Lagervall made the decision to move his company to Yakima, Washington from Manhasset, New York for a variety of reasons. That move ensured that the company would have plenty of room for expansion as it grew.

In the 1990s, Manhasset became fully employee-owned through an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP). This transition truly created a spirit of ownership among all of the company's employees, which has led to a universal drive to achieve excellence in our product quality and performance, as well as creating a commitment on the part of all employees to offer the best possible customer service to the company's customers and consumers.

How do you explain the longevity of the success that the Manhasset music stand has had over the years?

80 YEARS

and still standing strong

By Eliahu Sussman

The Manhasset Symphony Music Stand is recognized worldwide for its quality, durability, and dependability. The same objectives that Otto Lagervall aspired to achieve are still the goals for Manhasset stands today. The company has worked hard over its 81 years to continuously improve the performance of Manhasset music stands by finding new, more durable materials and to develop the most dependable production processes. The result is that Manhasset is now able to offer a lifetime warranty on its music stands, which is unprecedented in the world of music stand products.

Manhasset has also brought a number of new and innovative music stand and accessory products to the marketplace in the last 81 years. Manhasset now offers a variety of shaft heights on its stands, all of which feature the Magic Finger Clutch, as well as new models with built-in shelves for storage, portable stand models, new colors of music stands, models with wider desks so that lengthy scores can be used by musicians, and many more items. Manhasset also offers three models of stand carts for storing or moving music stands safely and easily.

Have there been other significant technological or product innovations along the way?

New product introductions have been stepped up in the last few years. Some of these include new colors with matte finishes for music stand models, new Percussion Trap Tables, new Clear Desk Symphony stands. We also offer many new accessories, including bandstand fronts, music stand base weights, a new LED Lamp that is about to be introduced, repositioned instrument holders that conveniently fit onto Manhasset music stand bases and store easily, universal tablet holder models, and a repositioned instrument holder peg system for a wide variety of instruments that fits securely onto Manhasset music stand bases.

In terms of product innovation, we moved to powder coating for finishing music stands, which has allowed for more consistency in our operations, and a process called plafORIZATION for our pre-wash preparation of music stands prior to powder coating. This enabled Manhasset to become 100 percent green in its manufacturing – no waste is generated in the production process. The company was recognized for this accomplishment in the fall of 2014 by the Association of Washington Business, receiving their Green Manufacturing Award.

Manufacturing is another area that has seen substantial technological advances in recent years. How has this innovation influenced your manufacturing process?

We introduced robotics into operations for the production of welded parts and the production of component parts for music stands, adding speed and improving the overall quality of the parts



Dan Roberts, president and general manager, Manhasset Specialty Company

“Manhasset has committed to significant capital expenditures that will be made over the next five years.”

affected. Manhasset has committed to significant capital expenditures that will be made over the next five years to further improve manufacturing processes in packing and assembly, metal fabrication and another plant expansion. The packing and assembly line is being installed in the fall of 2016, which will improve throughout while assuring that the quality of products stay at their current high level.

We also take pride in Manhasset's commitment to making its products in the USA. As a further commitment to USA production, the company only uses steel and aluminum from U.S. manufacturers.

From the first Manhasset stand that Otto Lagervall produced to the present, product quality is of the utmost importance. Quality control checks are conducted at every phase of production to make sure that Manhasset products will perform for years and years.

Keeping on the topic of technology, how have the company's marketing efforts been influenced by the rise of social media and other tech-based methods of communication?

In the last few years, we have increased our marketing efforts, resulting in an updated website, a new trade show booth, and increased social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. In addition, we have introduced new packaging for Manhasset Stands and accessories, with QR codes included to provide access to support for consumers.

We have also focused on growing export sales, which have been very successful in the last ten years. The company has worked through the Ex-Im Bank to provide insurance on the company's export receivables, helping the company grow its export sales from five percent of sales to over 30 percent of the company's annual sales. In 2016, export sales are expected to hit record levels for Manhasset based on YTD sales and order commitments the company has from its export distributors.

What were some of the keys to success for Manhasset through recent periods of market turbulence, including the recession of '08 and pressures from foreign imports?

Every company was impacted by the recession of 2008, but fortunately, Manhasset

was not affected dramatically. The stability of school music programs and the growth of international business has helped Manhasset to maintain and grow the company's sales and to expand its market share during the last eight years and that trend is expected to continue in the coming years. The growth of foreign imported products is a major concern to Manhasset, however. The company has become much more aggressive in defending its patents, trademarks and trade dress in the last few years to keep marketers from bringing knock-off products to the US market and that will continue to be the case until foreign manufacturers stop copying the company's products.

Also, Manhasset has been working closely with raw materials suppliers to control costs by working on economies of scale and by being flexible in ordering to take advantage of any price savings opportunities. Long-term commitments for these raw materials have ensured that Manhasset will receive enough materials when mild shortages occur, to make sure that production is not impeded.

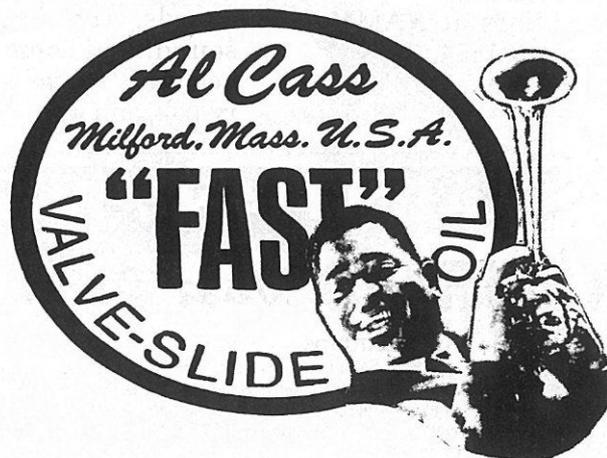


Manhasset's flagship product, the Symphony Stand, comes in three sizes

What can you tell me about the current facilities and the people who make the company run day in and day out?

We are blessed to have fantastic employee involvement and virtually no turnover, in part because the work is so rewarding and especially because the benefits of employee ownership (ESOP) are outstanding. More than half of the company's em-

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employees have been with the company for 20 years or more. Our employees are able to plan for their retirement with confidence as a result of the ESOP program that the company offers, and recruiting is easy when you have these kinds of positive stories to relate to potential new employees.

Manhasset owns two buildings for its operations, the first of which is the production plant and the second is the warehouse used for storing finished goods, some raw materials, sub-assemblies, and packaging materials.

One of the major advantages that Manhasset has with its experienced and dedicated work force is that there has been cross-training among all employees. Everyone is ready, willing and able to move to another position in our manufacturing, packing and shipping operations if needed, which is tremendously helpful for production planning. Yet another advantage of the ESOP mindset – everyone sees what needs to be done and jumps in to make it happen. All of the moves the company is making are designed to make sure that Manhasset products are made in the USA for many years to come. We all enjoy helping to create jobs in this country!



Mike Lizotte, an employee and current board member, at work in the assembly plant



Manhasset's Universal Tablet Holder

What at Manhasset are you most excited about today? And where do you see opportunities for growth and innovation?

All of us at Manhasset are excited about finding ways to make our products even better for the generations to come. The commitment to increased levels of capital spending will put the company in a position to be even more competitive and flexible in our operations in the next 81 years. We are constantly working on developing new product ideas so the company's product lines will be fresh and remain at the pinnacle of performance.

We are working to remove any bottlenecks in our production process so that we can produce at an even faster pace, while keeping that great Manhasset quality inherent in each music stand we make. A healthy backlog of orders is great for every manufacturer, but we want to reduce our lead time for our distributors' orders to help create more inventory turns for our customers. The commitment to capital spending and to the development of new products will also help position the company for even greater success in the future.

And we will continue to push to grow market share outside of the U.S. We know that we can grow our sales dramatically on all six continents that we distribute to now. And if Antarctica develops a population, we will find a distributor there!

Ha – good luck with that! Anything else you'd like to add?

We are delighted to see the renewed enthusiasm for music and arts programs in our schools in the U.S. and we will do all we can to support those efforts. We are very hopeful that this commitment to and support of the arts will be continued for many more years. We know the benefits these programs bring to kids as they grow into adults. The company is also looking at possible acquisitions that would fit strategically into Manhasset's operations, ensuring more future growth and more jobs for Americans making great American products. **MMR**

The Benefits of Conversation & Cooperation Versus Old School Competition

By Menzie Pittman

The Benefits from Conversation

What if you stopped and talked to a stranger sporting a music logo?

The other day my path crossed a person who was entering a dance studio, carrying a Fender case for a P.A. system. I engaged in a conversation, as I am always on the lookout for singers and musicians to play in our performance venue, @4410. However the direction of this conversation quickly morphed into something entirely different than what I had expected.

It turned out this young lady was a Jazzercise instructor. She had arrived early to set up the P.A. for her classes. I learned that she was temporarily renting the space from that dance studio because her last studio had recently closed. The most telling information the conversation netted was that what she really needed (a stage and more flex space, so her classes could work properly), this current studio didn't offer. Enter into the conversation @4410, our performance venue. After we spoke, she came by to see our space and completely loved it.

Here's the point:

As a jazzercise instructor, she has a client base of 150 participants. We have a professional space that can serve her needs immediately. By serving her needs, CMC has the added opportunity to cross-sell services that we offer to her clients, and we have her clients (and their children) embrace our performance venue. She wins because our room design is a plug-and-play for her. We win because anytime you coordinate events that drive new traffic to your business, you always win. But the big takeaway is through our joint cooperation her clients win on the deal, and then they go back into the community and talk about this new great place they found.

The ultimate take away...

None of this would have happened had I not stopped and initiated a conversation.

The Benefits from Cooperation

What if you had a competitor twelve miles away who did something similar to what you do in your own business? Could there be possibilities that benefit everyone by finding ways to work together?

In the town where I live, there is an "Old Town" Main Street, and on Main Street is a music store (Drum and Strum). The owner, Tim Dingus, is a great guy who is much respected in the music community. Inside Drum and Strum there is a back area where Tim has built a beautiful sound stage and cozy performance space. He invited me to a show, and since our space @4410 was dark that night, I made sure to go. His act for the night was The Edgar Loudermilk Band. These guys are a killer bluegrass group with great vocals, plenty of pickin' and terrific songwriters.

Here is where the story affects anyone trying to grow their business, and their music community. It's a no brain-

er that this band was great; it's also obvious that Tim and I have built unusual spaces in our music businesses to promote the opportunity for artists to make music.

But the creative consideration in this tale is about the conversation I had with Tim and the Edgar Loudermilk Band after the show. You see, it's my thought that a rising tide lifts all boats, and the "real" goal in front of us is to increase attention and support for quality live music, as well as our venues and music stores. With that accomplished, there is more community support... *And where there is support, there is increased interest in learning how to play.*

So Tim and I discussed how we could work together in bringing artists through our area to play in both our venues. This, of course, would bring more overall visibility and promotion to the artists while at the same time creating additional attention to our businesses. The philosophy is simple. Where there is a lower cost burden for an artist, and an increased visibility for the artist to build his brand, then there is more opportunity for that artist to play and for all involved to build bigger followings. Ultimately, this also creates more opportunity for both music stores to raise their visibility and profile in their respective communities.

The Ways of 'Old School' Have Become New Again

In today's business climate, if you want to survive and thrive, then the "old school" way of a beneficial conversation, along with out of the box thinking is back in vogue. We are in the music business, and the purpose of musical instruments is to facilitate people playing music "together." So just like in the '60s and early '70s, we need to rekindle the passion of a music community. My advice, therefore, is to have conversations and find ways to embrace cooperation. Always remember what Carly Simon sang to us: "These are the good old days." **MMR**



Menzie Pittman is the owner and director of education at Contemporary Music Center in Virginia (CMC). Following a performance and teaching career spanning more than 32 years, he founded CMC in 1989 and continues to perform, teach, and oversee daily operations. He has 50 years of musical experience as a drummer and drum instructor. Menzie is a frequent speaker at NAMM's Idea Center, and a freelance writer

for MMR's "Small Business Matters" column. He served on NAMM's Board of Directors from 2012 through 2015 and currently oversees the curriculum for CMC's performance venue @4410. In 2016 NAMM awarded Contemporary Music Center the "Dealer of the Year" award, the "Music Matters" award, and the "Best Sales and Promotion" award.

For Your Consideration The 2016 Dealers' Choice Award Nominees



For 23 years, MMR has looked to MI retailers to select the very best instruments, products, and services across a wide array of categories in our industry – those that have risen to the top have been named Dealers' Choice Award (DCA) winners.

For 2016, we've involved musical instrument dealers in the process more than ever, asking for input every step of the way and you've stepped up to the plate, helping to decide the final nominees for consideration across 17 categories.

Now is the time to let your voices be heard by voting for the winners, to be announced in the December 2016 issue of MMR. What instruments were the hottest sellers this past year? What gear helped your operation turn the greatest profit? Which suppliers provided the best support and service?

Submit your vote for the 24th Annual MMR Dealers' Choice Awards today. Only Subscribers to Musical Merchandise Review (MMR) magazine are qualified to participate. mmrmagazine.com/dca-vote

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Part II of Roland's 24-hour online music festival, "The Future. Redefined."

By Sharon Paquette Lose

In Part II of *MMR*'s coverage of the unique product launch that took place on September 9, we are placing the spotlight on their DJ-inspired releases.

Introducing the Roland DJ Controller, the System-8 Plug-Out Synthesizer, three new Roland Boutique Series Models, and their commemorative DJ Turntable and 2-Channel DJ Mixer honoring the TR-909 Drum Machine.

DJ EQUIPMENT



DJ Controller

Roland DJ-808 DJ controller features a stand-alone professional 4-channel mixer, built-in drum sequencing, vocal processing, external instrument connectivity, and Serato DJ integration.

The DJ-808 is also an instrument, offering a built-in, customizable Roland TR-S drum machine. The 16-step TR-S sequencer offers trigger control over the Serato Sampler within Serato DJ. Also onboard are velocity-sensitive RGB color pads that can be used for HOT CUE, ROLL, TR PAD MODES, SAMPLER and more, and dedicated FX control knobs for unlimited creative options.

In addition to its microphone and DVS-ready turntable inputs, the DJ-808, with two AIRA Link USB ports, enables DJs to connect compatible Roland synths and electronic gadgets, and to produce a live remix, trigger keyboard arpeggios or play live bass lines, all with a single USB cable.



System-8 Plug-Out Synthesizer

The System-8 Plug-Out Synthesizer can host and control up to three Roland Plug-Out software synthesizers, and new Jupiter-8 and Juno-106 Plug-Outs are included with purchase. The synth also includes an array of hands-on controls, as well as a polyphonic step sequencer, vocoder, CV/GATE outputs, arpeggiator, and other creative tools.

The synth functions as a USB audio/MIDI interface for a DAW, and the 49 full-size keys (with velocity) provide a responsive keyboard for recording MIDI tracks. There's also a control surface mode for using the System-8's knobs, sliders, and buttons with soft synths. The System-8 is equipped with CV/GATE outputs, enabling a user to send note/pitch data from the synth engine and step sequencer to trigger modular synths and vintage analog gear. Price: \$1,499.



DJ Turntable

For 33 years, the Roland TR-909 has been one of the most definitive sounds in electronic music, and the beating heart of DJ culture. In celebration of this iconic drum machine, Roland has created the TT-99 Turntable and DJ-99 DJ Mixer with special 909 graphics.



2-Channel DJ Mixer

The TT-99 3-Speed Turntable (\$349 street) features a direct drive system for stable torque and built-in phono equalizer. The DJ-99 2-channel analog DJ Mixer (\$249 street) features a pro-grade mini innoFADER™ crossfader, dedicated DVS inputs/outputs, and a 3-band equalizer for each input.

BOUQTQUE SERIES



TB-03 Bass Line

The TB-03 captures the authentic sound of the original TB-303 Bass Line Synth. The new four-digit LED display allows for enhanced programming, while rotary dials give hands-on control over tuning, cutoff, resonance, envelope mod, decay, and accent. Saw and square waveforms are present, alongside new overdrive, delay, and reverb effects. In addition, there's an all-new Step mode and fine tempo control, and sequences can continue playing while switching modes. Ports for external gear include a dedicated trigger input to drive the internal sequencer, plus MIDI IN/OUT, USB, and CV/Gate. Price: \$349



VP-03 Vocoder

True to the VP-330, the VP-03 has vocoder, human voice, and string sound sources on board. It also includes a gooseneck XLR microphone, and can be paired with the optional K-25m Keyboard Unit for enhanced performance. New features include 16 Chord Memory setups for one-finger chord playback, plus a new Voice Step Sequencer for dynamic rhythmic effects. Alongside line and headphones outs, the VP-03 also includes MIDI I/O for connecting with other devices and 24-bit DAW audio interface capability via a Micro USB connector. Price: \$349



TR-09 Rhythm Composer

The TR-09 drum machine recreates the hybrid sound of its predecessor using ACB tech, complete with the familiar 16-step TR-REC programming style and a choice of Step or Tap write modes. It allows musicians to fine-tune parameters and switch modes without interrupting their beats. It's also designed for easy connectivity to external gear, with a choice of MIDI, USB, and trigger ports giving control over vintage analog synths, modular gear, and DAWs. Price: \$399

Intended for flexible use on stage, in the studio, or at home, all three new Roland Boutique units run on 4 x AA batteries or USB bus power.

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The Last Dinosaur



By Jeff Mazza,
Royal Music

I began my career delivering Lowrey organs in the summer of 1984. From the day I started I was told, "You missed it." Industry data shows I missed the heyday of the organ business by about five years. Being a delivery guy was a good entry into the music business. It paid better than the burger-flipping minimum wage jobs many of my classmates were getting that summer. As I transitioned into a commissioned sales position I learned that sales could be both a noble and profitable profession.

Organ sales had begun their decline before I joined the industry, but during my early years in sales it was still possible to earn very good money selling organs. More importantly the skill set necessary to become good in the market segment prepared our salespeople to excel in sales of any other product and/or service. One of our rookie salesmen went on to become one of the top pager salesmen in the country after just one year of sales training in the music business. Twenty years ago a majority of executives in our industry had organ selling experience listed on their resumes.

As the years have passed and most of the manufacturers of home organs have either closed, been sold, or changed directions, there has remained a small (shrinking) group of dealers who continue to promote and sell these instruments. I can't count the number of times someone has remarked to me, "You're still selling those things!"

Over the last five years I have represented both Lowrey and Roland Atelier organs. When I went in business in 1993 there were four organ stores in my town. Now I'm basically the last organ store in New Jersey. Twenty years ago it would have been impossible to represent the top two brands. Today there is such little demand that Roland has joined the list of "used to" manufacturers: "We used to build organs."

There is much to be learned from organ salespeople. The following concepts are critical for all



Lowrey Marquee EX5000

marketers of musical instruments.

In our country there are more people who don't play music than those who do. Everyone involved in our industry is best served by growing the market. Making more musicians makes more potential customers. In all segments of the music products business there is a simple formula that states. Students X Inventory = SALES ... or as I teach my staff P X P = P... Product X People = Profit.

It's okay to earn a profit. The margins on home organs were strong enough at both the wholesale and retail level to ensure the longevity of the companies involved in marketing these products. The introduction of MAP and the race to sell at shrinking margins has done a terrible disservice to our industry.

As an industry we need to teach people how to operate and grow our businesses. As a rookie I learned not only from the people who owned and managed the company I worked for, but also from a cadre of industry professionals who taught me the industry could afford me a decent living and more fun that I could imagine. Over the last fifteen years the relationship between manufacturers and retailers has changed dramatically and as the dinosaur I profess to be, I'll say it has not changed for the better.

I was first published in *MMR Magazine* in November 2000. My guest editorial: 'Home Organ Retail and the \$64,000 Question' was a call for everyone involved in selling home organs at both the retail and wholesale level to step up their game.

Fifteen years later as one of the last organ salesmen, I feel like the last dinosaur with his foot stuck in the tar pit. (If anyone wants to read that article e-mail me and I'll send it to you: jeffmazza@royalmusic.com).

I was moved to write that article because I thought my niche of the music products industry was at a crossroads. It was, and as an industry segment we didn't follow the best course.

The music business is very simple:

- Teach someone to play.
- Let them try nice instruments.
- Encourage them both to play and to purchase.
- Understand the lifetime value of this customer.
- Don't do anything stupid to make them leave you or the hobby of making music.

In my November 2000 article I posed the question, "What constitutes an organ sale?" At the time I hypothesized... "It may be time for us as an industry niche to reclassify product categories by marketing method. From NAMM we can follow trends of product categories and unit sales. Yet we cannot track to whom these instruments were sold. If a dealer markets a digital ensemble to an over 60-year-old consumer and includes a comprehensive class lesson package with purchase, that seems like an organ sale to me. If organ retailers don't view that as an organ sale they certainly should view it as competition."

The trend line for home organ sales over the last 20 years is abysmal. However, the demographics show an unprecedented

upside potential for those who want to market home hobbyist musicians. Any manufacturer of a keyboard product with auto accompaniment features is essentially in the home organ business on some level and needs to understand the dynamics involved in selling their products through various marketing channels.

At 2,800 words my last article was an industry warning that went ignored. After thirty years on the retail sales floor and having earned every dollar through the sale of electronic keyboard instruments (organs, digital pianos and portable keyboards) I have decided to form an industry think tank in hopes of shaping the marketing strategies of those involved in the sales of the aforementioned keyboards. I envision a three-tiered group with a tier for senior management of manufacturers and perhaps dealer principles, another tier for manufacturer's reps, and finally a group for retail salespeople. My experience shows as an industry we are losing high quality potential people to other, more lucrative, less stagnant industries. The industry as a whole must grow to attract and retain its talent. This think tank could be the impetus of that growth.

It has been said, "If you're not getting better, you're getting worse." Frustrated by the lack of growth in our industry, I want to meet with other industry thought leaders and plot a course for growth.

Anyone interested in participating in this think-tank may e-mail me jeffmazza@royalmusic.com or call my store (732) 240-2332. I intend to host the inaugural meeting this winter. **MMR**

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J. Rockett Audio Designs .45 Caliber Overdrive Pedal

J. Rockett Audio Designs has announced the fourth product release of the Tour Series line. The "Tour Series" is comprised of all new products designed with the influence of a host of top Nashville and LA touring artists to address their needs on the road.

The collaboration continues with the release of the J. Rockett Audio Designs .45 Caliber Overdrive.

The new .45 Caliber is a recreation of the original 1962 JTM 45 sound, overdriven. The sonic influence came directly from old Malcolm Young, crunchy rhythm tones and Pete Townsend Live at Leeds.

The .45 Caliber also takes advantage of a "Speed Switch" system and includes four controls: Loud, Gain, Bass, and Treble; I/O jacks at the head of the pedal; 9V DC operation with standard – tip and + sleeve; and is approximately 4" x 2.30" in size. Price: \$189.



www.rockettpedals.com

EHX Bass Clone Chorus Pedal

Electro-Harmonix released the Bass Clone, a chorus pedal with core circuitry that is nearly identical to the legendary Small Clone chorus, but with added features especially for bass.

Chorus is a combination of modulated and dry signals. The Bass Clone's Crossover switch cuts low end from the modulated signal so the pedal delivers a more accurately articulated bottom end with excellent note definition. The Bass Clone's Treble control affects the whole signal while the Bass control only affects the dry half. Together with the Crossover switch, they provide precise sound shaping that lets the player achieve a tight, focused bass guitar sound with a well-defined low end and shimmering chorus on top.

The Bass Clone features a compact footprint plus true bypass switching for maximum signal path integrity when in bypass mode. It runs on a 9V battery or an optional EHX 9.6DC/200mA AC adapter. To see and hear the bass pedal in action click here. The Bass Clone is available now with a U.S. List Price of \$90.40.



www.ehx.com

PROcussionCare WearBarrier and CymbalCare

PROcussionCare WearBarrier and CymbalCare are new products from SoundSynergies that are formulated to work together to prevent the formation of black oxidation on drums, sticks, and cymbals.

WearBarrier and CymbalCare are designed to be applied with a cloth in order to remove black marks and grime, and to condition them. The products are formulated to leave behind a protective micro-barrier.

CymbalCare is engineered to remove debris, dirt, and oils while preserving the cymbal patina for full-range, naturally attenuated tone. It can also be used to care for other metal instruments in the band and orchestra including; marching cymbals, gongs, mallet percussion, and the metal parts of brass instruments.



www.soundsynergies.net

MusicNomad Premium Workstation

The MusicNomad Premium Workstation is a combination pack that includes everything a player needs to outfit a repair bench whether it be for a retail establishment or home. This kit contains the Cradle Cube and Instrument Work Mat. The Cradle Cube is a five-sided, multi-angled, soft-gel covered neck support to securely hold all guitars, ukuleles, orchestral strings, and other instruments in place while repairing and maintaining them. The Cradle Cube's innovative gel covering is safe on finishes including nitrocellulose and has angles that support acoustic, bass, and electric guitars. When flipped over it acts as a caddy for tools and cleaning supplies. The Instrument Work Mat is for guitar and other musical instrument maintenance tasks. The 36" x 17" biodegradable TPE material is safe on finishes, is odorless, and contains no rubber, PVC, lead, latex, dioxins or chloride. The closed-cell construction is designed to make the mat chemical and bacteria resistant. The textured surface keeps small items from moving about.

This combination pack may hang on hooks or stand alone on the shelf. End users purchasing both items as a kit save money. Premium Workstation (MN207) retails between \$32.99 and \$36.99.



www.musicnomadcare.com

ACCESSORIES

On-Stage Foam Speaker Platforms

On-Stage Foam Speaker Platforms are designed to create separation between speakers and the work surface. Included are two wedges (per base platform), which allow you to customize the angle of your speakers. They are packaged and sold in pairs and include three sizes.



www.on-stage.com

PRO AUDIO

Carvin Audio Amplifiers VX BirchSeries

Carvin Audio VX series cabinets are designed to allow great detail to be heard by audiences and at recording sessions.

The series features rugged internally braced premium Baltic Birch cabinets ready for the road, a black grill cloth designed for a clean look on stage, 100 watt speakers designed for full tone, removable back ports for sealed and open back tuning sounds, standard black vinyl or the option to select from several vinyl coverings, jack plates featuring two 1/4-inch phone jacks and a stereo/mono switch for splitting the cabinet for stereo or wet/dry operation using two amplifiers (except for the VX112).



www.carvinaudio.com

Hughes & Kettner GrandMeister Deluxe 40

Hughes & Kettner announced GrandMeister Deluxe 40 all-tube guitar amplifier.

An evolution of the GrandMeister 36, the 40-watt GrandMeister Deluxe 40 pairs analog all-tube tone with smart control features.



GrandMeister Deluxe 40 uses Deluxe Tone Technology, a new circuit design developed by the Hughes & Kettner R&D team, and used in conjunction with tone-shaping components inspired by the brand's multiple award-winning TriAmp Mark 3 flagship.

Every knob and switch setting can be easily saved, stored, and recalled in up to 128 memory slots at the touch of a button, and the studio quality onboard effects settings are saved along with the gain and EQ knob values.

The standard Hughes & Kettner technological innovations are also included; an onboard Power Soak, Tube Safety Control, and the Red Box AE's DI speaker simulation. Plus, there's a free optional GM40 REMOTE App for iPad that lets players watch, touch, and control all of the amp's features on one screen, as well as backing up and sharing their favorite sounds. Price: \$1,199.

www.hughes-and-kettner.com

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Ortega Guitars Earth Series

Ortega Guitars new Earth Series Ukulele's are designed to combine quality with a low price point.

The Earth Series Ukulele's feature are available in standard concert size with four color options; the Ruocuan is a see-through blue stain on a natural Okoume wood top, back, and sides. The Rucole is a see-through brown colored stain, Ruforest a see-through green, and Rufire a see-through red. All of the uke's in the series include chrome die cast tuners, Tortoise style binding, a satin finish, Sonokelin fretboard and bridge, 18 frets, four original Aquila Nylgut strings and a Mahogany neck.



Ortega Earth Series sells for \$ 86.33.

www.ortegaguitars.com

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eMedia's Guitar, Bass, Piano, and Singing Method Classroom Software

eMedia Music Corp. has begun shipping classroom license and lab pack versions of its eMedia Guitar Method, eMedia Bass Method, eMedia Piano and Keyboard Method, and eMedia Singing Method software.



The classroom license covers IP use for presentations and academic-level support. Price: \$199.95.

The lab packs are designed for a school music lab with a small to medium number of computers. Guitar and Bass Method pricing is: 5 computers, \$199.95; 10 computers, \$399.95; 20 computers, \$749.95

eMedia Piano and Keyboard Method and eMedia Singing Method feature enhanced performance assessment and their pricing is: 5 computers, \$299.95; 10 computers, \$499.95; 20 computers, \$849.95.

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DRUMS & PERCUSSION

Dream Cymbals Bliss Paper Thin Series

Dream Cymbals announced the arrival of their Paper Thin series. The flagship Bliss series is designed to attract players with a sensitive ear and demanding touch. Since 2008 the Bliss Paper Thin 20" and 22" cymbals have been available. They are now available as a series including 14", 16", 17", 18", and 19", as well as the original 20" and 22" sizes.



The Bliss Paper Thin series are thin B20 hand hammered cymbals designed to create a rich sound with outstanding control and decay envelopes. Featuring a medium articulate bell, low profile and micro lathing—these cymbals are especially suited to studio work.

Starting from \$95 retail for a 14" paper thin crash.

www.dreamcymbals.com

CASES

SKB's 3i2222-12QSC iSeries QSC Mixer Case

Featuring form-cut PE foam designed specifically to house the QSC TouchMix-30 Pro Digital mixer, the 3i2222-12QSC iSeries QSC Mixer Case interior also includes a pocket for a standard iPad with cover and a large (10.5" x 9.25") recessed compartment below the mixer for cables and other accessories. An oversized carry handle, user-friendly one-finger push button release tow handle, and in-line wheels are all a part of the design.



SKB iSeries Injection Molded Mil-Standard Waterproof Cases are molded of ultra high-strength polypropylene copolymer resin, and feature a water- and dust-tight, submersible design (MIL-C-4150J) that is designed for resistance to corrosion and impact damage (MIL-STD-810G).

The 3i2222-12QSC iSeries QSC Mixer Case will be available November 1, 2016, with a MAP of \$419.99.

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By Dan Daley

76 Trombones Led The Big... Wait, Make That 39 Trombones

Music's age of glorious excess, the one epitomized in the hard-rock parody "This Is Spinal Tap", or in the less-celebrated and already-cancelled HBO series "Vinyl," has been over for some time, with the limos replaced by Uber and the Bolivian marching powder replaced with hipster PBR. Except when it comes to military bands, where reports of \$11,000 flutes and \$12,000 tubas have gotten a few members of the House of Representatives up in arms. That's the word from Washington, which would like to curtail what it sees as the Pentagon's largesse when it comes to its musician corps, which numbers over 6,500 assigned to everything from formal orchestras, marching bands, and rock combos that are deployed globally in locations ranging from front-line outposts to capital-city embassy soirees, a total of 130 individual units, at a time when the military is finding itself short of qualified personnel to fill posts such as fighter pilots and encryption specialists.

There's plenty of irony to go around; one of the film's most memorable scene involves a "Tap" gig at an Air Force base playing for an officers' gala where guitar-amp feedback is virtually weaponized. But the reality isn't quite as funny. Cumulatively, the U.S. military's musicians cost taxpayers about \$437 million in 2015 – almost three times the budget of the National Endowment for the Arts.

You Spent How Much On What?

However, the numbers don't tell the whole story. Military spending should be focused first and foremost on military necessities, of course. The problem is, figuring out exactly what those are isn't easy. For instance, how necessary were two sculptures costing \$670,000 for a VA facility in California – that serves blind veterans? Or a 27-foot artificial Christmas tree that cost one military facility in Chillicothe, Ohio \$21,500? A VA facility in Puerto Rico spent \$610,000 on artwork and one in Alaska spent \$100,000 on a sculpture. At the Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System, \$483,000 went for a large decorative rock and \$807,000 was for the site preparation for the rock outside the building. Inside the center, the VA spent \$365,000 for a sculpture at the entrance to the pool, and \$305,000 for a sculpture in the center's main lobby.

Even the weapons that putatively are the subject of most military spending produce some questionable numbers. Stories about \$600 toilet seats for the

Air Force's C-5A Starlifter in the 1970s and '80s have achieved the status of legend, and what's billed as the world's most sophisticated fighter aircraft project, the F-35 Lightning II, is seven years *behind schedule* and \$163 billion *over budget*, all before a single airplane has been deployed.

Here are some more numbers. The sources for many members of the U.S. military's music groups are high school band organizations, and those are showing growth at a time when the military may have to curtail its music programs. NAMM's 2015 sales analysis shows a 6.3-percent increase in the retail value of instrument shipments to school programs, with a notable 10.5-percent gain in brasswind instruments. "Also," NAMM's report noted, "brasswind sales have benefitted from strong participation in drum and bugle corps," which are often a bridge to military musician positions.

The Best Deal In Town

So in the grand scheme of things, the Pentagon's \$437 million music budget doesn't seem all that onerous, especially within the context of the DoD's \$600 billion annual budget. The military has already begun trimming its musician ranks; the *New York Times* reports that the Army has cut 600 band personnel since Congress started calling for reductions in 2011, and it plans to cut 270 more by 2019; the Marines and Navy have terminated two active-duty bands, and the Air Force has cut three. (Even though, as the paper points out, it's unclear whether decreasing the number of bands would decrease costs, "...since the cuts would mean more travel for the remaining musicians...")

The great things about military music entities are that they are useful whether or not we're in a war. They serve as recruiting tools during holidays and events. But so do groups like the Navy's Blue Angels, which costs about **\$40 million** a year to maintain the squadron of \$21 million FA-18 aircraft, which also consume another **\$20 million** in fuel expenses for rehearsals and performances. And while the Blue Angels or the USAF's Thunderbirds may prompt the occasional teen to seek out flight training, the uniformed bands almost certainly inspire far more of them to pick up a horn or a drum, creating – coincidentally – a new pool of musicians who've already gone through their musical basic training using Hickman's books. In fact, military musicians may be the best ROI the taxpayer ever got from the Pentagon. Think about that the next time the parade passes by. **MMR**

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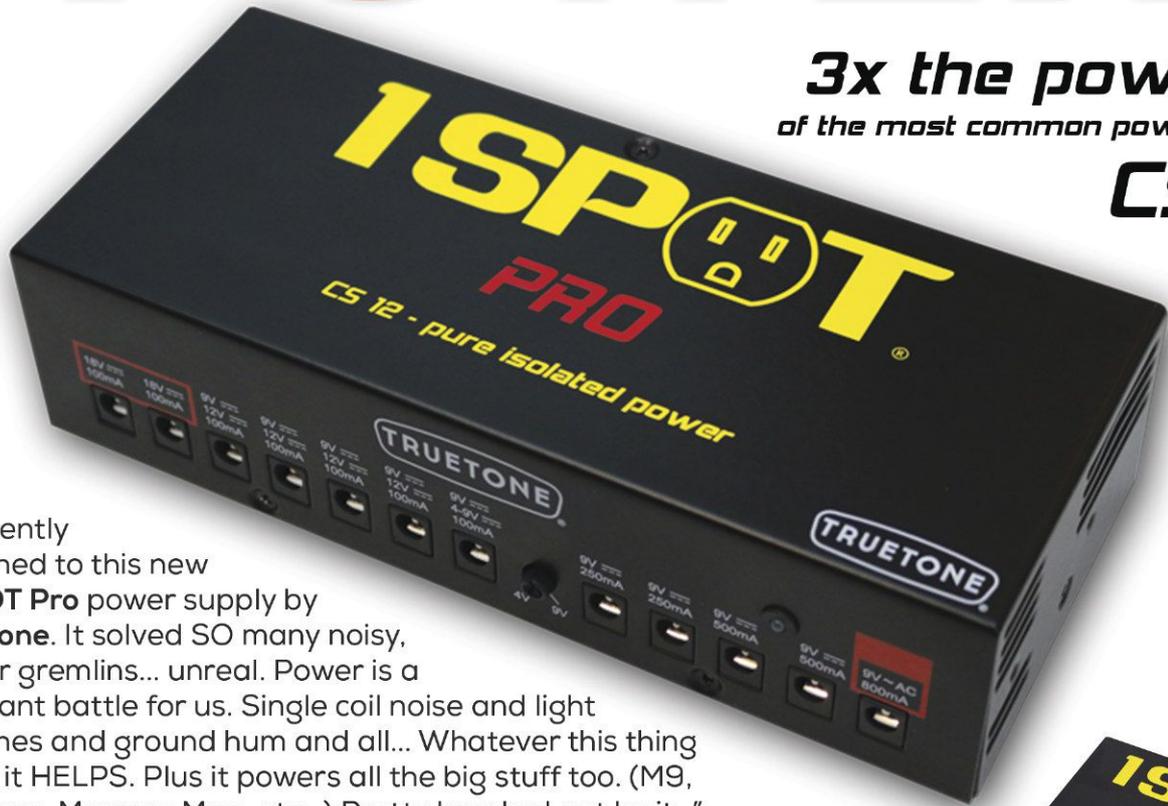
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