

MMR

MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW



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Cover photos courtesy of Dream Cymbals and Gongs, Meinl USA, SABIAN, Universal Percussion, and Zildjian

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Don't Forget to Vote in the 2017 MMR Dealers' Choice Awards!
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The Big, Bad Online Threat and the Power of Optimism



by Christian Wissmuller

For the past... well, certainly since I came on board at *MMR* in early 2002, nearly every issue has featured articles, surveys, or editorials that have, in some way, touched upon the challenges and threats that online retail poses to brick and mortar MI dealers. Our November 2017 issue takes that theme – not really even by design, truth be told – and runs with it to an extent that goes beyond “the norm,” however.

Sure, we have published issues with cover stories specifically dedicated to exploring Internet sales and how to react to and compete with them, and there have been detailed examinations of how to comprehend and embrace (or combat) related phenomena – apps, social media, et cetera – but for online retail competition to “randomly” take center-stage, as it does this month, is a reminder (or at least anecdotal evidence) that this is one of the most serious (very likely *the* most serious) tests that traditional MI retail models have ever needed to face and to overcome.

“Significant trends are the ease of simply purchasing on the internet, sight-unseen, or tested and heard in person,” observes Greg Allen of Long Island Drum Center of Nyack (Nyack, New York) in this issue’s dealer survey – a sentiment that was shared by nearly every participant.

Ronnie Dungan, discussing shifting trends and trials for musical instrument suppliers and retailers in his “*MMR* Global” department posits: “Maybe the more serious issue is the ease at which it is possible to buy reasonably priced second-hand guitars online, making the case for a brand new purchase a lot harder.”

In this month’s Supplier Roundtable, Mein’s Gabriel Harris observes that, “Online dealers can offer an entire catalog and sell to virtually anyone.”

Happily, November *MMR* also offers some hopeful outlook, as well.

In his first column for us, industry veteran and certified wealth strategist and succession planner, Jamie M. Blackman, asserts that, “brick and mortar music retailers, who continue to innovate and create new services will successfully compete against the ‘box pushers.’ After all, Amazon can’t shake the hand of your customer, and ask them how their granddaughter is enjoying her piano lessons.”

Chad Lyon of Wells Fargo (page 12) also provides the outlines of a overall plan to not only survive, but to thrive, in this changing market: “By focusing on quality in-store customer service, businesses are creating an advantage by embracing something online retailers can’t replicate.”

I’m absolutely certain many (most? all?) have heard some variant on these broad stroke “solutions” and maybe some of you are – understandably, for many reasons – at this point a little cynical about the real-world application of such philosophies, or maybe they just seem a little too self-evident to prove meaningful (“Oh, really? Provide good customer service and everything will be fine? What a novel idea – thanks soooooo much...”). To those who fall into this category, I’ll refer you to some of the words of Menzie Pittman (again appearing in this issue) – himself a rather successful brick and mortar musical instrument retailer, by any metric: “The pessimist holds the belief that the outcome of any and all problems will only worsen... Where others see blocks and restrictions, the optimist sees opportunity... I’m betting on optimism.”

Me, too, Menzie – me, too.

Christian Wissmuller
cwissmuller@timeless.com

- PRESIDENT**
Terry Lowetlowe@timeless.com
- GROUP PUBLISHER**
Greg Gallardogregg@timeless.com
- EXECUTIVE EDITOR**
Christian Wissmullercwissmuller@timeless.com
- ASSOCIATE EDITOR**
Victoria Wasylakvictoria@timeless.com
- ASSOCIATE EDITOR**
Mike Lawsonmlawson@timeless.com
- AUDIO / MI ADVISOR**
George Petersengeorge@timeless.com
- LIGHTING / STAGING ADVISOR**
Nook Schoenfeldnook@timeless.com
- CONTRIBUTING EDITOR**
Dan Daleyddaley@timeless.com
- WEB DESIGNER**
Mike Hoffmike@mikehoff.com
- ADVERTISING / MARKETING DIRECTORS**
Mike Devinemd@timeless.com
Matt Hubermh@timeless.com
Dave Jeansdjeans@timeless.com
Matt Kingmking@timeless.com
- GREATER CHINA**
Judy Wang, Worldwide Focus Media
C: 0086-13810325171 E: judy@timeless.com
- ART DIRECTOR**
Garret Petrovgpetrov@timeless.com
- PRODUCTION MANAGER**
Mike Streetmstreet@timeless.com
- GRAPHIC DESIGNER**
Angela Marlettamarlett@timeless.com
- VICE PRESIDENT**
William Hamilton Vanyowvanyo@timeless.com
- OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR / CIRCULATION**
Naomi Crewsncrews@timeless.com

Timeless Communications Corp.
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Industry News

Sound Enhancement LLC Drops Amazon

Sound Enhancement LLC, manufacturer of Morley and Ebtech brand products, has announced that it has terminated its relationship with Amazon.

CEO Joseph A. Turek released an official statement with regards to the termination, which *MMR* received in early October:



“Dear Valued Customers,

Sound Enhancement LLC, producer of Morley and Ebtech pedal and audio products, has determined that business practices adopted by Amazon.com are compromising the competitiveness of our brands. Consequently, like others in the Music Industry, we are following suit and discontinuing sales to Amazon.com. While we believe the Amazon Marketplace is an excellent forum for our retailers to sell our products, this will only be successful with the strict adherence to our MAP policy. Like Amazon, if our policy cannot be respected we reserve the right to discontinue sales to that violator. The value that our retail base brings to the consumer through superior customer service needs to be cherished and protected to keep our industry alive and vibrant.

Grab a Morley and Step On It Joseph A. Turek, CEO.”

➤ Industry News

➤ Supplier Scene

➤ People on the Move

➤ *MMR* Global

NAMM Musikmesse Russia 2017

NAMM Musikmesse Russia (September 14 - 17), the international musical exhibition, welcomed over 12,000 music industry professionals and music lovers to the show's thematic pavilions.

Now in its sixth year, the show attracted Russian and international manufacturers and distributors of musical equipment and accessories, a wealth of thematic programming and events, as well as over 12,000 visitors to Moscow's Sokolniki Center.

For the first time, the trade fair presented five pavilions dedicated to different product groups, including Guitar World pavilion dedicated to guitars and accessories; Drummers United presenting drums and percussion; DJ & Electro World featuring equipment for electronic and club music; Keyboards World showcasing keyboards, acoustic musical instruments and accessories.

The new format of the exhibition, as organized by product category, was reported to have been highly appreciated by participants and visitors. “We are glad about our decision to participate in the show with a separate pavilion,” said Esinori Sasaki, general manager of Yamaha Music. “At the beginning of a new season, it's important for us to gather all our partners to communicate about marketing and new products. As a one of the leading manufacturers, we feel our responsibility and choosing events, where we can support musical industry most effectively. Certainly, NAMM Musikmesse Russia is a

NAMM® musikmesse RUSSIA

very important event for us.”

Yegor Krundyshev, owner of Inspector Guitars, a Russian manufacturer, also reacted positively to the changes: “At the exhibition our guitars received the attention of both dealers and professional musicians. The audience of visitors completely justifies our expectations - 90% of visitors are professionals [and] we got many prospective contacts. It's great that this year the show is featuring a separate guitar pavilion - it's really 'hot' here with all the concerts, master classes and guitarists parties at the stands and on stage.”

More than 140 well-known brands were represented including Yamaha, Pioneer DJ, Pioneer Professional Audio, A & T Trade, Asia Music, BAM, Blastbeat Drum-Shop, CONTENT MusicMag, Di-Sound, Inspector Guitars, LTM, Lutner Spb Inc., MAGMA MUSIC SA, MBOX – Organ Salon, MuzTorg, Piano Victory, Proaudio Systems, Yerasov Music Corp., and others.

NAMM Musikmesse Russian will return to Sokolniki Center on September 13-16, 2018. For more information, visit <https://namm-musikmesse-russia.ru.messefrankfurt.com/moscow/en/visitors/welcome.html>

Nobels Names Osiamo LLC Exclusive U.S. Distributor



Osiamo recently announced that Nobels has named Osiamo their exclusive distributor for the U.S.

Osiamo managing director Ed Matthack said, “The Nobel's ODR-1 compliments our other pedal and effect lines. The reputation and build of the Nobels pedals is well known to be of the highest quality.”

Nobels' Bernhard Kurzke adds, “The Osiamo team has the qualities that we value in a partner. I'm looking forward to building our sales in the US with Ed and his team.”

See *NOBELS*, page 8

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Phil Carnivale - D'Addario sales manager; Laurie de Koch - executive director, Seattle JazzED

D'Addario Honors Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Metropolitan Youth Symphony, and Others at Music Retailer Events

The D'Addario Foundation, a 501(c)3 nonprofit grant-maker that supports transformative music education organizations, held three grant presentation events in October.

Hosted by Ted Brown Music (Tacoma,

Washington), Beacock Music (Vancouver, Washington), and Menchey Music (Timonium, Maryland), deserving not-for-profits including Seattle JazzED, Metropolitan Youth Symphony, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, and more were given awards by storeowners and D'Addario & Co. sales managers on behalf of the D'Addario Foundation.

In total, \$46,000 in grants were formally handed out at check presentations so far this year. Moreover, The D'Addario Foundation has awarded over \$517,000 in year-to-date monetary and product donations to 242 music education not-for-profits in 40 states and six countries outside of the U.S.

D'Addario Brouder also shares a personal thanks to store owners Whitney Grisaffi, Gayle Beacock, and Joel Menchey and their teams who hosted the grant presentation events: "Thanks to everyone at Ted Brown, Beacock, and Menchey Music. Each has a deep history of supporting music education in their local communities, and we are very proud to partner with these industry veterans that are committed to a similar mission."

Coming up on November 14th in partnership with Nick Rail Music, The D'Addario Foundation will hold another grant presentation event recognizing not-for-profits in southern California at the D'Addario & Co. Woodwinds Facility in Sun Valley, California.



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Nobels

From page 6

Currently, the Nobels line is centered on its well-known ODR-1 overdrive pedal. The ODR-1 has been available for over 30 years and has earned a good reputation in many musical circles, including the Nashville studio scene. The ODR-1 features a Drive and a Level control, and a proprietary Spectrum control that optimizes the midrange frequency for clarity and full dynamic range.

All Nobels pedals feature a solid metal chassis and Nobels Remote Control Jack switching system. Nobels pedals are engineered in German and manufactured in China.



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Concert (KA-ZCT-C)

Pacific Walnut
Concert (KA-PWC)

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Tenor (KA-EBY-T)

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Yamaha Drums Celebrates 50th Anniversary in Hollywood

Yamaha Drums assembled nearly two-dozen world-renowned drummers on September 30 for some live music, a celebration of the company's innovation and success over the last 50 years, and an exploration of the company's plans for the future.

More than 400 people gathered at the Musicians Institute in Hollywood for the event, which began with an interactive exhibit of both current and legacy Yamaha drum sets and gear as they evolved over the decades, including the company's very first drum set released in 1967. Attendees, including students, dealers, professional drummers, hobbyists, media and others, had the opportunity to test-drive all of the gear on display as they mingled with professionals from the Yamaha Drum Artist roster. Drum designers were on hand offering technical and historical perspective on the company's evolution into the trailblazing drum manufacturer Yamaha is today.

The hands-on presentation was followed by exciting

stage performances by the three Artist headliners of the day: Larnell Lewis (Snarky Puppy), Dave Weckl (solo artist and session legend) and Tommy Aldridge (Whitesnake, Ozzy Osbourne); all three Artists put on a spectacular show. The Yamaha team took time out from the festivities to honor two more artists, Bill Gibson and Rick Marotta, with special appreciation awards.

The evening ended with remarks by Yamaha Drums marketing manager Steven Fisher, who said, "50 years of making high-quality hand-crafted drums is a major milestone in Yamaha's history, and it's a pleasure to be celebrating it with our customers, artists, and Yamaha colleagues. What we're really excited

about, however, is the next 50 years. Yamaha has the resources, knowhow and innovative spirit to take drums and drumming to the next level for the next generation of drummers. You'll see the next sign of that spirit this fall with a brand-new product every drummer will want, so stay tuned."



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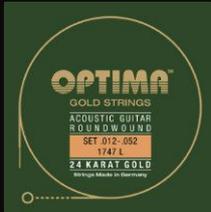
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Financial

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Facing the Music Doesn't Need to be Such a Challenge for Dealers

How MI Retailers Can Stay Competitive in an Increasingly Online World

By Chad Lyon, managing director, Wells Fargo Commercial Distribution Finance

Since the music industry is still recovering from the recession, Wells Fargo Distribution Finance (CDF) understands the unique challenges facing music retailers. Common disruptors include low-cost imports, shifts in consumer purchasing behaviors, the inception of electronic instruments, direct-to-consumer sales, and – the biggest challenge – growth in online sales.

According to Bloomberg, traditional brick and mortar stores are closing doors at a record pace due to the rise of online retailers. Consumers are relying on sites such as eBay and Amazon for many purchases, including musical instruments, causing lower sales and shrinking margins for MI retailers.

To combat the challenges, dealers need to focus on providing customers with the right product, a competitive price, and an outstanding in-person buying experience.

First, take stock of your business' operations by answering the following questions:

- Are you losing customers because you don't have right items in stock?
- Are you paying for products before they are sold?
- Is your cash flow inconsistent and unpredictable due to seasonal sales?
- Are inventory payment terms not matching inventory turns?

If you answered "yes" to any of the above questions, you may be at a disadvantage.

Right Product in Stock

Today's diverse retail landscape has created a culture of instant gratification. Over the years, the balance of power has shifted in favor of the consumer as a result of market globalization, comparison shopping, and price wars. To address this, dealers need to meet customer expectations on price, quality, availability, and selection.

Stocking the wrong products or not having the right ones available can result in fewer sales, diminished loyalty, tarnished brand perception, and customer attrition. This commonly occurs when a business does not have access to cash in order to replenish inventory. In this instance, inventory financing can be a great option to improve cash flow and help restock shelves.

Competitive Pricing

Cashflow is a key factor in determining a company's long-term. For example, Wells Fargo CDF's activity ratio calculator allows you to track and optimize cashflow trends by simply entering a few of your businesses' annual data points. Ideally, a business should aim to reduce inventory levels and payment terms, and accelerate collection times.

You can further strengthen your operational performance by reducing your business' reliance on debt or other external forms of financing. To start that process, analyze your business' ability to convert inventory and account receivables into cash. CDF has developed a GMROI calculator to determine the success of each of your product lines.

Customer Experience

Online sellers continue to make the shopping experience more convenient – making it harder for brick and mortar dealers to attract customers. Customers who visit a shop in person want to physically see, feel, and "test-drive" the product before buying the same product online at a lower price. Providing a great in-store experience is critical to combatting this growing trend. By focusing on quality in-store customer service, businesses are creating an advantage by embracing something online retailers can't replicate.

When a customer interacts with knowledgeable, informed, and seemingly trustworthy team members in store, the price often becomes significantly less relevant. Customers who have a positive in-store experience are also more likely to return.

While the music industry is facing challenges, working with industry resources, like Wells Fargo CDF, can help retailers stay ahead of the competition. In addition to inventory financing CDFconnect, a program for CDF customers, delivers learning opportunities and best practices sharing to help businesses grow. **MMF**



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Supplier Scene

Genelec Launches New YouTube Portal



Genelec has debuted a new YouTube portal called “Genelec USA Learning Channel,” which will be updated frequently with new content, featuring everything from production tips and tricks to interviews with industry pros.

Genelec Inc. territory managers Paul Stewart and John Whitcore will serve as the hosts for this new information channel.

Visitors who subscribe to the channel before November 30, 2017, and share their subscription publicly on social media, will be entered to win a pair of limited-edition red Genelec 8030 Studio Monitors. The drawing is open to U.S. residents only.

“Paul and I have been working hard to plan out the content that users have been asking for, and stuff that we would like to see personally,” said Whitcore. “Sometimes we have the answers to our users’ pressing questions, whether it’s troubleshooting in the studio or just the basics of monitoring, and sometimes we bring in an outside expert to illuminate the issue. And we keep it fun, because we know sometimes these topics can be too dry or technical for some visitors’ tastes. We have a real passion for this content, and we hope that shines through. See you on the channel!”

Yamaha Adds Szekely, Block, and Sabatino to Artist Family

Yamaha Artist Services has announced that cellists Jacob Szekely and Mike Block and bassist Charley Sabatino have been welcomed to the Yamaha Artist family. All three musicians currently use Yamaha electric string instruments.

Both Szekely and Block play the Yamaha SVC-210sk Silent Cello, while Sabatino performs on the SLB-200LTD Limited Edition Silent Bass.

“It’s the closest thing to an upright bass in sound and feel, it’s just wonderful,” said Sabatino of the SLB-200LTD.

“It feels like an acoustic instrument, which is really the exciting thing. Even when a cellist is playing electric music, we’re still often evoking the acoustic sound of a cello,” Block said of the SVC-210sk.

“Yamaha has done its homework,” Szekely added. “They’ve created an instrument that a classically-trained musician—which is what 98 percent of string players are—can sit down and just feel comfortable with, instantly. No company in the world supports their artists like Yamaha. I don’t think that’s controversial or debatable.”

All three musicians are involved with music education; Szekely runs String Project Los Angeles, a school dedicated to creative string playing, Block is a pro-



fessor at Berklee College of Music and runs The Mike Block String Camp, and Sabatino has been teaching bass for over 30 years. Because of this, all three artists can recognize and appreciate the dedication to music education that Yamaha has shown.

“Yamaha is actively involved on the ground level of promoting music education in its many forms,” Block said. “I’m grateful for this opportunity to collaborate with them.”

“It would be hard for me to understate their commitment to music education,” Szekely added. “I have a unique perspective, because I’m not only an artist and a teacher, but I’m also a school owner. Yamaha is unlike any other company on earth.”

Looking forward, Szekely will be promoting and playing at the 6th annual L.A. Creative String Festival and recording a new album with his trio. Block will be recording a new solo album that’s due out in 2018, and Sabatino will be appearing at the Uncool Festival in Switzerland and the Stockholm Jazz Festival with his free-improvised jazz group, The Velocity Duo.

Music & Arts Announces New Location in South Carolina

Music & Arts has announced a new store location at the Rice Creek Village Shopping Center in South Carolina.

Located at 4611 Hard Scrabble Road in Columbia, the new location expands Music & Arts’ lesson space and service capabilities to better serve the residents of Columbia and the surrounding towns of Forest Acres, Cayce, Springdale, Denny Terrace, Oak Grove, and Pine Ridge. The store also serves school music programs throughout Richland, Lexington, Kershaw, and Fairfield counties. “Since day one, services such as rentals, repairs and lessons have been an important part of our retail experience,” said Music & Arts president Steve Zapf. “Sixty five years ago our company founder, Benja-



min O’Brien, opened the first Music & Arts in a small house in Bethesda, Maryland; today, we are proud to serve communities across the entire U.S. with his same level of dedication to students, parents, and music educators.”

“We thank the Columbia community for their warm welcome, and are excited to continue to offer the best in music education, resources, rentals, lessons and repairs,” added Mike Ditonto, director of sales for the Southeast.



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Orange Amplification Partners with Firestone's Battle of the Bands

Firestone's Battle of the Bands is back for 2017, this year featuring Orange Amplification's Wolf Alice bassist Theo Ellis.

This competition will give unsigned artists from across the UK the chance to make their big break and win various devices from Orange Amplification.

More than £2,000 worth of Orange Amplification equipment will be up for grabs for the winning band, as well as studio time worth around £1,500 and support towards the creation of an EP album. Orange Amplification, returning partner Professional Music Technology (PMT), and Firestone will also be judging the entries and selecting eight acts for the shortlist after October 22. From there, the public will choose three finalists from November 13 to 23. "This will be our third Battle of the Bands competition and we are looking forward to it being our biggest and best yet," said Stuart Atfield, Firestone's brand manager. "Music is ingrained in our DNA and dates back to our Voice of Firestone radio show in America many years ago. We are passionate about giving talented bands a journey to the main stage, which is why Battle of the Bands is such a vital competition for us." "We wanted to build on two really successful years and engage with even more 'grassroots' musicians than previously. Our new 'Be Heard' strapline is particularly fitting as we think that every sin-

gle artist should get the chance to have their own sound amplified to a big audience. Battle of the Bands will make sure that this will be the case for so many acts," he added. "Both

Theo [Ellis] and Orange Amplification will supplement the existing partnerships we have with Professional Music Technology and Arena Birmingham, so we really hope this year's event will be more memorable than ever." "With small gig venues closing and bedroom music become increasingly accessible, Firestone's Battle of the Bands is a cool opportunity for musicians to make and put their music out there to be physically heard," Ellis said. "Music fans get to hear fresh new bands, that discovery is exciting for everyone involved in music and it's great it's being promoted here."



Peavey Electronics Sponsors Park Jams Series Florida



Peavey Electronics has renewed its corporate sponsorship of this year's Park Jams Series Florida.

This year's season of the Tampa-based event celebrates hip hop's positive influence on urban youth and supports young artists in a resilient community, and has been dubbed "The Mixtape Era" to commemorate the 44th anniversary of the birth of hip hop.

The series uses Peavey's DJ equipment, such as the FX mixers, QW enclosures, Crest amplifiers, and PVXp-DSP powered loudspeakers. All of these devices help to power the series and bring together musicians of all ages.

The series takes place on four Saturdays over the course of four months, showcasing a new DJ's display of mixing and scratching every month. All of the events are family-friendly and free.

Crazy DJ Bazarro, DJ Izzy Does It, and DJ Terra already performed on September 23 for the kickoff show of 2017.

Future events include performances on November 18 (DJ Eddie B Swift, DJ Immortal, DJ Spaceship at Perry Harvey Sr. Park) and December 16 (Tampa Legends Weekend at to-be-announced location).

American Country Music Honors Uses Shure Fixtures

At this year's American Country Music Honors on September 15, the live show used 20 channels of Shure Axient Digital wireless as the default microphone system.

J.D. DuCrest, RF coordinator, brought in six Shure PSM 1000 and two PSM 900 in-ear systems for the headliners and house band.

"Bringing in both Axient Digital and PSM in-ears as a package was clearly the best option," noted DuCrest. "The sound quality is just outstanding, and the RF performance is the best I've ever encountered. Plus, it allowed me to coordinate the entire production using Shure Wireless Workbench software. Working with so many amazing artists on the Ryman stage, this show demanded the best, and Axient Digital delivered."



"This was my first experience with Axient Digital at the Ryman, and my first impression was simple: It sounded like copper," said front of house engineer Les Banks. "The sound quality was superb and the RF signal was rock solid. In other words, there was really nothing to notice sonically – and that's a good thing."

Four channels of Shure UHF-R systems were also deployed for the two podium systems, with one UR1 bodypack and UR1M micro-pack on each.

"The annual ACM Honors is a fantastic event, so I was very pleased to hear that J.D. DuCrest had requested Axient Digital systems for this show," said Ryan Smith, Shure's Nashville artist relations manager. "The performers enjoyed the benefit of clean digital audio, plus the crew at the Ryman was able to experience it for the first time. It was a great night for everyone involved."

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by Ronnie
Dungan

VC Group Buys Loud Technologies

Venture capital group Transom Capital has acquired all brands from Loud Technologies, including Mackie, Ampeg, EAW, and Martin Audio.

The new company will be called Loud Audio and be led by the existing management of Loud Technologies to ensure continuity with product development, distribution, and supply chain.

"This transaction presents a great opportunity to work with the Loud team to achieve the next stage of growth for these iconic brands," said Ty Schultz, managing partner of Transom Capital. "These brands are positioned well with major retailers, installers and production companies and bring with them an outstanding legacy of innovation and category-defining product introductions. We have been working closely with LOUD's leadership to ensure continuity of the supply chain, channel relationships and Loud's employee base." We look forward to realizing the compelling growth opportunities for these brands both in the retail and professional audio spaces."

"This transaction is the first step in a broader strategic plan to enable and grow each of our iconic brands. Our brand and product strategies are greatly enhanced going forward as each will be working from a vastly improved financial structure and with access to growth capital," said LOUD CEO Mark Graham.

Transom is a Los Angeles-based private equity firm with an operational focus on private equity investing in the lower-middle-market. It invests in businesses across multiple industries.

Difficult Decisions to be Made

Despite the company's post-announcement attempts at accentuating the positives, it's hard to see Gibson's decision to downsize its Memphis manufacturing as an encouraging sign for the MI market in the U.S. and elsewhere.

Critics, who seem to love any opportunity to take a pop at Gibson and, indeed, Fender, will no doubt suggest that it is a case of chickens coming home to roost for selling what they deem to be overpriced, over-marketed products that are trading off past glories. Although, trading off past glories is the *raison d'être* of the entire MI industry, surely? At least, it certainly is in the guitar market.

But, whatever your feelings about Gibson and/or Fender, when market leaders are having a tough time, it's rarely a good omen for the market as a whole. There's no need to also mention Guitar Center's continued travails. (oops. Just did).

Possibly Gibson's decision hints at the cold hard truth that most in the market know, if not through sales data then by at least by instinct, that guitars just ain't where it's at for the youth right now. And maybe they never will be again. Then again

– vinyl records came back in a big way.

I'm not sure that I subscribe to the argument that there are no guitar heroes anymore, not in the sense of being artists that inspire kids to get strumming. They may not have poodle perms and legs akimbo, but the likes of Ed Sheeran, Taylor Swift, et cetera still create that spark. You're just too old to recognize it anymore.

Here in the UK they are showing reruns of 1980s "Top of the Pops," which was the most important mainstream music chart television show of its time, running for more than 40 years. Watching it, it's clear that guitar heroes didn't occupy much of the mainstream even then. For every Johnny Marr there were 20 Howard Joneses. Imagine that.

Maybe, the more serious issue is the ease at which it is possible to buy reasonably priced second-hand guitars online, making the case for a brand new purchase a lot harder.

Whatever the reason, it is clear that difficult decisions are starting to be made in the market and we should probably expect a few more.

Musikmesse Increases DJ/Audio Focus

Musikmesse is putting its audio, DJ and recording segment at the forefront of next year's show with a new and central presentation platform.

From 2018, exhibitors who used to be spread over several halls at the two fairs will make their presentations together in Hall 4.1. The advantages include shorter walking distances for visitors and "optimum target-group reachability" for exhibitors. Hall 4.1 will be a component part of both Musikmesse and Prolight + Sound and, therefore, integrated into the visitor marketing and information services of both events, from the exhibitor search engine to apps and the official catalogue.

"The synergies generated by Musikmesse and Prolight + Sound are a decisive factor behind the success of the two events. Bringing together the various parts of the audio, DJ and recording product segment in Hall 4.1 will reinforce these positive effects," said Michael Biber, group show director of the 'Entertainment, Media & Creative Industries' Business Unit of Messe Frankfurt. "The new concept for Hall 4.1 is the result of numerous discussions

with companies from the sector."

Hall 4.1 is in the heart of Frankfurt Fair and Exhibition

Centre. The focus of the hall will be on products of interest to both professional users from the event and media technology segment and musicians, music producers and musical-instrument retailers. Products include microphones, effects and signal processors, cables, mixing desks, control units, monitoring tools, production tools and recording hardware and software. As in the past, visitors will find products for (live) PA systems and fixed installations in Hall 3.1.

Also part of Hall 4.1 is the 'Silent Stage' area, which was launched in 2017 and presents a stage concept for clean sound and effective monitoring, as well as the Sound & Recording Lounge, which offers lectures on mixing, micing and production. Other events in cooperation with the exhibitors are in planning.



JHS Appoints new Aussie Distributor

JHS has appointed Better Music/Pro Audio Supplies as distributor of its Vintage guitar and Odyssey Brasswind brands in Australia.

JHS export sales manager Adam Butterworth said: "Better Music/Pro Audio Supplies Group have an excellent portfolio of products that Vintage and Odyssey will compliment perfectly. Their attention to detail and customer focus make them exactly the type of partner we want to serve our Australian dealers."

Better Music/Pro Audio Supplies managing director, Ivan Ste-

fanchuk, added: "The JHS team embody all the qualities we value in a partner."

Australian dealers should contact Steve Gray at Better Music for more information: steve@bettermusic.com.au



www.jhs.co.uk

EarthQuaker Signs Japanese Yamaha Exclusive

Yamaha has become the exclusive distributor of EarthQuaker Devices effects pedals in Japan.

EarthQuaker started in 2004 in Akron, Ohio, by musician and entrepreneur Jamie Stillman. Since then, EarthQuaker Devices pedals have been used by artists such as Queens of the Stone Age, Boris, the Mars Volta, Mono, CHON, Asai Kenichi, and the Black Keys. Each effects pedal is built by hand at EarthQuaker Devices' workshop in Akron by a team of passionate artists and musicians.

"EarthQuaker Devices is honored to work beside Yamaha Music Japan Co., Ltd, and to play a part in the company's 129 year history," said the firm.



"We are excited to deliver innovative and creative effects pedals which live up to Yamaha's philosophy of 'Kandō,' and it is our hope to supply musicians with effects pedals of supreme audio quality, build quality, physical appearance, and performance. Yamaha Music Japan is Japan's leading importer of musical equipment, with many decades of experience distributing Marshall Amplification, Zildjian, and Nord. EarthQuaker Devices is thrilled to join these legendary brands as we begin our partnership with Yamaha Music Japan Co., Ltd."

In celebration of the new partnership, Earthquaker held an effects pedal clinic at Galaxy Gingakei with talks and product demonstrations by EarthQuaker Devices President Jamie Stillman, Deltron 3030 guitarist Taka Tozawa, and EYE multi-instrumentalist Lisa Bella Donna. The event was free and open to the public.

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Another TC Executive Joins Lunastone Team

TC Electronic's former head of development, Morten Lave, has been become the latest to join the Danish guitar pedal company Lunastone.



He will be the third ex-TC employee to become part of Lunastone, alongside former TC execs Allan Strand and Jesper Dalum.

Lave has served as head of development on the digital side of TC Electronic and also took lead on establishing TC Applied Technologies in Canada, leading the company as its CEO from 2003 to 2015. His new role at Lunastone

will be to head the digital side of development, taking the company that until now has focused on analog overdrive circuits to new territories.

"It is a great pleasure for me to rejoin with former colleagues once again at Lunastone," said Lave.

"We managed to achieve many great things in the past and I am confident that we can continue doing exactly that in the future with a new line of digital pedals under the Lunastone brand.

"In fact, I see it as a perfect opportunity to combine Steen Grøntved's brilliant analog design skills with my knowledge within digital audio. Further, zooming out, I see the core people at Lunastone – Steen Grøntved and my former colleagues Allan and Jesper – as something of a dream team that I am very excited to be joining."

"Having Morten join us will be a game-changer," added Allan Strand, Lunastone CEO. "No question, we have had greater success with our TrueOverDrive cascaded-gain-stage concept than we ever dared dream of, but obviously there is also a whole other world to take on in the digital domain and I couldn't possibly think of anyone better suited to help us succeed there as well than Morten."

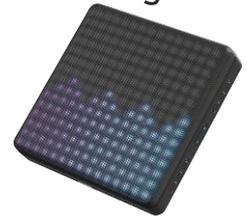
Lunastone founder and head of Engineering, Steen Grøntved, is also looking forward to the new collaboration and reinforcement of the team: "Getting to collaborate with Morten is a great opportunity to develop the product line and expand into the digital realm. I have lots of ideas on how to unite analog and digital circuits in musical ways to get the best from both worlds. And with Morten's expertise in digital signal processing and years of experience from TC Electronic, I am sure we are going to make great pedals, digital as well as analog, moving forward."

Lave will also become part of the ownership of Lunastone, investing in the company as part of the future partnership.

Keyboard Benders Add to ROLI Range

Bendy keyboard firm ROLI has launched a new model of its Lightpad Block and a series of upgrades to its Noise app.

Roland Lamb, founder and CEO of ROLI and inventor of the Blocks system, said: "In the last 10 months since we launched Blocks, we have continuously evolved the system with software and firmware updates as well as new hardware components like the Seaboard Block. Today with the release of the Lightpad Block M and Noise 3.0, we are even more firmly establishing Blocks as the most powerful way to create music on the go."



The Lightpad Block M is the next generation of the Lightpad Block, a surface for sonic control that launched in November 2016. Music-makers can recreate the sounds of drums, cellos, flutes, uplifting synths, and other instruments just by touching the Lightpad Block, which is both a palm-sized music-making device in its own right and a piece of the expandable Blocks system. The Lightpad M is designed to create a more sensitive and precise playing experience that is on par with ROLI's premium instruments like the Seaboard Rise.

New features of the Lightpad M include Microkeywaves, inspired by the wave-like undulation of keywaves on the surface of ROLI's Seaboard instruments, the microkeywaves of the Lightpad M provide additional tactile feedback on an already sensitive surface. They mark a major revision from the flat surface of the original Lightpad Block. There's also a redesigned silicone surface layer. A deeper, softer silicone layer – topped with 225 microkeywaves – enhances the pressure-responsive control of sound that defines the Lightpad Block and brighter surface illumination. The Lightpad M is 50 per cent brighter than the original Lightpad Block. It features a higher contrast display and a much richer range of color definition.

Noise and the software ecosystem supporting Blocks have also been added to. Highlights include Noise 3.0, which is the newest version of ROLI's free app introduces improvements to clip launching, clip editing, and user-interface navigation as well as new acoustic sounds. Together with the recent introduction of Seaboard View and Mixer Mode, the updates make Noise 3.0 a versatile sketchpad for making music on the go.

Acoustic instrumental soundpacks: Realistic cello, violin, clarinet, saxophone, and other acoustic instrumental sounds are now available in Noise. Treble Quartet and Bass Quartet are two new soundpacks created with the SWAM engine by master sound designers at Audio Modeling. Bass Quartet is now bundled with the Lightpad M, and Treble Quartet is bundled with the Seaboard Block. Also available for \$9.99 in the Noise Soundpack Store.

Noise Audio Unit for GarageBand: Over 400 polyphonic sounds from Noise are now available to play and edit in GarageBand. Music-makers can bring their favorite Noise sounds directly into their GarageBand workflows with the new Noise Audio Unit plug-in for iOS.

Ableton Live Lite: A customized version of Ableton Live, the acclaimed digital audio workstation (DAW), is now included with every Lightpad Block. Integration with Ableton Live Lite transforms the Lightpad Block into a versatile control surface for launching clips, controlling instruments, and creating tracks within Ableton Live. Coming soon to all Lightpad Block owners.

Strobe2 Player: A desktop sound player version of the acclaimed polysynth from FXpansion. Strobe2 Player is fully compatible with MIDI Polyphonic Expression controllers like the Lightpad M. Explore 50 presets and 3 macros from Strobe2 — and upgrade to the complete Strobe2 synth for \$79. Now available to all Lightpad Block and Seaboard Block owners.

The Lightpad M is available now priced at £189, including VAT.

ON THE MOVE

Franck Bichon, president of **BG Franck Bichon** recently announced the appointment of Juan Garijo to VP of Sales for Latin America and South America.



Franck Bichon and Juan Garijo

Bichon says, "I have been working with Juan Garijo for last 27 years as the Spanish agent For BG and for three years now we have worked closer together on BG global communication with a focus on markets to develop. Juan has the same customer, quality, service that defines BG Franck Bichon. Juan is highly respected among instrument makers, distributors and customers. We value our Latin American Customers and want to make sure they receive the same level of care all BG customers receive."

Juan had this to say about his appointment: "I have always admired the quality and countless small details that Franck Bichon gives to all BG products. This sets them apart from the rest. It is an honor for me to assume this position in a market as fascinating as Latin America."

Zoom North America has announced the appointment of David Via as vice president of marketing.



Via will be responsible for the development and execution of Zoom's marketing strategies and brand engagement. He joins Zoom after 12 years at D'Addario & Company, where he served as vice president of Business Development and vice president of Global Sales.

Via held executive positions in marketing, sales, and business development, as well as product management, and artist relations over the course of his career. After starting his career at Yamaha Corporation of America, Via went on to manage global marketing and sales activities for SKB Cases and SABIAN Ltd.

Via holds a bachelor's degree in Music Business from Millikin University, a master's degree in Percussion Performance from Northwestern University, and an MBA degree from the Olin School of Business at Babson College. In addition

to remaining active as a musician, Via is a sought-after guest lecturer at colleges and universities including Manhattan College's Center for Music Entrepreneurship, The Crane Institute for Music Business at the SUNY Potsdam, and The Center for Innovation and Design at The University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen, China.

"I'm pleased to have David coming onboard with Zoom as vice president of Marketing," said Scott Goodman, CEO of Zoom North America. "He brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the position and, importantly, understands our customers who count on us to help support and foster their creativity."

Fishman has appointed Ryan Fitzsimmons as marketing manager in an ongoing expansion of its marketing team.



In this capacity, Fitzsimmons will be responsible for managing the company's website, social media, trade shows, graphic design, and marketing communications.

As a singer-songwriter, Ryan has established himself as a veteran of the New England Americana music scene, winning awards such as the Providence Phoenix Best Male Vocalist in 2005 and Boston's Redline Root's Favorite Local Rock and Roller in 2013. He's also performed at venues and events such as Club Passim and the Newport Folk Festival.

Ryan comes to Fishman from Maine's Bourgeois Guitars, where he spent the last three years as the marketing manager.

Chris DeMaria, VP of marketing and artist relations states, "We're thrilled to have Ryan on our team. His background as a musician, combined with his experience on both the retail and manufacturing side of our industry, will be a huge asset to Fishman's continued growth and marketing goals. Ryan understands our products, our brand, and our customers."

SABIAN has announced that master product specialist Mark Love has been promoted to the newly created position of director of research & product development.



In his new role, Love will take on overall responsibility for the development and creation of new instruments,

development of enhanced manufacturing techniques and ensuring that the highest possible levels of product quality are maintained.

A 35-year veteran of the SABIAN team, Mark has been instrumental in developing some of the most innovative and groundbreaking cymbals in the world. Working side-by-side with artists like Jojo Mayer, Terry Bozzio, Dave Weckl, Jack DeJohnette, Neil Peart, and many, many others, Mark has put his stamp on cymbal history with instruments like the Omni, Evolution, Radia Cup Chimes, Paragon, and many more.

SABIAN Vault veteran Dave Williams will take over Mark's day-to-day role as vault operations lead. Williams will be responsible for leadership of Vault staff, Vault inventory management, production scheduling, quality testing and sales order fulfillment. Dave has worked closely with Mark for 25 years, and his knowledge of sounds and cymbal making is extensive.

Soundtree, the growing education division of **Korg USA**, has just hired John Lannucci as their newest sales representative.



Lannucci's sales experience originated in the finance market where he worked as a sales manager for a prominent mortgage company. Despite his growing success in the banking industry where he earned multiple sales awards, Lannucci longed for a more creative path, and decided to revisit his life-long passion for music.

"We are excited to be growing our Education Division and pleased that John will be helping us to reach more teachers and schools," says Tiffany Stalker, senior manager of the Education Division at Korg USA. "Our overall goal as a division is to support music education across the country. With John's skill set and personality, I am confident Soundtree will make a bigger and better impact in the classroom," Stalker concludes.

Lannucci, a seasoned musician, graduated from Five Towns College with a B.A. in Jazz Performance. He is a NYSSMA jazz guitar specialist and was endorsed by Brian Moore guitars.

2017 Music China and Prolight + Sound

More Exhibitors, More Attendees – Asia’s Largest MI Gathering Shows No Signs of Slowing Down

by Christian Wissmuller

Asia’s largest MI trade show just keeps getting bigger – much bigger. At this year’s gathering in Shanghai, 2,135 exhibitors from over 30 countries and regions (compared to 1,909 last year) showed off their newest product introductions, alongside best-selling, established gear. A staggering 105,125 total visitors to the show (up 16.6 percent from 2016’s already impressive 90,125) were on hand to check out everything on display in the 410,105 square-foot exhibiting area – a metric that was also up from last year’s 367,000 square feet.

As Colin Schofield of JodyJazz noted on the second day of Music China, “The show just keeps getting bigger and bigger. Every year we come here and there are more manufacturers, people taking larger booths, larger attendance – all signs are this is going to be a barn-burner of a show, so we’re looking forward to it.”

Prolight + Sound Shanghai 2017 featured an expanded Recording & Production Zone, as well as two new zones for AV entertainment solutions and stage machinery. Numbers were also robust with over 630 brands from 23 countries and regions being visited by 29,604 attendees from 81 nations (a total increase of 11.6 percent, compared to 2016).

Chinese Sales Top \$6.1 Billion

Musical instruments sales in China are estimated to exceed 40.6 billion yuan (\$6.1 billion U.S. dollars) in 2017, according to the latest figures launched at the recent Music China expo.

Musical instruments sales soared in recent years as more Chinese kids, particularly those in big cities, are taking up music as an enjoyable extra-curricular activity.

In the first half of the year, 253 musical instrument makers, whose sales revenues exceed 20 million yuan each, recorded total sales of 19 billion yuan, said the China Musical Instrument Association.

In 2012, the whole year sales were 24.5 billion yuan.

In the Jan-June period, China’s musical instrument exports declined slightly, but the imports grew 6.9 percent year-on-year after reductions to import duty rates, the association said at the Music China Expo.

China has more than 640,000 musical training agencies, with the music training market exceeding 70 billion yuan last year.



Next year’s Music China and Prolight + Sound will take place October 10-13, 2018.



1. Levy’s Leathers’ Harvey Levy with Keith Brawley of Taylor Guitars 2. Jody Espina and Colin Schofield of JodyJazz, Inc. 3. The Music People: Tom Tedesco, Bess Liu, Bob Shen, and Aissen Huang 4. Jack Jin, Ali Yazidi, and Maggie He of D’Addario & Co. 5. Orange Amps’ James Deacon, Cliff Cooper, and Tim Ireland 6. Keith Watson, Heath Mathews, and Gear Fisher of Peaksware (Alfred Music) 7. The piano exhibits were consistently busy throughout the Show 8. In what’s becoming a tradition, it was near-constant downpours in Shanghai during most of Music China 9. Silvan Küng of Relish Guitars Switzerland 10. Schimmel Pianos’ Hannes Schimmel-Vogel 11. Ms. Zhaoxinin of Shubb Capos 12. The PA systems displayed at “The Sound of World” outdoor rig certainly got to display their weather-resistance capabilities at this year’s Show 13. Stephen Wick of Denis Wick Products, Ltd. 14. Scott Thompson of The Music Link

Voices from the Show Floor



"Here is a photo of me and Teng Zhe a 19 year-old university student from Shanghai. He has been playing guitar for three years and is a fan of Levy's guitar straps. He has visited me for the last three years and plays Martin and Taylor guitars. Does he represent the future guitar playing in China? Let's hope so. Levy's has been exhibiting to Music China since it's incep-

tion. The changes in the city and the show from year to year have been remarkable: an accelerated rate of change reminiscent of our North American experience from the 1950s to 2000. If memory serves, the guitar seemed a curiosity at the first Music China show, but now it seems young people like Teng have become avid, active players. In the guitar booths where visitors are permitted to play the guitars, the skill level has increased year over year.

"The popularity of western symphonic music in China goes back to the 1600. Suppressed during the Cultural Revolution in 1966, it has been making a steady comeback as the suppression of all things western relaxed. Some sources estimate that there are 100 million children studying piano and violin in the western classical tradition. Guitar based music in the western popular tradition is a

little late to the game, but if social stability, mobility and prosperity continue, the market for guitar and guitar related products, like Levy's guitar straps, looks bright.

"Simply stated, Levy's continues to see the benefit of exhibiting at Music China and I am excited about the growth of Levy's guitar straps in this market."

- Harvey Levy, Levy's Leathers

- Tim Elvy CSP, Elvy Sound Solutions

"I thought Music China was excellent this year. At the BG booth I was told that compared to last year we were far busier. The show seems to have a vibrancy about it. The Chinese really embrace music and the teaching of music. This passion really excites me. I always say that 'music is emotion and emotion creates passion and passion is contagious.' Lots of emotion and a whole lot of passion at this years Music China."

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tion partners that are in the Pacific Rim. Some come to NAMM and in some situations this is the only time to meet with them in person each year. The vibe was very positive as the new and existing partners were actively looking to do more business. I am optimistic about the coming year."

- **Thomas F. Tedesco, TMP**

"The Music China show has already been [an exciting event]. I have been in the MI industry for more than 10 years and it's always been a pleasure to be able to meet friends every year by attending the show. We are happy to display and demonstrate as much new D'Addario products as we possibly can to the Chinese musicians and dealers. We had a strong sales performance on-site and we also [connected with] hundreds of new dealers who we can further develop with in the coming weeks."

- **Jack Jin, D'Addario Shanghai Trading Co., Ltd.**

"Recording King and The Loar did extremely well at Music China 2017. We have been working hard the last few years to keep our focus strong at this show with respect to product offerings and who we are reaching out to. This year we opened a new warehouse in Europe and are able to serve several more markets in a new way. Telling existing and new customers about this new phase of our distribution is very important at these shows. There is no better way than doing that in person. "All the international shows are changing year by year. The China Show specifically has become more focused on the growing local markets and it is apparent in the exhibitors and the attendees. The

fun part for me is the interest in our western instruments... mando, banjo, resonator. We are strong in these categories and hopefully it shows in the booth. Plus we had some nice limited run pieces that got some great feed back as well. We stand out from the same solid spruce top guitar on all the walls. I think people from any market notice that and that is good for the brands in the long run."

- **Scott Thompson, The Music Link**

"I was impressed with Shanghai, clean, modern – quite western. The Show was well attended, with lots of continuous booth traffic. Since the government controls publishing, it's important and rather difficult to work with key partners and find success. However, our content is in high demand, so we have a lot of new requests for licensing."

"I had heard from many people, that the notion of 'China will just copy/steal your intellectual property' is changing. They want to buy the legal, and legit products. The government is pushing for this, and a cultural change is happening. The piano market is going to explode. The Government lifted the one child per family ban last year, so in five years, the piano lesson market could essentially double. China loves western brands, so there's lots of growth potential."

"Business is business, I enjoyed working with several partners. It's not as foreign as I always thought."

- **Gear Fisher, Peaksware**

"Speaking personally for JodyJazz we see our brand gaining recognition and the Chinese musicians recognizing the maker and

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players more than before as evidenced by the amount of people who wanted posters signed and pictures with myself.

"We still play mainly groove tunes because straight ahead Jazz does not register over there but the public reaction to Jazz influenced music is getting warmer as time goes on. Many people that come to the show are very excited to be there and it seems it is one of the highlights of their year. For us the market feels very strong with plenty of room to grow. We feel the China show is worth coming to and it will remain #2 in importance after the NAMM show for us but it keeps gaining in importance whereas the Musikmesse Frankfurt is finally over for us after exhibiting for 14 or 15 years straight. Very sad that my favorite show is now dead to us."

- Jody Espina, JodyJazz, Inc.

"From the perspective of acoustic piano this year's Shanghai Music show was mesmerizing; More piano exhibitors than ever before filled the halls, which reflects the continuing and increasing demand of the Chinese domestic market. Noteworthy were also the amount of matured and user worthy products when it comes to combining the piano with online learning and long distance learning. In the past years these products lacked maturity and were a little cumbersome. The products at this year's show are professionally implemented, well designed, and easy to use. They rely primarily on Apple's iOS platform and connect smoothly with iPads and mobile phones. More importantly, manufacturers and developers are already preparing to make them available internationally. The results of the combined Chinese R&D outpaces what any of the main well established players can of-

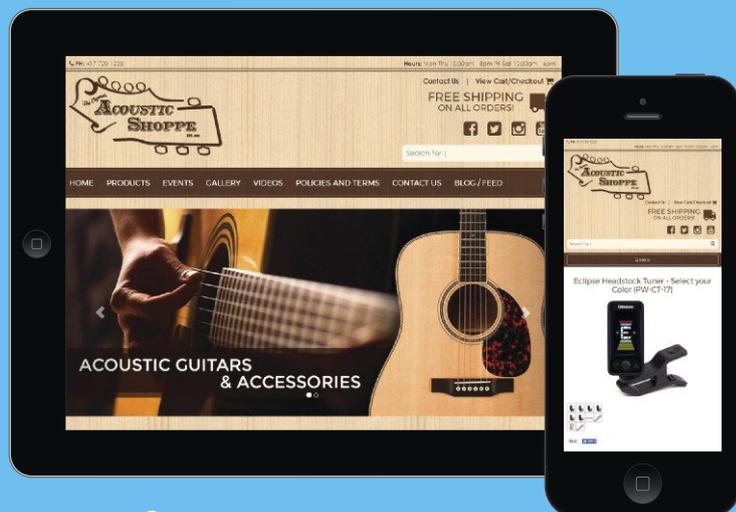
fer in innovation and creates a more even playing field. Hailun's challenge will be to roll out the products at good pace and continue to be the innovation leader in the acoustic and keyboard segment.

- Basilius Strmec, Hailun Pianos/Petrof Pianos



A: SLM's Craig Denny, Tim Elvy of Elvy Sound Solutions, and Franck Bichon, Alun Hughes (BBICOB), and Juan Garijo of BG Franck Bichon **B:** Hailun Pianos: Mr. Zeng Zheng, Hoci Wu, Mr. Hu, Sophie Zuo, Basilius Strmec, Qiaying Xu, Honli Wang, Arie Kaizer, and Jun Zhou **C:** Petrof Pianos: Said Tabet, Mr. Joung, Mrs. Jana K., Mr. Kwon, Ms. Krupkova, Mr. Vasicek, Pavel Stepan, Zuzana Petrova, Basilius Strmec, Mr. Kwon, Adam Prouskov, and Arash Rahoon **D:** Dan Roberts of Manhasset Stands, Roy Tang of Chairman International, Zach Frederick of Fredrick Export, and Kevin Lee of Chairman International at the Manhasset booth

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'Crash' Course

Representatives from Five Major Players in Cymbal Manufacturing and Design Discuss the State of the Market

by Christian Wissmuller

How would you characterize the current cymbal market?

Gabriel Harris: Compared to the same time last year, Meinl has had a dramatic increase in cymbal sales and most of that is concentrated in our high-priced Byzance series.

Tom Shelley: The cymbal market has had significant changes over the 41 years I have been in business. In the '70s there were only a few high-end lines (and entry level cymbals). Today there are dozens of both high- and low-end cymbals from Asia, Turkey, Canada, and the USA.

Andy Morris: Our sales were up 25 percent worldwide as of August, so cymbal sales for Dream, with its unique price point to value proposition, are great. While most of our lines all have the same price, our more expensive Dark Matter series is also doing well right now despite the slightly higher price point.

Victor Filonovich: The market seems fairly flat from our perspective. While we are hearing of more interest in acoustic drums in general, we do not believe that sales of acoustic drums and cymbals are increasing by much. Our sales are healthy, especially at the upper end, and we believe most of the gains are increased market share. Our L80 "Low Volume" sales are helping the overall numbers, as it's a new category, and our mid-priced S Family introduced in 2016 continues to do well.

Luis Cardoso: Sales in 2017 were roughly the same, with higher-end cymbals doing very well. This has been a great thing for sales of our pinnacle Artisan and Artisan Elite cymbals. This trend has also helped XSR, our mid-high B20 cast series.

What's your brand's "hottest" cymbal at the moment?

LC: From a series point-of-view, our HH and HHX lines are doing very well. In terms of specific models, some of our hottest sellers are HHX Omni, AA Holy China, HHX Legacy, Artisan Light, AA Apollo and XSR Monarch.

AM: The 14" Re-FX Crop Circle and the new 14" Re-FX Naughty Saucer, both made from recycled cymbals, are selling faster than we can make them. The new Dark Matter Eclipse ride introduced earlier this year is building a lot of steam now that it is hitting markets. Our Dark Matter 16" and 18" crashes are also seeing a nice boost.

VF: K Custom, including the K Custom Special Dry (introduced this past Jan-



uary) is very hot. Considering the relatively high price point, that's a good place to be and tells us that consumers are willing to pony up for a compelling product.

TS: Our hottest line of Wuhan cymbals are our new 457 and 457 Rock sheet. These are hand-hammered sheet cymbals at prices that are well below the other name brands.

GH: There are a few cymbals that I continue to hear a lot of talk about. Those would be the Byzance 18" Dual Crash and the Byzance Big Apple Dark Rides, with the 22" and 24" being very popular.

How important are artist endorsements/relationships for your company?

VF: We highly value our family of artists. These drummers are the face of our brand. They provide invaluable exposure to our products through concerts, advertisements, TV, and social media. And what has become very evident is that access to social media channels has made artists popular among drummers that the general public may not recognize at all. On top of that, the product feedback and suggestions that our artists provide are invaluable.

GH: Of course our cymbal artists are very important to us because they play a large role in developing our sounds and key models. A good example for this year has been the Artist Concept series, which are unique and specific sounds that reflect those artists and the personality they bring to the drum kit.

LC: Extremely important. Our artists are who our customers aspire to be. And while the whole endorsement arena has changed drastically over the last few years with the advent of YouTube and other online platforms, endorsers remain important – whether they play on arena stages in front of



Andy Morris, President of Dream Cymbals and Gongs

tens of thousands of people, or whether their videos are watched by millions online.

AM: Artist relations are a huge component of our Family. While only a small proportion of artists who apply end up with a deal, everyone who applies is a potential fan and customer and we do our best to develop those relationships, too. Artists play a critical role in defining a brand and building awareness, especially in new markets. Our approach to artists is somewhat different than companies of generations past, simply out of necessity and size. Artists are *always* connected to a dealer for any purchases and to complete the circle between dealer, artist/customer, and Dream.

TS: This is an interesting question. When I purchased the Wuhan brand from Paul Real, he had major artists using and endorsing the Wuhan brand including Neal Peart of Rush, Jeff Hamilton (jazz legend), and many famous rock players such as: Doan Perry of Jethro Tull, Mike Terrana, et cetera.

When I took over Wuhan, my goal was to make high quality cymbals that drummers can use... for less! Most of the drum and cymbal companies support very few clinics. In my opinion this is



Gabriel Harris, Sales Manager for U.S. and Canada, Meinl USA

a strong indication that very few endorsements increase sales like they did in the '70s and '80s.

Have you noticed any practices – display, promotions, et cetera – on the parts of dealers who do exceptionally well with cymbal sales?

TS: Dealers who display our cymbals next to the other name brands are our best customers. A drummer who compares a Wuhan crash, splash, ride, or China can hear and see our great-sounding line of cymbals for a lot less than the other name brands.

GH: The stores with the best selection and depth of our lines, like Byzance, have typically sold more cymbals than stores with a very limited selection. The problem for local retailers is that they often have a limited amount of floor space to devote to cymbals and they have a limited amount of customers who may visit their store. However, online dealers can offer an entire catalog and sell to virtually anyone, although its not the same as walking into your favorite drum shop and finding “that” cymbal. I have encouraged independent dealers and drum shop owners that when a customer has made the investment to drive to their store and look at their selection, that is the time to capitalize and make the sale happen. One of my goals is to continue to build up and support dealers at the local level to have the right cymbal selection

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and be able to offer Meinl cymbals so they can be “the spot” for that drummer in town that loves cymbals.

AM: The simplest way for a dealer to have success with Dream is to stock a selection from each line and put them out next to their most expensive cymbals from other brands. The second thing is to participate and promote the recycling program, which drives customers into your shop and costs you nothing but a bit of time. Stick to MAP. The dealers with the best turnover and growing sales are absolutely also the ones who are monitoring MAP and stick to it. Finally, if you don’t have a good website that manages sales, start listing on Reverb.com. Nearly all of our top dealers without strong websites of their own – and even some that do have great sites – list our product on Reverb and do well with it there.

LC: Partnering with dealers on social media promotions for specific products has been a great avenue that’s been a huge boon for both shops and consumers. Case-in-point: our SABIAN Sound Kit SSKIT promo. Dealers loved the way we could target a specific market segment to drive them to their shop and make the buy – and it’s easy for us as a manufacturer.

Also, dealers that have a designated, well-trained drum staff – either one person full-time or multiple people part-time – will do best. It seems that having crossover staff between departments is inevitable, but given a choice, customers will seek out shops that employ actual drum talent. It helps develop long-term relationships with customers, thus driving future sales. And of course, we also know that dealers who host a SABIAN Day Sale have been very successful!

VF: Online sales continue to grow in importance, and dealers that have appealing websites with compelling content are benefitting. In-store displays that incorporate cymbals with drum sets, showing cool combinations, stacks, and that are playable, seem to help dealers increase sales. We have seen that especially with dealers that display our L80 cymbals together with a drumset with low-volume heads or mutes.

Are there any trends of note that you’ve been observing in the market?

GH: When we introduced the Pure Alloy line this year a lot of drummers told us that they had been wanting or looking for a brighter cymbal sound, which Pure Alloy fits. However, we see a lot of drummers blending Byzance and Pure Alloy cymbals on their kits, and Byzance is still growing, too, which signals to me that having diversity in sound and texture is the new cymbal trend.

VF: We haven’t seen any major changes in cymbal trends over the past year. Thin cymbals and larger diameters are what is “in” now.

LC: We’ve noticed that big drums and big cymbals continue to be back in a big way... it’s just like the ‘70s!



Luis Cardoso, GON BOPS Brand Manager, SABIAN Marketing Manager



Think John Bonham: 15” hats, 20” crashes and 22” rides are very popular still. Also: stacks, stacks, stacks. Effects cymbals are every popular, which as a manufacturer known for our innovation and sounds, we are personally quite thrilled about.

AM: Yes, but I would rather not share them to be honest. Some cymbal companies are trendsetters, others are followers. Most are followers.

TS: According to import statistics there are now record amounts of cymbals being imported and sold in the USA from China and Turkey.

Do you have any recent or upcoming product introductions you’d like to alert our readers to?

LC: Yes, but if I told you about them, I’d have to... well, you know how that line goes. All we can say is... stay tuned!

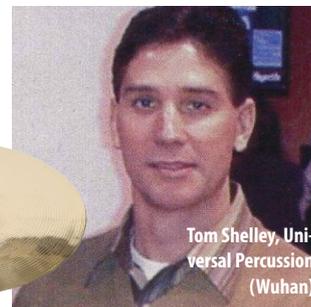
TS: In early 2018 we will introduce a new line of durable brilliant sheet cymbals that are made from a strong, carbon-based alloy. Drummers will be able to buy our new Wuhan Heavy Metal cymbals for about the cost of an entry-level sheet cymbal.

VF: We marked the 25th Anniversary of the A Custom series with a stunning 23” limited edition Ride. We only made 1,000; each one had a unique serial number; our CEO Craigie Zildjian hand signed the inside of the bell of all 1,000 pieces; and we developed an incredible package with a certificate of authenticity, for each cymbal. It’s truly a collector’s item, a functional work of art. This cymbal was one part of our marketing campaign around the 25th anniversary of A Custom, one of the world’s most popular and iconic cymbals, for many years.

AM: The Dark Matter Eclipse ride, a half-lathed ride currently in 21” configuration, is really growing nicely and is only just on shelves in the last few months. Also, Scott Pellegrin’s new Re-FX Naughty Saucer is taking off based on the incredible versatility of those effects. It is the ultimate analog/digital drum effect for those that want the sound without any wires. I guess you could say it is a wireless drum effect.

GH: We introduced two new Artist Concept stacks this summer for Benny Greb and Matt Halpern. First, the AC-CRASHER for Benny Greb is four 8” cymbals (three of which are Byzance) stacked together to create a shaker or an electronic hi-hat sound and includes an auxiliary hi-hat arm – street price \$499.99. Next, the AC-DOUBLE-DOWN for Matt Halpern includes a 17” Byzance dark crash cymbal and an 18” Byzance dark china that have each been lathed on one side only. This stack is meant to be reversible producing both a sharp attack or long sustain depending on how you stack the two cymbals – street price is \$599.99.

“Endorsers remain important – whether they play on arena stages in front of tens of thousands of people, or whether their videos are watched by millions online.” – Luis Cardoso



Tom Shelley, Universal Percussion (Wuhan)



Finally, what are your expectations for cymbal sales in 2018?

VF: 2018 will mark Zildjian's 395th year. We expect to see further growth in 2018, further market share gains, and reinforcement of our great market-leading brand image and reputation.

AM: We expect growth in the 30-60 percent range in the coming 12 months as we expand our reach into new markets while improving our ground game in North America. We have hired Kent Aberle, an exceptional clinician and drummer, as a sales rep/clinician/product specialist. His experience selling Dream at the retail level combined with his musical prowess makes him a valuable asset in our new approach to dealer relations. He helps put a consistent face for many of our dealers to relate to.

LC: We believe that we'll continue to see an increase as more churches migrate back to acoustic drums. In addition, we're so honored to have a large family of loyal SABIAN customers. We have made a commitment to continue exceed-



Victor Filonovich,
Category Manager –
Cymbals, Zildjian

ing their expectations, while turning some heads with great new instruments in the coming year. We're looking forward to 2018!

GH: There are some things in life that will always remain special. For cymbals, there is nothing like playing a hand-made cymbal that has been crafted and shaped by a skilled artisan using only the simple

tools of a hammer, anvil, and a blank piece of metal. For that reason, I believe that our growth as a cymbal manufacturer will continue as more drummers get to experience playing our Byzance cymbals for the first time – hopefully at their favorite local shop!

TS: We are expecting a growth of at least 25 percent in the next 12 months. Drummers need to know that Universal Percussion is the exclusive importer of all cymbals from the genuine Wuhan factory into the USA. We are in a partnership with the same factory (three generations old) that made all of the Wuhan branded cymbals that Neal Peart used in the early '80s. The Wuhan factory has over 130 workers. Others who import cymbals from China are made by very small factories that are not related to the genuine Wuhan brand. **MMR**

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Keeping Time in a Changing Market

Dealers Share Thoughts About the B&O Percussion Sales *By Christian Wissmuller*

Results from this month's retailer survey were something of a mixed bag, though there were some takeaways. While complaints regarding online competition are pretty standard, regardless of the topic being discussed, for whatever reason the realm of band & orchestral percussion instrument sales seems to be particularly hard-hit. Even participants in this poll who shared generally upbeat views on this market segment often cited difficulties related to keeping up with internet retailers.

While it'll come as a surprise to virtually nobody that school music directors, districts, and student musicians were most frequently noted as "typical" B&O percussion instruments, it may be of interest that a good portion cited young to young-ish (20s-40s) adults looking to "jam" as go-to customers for this type of gear.

Another "what to make of this?" result of this survey: for every retailer who described typical B&O percussion end-users as being lower-middle or, even, low income, there were those who

remarked that a trend in the past year has been one of customers more willing to spend more (even a lot more) to get a quality instrument that will last for years to come.



On average, how would you describe – age, income level, ability, intended usage of instruments/gear – your typical B&O percussion customer?

"Elementary to middle school, middle class. All are brand-new students. Many return the rentals at the end of the year and don't continue the next year."

Jennifer Harrigfeld
Woodstock Music Shop
Woodstock, New York

"Middle-aged parents buying for their kids."

Dean Tower
Dean's Strings and Music Suppliers
Whitehorse, Yukon
Canada

"Beginning fifth and sixth graders."

Ej Dombrowski
Jim's Music
Green Bay, Wisconsin

"Middle school, beginner, beginner band, sticks and mallets and rentals for snare/bell kits."

Justin Sims
Sims Music
Columbia, South Carolina

"There is no one or average band instrument customer. They come from all income levels, and the ages are usually between 35-40."

Mark Magellan
Bill's Music Sales, Inc.
Stockton, California

"Young beginning students from families with low to moderate income, primarily. Starting band and continuing band levels 1 & 2."

Ted Engstrom
Sunday Guitars
Bend, Oregon

"Lower income, beginner to intermediate, for school usage."

Paul Durand
Family Piano Company
Waukegan, Illinois

"In their early 20s... just getting a band together to jam."

Shelly Morris
Morris Music Store & Studio
Sheridan, Wyoming

"Intermediate drummers and mature drummers, students."

Jimmy Marks
GLYNS Guitars
Fostoria, Ohio

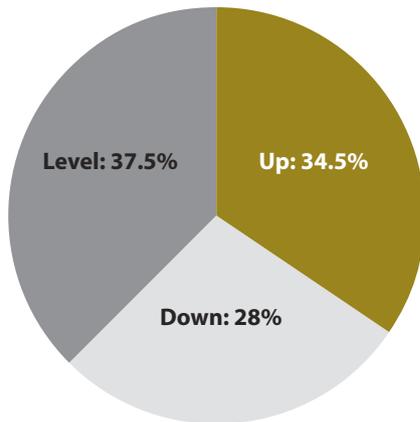
"Schools and institutions, eighth grade through college."

Randy Pratt
Sweetwater
Fort Wayne, Indiana

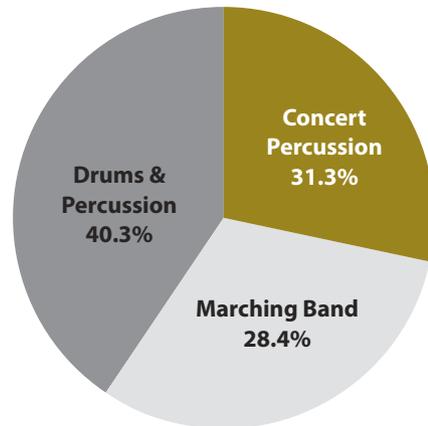
"16-35 years old, upper-middle income, [purchasing for] 'jam' usage (djembe, hand percussion)."

Allegro Music Center
Miami, Florida

Compared to fall of 2016, sales of band & orchestra percussion instruments for your business are...



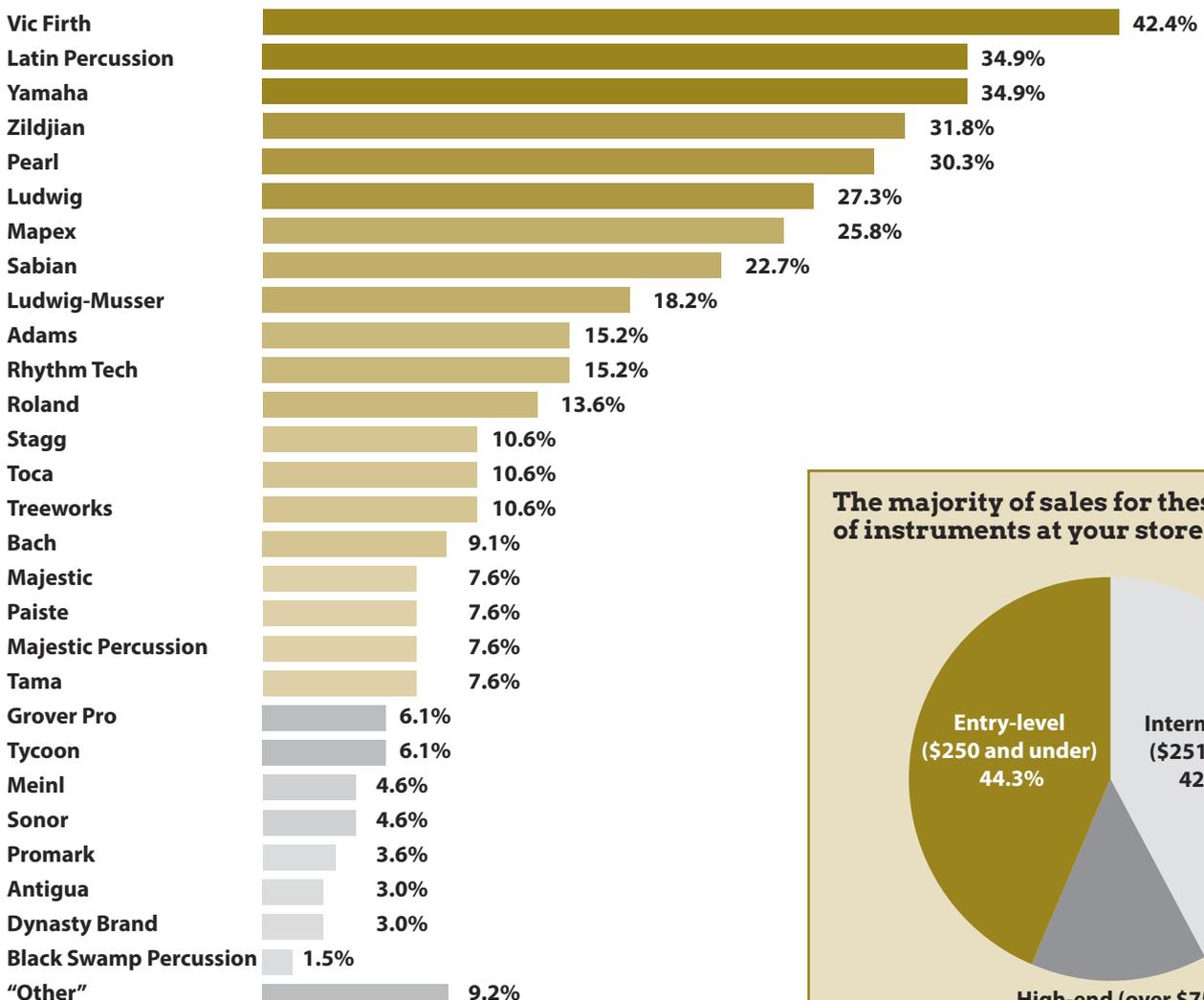
Which type of instrument "family" within the larger B&O percussion category do you sell most of?



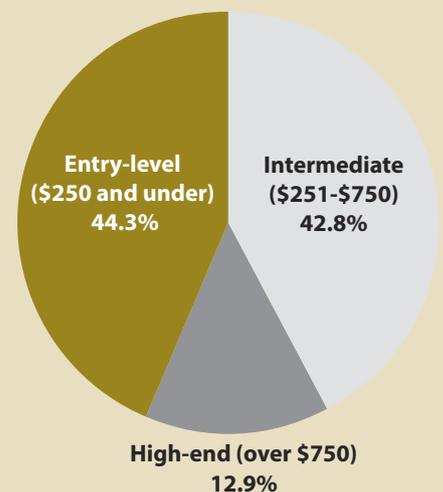
"We service seven school districts. Marching percussion is a large part of that business."

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

What brands are generating the most profit for your store?



The majority of sales for these types of instruments at your store are...



(The most commonly cited brands for those who selected "other" were, in order: Tye, Eastman, and Orion Drums)

Have you been noticing any significant trends with respect to B&O percussion instruments – either on the supplier or the consumer side?

"It's hard to compete with catalogs, internet, and MAP policy in the entire music industry!"

Bruce Marion
Marion Music
Melbourne, Florida

"Suppliers are not stocking as heavily and consumers are buying good quality instead of economy brands."

Wesley Edwards
Draisen Edwards Music
Anderson, South Carolina/Atlanta, Georgia

"On the consumer end, I'm definitely seeing that parents are still very money and space-conscious with their purchases. Parents of beginners are wary about drum purchases and prefer practice pads."

Karen Janiszewski
Music Room
Cheektowaga, New York

"Everyone wants price to be lower for everything. They take pictures of

store merchandise and then look it up on the web and tell us, "Well, I can get it for \$_____ on Amazon or Musician's Friend or Sweetwater" et cetera. We need to stop the big stores from taking our clients somehow!"

Sue Sexton
Greenfield Music and Amps, LLC
Greenfield, Ohio

"Better availability this year. More schools are doing 'total percussion,' rather than just a snare drum."

Kevin Walters
Central Penn Music
Palmyra, Pennsylvania

"More and more ISOs (instrument shaped objects) flooding the market with cheaply made, poor quality product shows up every year. As for school purchases, they're finding budgetary constraints preclude the purchase of new equipment and we're refurbishing more and more of the old stuff for them."

Bob Josjor
Lou Kraus Music, Inc.
Ogallala, Nebraska

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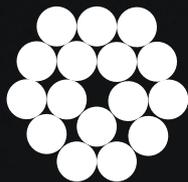
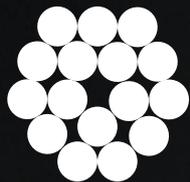
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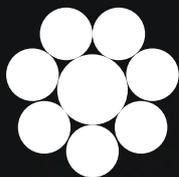
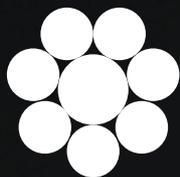


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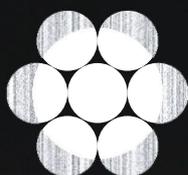
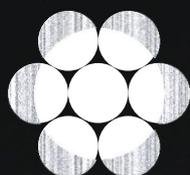




RUTE
16 dowels



RUTE 202
7 dowels surrounding
thicker center dowel



RUTE 303
7 dowels with bevel



RUTE 505
31 plastic bristles

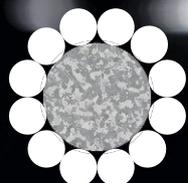
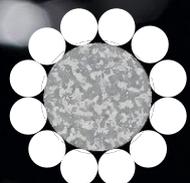


RUTE 606
19 dowels

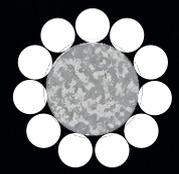
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12 birch dowels with foam center



Steve Smith Tala Wands TW12
11 bamboo dowels with foam center



Steve Smith Tala Wands TW4
4 bamboo slats with foam center

For Your Consideration



The 2017 Dealers' Choice Award Nominees

Submit your vote for the 25th Annual *MMR* Dealers' Choice Awards. Only subscribers to Musical Merchandise Review (*MMR*) magazine get to participate.

25th Anniversary
2017
MMR
MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW
DEALERS' CHOICE AWARD
Product of the Year

Bittree PS4825F
BOSS Katana
VOX Continental
BUFFET CRAMPON Prodigie Student Clarinet
Breedlove Oregon Concerto Myrtlewood
HAILUN 161
XO XO 1602 LTR Trumpet
YAMAHA Disklavier

25th Anniversary
2017
MMR
MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW
DEALERS' CHOICE AWARD
Electric Guitar of the Year

D'Angelico Premier Bob Weir SS
ERNE BALL MUSIC MAN St. Vincent
Fender American Professional Stratocaster
Ibanez RG1070PBZ
gibson Les Paul
YAMAHA RevStar

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2017
MMR
MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW
DEALERS' CHOICE AWARD
Electric Bass of the Year

Fender American Precision
Ibanez Soundgear Series
Riversong GUITARS GS 5 String
Spector Euro4 1977
YAMAHA BB Series

25th Anniversary
2017
MMR
MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW
DEALERS' CHOICE AWARD
Acoustic Guitar of the Year

Breedlove Oregon Concerto Myrtlewood
Martin & Co. EST. 1833 D28
H. Jimenez Tradición e Innovación LG-1
Tanglewood Java
Taylor GUITARS QUALITY 224CE
Riversong GUITARS 2 GA Stage Triple Play
YAMAHA Transacoustic

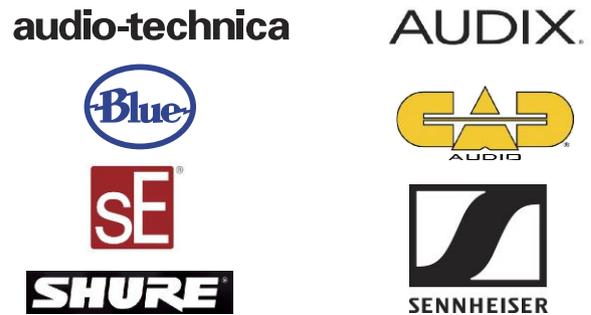
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Geekin' Out

How ReedGeek is Creating Better Musicians Around the World, One Gadget at a Time

by Victoria Wasylak

As Mauro Di Gioia picks up the phone to chat with *MMR* this past October, he's fresh off the plane for a trip to China, and awake a short seven hours after putting together an instructional video for a teacher at 1 a.m. It's all par for the course for the founder of ReedGeek, who like many entrepreneurs is happily enveloped in their "seven-day operation."

Except Di Gioia carries a touch more weight on his shoulders, since he literally invented and started a single industry: reed maintenance.

"Historically, people didn't do anything to maintain their reeds," Di Gioia explains. "We actually developed this industry. We were the first ones ever to come in and start to develop the tool that all woodwind players can use."

By developing tools to adjust reeds Di Gioia has developed a safe, easy, and kid-friendly way to ensure that players are getting the best sound possible.

It's nothing less than what you'd expect from this self-described "equipment person" and music entrepreneur. Right now, ReedGeek's roster of products includes everything from reed stabilizers to the ReedGeek Klangbogen bore and the ReedGeek "Universal" Classic tool.

Di Gioia's story begins on the West Coast, as alternative bands were beginning to boom in the 1990s.

"I'm a woodwind player by trade - predominantly single reeds," he explains. I grew up mainline Northern California and Northern Nevada, so I had the chance to play in a lot of the bands up here. Went to school at UC Davis. At that time, a lot of bands were breaking out of that area - we used to play a lot with Cake and Cherry Poppin' Daddies."

From that experience, there was one trend that he quickly picked up on, and that was the difficulty that reeds could pose to active musicians.

"Everyone's bane of their existence is their reed if you're a woodwind player - you're constantly buying reeds," he says. From there, he started to craft tools that could be used to correct the shape of reeds for players, a safer alternative to reed knives. Admittedly, Di Gioia says that selling them was never part of the plan.

"It started very organically - I'd be giving one to a friend, and so forth. It's very much a story if the business grew just from getting out there quite literally - going to trade shows, people asking 'hey would you sell these?'" Four years in, things really started picking up and looking like this isn't something you do on weekends anymore." Di Gioia says. "It's never a marketing plan where I feel like 'I



ReedGeek Founder Mauro Di Gioia

can see a lot of these,' it's always 'can I contribute something?'"

"We were the first company and I was the first person to actually to introduce the first practical reed tool for both single or double reeds - something that was easy to use, something that people could use for adjusting and maintaining their reeds. Between single and double reeds, we have some of the top players in every genre that use the ReedGeek - major orchestras and touring musicians. And now we're in more than 20 countries."

Despite this growth, Di Gioia has maintained his roots, with facilities in Carson City, Nevada. But the gear is only one half of what ReedGeek prides itself on as a company; creating and selling his products is only part of his mission.

"ReedGeek is half-product and half-education," Di Gioia explains.

Most recently, Di Gioia was invited back to China by bassoonist, educator, and sponsor Stephen Ye after an initial trip in the spring, again bringing his reed knowledge and tools to top universities and conservatories, focusing on working with the sound, working with reeds, and having proper reed adjusting tools.

"He's been very instrumental in bringing myself, ReedGeek, and my knowledge of reed adjustments to the top universities and conservatories. We're teaching reed re-adjustments, a little bit about acoustics, and introducing the powers of ReedGeek. What's kind of happening in China [is] a lot of the students want the top stuff in the world, the really searched out the best things in the world - and so they're really active in bringing in the best players, clinicians and the best products."

Thus far, he's spoken at schools like the China Conservatory of Music Beijing, Wuhan Conservatory, and Shanghai Conservatory preparing students for upcoming festivals and clarinet camps, and he's currently working on developing more research on how to improve double reeds. Maybe it all seems a bit much to obsess and invest so much time and energy into a single category of MI, but the truth is, there's no such thing as "too much" when the reed is the gateway to good performances from woodwind players. When the reed's working well, Di Gioia says it just gets easier from there.

"The students are really excited about understanding more about their reed, because it's really directly related to how well they play their instrument. That's something that can't be stressed and hasn't been stressed enough. When the reed is happy and you have control of your reed, everything is downstream from that." **MMR**

Optimist, Pessimist, or Realist?

The Way You Think Daily Decides Your Fate in Business

By Menzie **Pittman**

How You Think Dictates Your Reality

We have a choice to make every day. Are you an optimist, pessimist, or realist about the changes that affect your businesses? And what effects can you have on an outcome or a change by being aware of how you normally react and process?

Revitalization. That was the word that preceded the growth boom currently happening in Nashville. In 1985, it was a completely different city. Back then, many felt Nashville had already seen its true glory days. Now, however, some thirty years later, it is one of the country's fastest growing regions, and it continues to grow rapidly – on average, one hundred people per day are moving into that region.

Whether that's a good or bad thing depends on your personal outlook. Living just outside the Washington, D.C. area, along with having many friends and family in Nashville, terms like revitalization and sequestration are of particular interest to me, and should be to anyone in business.

The Optimist: I have always been an optimist, and I believe the reason is that I simply like feeling the best I can feel. There are more benefits from optimism than one can describe. It stirs the pot of contemplation, which in turn invites curiosity. When you are an optimist, your energy is higher, and that enables you to have more creative thinking. You will never have a good idea when you are in lower vibrations; that simply works against nature.

I am certainly not suggesting that you have your head in the clouds, although I don't always think that's a bad idea either. I am stating that an optimistic thinker is more creative, more relaxed, and certainly more intuitive.

The Pessimist: This personality type spends a great deal of mental energy on worry. The pessimist holds the belief that the outcome of any and all problems will only worsen. At every opportunity this person spends valuable emotion defending that the worst-case scenario is not only possible, but also inevitable. Pessimism is fear-based thinking and stagnant.

The Realist: This pragmatic type of person is generally born out of his or her experiences. A realist is someone who has had both successes and setbacks and is sober in the decision-making process. Unfortunately for the realist, the price of sobriety is paid in creative currency. The realist makes a great center pole for the optimist to dance around. The realist is stable, but lacks excitement and takes very few risks. For this reason, the realist is probably not the best candidate for the entrepreneurial arena.

One often overlooked truth: A pessimist will choose to see the glass half empty, and a realist will call it neither half empty nor half full, but the optimist always sees the potential in the glass.

Have you ever noticed that pessimist forms his beliefs based on the past? He or she elects to discount current potential based on results of prior happenings. I would say this personality lacks imagination.

The realist bases decisions on the current moment. In the realist's eyes, it is what it is, and although he or she observes the past

and considers it in decision-making, he or she lacks the vision to see what could happen if conditions were improved or different. This person also lacks some imagination, and could benefit from some much-needed courage.

The optimist is bored without some creative risk and the reason is simple: without the potential of creative risk, there is nothing about which to be optimistic. There is no chance for improvement. The optimist needs potential to breathe – optimism is his air.

Blame is a by-product of pessimism. No default setting is used more quickly than blame for a pessimist. Accountability is not the pessimist's go-to reaction because it's inconvenient to take responsibility. Blame is a well-worn road.

A favorite tool of the realist is higher authority, or corporate automation. It's been around a long time, but now that corporations have gotten bigger and bigger, it's back in style. "That's just the way it is." I believe Bruce Hornsby wrote a song about it.

“When you are an optimist, your energy is higher, and that enables you to have more creative thinking.”

Whether it's schools, insurance companies, or the DMV, all institutions are defaulting more often to an automated approach.

Ultimately, the optimist bases everything on hope and vision. This personality is forward-looking. Where others see blocks and restrictions, the optimist sees opportunity. Think about Steve Jobs or Walt Disney. I think it is fair to say they were definitely optimists.

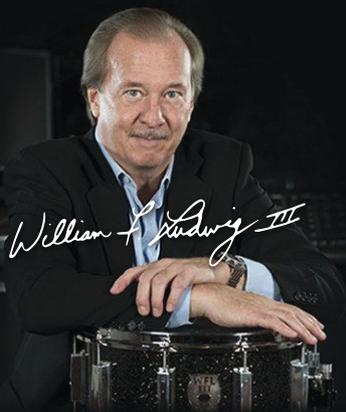
In Closing...

Before you decide anything, the way you think, the way you consider and the way you process makes all the difference in your personal world, and certainly, your business world. So, I'm betting on optimism. "That's Just the Way It Is." **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.

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Rewriting History

In 1964, Ludwig Drums and Ringo Starr changed the drum industry forever when Starr appeared on "The Ed Sullivan Show," performing with his Ludwig Black Oyster Pearl drum set. Over 50 years later, a Ludwig is still passing the goods on to Mr. Starr - and drummers all over the world.

After being away from the business since 1991, Bill Ludwig III, the grandson of Ludwig Drums founder William F. Ludwig, started WFLIII Drums, establishing himself as the last and only Ludwig still in the drum business.

When Ludwig talks to *MMR* on the phone, he's en route to Drum Center of Portsmouth in New Hampshire to meet with drum fans, sign autographs, and take photos.

"It really works, because people want to come in and meet me, and once I get them one-on-one, it's a good easy way to sell 'em a drum." He eagerly meets with fans who are just as excited to get to know a member of one of the most pivotal families in drum history.

For his new company, Ludwig brands himself as "the sound of generations," but the real tagline that Ludwig wants to get out there is "Bill Ludwig III - the only Ludwig in the drum business."

"Some people still think I'm with Ludwig, which is owned by



Bill Ludwig III with a photo of his grandfather

WFLIII Drums Carries on the Real Family Legacy of Ludwig

By Victoria Wasylak

Selmer Saxophone Company, which is owned by Steinway Piano Company, which is owned by a real estate company," he explains.

But with things back in his own hands, Ludwig has been able to retrace some family history.

"I'd been away from the drum business since 1991 and I really missed it. I kept thinking 'boy, I'd love to get back into it' but I didn't have the money or the drive to do it," Ludwig says.

It was a few years ago when Ludwig received the sign he needed - from his own family history, no less. Sitting on the wall in Ludwig's kitchen, Ludwig removed a photo of his grandfather from the wall to study it. His grandfather was pictured working in the WFL Drums factory; after selling Ludwig Drums, he no longer could use his name to start a business, so he opted to use his initials instead.

"There's a picture in my kitchen, and he looks so happy and so proud in the factory testing drums," Ludwig explains. "I took the picture off the wall for some reason, and on the back, in my father's handwriting it says 'Senior, starting over, age 62.'"

It was precisely the nudge that Ludwig needed to start his own company, following suit with his grandfather and going on to found WFLIII Drums.



Classic Wood Snare Drum



Top Hat & Cane Collectors Acrylic Snare Drum

"I was 59 three years ago, and I thought, dammit, if he can do it...I gotta go for it," he said. "Now here I am, age 62, not able to use my name, so my company is WFLIII Drums, in the exact same position that he [his grandfather] was in. The similarities are just really unbelievable."

From there, Ludwig knew what was next on his agenda for the business – and it looped back to that pivotal moment for Ludwig when Ringo Starr himself got involved.

"Ringo played Ludwig because he saw a sample of the finish that we were coming out with called Black Oyster Pearl – this was in a dealer's store in London. It was cool to play an American-made product to people from England," Ludwig explains. "He bought the drum set. The next thing you know, they were on Ed Sullivan and in every picture, any shot, of any of the Beatles, you saw the Ludwig logo in the background, and the next day our phone was ringing off the wall for the black oyster Ringo set. It was just unbelievable. We had to build a huge addition to our factory."

The Starr-Ludwig bond strengthened when William Ludwig Jr. met up with the Beatles drummer to give him a gold-plated snare drum in Chicago as a token of appreciation for the exposure that he had granted to the company. Backstage at the venue, they snapped a photo together – Bill III didn't make it out for that (he was in fourth grade at the time).

So naturally, when Ludwig started his own business, the first thing he wanted to do was put a WFLIII drum in the hands of Starr, who he still keeps in contact with.

"I told him 'the first drum off the assembly line I want to give to you,'" Ludwig says of his fateful call to the drummer.

"Two years ago, backstage at one of his concerts, we re-created the picture of Dad giving him the drum."

In amazement, Starr looked over the original photos of himself with Ludwig Jr. in Chicago, which he had never seen before.

In 2017, WFLIII Drums is a two-person operation, consisting of Ludwig himself and CEO Kipton Blue. With Ludwig's fifty-plus years as a drummer, and Blue's expertise in both business and the drum world, the two make an ideal team.

Ludwig has noted that some of the best parts of being back in the MI industry have been taking the reins of creative design and getting back to drum shows. After growing up going to NAMM shows with his family, seeing his daughters – ages 13 and 16 – do the same and hand out their business cards is particularly sentimental.

After starting with snare drums – what Ludwig calls the "focal point" of a drum set – the WFLIII Drums owner says full drum kits might be in the future for the company. In keeping with the lega-



cy of his family, all of the parts of WFLIII drums are made by the company themselves – Ludwig was, of course, the only drum company at the time that made everything (heads, hoops, etc.) themselves.

"The next logical step would be full drum kits. After that, innovative hardware and possibly another line of snare drums," he said. "We're about to get into our own factory pretty soon."

And since business for WFLIII Drums is booming – quite literally – it shouldn't take too long before a factory is the next entry in the Ludwig family history books.

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Hello!

My wife and I enjoy cruising. During meals, we are usually seated with new acquaintances. As so often is the case, the “What do you do?” question will eventually surface.

In the ‘80s, my response was that I was a music educator and sold musical instruments in NYC. The comments and the smiles were immediate. One person would say, “I love music,” and another person would say, “My children take piano lessons.” What followed were conversations filled with joy about an activity that captures the deepest of human feelings.

By 2000, I was forced to close my music business – MIDI hardware and software 1.0 required more knowledgeable workers than I could find and afford – and was later recruited and trained by one of the largest wealth management firms on the planet. Along the way I qualified as a licensed investment professional and obtained a Financial Planning Certificate as well as a Certified Wealth Strategist designation. The dinner table conversations then took a dramatic shift. When the subject of wealth management and succession planning came up: Silence....

Given my music background and financial training. I believe the future of music retail requires establishing a culture where employees are sharing and managing knowledge with their most profitable customers. It’s no longer viable to place most of the focus on tangible assets such as inventory turns. To successfully compete against the “Amazons” of the world, the real value is in your intangible assets including customer relationships, knowledge, culture, customer loyalty, as well as in your customer relationship management system, also called CRM.

Look how the market values Microsoft’s tangible assets versus its intangible assets. A key tangible asset for Microsoft is its headquarters in Redmond Washington. The value of the building is \$1.2 billion. By contrast, Microsoft’s

intangible assets, which consist primarily of its global human capital, are worth \$500 billion!

Intangible assets must be measured and managed. And since you won’t find intangible assets on your balance sheet, they’re easy to ignore.

My column will offer sound advice to help the MI retailer:

- Grow and monetize its intellectual capital: its knowledge assets
- Train employees to be *Value Creators*
- Get profitable customers to keep coming back
- Build a culture of knowledge sharing
- Implement a customer learning process
- Accelerate business value now, and maximize value when it’s time to exit

Let me share an experience with you. I was recently on a cruise celebrating our 40th wedding anniversary with my wife. In our hurry to get to the airport on time, I left behind my travel guitar. When we got to our destination, I was able to locate a music store, which rented acoustic guitars. The staff was extremely courteous and even threw in a gig bag and some picks. Still, as I was walking out, I kept thinking what a missed opportunity for the sales person to get to know me by asking me some questions like, “What style of music do you play?” Or perhaps, “How often do you travel?”

Or even better, “What type of guitar would your ideal rental instrument be?” In other words, learn about my music habits and what was important to me.

Tapping into, and successfully managing your intangible assets, is key to growing the value of your business

and selling it profitably. Want more proof? Take a look at the company that sets the standard for customer service, education, and knowledge sharing: Sweetwater. Chuck Surack, founder and president created an enormously valuable and effective culture.

I first met Chuck in the mid-1980s at a NAMM show, when we both fell in love with the Kurzweil K250. With a lapse of 30 years since we had last connected, Chuck was kind enough to re-introduce me to the folks at NAMM, which triggered a series of speaking events at NAMM Idea Center, writing opportunities for NAMM U, and writing columns for

“The future of music retail requires establishing a culture where employees are sharing and managing knowledge with their most profitable customers.”

“Intangible assets must be measured and managed. And since you won’t find intangible assets on your balance sheet, they’re easy to ignore.”

trade magazines. This singular introduction allowed me to connect my musical past, and also with my passion for financial education by helping MI retailers unlock the wealth trapped in their business.

I first read *MMR* as a young music retailer. It was my “go-to magazine” when I was looking for new gear. The magazine has a storied history which dates back to 1879 and, under the editorial helm of Christian Wissmuller, and its publisher Terry Lowe, *MMR* is well positioned for continued growth. It’s an honor for me to write a column for the magazine.

For those that plan on attending Winter NAMM 2018, I invite you to my talk at the NAMM *Idea Center* titled: “5 Ways to Add Value to your Business – Fast!”

I will be exploring value-building activities – employee talent, processes and technology, customer relationships, community outreach, and professional and personal fulfillment – to capture opportunities and ignite innovation in your business. This session has been designed for owners, and key managers who are aspiring owners.

I believe brick & mortar music retailers, who continue to innovate and create new services will successfully compete against the “box pushers.” After all, Amazon can’t shake the hand of your customer, and ask them how their granddaughter is enjoying her piano lessons.



Jaimie Blackman – a former music educator & retailer – is a certified wealth strategist & succession planner. Blackman helps music retailers accelerate business value now and maximize value when it’s time to exit. Blackman is a frequent speaker at NAMM’s Idea Center and a freelance writer for MMR’s “The

Sound of Money” column. Visit jaimieblackman.com to register for educational webinars and to subscribe to his podcasts.



MI Retailers Hosting Live Performance Spaces, Beware

by Stuart B. Shapiro

Creating a performance venue in your music store is a great way to connect with the community and increase customer traffic. A performance space can also provide an additional source of income if tickets to shows by local bands or national acts are part of the plan. However, even if the performance space is only going to be used for recitals performed by students involved in a band camp, or students who take music lessons at the store, there are some legal issues affecting how you go about setting up a live performance space.

First and foremost is the issue of licensing the music. The holder of a music copyright (the author and/or publisher) has the right to control the use of the music for live performances in addition to the right to control making copies of the music. Therefore, any live performance of a copyrighted piece of music is a violation of copyright law unless permission for the performance is obtained in advance.

Usually authors and publishers assign the right to collect money for live performances to a Performance Rights Organization (PRO) such as ASCAP or BMI. These organizations sell “blanket” licenses to various venues, including everything from grocery stores to restaurants, nightclubs, concert venues, and music stores. The PROs then collect the licensing fees that the venues pay for using the music and distribute the funds to the authors and publishers of the works.

A blanket license only permits the venue to use the music in a particular PRO’s repertory. Therefore, live performance venues in the United States require separate blanket licenses from ASCAP, BMI, and SESAC to permit the performance of music that is part of each of their separate catalogs.

MI retailers generally want to support the creativity of musicians, and therefore should want to pay for the privilege of using their music. However, there is an additional motivation for paying to use music – which is the real concern that failing to obtain a license can lead to the assessment of substantial money damages against the music store.

PROs retain field agents (spotters) who go around to unlicensed venues and basically act as spies to see if any of their music is being performed. If they catch a venue using their music without a license, the next step is usually a letter demanding a large payment and demanding that the venue either stop using their music or buy a license. Ignoring the demand for payment results in a lawsuit for statutory damages.

17 U.S. Code Section 504 provides that an infringer of a copyright may be liable for up to \$30,000 for one infringement of a work (each unlicensed public performance of a copyrighted work constitutes a separate infringement). Furthermore, if the copyright owner or PRO can prove that the infringement was being done willfully (usually a continued infringement after the venue has been warned) the damages can be up to \$150,000. While the damages awarded, and settlement figures are usually much lower, PROs often try to tack on their costs and attorney’s fees when bringing an infringement claim.

We reached out to ASCAP and BMI for comment about in-store performance spaces. BMI did not respond, but ASCAP was kind enough to provide a copy of their standard form License Agreement for Music Stores.

ASCAP’s standard form Agreement permits only “non-dramatic” public performances of the ASCAP repertory (music not to be accompanied by dialogue, pantomime, dance, stage action or visual representation of the work). Of course, any public performance outside the parameters of the license constitutes a copyright infringement. PRO licenses do not provide permission for the music to be recorded and the ASCAP license excludes permission for the performance to be live-streamed over the internet or broadcast by the venue. (Live streaming requires a separate license from Soundexchange).

The ASCAP Music Store license also specifically prohibits performances “where a direct or indirect admission, entry or similar fee or charge that may

be reduced to monetary compensation is imposed to hear such performance” – so, no charging the students to play at the recital, and no charging admission to get in. Renting the space to local bands to put on concerts and charge admission is not permitted under the standard license. That would require the negotiation of additional permission and an additional fee.

Some Frequently Asked Questions

What if I only buy a license from one of the PROs?

It would be extremely hard to monitor whether a band or artist is only playing the music from a particular catalog. Usually, the artists themselves don’t know which PRO covers a particular song, and it would be unwise for a venue to try to put the burden on the performers to determine which music they can use.

Why doesn’t the band buy the license?

PROs license the venues. They do not license the performers. The theory is that the venue is attracting customers by using the music and therefore should pay for the privilege. Whether the performers get paid or play for free is of no consequence, since the venue gets the benefit of having the music on its premises

What if only original music is being performed?

The author of the music has the right to control its public performance, so theoretically, if the artist is only performing their own material, they can grant permission to the venue to use the music. However, it isn’t worth the risk involved to try to ensure that the performer isn’t inspired to throw in an occasional cover song, or to determine whether the band has previously licensed away its rights to a particular song to the record company or publisher (which would then have the right to control the public performance).

What about music in the public domain?

Currently, there is a lot of music freely available to be used because it is in the public domain. Copyrights have expired on songs written before 1923, and some music lapsed into the public domain because the copyrights weren't properly registered before 1978 or because the music was published without the requisite copyright notices. Clearing rights to music is a complex process with many factors to consider in order to determine whether a particular piece of music is freely usable. The danger lies in the fact that, although a particular piece of music is in the public domain, there can be a valid copyright on the arrangement or version that is being used. For example, derivative works created from public domain songs with slight variations in the words or music are separately copyrightable. Therefore, it would be extremely difficult for any venue to try to determine whether the music being played is free to use without a license.

What about the FIMLA?

The Fairness In Music Licensing Act was enacted in 1998 to protect small venues (bars and restaurants under 3,750 square feet and stores under 2,000 square feet) from infringement claims made by PROs for music played over the store PA system or on a radio. The law exempts stores that have less than four speakers or TVs in any one room and less than six total speakers. It also included a so-called "record store exemption" if the sole purpose of performing the music was to promote the retail sale of recordings or the devices used to play the music (radios, CD players, et cetera.). However, the protection that was granted does not extend to live performances or to any location that has a cover charge for admission.

What about fair use?

"Fair Use" (the idea that you can use a copyrighted work under certain circumstances without the permission of the copyright owner) is one of the most misunderstood aspects of copyright law. It is governed by 17 U.S. Code Section 107 which provides that works may be used for "criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, or research." The factors to be considered under the statute, to determine if

the use is "fair" include: the amount and substantiality of the portion of the work that is used; whether it is for nonprofit educational purposes; and the effect of the use on the potential market. People sometimes confusingly believe that as long as they're not directly receiving any money they have the right to fairly use the copyrighted material – but that's not how it works. Courts reviewing fair use disputes look to see if there is any commercial nature to the use of the music. If the purpose of the use can be characterized in any way as commercial then it's not going to be fair use, regardless of whether any income or profit is actually made. While it could be argued that there is a teaching aspect to conducting a recital in your performance space, it can't be characterized as non-profit educational use. The use of music to attract customers to your store is always commercial in nature and would not be characterized as fair use under any circumstances.

Other Live Performance Considerations

There may be local laws that require additional licenses for public performances, or that prohibit live music in particular areas altogether (such as locations contiguous to residential neighborhoods). If live music is not prohibited, there may still be restrictions on the days and hours that live music may be performed, restrictions on the decibel level, or restrictions on cover charges. Some municipalities require a license for live music and an additional license if there's going to be any dancing. It would be a shame to set up a performance area in your store only to find out that you can't use it because of a local ordinance. Therefore, it's a good idea to check the local laws first.

Another important consideration for MI retailers is to make sure that your insurance covers what you have planned. Many insurance policies exclude coverage for particular types of events or for activities in which there is a fee charged to attend at the insured premises. If you're planning to have food available, check and see if your coffee house open mic activities are going to be excluded from coverage. If you're running a "rock camp," have a conversation with your insurance agent to be sure all activities are covered.

There are additional kinds of insur-

ance policies available, some of which are used to cover one-time concert performances. Under certain circumstances, the cost of one of these insurance policies may be passed along to the artist. The venue may require that the artist obtain proof of insurance before the event, and may require that the music store be named as an additional insured on the insurance policy. **MMR**



Stuart B. Shapiro, a practicing attorney, is also an assistant professor at the State University of New York College at Fredonia – New York's premiere public college for Music – where he teaches law courses including courses in Music Business Contracts, Copyrights, and Trademarks. He plays drums in two bands and guitar in two more, and is known locally as a major gear head – with over 50 guitars in his collection, a full blown recording studio, and five full sets of drums.

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In January, as we gather as a global community to conduct business, network, share and grow, we also pay tribute to those we've lost; a fitting farewell to dear friends, many who were with us at last year's show. The Tribute is Thursday evening at 5:30 pm on the Grand Plaza. Please come and share in this special gathering of family and friends.

Thank you for your enthusiastic support of NAMM and the Oral History Program. We truly believe we are all part of one big musical family and we look forward to seeing you at The NAMM Show where our collective family story will continue to grow.

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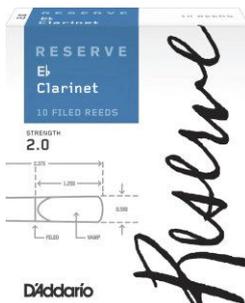
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www.korg.com

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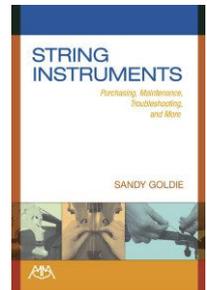


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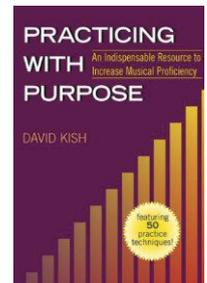
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Audix Corporation	7	audixusa.com	Kawai America Corp.	13	kawaius.com	The Music People	41	on-stage.com
Big Bends LLC	49	bigbends.com	KHS America/Hohner	3	ozzy.playhohner.com	The Music People	41	on-stage.com
Bourns Inc.	4	bourns.com	Kyser Musical Products Inc.	10	kysermusical.com	TKL Products Corp.	25	tkl.com
Breezy Ridge Instruments	56	jpstrings.com	McPherson Guitars	17	mcpersonsguitars.com	Truetone	C4	truetone.com
Casio America, Inc.	41	casio.com	Mojotone	29	mojotone.com	Vic Firth Company	37	vicfirth.com
Chauvet	C1	chauvetdj.com	NAMM	52, 53	namm.org	W.D. Music Products Inc.	2	wdmusic.com
D'Addario & Co.	1	daddario.com	National Educational Music Co.	36	nemc.com	WFL III Drums & Percussion	45	wflldrums.com
Dream Cymbals & Gongs	21	dreancymbals.com	OPUS Musical Instruments Corp.	26	usaoopus.com	Whirlwind Music Inc.	C2	whirlwindusa.com
Drum Workshop Inc.	33	lpmusic.com	Rain Retail Software	27	rainpos.com	Zinc Platform, Inc.	C3	zincplatform.com/mmr



By Dan Daley

An MI Store Adds a Recurring Event that Pulls it Closer to the Musician Community

James Rea has been holding intimate one-in-one interview events, known as “The Producer’s Chair,” with Nashville’s leading music Producer’s for 11 years, almost all of them from the stage of Douglas Corner, one of Nashville’s more enduring live-music clubs. In that time, he’s had hit-making helmers like Dann Huff, Paul Worley, Dave Brainard, Scott Hendricks, Mark Bright, Doug Johnson, and others sitting in an outlandish chair that looks as if it fell off the truck when they were packing up “Pee Wee’s Playhouse.” A music venue was certainly an appropriate location, especially when Rea began the series, back when records still were at the top of the revenue hierarchy of music. He got to move the events into an actual recording studio last year, on Music Row. But for various reasons that didn’t work out for the long run.

But starting earlier this year, Rea moved his event into what might be the most appropriate location of all: an MI retail store. Since then, The Producer’s Chair has been taking place in the 100-seat space at the rear of World Music, a 16-year-old shop on Nashville’s far west side that new owners took over a year ago. There, Rea is also able to record audio and video of the interviews, which will eventually be made available online.

“You’re surrounded by musical instruments from the moment you walk into the store until you enter the performance space, and it just feels right,” he says.

A Place To Hang Out

For World Music COO Denny Sanders, who moved to Nashville from Los Angeles last year and with partners bought the store from founder Larry Faragalli in September 2016, it also feels right. He had spent over 20 years working as a tour manager, for artists including Ministry, Papa Roach, and Giant. When Rea brought Giant guitarist-turned-producer Dann Huff (whose production discography reaches from Megadeth to Faith Hill) in as the first Producer’s Chair interview at the store, it felt like pieces were falling into place.

“We’re not trying to be a nightclub, but rather a

place to come and hang out,” says Sanders, for whom World Music is his first take at retail sales of any kind. “But James’ event adds another dimension to what a store can be. And it has to be more than a store these days.”

Sanders cites competition from big box vendors and online outlets, which are bringing increased pressure on local MI retail everywhere. He sees incorporating The Producer’s Chair events into World Music’s agenda as a natural fit, part of an itinerary for the store’s performance space – which is named, simply and aptly, the Venue. It’s where the store’s 450 music students can do a recital for parents one day and then come to see live music that evening. They can learn recording and then outfit their home studios from the same place.

And they can listen as world-class record Producer’s talk about their craft. Sanders has even applied for a beer license for the store. “We’re getting to the point where people may never have to leave the store,” he laughs.

Rea says beyond the vibe the store confers on his events, it also brings a staff that can not only sell guitars but also document the larger process of how music is made. “For instance, the person World Music has managing the venue and its productions, Mike Green, had worked in network television for years,” he says. After Producer’s Chair events, in a guitar-strewn room off the side of the performance space, visitors are asked on camera to relate what they were taking away from the interviews. “The experience has a more polished, produced feel to it,” he says.

World Music and The Producer’s Chair are a good fit, but they also underscore how MI retail is becoming – and should

become – more of marketplace, place where ideas are exchanged and interactions experienced beyond the transactional level.

“We want to sell guitars and drums, but we also want to create an environment that draws people in around music,” says Sanders. “The Producer’s Chair is one of the unique things that we can have on our menu.” **MMA**



Noted producer Dan Huff with James Rea of “The Producer’s Chair”

“ Sanders cites competition from big box vendors and online outlets, which are bringing increased pressure on local MI retail everywhere ”



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