

M M M R

MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

'We've Not Slowed Down for a Minute'

Snare Drum Sales in 2021



avantis

IT'S A SMALL STEP TO A GIANT LEAP.

SQ

ALLEN & HEATH



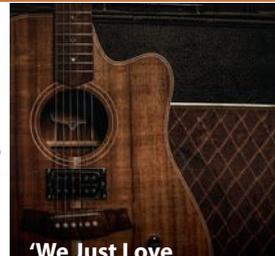
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MMR

MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

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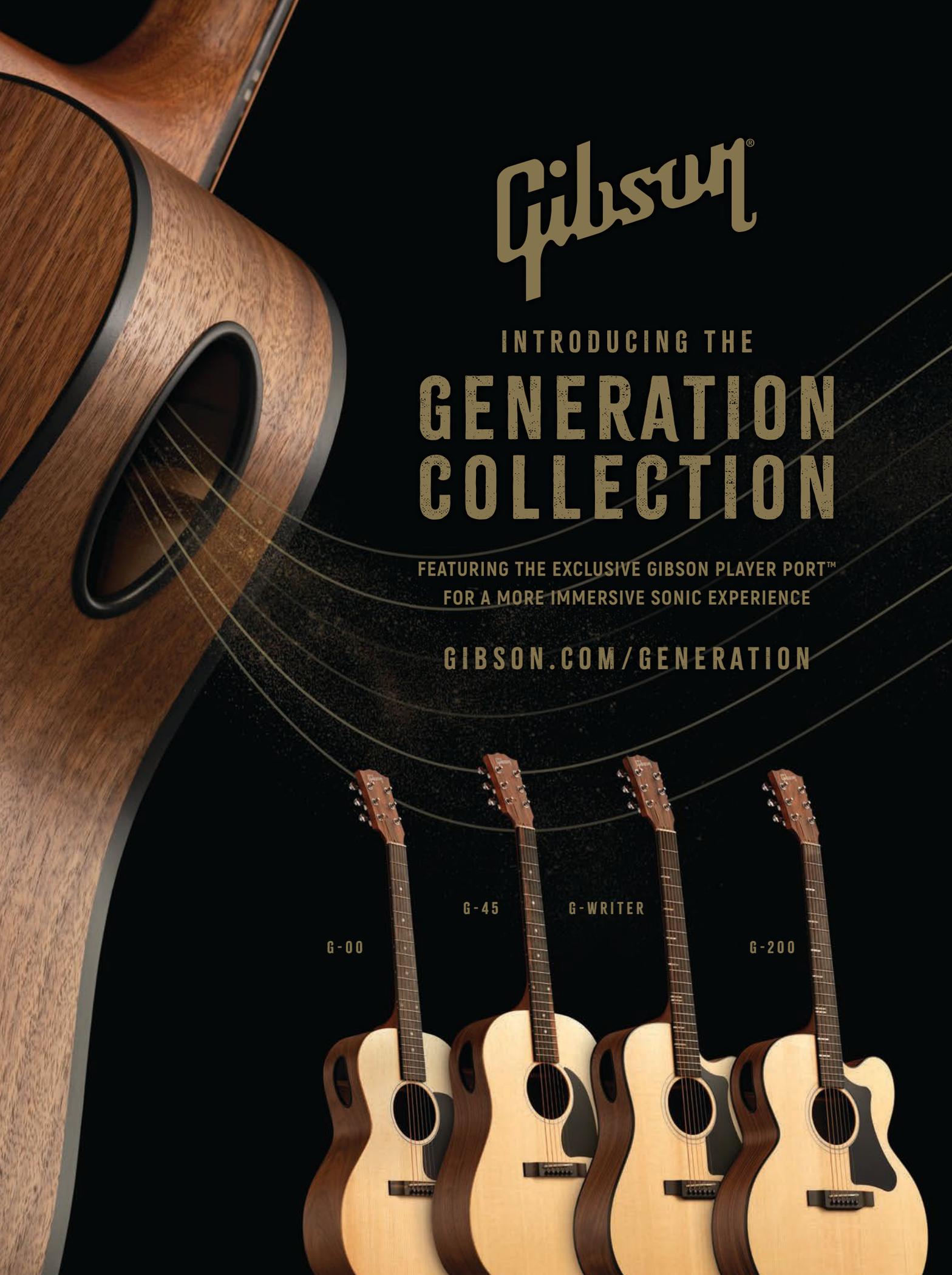
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By
**Christian
Wissmuller**

Life Moves Pretty Fast...

There's a recording studio in Boston – well, these days it's in Waltham, which is maybe a half-hour outside of the city – called Woolly Mammoth Sound. I first recorded at Woolly in May of 2002. While I had gone to school for Music Production & Engineering and had interned at a few of the larger studios in the area, that session was one of my first where I, personally, was tracking in a “real” studio and it was everything you'd expect: exciting, intimidating, overwhelming, daunting – and expensive.

The studio owner is one David Minehan, whose own band, The Neighborhoods, were (still are, to many) a big deal around these parts when I was quite young. They were regulars at The Rathskellar (“The Rat” – Boston's version of CBGBs; site of early-career appearances by the likes of The Police, The Cars, U2, Joan Jett & the Blackhearts, Metallica, Dropkick Murphys, Bullet LaVolta, and many more) got signed to Atlantic, and toured with the likes of David Bowie, Cheap Trick, and The Ramones. A high-school girlfriend had included a ‘Hoods song on a mix-tape given to me. Point being: to be working with this dude in his fully stacked, pro recording environment back then was pretty heady stuff.

Cue to this past week, 2021.

I'm no longer the fresh-faced (well, less worn-faced, certainly) 20-something I was in '02 and Woolly Mammoth isn't located in the Fenway neighborhood of Boston any more, but I was once again setting up gear with Minehan and getting ready to record another few songs.

What struck me was both how much had stayed the same in the past two decades, *and* how much had changed. While much of the gear – the envy-worthy array of vintage tube amps, 34-track NEOTEK console, microphones from the '40s that are worth more than my life – was as if it had been suspended in amber, there's also a whole lot of new “stuff.” During that first session, billions of years ago (ah, youth...), we mostly recorded to 2” tape, while Minehan minimally employed the then-new-to-him Pro Tools DAW for some elements of mixing. These days, other than printing mixes to analog 1/2” tape, it's a whole other, digital world. The HDX system with its three AVID (remember Digidesign?) converters did all the heavy lifting, along with a robust Mac Pro Six Core.

20 years is, objectively, a pretty sizable stretch of time. In terms of technological advancement, it may as well be millennia. We've all experienced buying a flashy new laptop, or flat-screen, or cell phone, only for the purchase to be considered obsolete within weeks of opening the box. As much as certain musicians and some aspects of the MI trade are critiqued – not always unfairly! – for being “stuck in their ways,” musical instruments and gear are also ever-evolving and it behooves anyone active in any aspect of the creation of music to stay at least *kind of* up to speed.

For my first decade or so at *MMR* – a trek which also dates back to 2002 – two of the go-to questions when profiling retailers was, “Do you have a website? Do you have an email address?” As recently as 2010, I'd estimate that well over one-third of folks replied in the negative.

As I creak into old-age, I am finding myself – with frightening regularity – having to put effort into remaining on top of technological developments. I may have stifled a laugh or shaken my head in disbelief at those MI dealers who'd reply, “Email? Is that on the World Wide Web?” 15 years ago, but now... I kind of get it.

It's hard work to adapt and evolve. It's very tempting to stay in set patterns and believe that what worked five or 10 or 20 years ago could – damnit, *will!* – work today. But digging in one's heels won't impede progress and, time and again, successful MI dealers and suppliers have proven to be pliant and nimble.

In other words: hold on to that Otari analog 2” recorder, for sure – but make sure you're a whiz at Pro Tools, too.

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Sweetwater Launches Online Band and Orchestra Store

Sweetwater has announced the launch of Sweetwater Band & Orchestra online. Featuring the industry's best equipment in every category from brands like Conn-Selmer, Yamaha, P. Mauriat, Buffet, Keilwerth, The Growling Sax (Victory Musical Instruments), JodyJazz, and many more – beginners, experienced musicians, and pros alike can now shop online for all of their band and orchestra needs.

Sweetwater's expanded product offering supports all types of musicians who play all types of band and orchestra instruments. With a tradition of excellence in customer service, Sweetwater Band & Orchestra is no exception, offering unparalleled expertise through dedicated sales engineers, try before you buy, easy returns, and a unique, thorough instrument inspection process before items ship.

"We're excited to offer Sweetwater Band & Orchestra online to help even more music makers fulfill their dreams and pursue their passions," said Sweetwater's SVP of the Sweetwater Experience David Fuhr. "Our customers had been asking for expanded Band and Orchestra options outside of our physical retail store, and with the return of live gigs, symphonies, and philharmonics picking up, we're happy to be able to meet that demand during such an important time for musicians."

Sweetwater has been enriching the

lives of music makers of all ages since its inception over 40 years ago and is wholly dedicated to music education. For youth education, where Band and Orchestra are instrumental and often the first place kids are exposed to music, the company has generously donated to local and national non-profits like Little Kids Rock, b Instrumental at Fort Wayne Community Schools, and several others. Through its dedication to local music groups like Fort Wayne Philharmonic, Sweetwater has remained devoted to the life-long enrichment of music and music education for all.

"Studies show that participation in school music programs helps students with positive social peer groups and perform well in math and science. Considering the critical role that music plays in schools and in the life cycle of musicians, it was only natural to expand our offerings in this space to better serve the needs of our customers. This is part of what makes this launch truly special," continued Fuhr.

Earlier this year, Sweetwater's band and orchestra retailer, Mynett Music, rebranded to Sweetwater Band & Orchestra and moved from its independent location into the company's new megastore in Fort Wayne. Today, customers nationally can officially shop a wide variety of band and orchestra equipment online at www.sweetwater.com/shop/band-and-orchestra.

FMIC Signs Definitive Agreement to Acquire PreSonus

Fender Musical Instruments Corporation (FMIC) has announced it has signed a definitive agreement of merger with PreSonus Audio Electronics, Inc. The Baton Rouge, Louisiana based brand is the leading designer and manufacturer of recording and live-sound hardware and software solutions that solve real-world problems for working creatives.

"We are thrilled to welcome everyone on the PreSonus team to the FMIC family and excited about the future growth opportunities available to both companies," said Andy Mooney, CEO Fender Musical Instruments Corp. "Our teams share the same passion for music, the same commitment to innovation and the same desire to inspire and equip current and future generations of artists"

"I would like to extend our utmost gratitude to our loyal Baton Rouge and Louisiana community that have supported PreSonus for the last two decades," said Kevin Couhig, chairman of PreSonus. "It has been wonderful being a part of this incredible journey with PreSonus. I'm excited to see what the future holds going forward"

"After more than 25 years PreSonus feels it has found the right partner to support us as we continue our growth," said Jim Odom, founder/CSO PreSonus. "We look forward to showing our current and future music community what this opportunity means for them."

"PreSonus and Fender's combined vision, the way we see the future of music creation, and the fundamental alignment of goals has made this an exciting idea since the first conversation," said Jim Boitnott, CEO PreSonus.

Completion of this merger is subject to U.S. regulatory approvals and other customary closing conditions. At this time, FMIC and PreSonus will continue to operate as separate entities.

Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP acted as legal counsel to Fender Musical Instruments Corporation.

PreSonus was advised by Robert W. Baird & Co. and legal counsel was provided by Butler Snow LLP.

AP International Becomes Exclusive USA Distributors of DMI Guitar Labs Line of Cleaning Products

AP International Music Supply has announced exclusive distribution of the eco-friendly DMI Guitar Labs line of instrument cleaning products including the popular Fret Butter fingerboard cleaner. Having previously handled the USA-made product in a more limited capacity, the company will be now taking the lead role in distribution for the United States.

DMI's flagship Fret Butter is a patented and proprietary solution for stringed instrument fingerboards, simultaneously hydrating the wood and removing even the most extreme grime and oxidation from frets in one simple application. The result is a clean, hydrated fingerboard with shiny frets and a satin smooth finish protecting against sweat, acids, and future oxidation. The applicator cloth allows for multiple uses per package ensuring your instrument remains clean for extended periods with a single cloth.

Additionally, DMI Guitar Labs produces their Guitar Clean and Maple Butter solutions for safely cleaning guitar bodies and maple instrument fingerboards respectively. DMI cleaning products are free of harmful chemicals, cruelty-free, vegan, and TSA travel safe.

DMI has also just released their lint-free Rabbit Fur micro fleece archival grade cloth billed as the "World's softest edgeless micro fleece." Rabbit Fur is safe for use on all instruments, reusable and washable, and also environmentally friendly. All cloths are pre-washed, sterilized, and packaged in the USA.



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Application Period for the Best Communities for Music Education Awards Now Open

As schools across the nation welcome the return of the joyous sounds of music programs, districts and individual schools have the opportunity to celebrate the resilience of music education and gain recognition for their efforts through The National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Foundation's Best Communities for Music Education awards program. Now in its 23rd year, the Best Communities for Music Education (district level) and

the SupportMusic Merit Award (school level) offers national visibility for school music programs and honors the efforts of educators, administrators, students, and community music education champions who share in the common goal to ensure access to music for all students as part of a well-rounded education.

This year's awards program is designed to celebrate a year of schools and districts adapting and innovating in the face

of change. Researchers at The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas, in conjunction with The NAMM Foundation, have created a new way for districts and schools to address the inroads and setbacks impacted by the pandemic, as well as goals for equity and access to music education for all students and national standards for music education in a short, qualitative survey.

Michael Stone, coordinator of Visual and Performing Arts Department at the Bakersfield City School District, a nine-time BCME winner, offers, "I would encourage any music teacher or school administrator to complete the BCME Survey as a way to assess your music education program! The application is easy and not time-consuming. Data can be provided to you by your principals or district office support staff, making completion of the application very user-friendly."

Over the past two decades, the awards program has celebrated community-level achievements and has served as a catalyst to rally and expand music education programs. This year, even in the face of COVID-19 initiated changes, administrators and instructors continue to underscore the importance of music education for all students and their joyous return to music programs.

Since its inception, over 2,000 schools and school districts have submitted a survey for evaluation. Based on survey responses in 2021, 686 school districts were recognized as Best Communities for Music Education, and 80 schools with the SupportMusic Merit Award. Past districts named a Best Community for Music Education included urban, suburban, and rural districts. Schools that have received the SupportMusic Merit Award designation included public and private schools ranging from elementary to middle and high schools.

District officials, music educators, and school staff in the domestic United States are invited to complete the short survey by January 31, 2022, by visiting www.nammfoundation.org/bcme.

In conducting the annual survey, The NAMM Foundation and the Music Institute at the University of Kansas are joined by leading national arts organizations including Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation; Music for All; League of American Orchestras; Music Teachers National Association; National Guild For Community Arts Education; Save The Music Foundation; Yamaha Corporation of America; and Young Audiences.



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C.F. Martin & Co. Cuts the Ribbon on New State-of-the-Art Warehouse

C.F. Martin & Co. has announced the grand opening of their brand-new, state-of-the-art warehouse located at 130 Commerce Lane in Tatamy, Pennsylvania, just a short drive from the company's Nazareth headquarters.

The spacious warehouse will allow the iconic guitar maker to meet growing market demand for their instruments and strings and it was designed to accommodate expected future growth for generations.

After many years of searching for just the right location, the company broke ground on the new warehouse in early March of 2020 and consolidated their previous warehouse operations from four locations into one. The new warehouse has been operational since October 1, 2021.

With sustainability always at the forefront of every business decision, the nearly two-centuries-old company made sure to design their new warehouse for the future of our planet, as well as the future of the company, leaving no detail to chance.

The warehouse has a 30-year roof that can accommodate the installation of solar energy which is on the company's roadmap. The installation of solar panels is expected to offset 100 percent of its electrical use. Additionally, runoff water from the property enters two large, lined retention basins and is pumped into an irrigation field on the property.

The warehouse includes a state-of-the-art HVAC system that maintains a constant temperature of 68-75 degrees and a rela-



tive humidity of 40-46 percent. This is crucial for proper storage of their instruments, even for short periods of time. The building and its HVAC system are monitored by a sophisticated monitoring system that will alert company personnel if the temperature or humidity fall outside of the designated range.

Possibly the most impressive step the company took to ensure the safety and health of their products is that the entire 200,000 square foot space is fully protected with 13½ inches of multi-layered insulation to maintain the proper environmental atmosphere more efficiently. They even added extra insulation under the entire roof. The company is pursuing LEED Silver Certification. Currently, Martin occupies half of the 200,000 square foot space and will lease the other half to a third party.

Levy's Teams with Guitars 4 Vets on Veterans Day

They say laughter is the best medicine. But for many veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), musical instruments are truly the best medicine. With this in mind, and in honor of Veterans Day, Levy's, an iconic music brand known for high-quality guitar straps, partnered with Guitars 4 Vets to honor the faithful service of military men and women with two signature "G4V" straps.

Guitars 4 Vets, founded in 2006, and which calls many musicians including Tommy Emmanuel among its ambassadors, is dedicated to providing free guitars, lessons and accessories to veterans struggling with PTSD, physical injuries and other emotional distress as a means of therapeutic healing.

According to several sources, including research published by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, music therapy has shown positive results in veterans suffering from PTSD. Guitars 4 Vets was specifically founded on the belief that music therapy can help veterans, as co-founder Patrick Nettesheim witnessed from many veterans firsthand, and is evidenced in its slogan, "The Healing Power of Music in the Hands of Heroes."

"We're thrilled to partner with Levy's again this year to continue to support veterans and bring the healing power of music to our nation's heroes," said Patrick Nettesheim, co-Founder, Guitars 4 Vets.

Crafted in Nova Scotia, Canada, the G4V signature straps (MPG4V-007-pictured, MPG4V-005) are constructed of strong, lightweight polyester and feature a custom dye-sublimation printed "G4V" logo design with black backing. Stylish, arrow-shaped, genuine chrome tan leather on both ends contain pin hole stitching to prevent stretching and feature debossed G4V™ and Levy's logos. The strap measures 2" wide and will adjust to a maximum of 65" in length by virtue of its tri-glide sliding adjustment.



Jon Tatoes, James Gordon, and Matt Anderson

Sound Devices Joins Audiotonix Group

Audiotonix, the group which comprises the Allen & Heath, Calrec, DiGiCo, DiGiGrid, Group One Limited, KLANG:technologies, and Solid State Logic entertainment technology brands, announces the acquisition of US-based Sound Devices LLC as part of its expanding group. The transaction, which was concluded today, further extends the Audiotonix professional solutions for audio production environments.

The acquisition will coincide with co-founder Jon Tatoes departure from Sound Devices after 23 years. Co-founder Matt Anderson, who has been chief engineer of Sound Devices since inception and CEO since 2013, will continue to serve in both roles.

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TRADE REGRETS

On November 2, NAMM's Dan Del Fiorentino shared the following sad news:

Mel Wisniewski, founder of the Wisniewski Brother's Music and longtime music advocate, passed away last month. He was 82 years old. Mel gave music lessons in a small music store in upstate Wisconsin and soon discovered he was interested in the idea of owning his own store. Not wanting to compete with his friend, Mel and his brother, Joe, moved to Southern Illinois where they established Wisniewski Brother's Music in 1963. A year later Joe returned to his full time job for a phone company and Mel continued to run the store. With the home organ boom of the late 1960s and '70s, Mel expanded to six stores, including several in local shopping malls.



From Left: Drew Unis, Maurice Unis, owner, Classic Pianos; Brian Unis, owner, Classic Pianos; Chris Gilbert, key account manager, Yamaha Corporation of America; Aaron Unis, accounts manager, Classic Pianos; Taylor Unis, accounts manager, Classic Pianos; Lamar Roach, consultant

Classic Pianos Earns First Ever 'Global Bösendorfer Dealer of the Year' Distinction

Classic Pianos has been recognized as "Global Bösendorfer Dealer of the Year" during a special ceremony held at the company's headquarters in Portland.

While Bösendorfer, the world's oldest premium piano manufacturer had named Classic Pianos its U.S. "Dealer of the Year" in 2019, this is the first time the company has presented this prestigious award to a piano dealer on a worldwide level, citing Classic Pianos' "global excellence" in the preparation of Bösendorfer pianos, in addition to its impeccably trained and dedicated staff.

Built in Austria, Bösendorfer instruments are known for combining unique hand-crafted piano designs with their unmistakable sound, true to the rich culture of Viennese instruments. Bösendorfer is a fully owned company of Yamaha Corporation.

With a family history of restoring pianos and a passion for the craft, Maurice Unis opened Moe's Pianos in the mid-70s, which quickly became Portland's most recognized name in piano sales and service. In 2001, Maurice opened Classic Pianos with his oldest son, Brian, and since then has expanded operations to include a 30,000 sq. ft. showroom and headquarters that's home to a diverse community of technicians, piano teachers, and a piano moving company, as well an acoustically enhanced recital hall. Today, all three Unis sons have become involved with the business that leads each market they represent, including locations in Portland, Oregon; Bellevue, Washington; Las Vegas, Nevada; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Denver, Colorado; Boston, Massachusetts, and Anchorage, Alaska.

JAM Industries Rebrands as Exertis|JAM and Reaffirms Commitment to Core Values

Following the recent launch of Exertis North America, JAM Industries has announced it was rebranding as Exertis|JAM under the leadership of Stuart Frenkel, who moves up from executive vice president and CFO to president & CEO as longtime JAM president & CEO Martin Szpiro assumes his new role as president & CEO of Exertis North America.

Indeed, while sales now exceed \$450 million annually, Exertis|JAM very much remains an employee and customer-centric company comprised of 18 thriving divisions spanning pro audio/lighting, consumer electronics, and musical instruments that have grown, through acquisition and diversification, into market leaders. In 2018, the company was named one of Canada's Best Managed Companies by Deloitte. *Music Trades* magazine lists Exertis|JAM as #6 in its annual list of the Top 100 North American Music Products Suppliers.

In the United States, Exertis|JAM owned businesses include American Audio & Video, American Music & Sound, Ashly Audio, Davitt & Hanser, U.S. Music Corp., The Music People, and KMC Music.



12th Annual Hal Leonard Vocal Competition Now Open

Hal Leonard has announced the 2022 Hal Leonard Vocal Competition for young classical and theatre singers, comprised entirely of YouTube video submissions. Singers can compete in two divisions: Art Song and Musical Theatre, with four age categories for each, children through college undergraduates. Hal Leonard offers more than \$10,000 in cash prizes and gift certificates to encourage singers to build a music library for their studies.

There is no entry fee or travel cost to an audition site for the Hal Leonard Vocal Competition, unlike almost every other music



competition. Singers from all over the U.S. and Canada can compete with others in their age group and view videos online. One of the aims of the competition is for singers to hear other singers of similar age and learn from one another. Another aim of the competition is to recognize the good work of the voice teachers who fostered these young talented performers. Playlists of results in each category may be viewed on the Hal Leonard Vocal YouTube channel.

The rules, required repertoire, and prizes, as well as a complete listing of winners and top placing videos for 2021 – and previous years – may be found at haleonard.com/vocalcomp. 2022 entries must be submitted before February 2, 2022.

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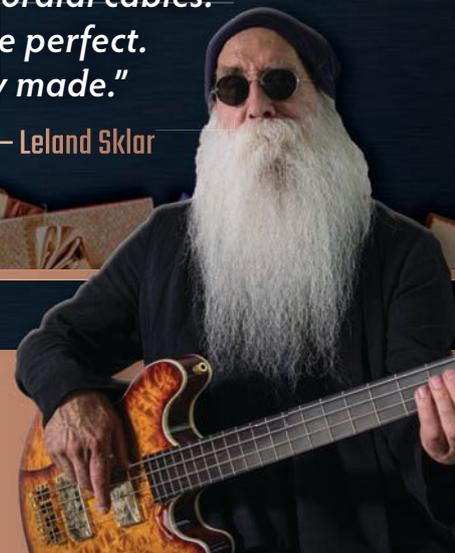


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PEOPLE

QSC, LLC. has announced that Olivier Roure has joined QSC as U.S. sales director for the Eastern Region for the company's Live Sound business. In his new role, Olivier will be responsible for managing the day to day direct manufacturer to channel partner relationship for the company's diverse portfolio of live sound products and solutions. Roure, a 20-plus year veteran of the professional audio industry, holds a mechanical engineering (BTS) from Lycée Claude Lebois. A native of France, Roure moved to the U.S. where he lived in New Jersey for more than 24 years. He started his career in music working at stores including Sam Ash in the metro Philadelphia area. Afterwards, he was owner of Ozone Recording, a production company with recording studios above Studio 54 in NYC and in New Jersey, working with major record labels including Arista and Elektra. In the service of audio manufacturers, Roure managed technical accounts on the east coast for Loud Technologies and held a 12-year tenure at Harman as director of sales for JBL, various positions at AKG and Soundcraft, and director of Harman's Large Venue and Sports Division. Most recently, Roure served as principal of Roure Consulting.



The **Guitar Center Music Foundation**, a non-profit organization focused on granting instruments and other musician services to various music education organizations, announces the appointment of Myka Miller as the non-profit's new executive director. The announcement was made by the Foundation's Board of Directors and reflects the organization's goal of growing its charitable initiatives in 2021 and beyond. In her new role, Miller will be responsible for the successful operation and performance of The Guitar Center Music Foundation. Additional responsibilities will include working closely with the Board to sustain and grow existing funding while establishing new relationships and partnerships with prospective donors, fundraising networks, and the music industry at large, while actively seeking to expand the scope and reach of the Foundation.



Zoom North America is pleased to announce the promotion of Eric Battin to vice president of sales and planning. Battin graduated from DePaul University with a degree in business management. He joined Zoom North America at its inception in 2013, as its very first associate. Eric initially handled many facets of the work required, from sales and marketing to warehousing and shipping. In 2014, Eric was promoted to U.S. national sales manager, and has been key to Zoom's sales growth over the past eight years. As VP of sales and planning, Eric will continue to be a vital member of Zoom's sales team, reporting to senior VP of sales, Dan Gallagher. Additionally, Eric will be responsible for managing and implementing the company's planning across its various departments.



Group One Limited, the Long Island, New York-based U.S. distributor for Avolites, Calrec, DiGiCo, KLANG, Solid State Logic, and several other premium professional audio and lighting manufacturers, announces the appointment of Alex Ordoñez to the newly-created post of



marketing manager. Ordoñez is now responsible for the planning, development and implementation of Group One's marketing strategies, operations and communications activities across all of the company's teams. He is additionally collaborating with Group One's UK- and European-based manufacturers to manage and execute domestic marketing strategies for each of the brands individually. Ordoñez comes to Group One from MatchMySound, where he held the title of sales and marketing, Enterprise. Prior to that, he spent 16 years in various marketing capacities with the world's largest educational music publisher, Alfred Music, most recently serving as Vice President of Sales and Marketing. He also spent five years with the U.S. Army as a chemical operations specialist before enrolling in a music industry studies program at California State University, Northridge.

Korg USA Inc. announces the retirement of senior key account manager John Hamer after 10 years of service to the Korg USA family of products. Respected by colleagues as both a mentor and leader, Hamer's savvy account management skills and broad understanding of the industry have contributed significantly to Korg USA's goals. Based in the Los Angeles area, Hamer brought extensive sales management, retail buying, merchandise planning, and allocation experience to Korg USA, managing more than \$100 million in annual sales volume across 214 stores. His experience negotiating with multi-billion dollar large box and specialty retailers, as well as managing vendor relations, sourcing, and product development proved to be tremendous assets. Among his many accomplishments, Hamer drove guitar amplifier national market share from 31 percent to 40 percent and reduced clearance inventory by 27 percent, resulting in a 2.8 percent gross margin increase.



Promoted from manager, national accounts to senior key account manager, Hamer served as the central point of contact for the Sweetwater account while continuing to manage the Guitar Center and Musician's Friend accounts. During his decade-long tenure, he played a vital role in maintaining Korg USA's relationship with Guitar Center, leveraging his past career experience as a buyer/planner/inventory manager for the retailer.

Beyond his role in accounts management, Hamer was an influential contributor to VOX and Blackstar development plans, supporting the global growth of both brands. Additionally, he brought his wide-ranging background consulting retailers around the country with the application of retail software at all functional levels.

American Music & Sound (AM&S), an Exertis | Jambusiness, has recently promoted Stuart Hay to the new position of director of customer interaction, overseeing all B2B and B2C customer service and support functions. Responding to the steady growth in AM&S distributed brands, trends in customer experience systems and processes, and increased overall business, the new Director of Customer Interaction demonstrates a continued focus on excellence in customer support from the company.



AM&S supports a wide array of brands in the US across the pro audio and MI spectrum – including Allen & Heath, CAD Audio, Focusrite (and Focusrite Pro), Fostex, Glorious, Hercules, Kurzweil, Lewitt, Nord, Novation, PLAYdifferently, Reeloc, Studiologic, and Xone. Based in Los Angeles, California, AM&S works tirelessly to maximize sales while building market share and brand awareness. With over 14 years of experience at AM&S as the sales coordinator, Hay brings a unique combination of skills to his new role.

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Jeff Mulvihill

Newly Announced Uplift Campaign Aims to Bring Positivity to All Communities
By Christian Wissmuller

In early September, Mapex Drums announced the Uplift Campaign, creating a platform for endorsing artists to host drumming events in their communities – with full support from the brand, which will provide sponsorship, promotions, giveaways, and unique drum sets. Uplift events will give Mapex artists the opportunity to truly connect in a meaningful way by drumming in their neighborhood churches, community centers, and schools. The campaign has already attracted the likes of Reggie Johnson (Baby Face) and Rashid Williams (John Legend), with many more soon to be announced.

We got together with Jeff Mulvihill [*Also a participant in this issue's Roundtable feature on snare drums. See page 20 – Ed.*], combo drum brand manager for Mapex, to get the scoop on what inspired the company to launch Uplift and how the initiative will unfold.

What was the catalyst behind coming up with the Uplift campaign?

Jeff Mulvihill: Recent events and ongoing racial tensions in U.S. black communities surrounding current events touching on police brutality, voting discrimination, systematic racism, and other volatile subjects inspired us to work with our artists to create a positive campaign to support community events. We looked at how we could give back and listened to our players. The need for support for positive activities on the local level through drumming and music seemed one small way we could start.

When will the full listing of upcoming Uplift events be released to the public?

We are hoping to have a



Rashid Williams



Reggie Johnson

full list of upcoming Uplift events as soon as possible. Our planning phase continues, and we are working through the many challenges with live events to create safe gatherings.

What about “community” do you think resonates so especially with drummers and percussionists and why is it important to highlight and support that connection?

There is a natural camaraderie with drummers and often stories of inspiration include a touchpoint event at a church, family event, community center, or neighborhood jam session that changes a young person's drumming life. Drumming is a visual activity employing the whole body different from a guitar or horn playing. Drummers learn from each other, and there is an almost supernatural rhythmic brotherhood between players.

Of the high-profile drummers participating, how many were approached by Mapex to join in and how many reached out to Mapex after hearing about the campaign?

The creation of the program has been thoroughly collaborative from the very beginning of the process with our full roster invited to participate and bring ideas to the project. We are excited to see it launch, grow, and evolve as our players host events.

It's such a cool and unique concept, but to what degree are Mapex and the participants worried about potential logistical challenges involved in “creating unique events in hometowns” – which I take to mean in-person gatherings – with the continuing restrictions due to the pandemic?

Tough question here, without a defined answer. We are worried about the continued limitations of the global pandemic, and knowing that it is part of our lives for the discernable future set the stage for the open nature of the campaign. There is no strict template for an Uplift event – it can be anything that the Mapex artist can put together including group lessons, community performance, or an educational clinic or drum circle, and we are here to help promote and provide support.

One of the very few upsides of the past 20 months or so has been the extreme uptick in the interest in picking up an instrument for the first time, rededicating oneself to a previous skill-set on an instrument, or just devoting all the “unmasked-for-but-here-it-is-anyway” free time to playing, practicing, recording. How has this phenomenon impacted the drumming community and Mapex, specifically?

I think the impact has been significant, but in different ways both positive and negative. On the positive side, many people found themselves with more time at home to explore new hobbies or rededicate themselves to old ones like learning drums or dust off the musical chops from the past. It was certainly exciting to experience the up-tick in demand. But we felt it was very important to also focus on how we can help those less fortunate young people without internet, devices, cable, or instruments, who have suffered greatly during the pandemic. What could we create to help spread some light and provide positive influence as soon as it is safe to do so?

How do interested dealers get involved with the Uplift campaign?

Interested dealers are welcome to co-promote, or collaborate, or even host an Uplift event. Dealers can contact their Mapex rep and we'll match them with a Mapex player to work together to create something special. This is not a specifically retail-driven initiative – it is a community and musical one.

To our valued QSC Dealers,

During these extraordinary times, it's especially important to take a moment to reflect on how much we appreciate your partnership, your support, and your business. We know that the QSC brand thrives because of you, making this nomination something we can all be very proud of.

Thank you for your kind consideration.



Sound Reinforcement Line of the Year

■ roundtable

'We've Not Slowed Down for a Minute' Snare Drum Sales in 2021

By Christian Wissmuller

When considering the pandemic-related spike in sales of musical instruments and gear throughout the past 19-plus months, it makes intuitive sense why certain items have thrived. Ukuleles, acoustic guitars, any synth or keyboard or other electronic equipment that can be used "silently" via headphones – those all would presumably not be terribly disruptive for housemates or family members stuck at home with the musician, or to neighbors above, below, or next door.

But acoustic drums?

Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, this market segment has also thrived since early 2020. Chalk it up to a robust suburban and rural customer base, improved sound insulation materials and

techniques for those practicing their art in cities, enhanced tolerance and empathy for our fellow man, or whatever else. The fact is, drums have been experiencing robust sales – and snare drums, in particular, have been flying off the shelves. Current supply chain challenges present difficulties, but have also informed the buying habits of players, with savvy customers now placing orders weeks and months in advance.

MMR spoke with reps for eight major brands in the design, manufacture, and distribution of snares to learn about what specific models are being embraced by drummers, what trends are defining the market, and what the future holds.

For your brand, what are currently the top-selling snare drum models?

John Palmer: Our S.L.P. series continues to experience strong demand, as well as the higher-priced Starphonic and STAR series. And we are also seeing strong sales in the more accessible Metalworks and Woodworks series.

Kevin Packard, Sr.: 2021 was a big year for Pearl snare drums. We introduced 15 new snare drums this year, including our 75th Anniversary President Series Phenolic 14"x5" commemorative model, a collaboration with Pearl Artist Matt Halpern, and new a fresh approach to some tried-and-true favorites. All have been very well received by dealers and the playing community. Value-centered models like our S1330B Black 13"x3" piccolo snare still move with the highest velocity, but there has definitely been a swing to mid-to-high-end models as the year has progressed.

Shawn Lafrenz, Sr.: The Pearl Philharmonic series of concert snare drums continue to be the most in-demand product line in this category. We offer a wide variety of shell types and sizes, but the PHP 14x5 Ply Maple models are consistently the most requested type, with piccolo sized PHB Brass and PHA Aluminum models a close second.

Gretsch Drums USA Bell Brass Snare Drum

Jeff Mulvihill: Our Mapex Black Panther Series is our top selling snare drum series. Within the series our top seller is the Hammered Brass "Persuader" Model.

Regarding Sonor, I'll answer this in two different ways: First, our SQ2 snare drum sales are extremely strong where we give the customer the chance to design something customer choosing from a huge range of shell materials, exotic veneers, and beautiful finishes creating a one-of-a-kind experience for our customers. Secondly, the Benny Greb signature snare drums in both beech and brass versions have been extremely well received and sought after in the market since the 2020 launch.

Terry Bisette: The top selling models are the LM402 Supraphonic and the LB417 Black Beauty. Both snares are metal, and are 6.5"x14". Truly legendary in the industry, it's safe to say Supraphonic and Black Beauty snares are the most recorded snare drums in history. No doubt.

Matt Rudin: Our snares remain some of our top-selling products across the board in terms of volume. Both our Stage Custom Birch (SBS-1455) and Stainless Steel (SSS-1455) snares top the list, which makes sense given the incredible value. The 100 percent birch delivers a sharp tone with excellent response at low to high tuning and the wide-open sound can be used in almost any situation. Similar to the birch line, the stainless steel offers great value, yet delivers a punchier, higher tone.

Our second highest selling snares come from our Recording Custom line, with the brass (RRS-1356, RRS-1455, RRS-1465) and the aluminum (RAS-1455, RAS-1465) taking the place as the second and third highest selling series. It's not surprising given the superb consistency in sound provided by these snares.

At Yamaha, we are committed to developing drums for any application and have a wide assortment of snares for both marching and concert

“There are several dealers who do a stellar job with promoting Gretsch snare drums on their social networks and/or company websites.”

– Andrew Shreve, Brand Manager
& Artist Relations, Gretsch Drums



Gretsch Drums Keith Carlock Signature Brass Snare Drum



Yamaha CSR-1450 Brass Shell Snare Drum

performance. Our best-selling concert snare is the CSM-1450 in the Concert Maple Series and one of the top-selling marching snares in the industry is the SFZ Series. To continue the legacy of the incredible SFZ line we have just released the new MS-9414, which is lighter and sounds even better.

Jim DeStefano: First off, thanks for including us in your review. Within the DW Brand, we have three series of drums (Collectors Series / Performance Series & Design Series). Each of these series offer both metal and wood snares in different depths and diameters. All the snares are professional quality, so the real difference is the ability to customize your choice. Collector's Series offers the most options, followed by Performance Series and then Design Series. Within each series, some of our most popular models over the last 12 months include the following:

Collectors Series – Dave Grohl Icon Series / Black Nickel over Brass / Purpleheart shells; Performance Series – Chrome over Steel / 6.5x14 Maple shells; Design Series – 5.5x14 Maple shells / 6.5x14 Acrylic shells

Andrew Shreve: Our stock USA Custom and Broadcaster snares are always in demand, but from an individual model standout, the USA Custom 6.5x14 Bell Brass, 5.5x14 Brooklyn Standard, and Keith Carlock Signature snares are really sought after. These three snares are constantly backordered.

Rob Dean: This year keeping PDP snares in stock has been a challenge. As soon as they come in they seem to ship out! Our Black Wax snares and new Concept Select snares are moving fast. Black Wax is offered in 6x10, 6x12, 7x13, 5.5x13, 5.5x14 and 6.5x14. Concept Select snares are 3mm bell bronze, 3mm aluminum, and 3mm Steel. You can get the Concept Select snares in 5x14 or 6.5x14 sizes.

Have there been any recent advances in design, materials-used, types of finish, et cetera that have been driving sales of late?

SL: We released the upgraded SR505 Silent Triad strainer for the Philharmonic series in 2021 and the demand for this new strainer system has been incredible over the past year. We also added a new 20Ply birch/maple shell configuration and refreshed the entire line with new colors and finishes.

RD: Definitely! Our 2021 Limited Edition snare comes in an exclusive Twisted Ivory wrap and walnut wood hoops. This retro-styled

“As drummers continue to seek out new and unique ways to define their signature sound through their snare drum, this segment of the market will continue to thrive.”

– Matt Rudin, Marketing Manager
Drums, Yamaha Corporation of America



and supremely versatile, 8-lug drum with DW MAG throw-off can be tuned low as a backbeat workhorse, up high as a side snare or anywhere in between. The Concept Select snares are all 3mm seamless shells with true-pitch tension rods and DW MAG throw-offs. From a curated metal shell selection to the unique laser-engraved Art Deco insignias emblazoned on each drum, these snares are worth checking out... and showing off.

JS: We have a great design team here at DW. The team is headed by our founders John Good and Don Lombardi and Rich Sikra (VP of product development). They are always working to provide new product offerings that give drummers a broader selection of sounds. Over the past couple years, we've introduced snare offerings that incorporate unique build materials ranging from almond on the wood side to titanium and carbon fiber. We also offer unique sizes and designs like our Pi-snare offerings. Each of these snares offers the drummer a different sound palette and playing experience.

AS: We developed a unique aging compound that gives Keith's signature snare drum a vintage patina and "antique" look to the shell and, although each shell varies from one another visually, they all look super vibey and cool.

JM: Yes. In this latest iteration of the famed black panther series, we have applied the Mapex Soniclear bearing edge profile to all the metal shell models. This requires specialized tooling and attention to detail on the production side, but the proof is in the sound and feel of these drums. It really makes a difference when you increase the quality of the contact between head and drum shell.

Sonor's Benny Greb signature models each feature a revolutionary set of internal tone controls giving the player a renewed concept of on-board sound control eliminating the need for any external dampening devices or materials.

TB: In the last couple of years we've upgraded and improved many of our snare drum throw-offs and butt plates. This is across the board in all price points. For Ludwig, aluminum and brass seem to be the customer preferred shell materials. That being said, we've done well with copper over the years. For finishes, one of the strongest trends has been a "raw, unfinished, and weathered" look. Brass, copper, and bronze fared well with this motif. More recently, a few dealers have also opted to choose unique and creative finishes and builds that set them apart from the masses. More like a "custom shop" approach.

Mapex Black Panther Onyx Ralph Peterson Snare



Mapex Black Panther Persuader Snare

“There has been a return to at-home music making coupled with an explosion of at-home recording and streaming that has contributed significantly to strong snare drum sales.”

–Jeff Mulvihill

Mapex Brand Manager and Sonor Brand Manager



roundtable



“Whether it is well produced YouTube videos or targeted social posts, the dealers that we have done the most business with over the last several years are the dealers with a strong online presence.”

—Jim DeStefano, EVP Sales, DW Drums

KP: This is an important year in Pearl's history, so we decided to look to our past to best celebrate our path forward. This included the revival of our original Jupiter Chrome-over-Brass shell in the new DuoLuxe line – the first-ever inlaid metal snare drums. 2021 also marked the return of the Heritage Alloys (Black Nickel Brass, Steel, and Aluminum,) in our player-focused Sensitone Snare models, which have sold very well. Our new StaveCraft snares use a traditional joining technique in woodworking called Dado-Loc to create a hardwood stave construction shell that's 20mm thick, and drummers that have been lucky enough to get one have been raving about them.

JP: Our TAMA R&D team continues to innovate and refine products that provide fresh voices, so we are always trying new things. From our perspective, unique finishes (such as our Bronze Aged finish) are well received. The key is that magic combination of unique features/specs that is priced right in the market. Wood shells and metal shells are both viable, so we continue to explore choices that give drummers something different, both sonically and visually.

We've been reporting on how sales of certain instruments and gear have been faring quite well during the pandemic - how have snare sales been recently?

TB: To be honest, all categories have been up for our brand since long before the pandemic. Snare drums, drum sets, hardware and accessories, all segments are faring quite well. Safe to say, we all originally expected business would drop off when the pandemic hit, but we've not slowed down for a minute. It's business as usual, with a respectable and noticeable lift.

AS: Very well!... and not just in North America. We've been experiencing an excellent volume of orders in most regions – most notably in Asia, Europe, and Australia.

MR: Although global supply chain issues and slower production brought on by COVID has made gauging true demand difficult, it seems demand for snare drums across all categories has not slowed. From snares for drum sets, marching, or concert performance, we are still seeing demand increase.

RD: Very good. I would say we have been very fortunate during the pandemic. Orders have been strong and because of the delayed

Pearl Steel Piccolo Snare Drum



lead-times people have been placing orders further out than normal. We at PDP greatly appreciate the support and hope that everyone that's been able to afford new snares is en-



Pearl Philharmonic Series Snare Drum

“Though results of the pandemic have been absolutely tragic, it has been refreshing to see people turning to music as a way to cope, create, and connect.”

— Kevin Packard, Sr. Marketing Manager Combo Products, Pearl Musical Instrument Co.



DW Design Series Snare Drum in Clear Acrylic



DW Icon Dave Grohl Snare Drum

joying them.

JM: Very Strong. As reported by many different sources, there has been a return to at-home music making, coupled with an explosion of at-home recording and streaming that has contributed significantly to strong snare drum sales.

There has been a real uptick in high quality, custom purchasing stemming from newfound spare time and, in some cases, newfound budget for consumers. While the pandemic has cost the economy in certain sectors, it has saved in others leading discerning individuals to go ahead and purchase the high-end gear they have been dreaming about.

JS: We have been very fortunate at DW, as our demand has been very strong in all product segments through the pandemic. We theorize that, maybe as a result of significant downtime, many musicians decided they had more time to work on their craft. As an example of this, we saw a spike in sales of our double pedals. One explanation could be that drummers wanted to work on their overall playing and that may include adding a double pedal (i.e. double bass playing) to their arsenal. Demand has also increased in our snare offerings, pretty much across the board. For most of us drummers, you can never have too many snares to choose from.

JP: We are happy to see positive results in the snare drum category this year. Incoming orders are strong at pretty much all price points. Our challenge has been on the production and delivery side. The global shipping issues are directly affecting our ability to fulfill orders.

SL: For concert and chamber musicians - and especially students of all ages - the snare drum is the center of the “performance and technical universe.” During the pandemic we saw a large number of players and students add to their collections while they spent those isolated pandemic hours working on new music and improving their skills. The snare drum was an important outlet for creativity for many people during the pandemic due to its relative compact size and musical flexibility.

KP: Though results of the pandemic have been absolutely tragic, it has been refreshing to see people turning to music as a way to cope, create, and connect. Social Media and social distancing have driven players to discover – or in many cases, remember – the true joy that comes with drumming; so the demand for snare upgrades to All-In-One drum set packages has been tremendous. On the other end of the spectrum, it's been interesting to see increased worldwide demand for our high-end Music City Custom Solid snares,

Tama S.L.P. Sonic Stainless Steel Snare Drum



Tama Starphonic Series Bubinga Snare Drum

“A personal pet peeve of mine is when I see a really nice snare drum that is really poorly tuned. Who wants to buy that?”

– John Palmer, Sales Strategist,
TAMA Products, Pearl Musical Instrument Co.



which we launched at the last pre-pandemic NAMM show in 2020. We, along with the rest of the industry, are currently feeling the effects of an expanding musician community that the supply chain can't keep up with.

presence. Whether it is well-produced YouTube videos or targeted social posts, the dealers that we have done the most business with over the last several years are the dealers with a strong online presence. I am truly impressed with many of our dealers' product videos. They are well produced with great content. It makes the customer's purchase decision much easier when they have really good information so accessible.

What are some strategies – marketing, display, promotion, sales – employed by dealers who are especially successful at moving snares?

AS: There are several dealers who do a stellar job with promoting Gretsch snare drums on their social networks and/or company websites. We see customers demonstrate our snares on high-end video that also sounds incredible – sometimes just on a snare stand and sometimes paired with a full kit. It's most impressive production work.

RD: I would say social media and online presence has been a great help while people have been more hesitant to go out. Lots of great videos and content [are] being shared through many different avenues.

JS: I'll nominate that the common thread that runs through our most successful dealer relationships is their online and social media

SL: Dealers understand their client needs better than anyone, and we often see the more successful concert snare dealers working closely with area educators and players to make sure they have a diverse selection of drums offered alongside the most needed accessories to complete the playing experience.

KP: Sometimes the bleakest moments make us step up our game. On the eve of our 75th Anniversary celebration at the top of 2021, our executive staff at Pearl gathered the marketing team together to see how we could best honor the occasion without the benefit of something like NAMM to bring everyone together. We decided that the best way to do that would be to bring the trade show experience to the dealer in the comfort of their own space. This meant extensive video of each new product, Artist demonstrations and testimonials, and actual scheduled meetings with our inside Sales Team and Pearl Dealers to personally show them through our "virtual booth." The results were pretty phenomenal, especially considering there were so many new snare models to educate dealers about. Pre-orders of



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For real-time inventory, scan QR Code
or visit goldtonemusicgroup.com/dealer





PDP Concept Select Bell Snare Drum in Bronze

“With high demand and lower than normal stocking levels I feel like snares are going to continue to move fast.”
– Rob Dean, Brand Manager, Pacific Drums and Percussion



to, and they have been sharing that content through their own channels to tremendous success.

MR: Snares are a great way for drummers to change up their sound without overhauling their entire kit. We know that finding the right snare sound can be difficult, so we developed the Find Your Backbeat page. The site gives visitors a chance to compare different snare sounds and helps them hone in on the snare that is right for them: https://usa.yamaha.com/products/musical_instruments/drums/ac_drums/FindYourBackBeat.html

We have also just launched a new video series, giving detailed sound samples of almost every snare in our drum line, tuned at low, medium and high. You can see these videos on our YouTube channel.

JM: Two specific things: maintaining a strong stocking position and co-promoting the Mapex demo sound content that we have produced for each of our individual snare drums.

In general, [it's important to have] a knowledgeable and caring staff to truly curate the customer experience by spending just that little extra time on providing the customer what they need and want for their own situation.

JP: Video reviews and demos have enormous reach and are very effective. We also know that dealers who have a reputation for strong in-store snare drum representation are garnering sales. These dealers are really good at snare drum tuning, which is essential. A personal pet peeve of mine is when I see a really nice snare drum that is really poorly tuned. Who wants to buy that? Many consumers will tap on a given snare and purchase it if they like what they hear. Having every snare drum tuned well gives

Pearl Brian Frasier Moore Signature Snare



Pearl Duoluxe Chrome Brass Snare Drum

them their best chance to be purchased.

TB: The dealers that are most successful take the time to shoot many of their own images. They typically use only one or two stock photos, then

they enhance their presentation with their own. Many are water-marked with their store name and/or logo. The other driver would be video. Many of those same stores film their own audio/video to promote the snares. They often tune the snares three ways: high, medium, and low pitch. This demonstrates a brief sonic snapshot of the dynamics and frequency range each drum delivers within those tunings. This works particularly well for online sales. For more brick and mortar walk-in sales, the better stores put the drums on display and meticulously tune them, providing a better playing and listening experience for the customer.

Does your brand have any recent or upcoming snare models you'd like to draw our readers' attention to?

JP: We are always exploring new things, so... stay tuned.

KP: Our two most recent Artist Signature Snares are really something special. Brian Frasier Moore's Gum/Maple 14"x5.5" model and Matt Halpern's 14"x6" Black Powder-Coated Brass snare couldn't be more different sonically, but they are individually spectacular instruments. For something completely different, the Modern Utility Maple 14"x10" Floor Snare is a great value and seriously versatile for numerous playing voices and situations.

TB: Stay tuned – we have a lot of new snare drums coming in 2022!

AS: Yes, keep your eyes open for Q1/Q2 2022.

JS: With our 50th Anniversary coming up we will have some new snare offerings in 2022. A couple of my favorites that are currently available include our Collector's Pi snares (unique build and size); Purpleheart snares (attack and body) and our thin Aluminum snares (dryer, resonant sound).

RD: We have a handful of snares we'll be launching next year that I'm very excited about. More metal snares, for sure, and – who knows – maybe some really cool and unique wood snares, too. Keep an eye on our socials or check out our recently released YouTube page to stay in the know!

SL: The newest PHTR 20-Ply Maple Birch Philharmonic is really something to see and hear - incredible lacquer finishes and Pearl STL lugs plus all the tone, cut, and projection anyone could wish for. The Philharmonic line of professional quality snare drums have been the flagship concert drum series for Pearl for over 20 years, but people should be familiar with all the new features and upgrades that have been recently added. Pearl's upgraded strainer, new shells, and finishes are truly exciting and once have set the standard for the concert snare drum market.

MR: Some other new products include the CFM-1414 deep

“As orchestras, schools, and festivals around the country continue to get back to work and re-open, we expect the demand for quality concert snare drums to continue to be strong.”

– Shawn Lafrenz, Sr. Marketing Manager for B&O Products, Pearl Musical Instrument Co.



Ludwig Raw Brass Snare Drum



Ludwig Supraphonic Snare Drum

bodied field drum and the new CSR-1450 in the CSR Series of brass snares, which are favored by professional and advanced players.

JM: We do have a special release coming up in Q4 of a very limited-edition Black Panther Snare drum designed by the late great Ralph Peterson, jazz legend, Berklee educator, and dedicated Mapex artist for more than 30 years. Our only regret is that he lost his battle with cancer before we could bring it to market, but we do feel that it will be a well-deserved tribute to his musical legacy.

Sonor does have some exciting things coming in 2022 that I really can't wait to share... but I must!

What are your expectations for this market segment in the coming months?

KP: That will certainly depend on the normalizing of our current shipping and supply crisis. However, we are very hopeful for a robust 2022 based on the current rise of online performance platforms, and the return of live music. We have another Artist collaboration coming in the new year, and we feel we have a strong selection of models for players of all levels.

TB: Sales continue to grow, and we don't expect them to slow down anytime soon. It's kind of like the industry's inside joke for drummers: "You can never have too many snares or cymbals." Drummers, engineers, and producers are always wanting "that next new sound" to make their music sound different, whether it be live or in the studio. With the development of new shell materials and interesting designs, there's no shortage of ideas to grow this segment of the market. My prediction is, it will never slow down!

JS: As mentioned previously, we have been fortunate that our sales have been strong. Our biggest challenge is keeping up with the current demand, given some of the supply chain issues. That aside, if sell-through continues to be robust, it

“We all originally expected business would drop off when the pandemic hit, but we've not slowed down for a minute.”

– Terry Bissette

Director, Ludwig Global Sales & Product Development



will bode well for all companies in the drum and MI space. That's our hope.

MR: As drummers continue to seek out new and unique ways to define their signature sound through their snare drum, this segment of the market will continue to thrive.

JM: I expect snare drum sales to stay very strong for the coming months and into 2022. More specifically, metal shell models in brass, steel, and aluminum will stay at a high level of demand. I expect the demand for snare drums and drums in general to stay very strong for the coming months and into 2022 and furthermore, I don't really see the drummer's quest for the perfect snare drum sound or sounds to ever stop in the community.

SL: As orchestras, schools, and festivals around the country continue to get back to work and re-open we expect the demand for quality concert snare drums to continue to be strong.

RD: With high demand and lower than normal stocking levels, I feel like snares are going to continue to move fast. We greatly appreciate all our drummers out there and I hope that no matter what snares people are buying, they are happy and motivated to play!

JP: I am optimistic we will continue to see strong demand for snare drums. Drummers are always searching for a new voice within their kit that inspires them. And relating to COVID, we are still just at the beginning to return to the full blossom for live music. Drummers have practiced their craft during COVID and are excited to display their deeper connections with their drums and their music. As an extension to "drumming during the pandemic," the electronic drum market has surged and I expect many entry-level drummers who purchased an electronic kit will find their way over to the acoustic side of the instrument, which bodes well for the snare drum category.

HR* Series – Our Most Popular Mouthpieces

The first choice of discerning students and professionals alike

Warmth & Beauty

These hard rubber sax mouthpieces produce a beautiful warm sound with free-blowing ease. Super versatile, they are great for Traditional Jazz, Big Band, Straight-Ahead and Bebop, but also have enough power for more modern styles.



Kirk Whalum plays the HR* Tenor 8



The Calm of Money The Lion Sleeps Tonight



By
Jaimie
Blackman

as originally sung by Mr. Linda can be listened to on YouTube. His soundtrack is raw and authentic, and it's all there. Listening to the track actually gave me chills.

The original translation of the Zulu lyrics is, "Every morning you bring us good luck. You're a lion mama!"

In the village, the peaceful village the lion sleeps tonight. Does that mean if the villagers weren't peaceful, and weren't quiet, the lion would be awake causing havoc?

How about we use the "village" as a metaphor for your own inner harmony – your own inner peace. Perhaps the villagers instinctively knew that their inner peace and inner harmony would transfer to the lion in kind. The villagers were not in fear, they were not in survival mode. They were calm. It's almost as if they accepted the lion's presence. That was the experience, and this is the power of calm – fully accepting what is in the present moment.

So here's my question to you: Has stress helped you overcome your money problems? If the answer is yes, ask yourself what was the cost to your physical, spiritual, and emotional health?

If the answer is no, how about you try a new filter to experience your financial life? Pass your financial life through a circuitry of calm. How? By being consciously connected to the area in your body that is always calm. For many of us, this area is located near your heart.

Try this now: Just breathe; Inhale and hold, then exhale; Be aware of each breath. That's it. Notice how the mental activity begins to shift. My wife and I listen to Panache Desai's (panachedesai.com) call to calm mindfulness meditation on most mornings where he teaches (free) many of these concepts which I have embraced. All I can say is from our personal experience, we have seen a real shift in our relationship to money stress, and every other form of stress for that matter.

Using the breath as a path to inner harmony is an ancient wisdom. It stems from many traditions like Buddhist meditation, Oigong, and Christian monastic practices. Studies have shown that breathing practices can significantly improve symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress-related medical conditions.

There are tangible benefits a quieter and present mind has for a business owner.

Improved Listening Skills

There are only two ways to improve your listening skills. First, you have to hear the other person. For us rockers, as we age hearing loss is a problem. The second way is to quiet the mind. If you



are taking a day trip while a customer or team member is talking to you, that's a problem.

More Joy

It's easy to blame others for our stress. Try to slip a quick breath in before you react. Just a pause before the emotions hijack your mind. Just try it.

Be the Best Version of Yourself

Let's face it, there are times when we don't like ourselves very much. And there are times when we are in the "flow." Everything is happening with ease, we are happy, we are present. We love this version of ourselves. In the present moment is where the magic resides.

Don't believe me. Just try this with your significant other. Next time you're discussing money, follow the breath. This immediately moves you from survival mode, from scarcity to calm and abundance. Please, just try it.

My buddy Richard Wolf, author of *In Tune: Music as the Bridge to Mindfulness* wrote, "Striking the balance between calm relaxation and energetic attention in the body and mind can be compared to tuning a stringed instrument. If the strings are too loose, they will not have the necessary tonality. If they are tuned too tightly, they will break."

I mean, what choice do we really have? After all these years, you are kind of stuck with yourself. You might as well learn how to live with yourself with peace and calm instead of dissonance and stress. It's time to tune up. Just breathe.

Ukuthula Nokuzwana ["Peace and Harmony" is the English translation of the Zulu phrase] 

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

“So here’s my question to you:
Has stress helped you overcome your money problems?”

Service is Not a Fad

'Bot' in Today's Marketplace, it's Your Lifeline!



By
**Menzie
Pittman**

As we are working our way out of the doldrums of the past 20 months, I think it's fair to say the chain of events that has followed the shutdown has been as unpredictable and disruptive as the shutdown itself. We are certainly experiencing a domino effect and, like the shutdown, these continual disruptions affect all of us daily, and certainly affect everyone's mood.

Topics such as inflation and product shortage have consumers and sellers on edge. Everyone's patience is being tested by all the additional resistance in the marketplace. It's a fact that suppliers, re-sellers, educators, and families are all affected by current circumstances which are beyond our control, and that puts everyone on the defensive. After all, we are all still in recovery, whether we admit it or not. It is quite clear that the "new normal" is anything but normal!

Because of that reality, customers are looking for something extra when they shop, and it's not a product – it's good, old fashioned customer service. The difference this time is that the terms are slightly different. It wasn't so long ago that the definition of best service was measured by speed. Today, customers are genuinely responding to simple civilities because now more than ever they want to be heard.

Currently, many people have a lack of trust in the marketplace. Consumers continue to shorten their list of those with whom they choose to do business, and the idea of what constitutes good service is being re-defined almost daily! Unequivocally, customer service has once again become the number one priority of patrons.

Good Service is an Understanding Before it's an Action.

Fads come and go; what worked yesterday doesn't necessarily work today. Not too long ago, we typically measured good service by alacrity. If a business responded faster than their competition, they were considered very successful in the category of service.

But Service is Not and will Never be a Fad.

Entrepreneurs must find a way (even in the new normal) to provide good customer service. This time, consumers are seeking additional consideration as well as responsiveness. It's almost as if customers have been transported back in time. For example, think about the fast-food industry. If you delivered your food product quicker, or better yet, faster and cheaper than your competitor, you were considered a titan of service. The fact that the food might have had very little taste was secondary. The mission of management was to give the buyer the product as quickly as possible.

Faster was the Gold Standard by Which We Once Measured Service.

That is no longer the standard. The fast-food business has embraced a model that focuses on the idea of service to the customer. They have incorporated courtesy and smiles along with more consistent food quality. Once they did that, their drive-through lines increased dramatically. The idea of fast and cheap proved to be a vulnerable model. Indisputably, customer service is not a fad; it's an understanding, and it is the lifeline of your business.

The most recent technology has given rise to Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) and businesses have begun to use this technology to provide service and save money. "Chatbot" has become the newest fad in customer service, which is somewhat ironic. Everywhere online, it is Bot City. This is not to be confused with *Bump City*, the famous Tower of Power album. The difference is most everyone loves Tower of Power! Not everyone is a fan of chatbots.

At the most basic level, a "chatbot" is a computer program that simulates and processes human conversation, either written or spoken, allowing humans to interact with digital devices as if they are communicating with a real person. The key words: As If.

The irony is that in attempting to provide better customer service, the customer has been taken out of the human conversation. Have you noticed how many customer service phone numbers have quietly disappeared from the websites of companies? It is not my intention to throw the baby out with the bathwater in this conversation, but have you tried to "chat" with your cable company lately? I will give my cable company one kudo over and above the discount airline re-sellers. With the cable company, if you request a callback, you will *only* wait 30-40 minutes for an operator to get back to you. With the airline resellers, if you are buying a ticket, there's no problem. But I feel for you if you must change a reservation, or if a flight is cancelled. Again, it is Bot City.

It's not that chatbots don't have a place; certainly, they do in this newest age of technology. Probably the nicest feature of a chatbot is that it activates immediately. However, immediate is still not genuinely immediate.

In Closing

It's important to remember that customer service is a form of consideration and exchange. Customer loyalty is based on how your customer feels about the experience they have with your business. So, in the land of "Please leave us a review," we need to make sure we are better than we are fast. We need to make sure we connect personally. That is the pure definition of customer service.

□□□□□

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."

“We need to make sure we are better than we are fast.”

For Your Consideration



The 2021 Dealers' Choice Award Nominees

Submit your vote for the 29th Annual MMR Dealers' Choice Awards. Only subscribers to *Musical Merchandise Review (MMR)* magazine get to participate.



ALLEN & HEATH
AVANTIS

KAWAI
THE FUTURE OF THE PIANO
Aures Hybrid Acoustic

BUFFET CRAMPON
Prodige Clarinet

Roland
HP Digital Pianos



D'Addario

GATORCASES

BUFFET CRAMPON
ICON Series

Fender



Fender
Acoustasonic

Martin & Co.
EST. 1833
D-35

Gibson
Hummingbird

QUALITY
Taylor
GUITARS
V Class



KAWAI
THE FUTURE OF THE PIANO

HAILUN

STEINWAY & SONS

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Drums
DW



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NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN!



We'd like to invite you to participate in the voting for
MMR's 29th Annual Dealers' Choice Awards.

PLEASE VISIT

www.mmrmagazine.com/vote

to vote for all product categories relevant to your business.



- PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
- ELECTRIC GUITAR OF THE YEAR
- ELECTRIC BASS OF THE YEAR
- ACOUSTIC GUITAR OF THE YEAR
- SOUND REINFORCEMENT LINE OF THE YEAR
- AMPLIFIER LINE OF THE YEAR
- MICROPHONE LINE OF THE YEAR
- RECORDING EQUIPMENT LINE OF THE YEAR
- BAND & ORCHESTRA INSTRUMENT LINE OF THE YEAR
- ACOUSTIC PIANO LINE OF THE YEAR
- PERCUSSION LINE OF THE YEAR
- HOME DIGITAL KEYBOARD OF THE YEAR
- LIGHTING LINE OF THE YEAR
- PRO DIGITAL PIANO LINE OF THE YEAR
- DJ LINE OF THE YEAR
- PRINT MUSIC PUBLISHER OF THE YEAR
- ACCESSORY LINE OF THE YEAR

Sticking the Landing

MI Retailers Enjoy Robust Drum Sticks Sales in 2021

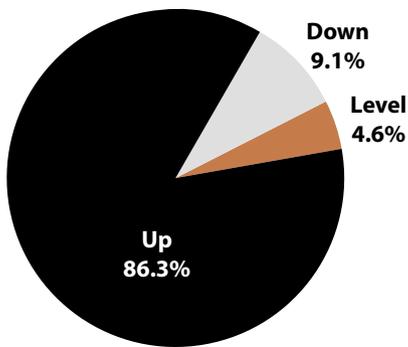
By Christian Wissmuller

It's always a pleasure to be in the position to pass along good news and the results of this month's dealer survey – sent out to over 400 businesses – are nearly uniformly positive. With close to 100% of participants (95.4%) reporting that drum stick sales are either up or level when compared to 2020, it's clear this is one MI market segment that is thriving.

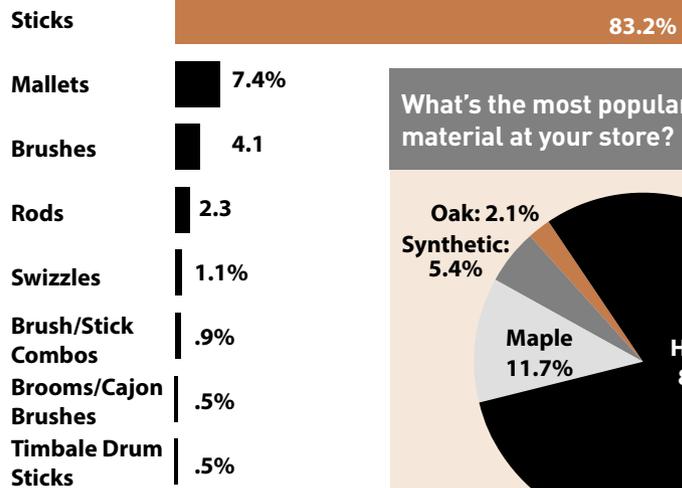
Of course, no river long enough doesn't contain a bend, so as much as the overall assessment is upbeat, there are some minor

complaints and concerns. Along with the usual (online sales, big box competition), some retailers find the exhaustive volume and variety of sizes, materials, and colors of drum sticks to be both daunting and frustrating. In other words, how do you choose what to stock if you can't possibly order a few of everything, and how do you accurately predict which "New! Cutting-edge!" drum sticks are going to be a runaway hit with players? However, as Allen McBroom of Starkville, Mississippi's Backstage Music says, "When it comes to drumsticks, manufacturers are constantly reinventing the wheel and every now and then they *do* make it a little more round."

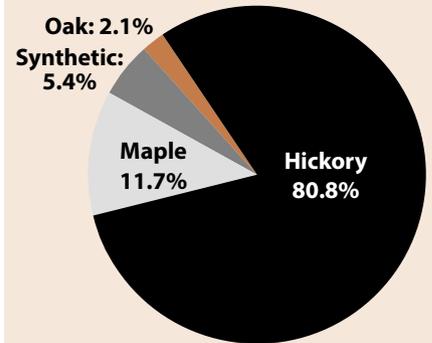
Sales of drumsticks, when compared to this time last year, are...



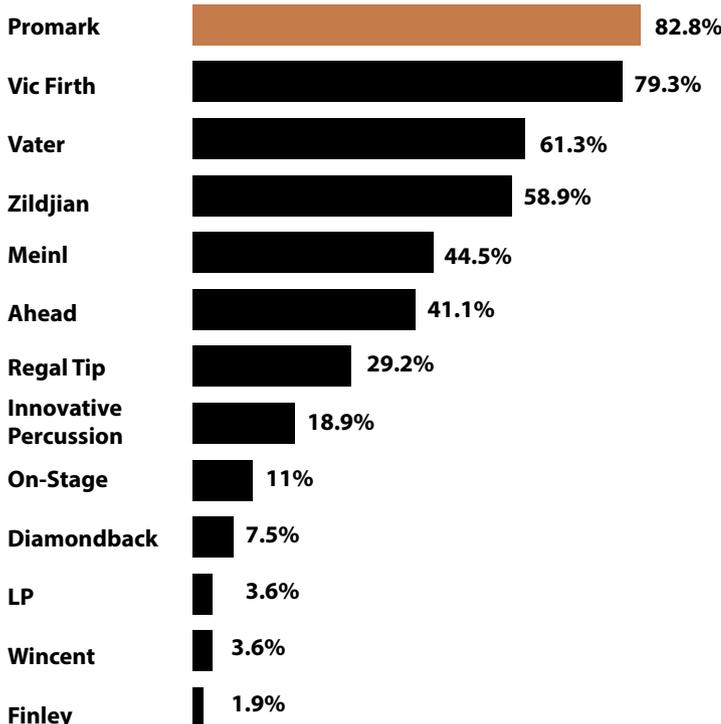
What specific types are the hottest sellers for your business?



What's the most popular drumstick material at your store?



Which brands are generating the most profit for your operation?



What trends have you been noticing with respect to drumstick sales?

"I can tell you that trying to stock all the models in all the finishes and colors drives an owner mad. We are seriously reducing our selection and maintaining the sales."

Ed Magruder
Musician's Warehouse
Athens, Georgia

"When it comes to drumsticks, manufacturers are constantly reinventing the wheel and every now and then they *do* make it a little more round. The ProMark FireGrain sticks are one example. The Wincent wax-bath treatment is another."

Allen McBroom
Backstage Music
Starkville, Mississippi

"Since we're very active in the school music business, we've noticed a substantial increase as schools are back in full swing."

Steve Gibson
Absolute Music
Reno, Nevada



'We Just Love to Innovate'

Australia's Cole Clark Guitars at 20

By Christian Wissmuller

Melbourne, Australia's Cole Clark Guitars (distributed in the U.S. by Korg USA) is an innovative, environmentally responsible supplier of well-regarded instruments – and in 2021 the company has been celebrating its 20th Anniversary. In addition to fielding the only mainstream acoustic steel strings with a Spanish heel, Cole Clark Guitars has also developed a proprietary 3-way pickup system, and the instruments are made using mostly native and sustainably sourced Australian tone woods

A few weeks ago, *MMR* sat down with CEO Miles Jackson to learn more of the Cole Clark story, the features that make their guitars unique, and their distribution model in America.

First off, congratulations on reaching this milestone! Let's start with some history: Who were the principal founders of Cole Clark Guitars and what was the catalyst behind launching a new brand?

Miles Jackson: It began with Adam Cole, Brad Clark, and a group of investors, including myself. Adam and Brad were well known guitar makers in Australia. I had been working in MI retail since 1979.

The concept was to meet the needs of the modern guitarist who tour heavily and plug in every night by re-imagining the acoustic guitar as a lighter, stronger instrument with a natural sounding pickup.

The Cole Clark Guitars site notes that the company currently has 73 employees. How many employees were there at the very beginning?

It began with four staff members and a CNC machine. By the end of the first year there were 10 employees on staff.

How big was that first factory and HQ 20 years ago and how large are the facilities today?

We started with 6,888 square feet and now have 20,000 square feet, as well as offices and research and development space.

Let's talk about what sets Cole Clark acoustics apart from other guitars. For those unfamiliar, what are the advantages of a Spanish heel and other design characteristics unique to Cole Clark?

The Spanish heel gives you a different characteristic from guitars with an attached neck: a cleaner, more piano-like bottom end. It is the other pallet. Not better or worse – just different.

This characteristic also works better when amplifying the guitar as the sound is more focused. To enhance this characteristic, we have a unique double V bracing with a mini X between them.

What are the upsides of the Cole Clark 3-way pickup system?

We don't see the pickup as an afterthought. It's a focus in every part of our build process and has been a priority from the start. Our patented pickup system has six suspended piezos under the bridge, a unique face sensor that's part of the integral bracing of the guitar and a microphone. Each operates in its optimized frequency and is incapable of hearing frequencies in its feedback zone. We use



The 3 Series in Blackwood



Cole Clark Angel 2EC

crossovers similar to a PA system to do this. It is the most natural sounding, dynamic and powerful pickup system available.

Simply put, we believe that when an acoustic guitar is plugged in, it should sound the same as it does unplugged... just louder.

With many large-scale acoustic guitar suppliers embracing sustainability in recent years — some mostly due to increased regulation, the CITIES act, and simply the unavailability of traditional tone woods — Cole Clark takes “going green” even further. Why is the brand so committed to environmentally responsible practices?

We have always had an ethical approach to sustainability. We were championing Queensland Maple for necks, backs, and sides and Bunya [pine] for tops since the company started in 2001. In fact, outside of rosewood and ebony on fretboards and bridges, our guitars were sustainable from the beginning. Two years before CITES restricted rosewood, we replaced rosewood and ebony with locally sourced alternatives. Now, 98 percent of our guitars have no endangered timbers. That’s true sustainability as far as we see it: normalizing the use of timbers which aren’t on the endangered list. We can’t figure out why companies don’t use new product introductions to offer alternative timbers. Some companies still exclusively use ebony for fingerboards, which is endangered.

We also get a great deal of our timber through urban recovery. These are trees that are sick and dying and need to be removed for safety reasons or have come down in storms, et cetera.

Are there any sonic characteristics unique to Australian tone woods that a “newbie” would be surprised by? Are there similarities to woods more familiar to most players?

Each are unique in a sense, but yes, they have tones that are akin to traditional timbers. Bunya is similar to spruce, our redwood tops are much like cedar, Queensland Maple and Silky Oak are closer to mahogany and our River She Oak and Satin Box fretboards are similar to ebony. Blackwood, which is our most popular back and sides timber, as well as our most popular plugged in top, is practically identical in look and tone to Koa. Just one DNA sequence difference.

When you look back at the past two decades, what were some of the most significant milestones, achievements, product introductions, et cetera?

When you’re attempting new things in a market that has so much history and tradition, the moments that stand out and those that justify the leap. The evolution of our pickup from the original 2-way system in 2003 to the 3-way system in 2010 was a huge step in our mission to produce the world’s greatest pickup. The switch in 2015 to entirely sustainable guitars gives us a great sense of pride and began a series of changes to our company that included urban recovery, the introduction of new timbers, and a shift to solar power.

More recently, we released a series of acoustics with humbuckers installed at the bridge that run entirely independent of the acoustic preamp as a separate output. This is a guitar that can create sounds no other guitar can and they were an instant hit. There are many players adding electric pickups to their sound holes to blend with their acoustic sound, but the pickup placement wasn’t optimal for dirty tones and they’d need a bunch of pedals to make it work. The Humbucker and Thinline models are confirmation that by focusing on moving with the modern, gig-ging guitarist, we can keep pushing boundaries.

Cole Clark Guitars began being exported to the United States 17 years ago. How many U.S. dealers did you have back in 2004 and how many carry Cole Clark in 2021? What is your distribution model, state-side?

We began with around a dozen dealers. Today the USA, we are proud to go through Korg USA. They distribute to 101 stores throughout the USA. Their in-house sales team is of the highest calibre. We could not be in better hands.

For U.S. retailers interested in partnering with Cole Clark Guitars, how would they best go about that?

Contact Korg USA about retail opportunities. Also, go to the Cole Clark website and socials. Spend some time finding out how we are different and why. A virtual factory tour will give you a good idea of what we do and they’re welcomed at any time.

One byproduct of the COVID pandemic has been that certain MI market segments — in particular fretted instruments — have enjoyed surging sales. How has Cole Clark been impacted?

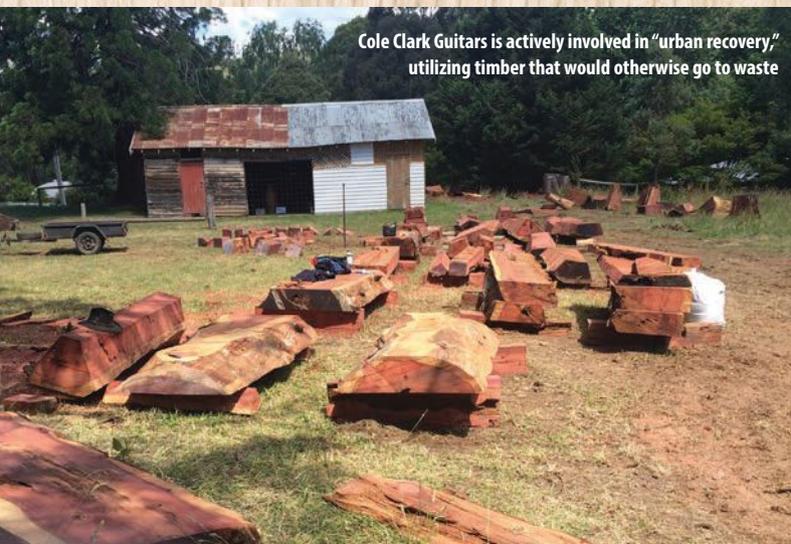
Cole Clark business has been incredible. Between people sitting at home with nothing to do and the introduction of some great new models in the Thinline and Humbucker range, we have all our production sold until March 2023. This includes a second shift that we added, doubling our output.

Do you have any upcoming events, instrument introductions, or initiatives to celebrate the 20th anniversary?

We would have loved to release a 20th anniversary model. We just haven’t had time or capacity with the orders we have. We had a two week social media campaign celebrating our achievements, artists and the staff that have made it the last 20 years possible.

What are your expectations for the coming months — for both Cole Clark and the MI industry as a whole?

As shops re-open around the world, I think the music industry will have a strong Christmas to finish up 2021. 2022 will see some major new releases from Cole Clark in January and then more in June for NAMM in California. For Cole Clark, we just love to innovate, make more and more guitars of the highest quality, and find new timbers. ©2021



Cole Clark Guitars is actively involved in “urban recovery,” utilizing timber that would otherwise go to waste



3 Series in Redwood



The Humbucker

ACCESSORIES

IK Multimedia Releases AmpliTube X-GEAR Digital Effects Pedals

IK Multimedia releases AmpliTube X-GEAR pedals. Each high-performance pedal features 16 different effects, drawn from the most popular AmpliTube models and all-new reverb and delay algorithms, bringing IK's industry-leading effects out of the computer and onto pedalboards.



Each pedal is accompanied by an exclusive virtual X-GEAR version of the exact same effects for use in AmpliTube 5 (SE version included). This lets users record, tweak settings and save presets back to the hardware pedal. Now guitarists can switch between stage and studio seamlessly and enjoy world-class tone anywhere.

Four boutique digital effects pedals

AmpliTube X-GEAR pedals cover the four realms of guitar effects processing. There's X-DRIVE distortion and X-VIBE modulation, which offer a range of iconic, must-have analog pedal effects – all recreated with IK's finest algorithms ever, while X-TIME delay and X-SPACE reverb feature cutting-edge, studio-grade effects algorithms.

Best-in-class DSP

AmpliTube X-GEAR pedals leverage IK's latest technologies and over 20 years of experience as the #1 amp and FX modeling company. The state-of-the-art DSP onboard includes 16 custom high-end algorithms per pedal, drawn from the most popular AmpliTube models along with all-new reverb and delay algorithms.

Hardware that stands out

Built to last, X-GEAR pedals feature an aluminum chassis designed and made in Italy. There's ultra-low noise, 24-bit/192kHz converters, an extended 5 Hz – 24 kHz frequency response and up to 123 dB dynamic range for whisper-quiet operation no matter how much gain is applied. With a pure analog dry path and selectable true or soft bypass, the guitar's tone will ring true no matter how simple or sophisticated the signal chain becomes.

Industry-leading integration

Each AmpliTube X-GEAR pedal includes a matching virtual version for Mac/PC and a copy of AmpliTube 5 SE. Opening any version of AmpliTube 5, users will find a virtual X-GEAR pedal available as a stomp for use within the program. Adjust any of the pedal settings with the convenience of AmpliTube's award-winning workflow and save them as presets. The X-GEAR Librarian lets users move presets between X-GEAR pedals and AmpliTube and easily reorganize them on the hardware pedal, where up to 300 presets can be stored.

All-in-one recording

X-GEAR pedals also work as a convenient USB audio interface. The same ultra-low noise converters and frequency response capture bass or guitar in all its range and dynamics. Versatile routing options let users choose between sending the wet or dry signals to their DAW. There's stereo out for monitoring and thanks to full MIDI implementation users can map the dials and stomps of X-GEAR to control AmpliTube and/or any compatible program.

From soundcheck to final encore

AmpliTube X-GEAR pedals offer everything players need to perform at their best. The intuitive interface and control knobs are easy to tweak on the fly. Indoors or out, a high-contrast LED

display keeps users informed on their settings and preset banks. An expression pedal input adds additional control over any parameter, while full MIDI implementation is built-in for even the most complex setups. We've also included 5 cabinet impulse responses in each pedal to connect directly to the PA.

Signal chain to the stars

Combining AmpliTube X-GEAR pedals creates a formidable team, seamlessly sending and receiving MIDI commands for dramatic effects changes. With the included Librarian, users can easily set up one X-GEAR pedal as the master to send program changes to the other pedals, and then just drop the presets they want to be activated into the appropriate slots. Daisy-chain the pedals together via MIDI and let the show begin.

Options, pricing and availability

AmpliTube X-GEAR pedals are available now from the IK Multimedia online store and from IK authorized dealers worldwide for \$/€299.99.

www.ikmultimedia.com

Electro-Harmonix Unveils the Nano Deluxe Memory Man

In describing this new version of a company classic, EHX founder, Mike Matthews, stated: "The new Nano Deluxe Memory Man delivers the lush bucket-brigade delay and modulation of our classic large-format pedal. We simply shrunk it and added some features for modern players including both Rate and Depth knobs for enhanced modulation control. Now, you can have the Memory Man in our time-honored standard chassis, or our new, compact, nano design."



The Nano Deluxe Memory Man features:

- Rich analog delay, chorus and vibrato
- Maximum delay time of 550ms
- Compact, rugged, pedalboard friendly enclosure
- Internal user-accessible switch to turn delay tails on or off
- True bypass when tails feature is off
- 9.6DC-200 power supply included

The Nano Deluxe Memory Man features a U.S. list price of \$203.10 and is available now.

www.ehx.com

Gator Cases' Fret Mutes

The number of guitarists has boomed worldwide in just the past year and a half. No matter if they are new to the instrument or not, guitarists are searching for a great way to take their playing to the next level. Enter Gator Cases' game-changing guitar accessory, the Guitar Fret Mutes. Guitar Fret Mutes are unique as they give guitarists an option for suppressing overtones and sympathetic resonance of open strings during certain guitar techniques.



Gator's Guitar Fret Mutes deliver what precision players crave, a solution for silencing the buzzing sound encountered when utilizing advanced playing techniques, like two-handed finger tapping and similar approaches. As if lending you an extra hand to mute the open strings, the Fret Mute suppresses any unwanted overtones and resonance to keep your recordings and live performances sounding as clean as possible.

Fret Mutes offer a small and compact design, making them the perfect accessory for a gig bag or guitar case accessory com-

partment. To attach the fret mute, wrap it directly over the fretboard at any position on the neck or move it just above the nut. The stretchy fabric and hook-and-loop strap allow end users to set and lock the preferred amount of dampening, giving them total control over placement and pressure. The Fret Mutes come in four different sizes and will fit an array of neck widths, from 4-string basses and 6-string electrics to 12-string basses and oversized stringed instruments.

The fret mutes are available in small, medium, large and extra-large to fit various guitar necks. They come in a (1) pack or (3) pack and are protected by Gator's lifetime warranty.

www.gatorcases.com

FRETTED

Luna Guitars Adds Folk Solid Top Acoustic Electric to Popular Wabi Sabi Series

Luna Guitars is pleased to announce the addition of the folk sized body shape acoustic guitar to the popular Wabi Sabi Series. The guitar features a folk body style (in-between a parlor and grand concert) a solid spruce top, and Luna SL3 preamp with tuner and built-in EQ.

Commonly depicted using Japanese aesthetics, Wabi Sabi is a world view that embraces imperfection and appreciates beauty that is incomplete in nature. Like the philosophy, the Wabi Sabi Series is for players looking to improve their playing abilities and perfect their craft without worrying about errors.

The Luna Wabi Sabi Folk Acoustic-Electric guitar features a solid spruce top, mahogany back and sides with black binding, a mahogany "C"-shape neck with a 20-fret 15"-radius laurel fretboard and a Bone 1 11/16"-nut. In addition, it has a satin natural finish, a "Zen Brushstroke" rosette, pau ferro bridge, sealed die-cast chrome tuners, dual-action truss rod and D'Addario EXP16 (.012-.053) coated strings.

"The Wabi Sabi Folk A/E makes an excellent beginner and intermediate guitar at an affordable price," said Adam Gomes, brand director & artist relations at Luna Guitars. "It features a solid spruce top, which is a favorite among many traditional guitarists and allows players of all skill levels to hear strong acoustic tones with crisp projection."

The Luna Wabi Sabi Folk A/E – Solid Top sells for \$299 at authorized Luna Guitars dealers.

www.lunaguitars.com

Fender Custom Shop Violinmaster Tele

Fender's Custom Shop is announcing the launch of the limited edition Violinmaster Telecaster Relic guitar, the newest custom-built creation from principal master builder Yuriy Shishkov.

Inspired by the world renowned violinist, Joshua Bell and his legendary 1713 "Gibson ex-Huberman" Stradivarius violin, Yuriy Shishkov set out to make this iconic instrument his muse for his latest Fender Custom Shop showpiece by personally reaching out to the artist himself.

Mimicking its bold design, Shishkov has captured the essence of the 300-year old violin through both its look and feel as a reincarnation in the form of a guitar. The instrument's design includes a Fender Patent Pending Floating bridge with interchangeable four saddles (Bronze, Ocean Coral, Buffalo Horn and Ebony) that will come in a small "violin case" made from leftovers of the body's "core" flame maple, a custom made Ebony/



brass tailpiece. It also contains copied and proportionally scaled Huberman Stradivarius violin "F" holes, and a newly designed "round-lam fingerboard", headstock adjust with no "skunk stripe" 22 frets neck. The Fender Custom Shop will be releasing up to 60 built to order Fender Violinmaster Telecaster guitars globally.

Limited to 60 guitars, the striking model features a hollow flame maple body, patent pending floating bridge with interchangeable saddles and combination of piezo and electronic pickups – and comes complete with an authentic European hand-polished violin varnish.

www.fender.com

PRO AUDIO

PreSonus Unveils Updated R-Series V2 Active AMT Monitors

PreSonus is now shipping its second-generation R65 V2 and R80 V2 active AMT studio monitors. The new monitor speakers feature more extensive control than the original R-series, incorporating the analog Acoustic Tuning controls from PreSonus' celebrated Eris line. You get Low Cutoff, Mid Frequency, and High Frequency controls, as well as a three-position Acoustic Space switch that allows you to compensate for the acoustic results of speaker placement against a wall or in a corner. An upgraded 140W (75W LF + 65W HF) Class A/B power amplifier provides ample headroom and even warmer, smoother overall frequency response for distortion-free, non-fatiguing performance, even at higher volumes.



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As with the original R-series, the new R65 V2 and R80 V2 monitors feature a custom-designed, 6.8-square-inch Air Motion Transformer (AMT) tweeter that responds to the subtlest waveforms and high frequencies, making them an ideal choice for hearing ultra-highs that add “air” and a sense of space and dimension. The AMT’s astonishingly thin (< 0.01 mm) folded Kapton membrane provides wave-cycle-accurate transient reproduction, so you’ll hear every detail in your music: the gentle breath in every exhale, the subtle finger noise in a nylon-string classical guitar, the nuanced overtones of brass and woodwinds; and exquisite reverb tails that gracefully decay.

The AMT tweeter also enables R-series V2 monitors to handle 8 to 13 times the projection area of more traditional tweeter designs, while the monitor’s housing design constrains the projection area to the horizontal axis. The result is a wide “sweet spot” with narrow vertical dispersion, minimizing problematic reflections off of your desk, ceiling, and floor, while providing a consistent sound in different listening environments.

The R80 V2 features an eight-inch, custom-woven, composite woofer that offers consistent low-end dispersion across its frequency range. The R65 V2 has a 6.5-inch

woofer of the same design. The R80 V2’s overall frequency response is rated at 40 Hz to 22 kHz, while the R65 V2 delivers 45 Hz to 22 kHz.

Balanced XLR and ¼-inch TRS and unbalanced RCA input connections make hookup to almost any line-level source quick and easy. Safety features include RF shielding, current-output limiting, over-temperature protection, and subsonic protection.

PreSonus R65 V2 and R80 V2 studio monitors are available immediately at PreSonus dealers for U.S. street prices of \$329.95 and \$429.95, respectively. The new R-series V2 monitors replace the original R-series monitors, which have been discontinued.

www.presonus.com



Audio-Technica Debuts BP28 and BP28L Line + Gradient Large Diaphragm Condenser Microphones

Audio-Technica is launching its new BP28 14-inch (355.6 mm) and BP28L 22.4-inch (569 mm) Line + Gradient Large Diaphragm Condenser Microphones. These microphones combine a large-diaphragm condenser element with a 28 mm diameter shotgun design for exceptional low-noise performance. With extremely tight polar patterns and a patented acoustic port design that maintains directionality across the entire frequency range, these shotgun microphones are specially designed to meet the needs of broadcast, film, television, outdoor recording and theater applications.

Particularly suitable for long-distance miking for audio acquisition for film or professional broadcast, the BP28 and BP28L offer a highly directional pickup pattern, with the BP28L’s pattern being exceptionally narrow. They provide a flat frequency response and exceptionally low noise levels (BP28: 8 dB; BP28L: 3 dB) and transformer-coupled outputs that produce a smooth sonic character. Extremely high sensitivity (BP28: -28 dBV; BP28L: -23 dBV), wide dynamic range (135 dB), and high-SPL capability (BP28: 143 dB; BP28L: 138 dB), and they are equipped with a switchable 80 Hz high-pass filter and 10 dB pad. Both. The mics’ rugged housing is made of lightweight, structural-grade aluminum alloy.

www.audio-technica.com

DJ & LIGHTING



Numark’s Mixstream Pro

Numark introduces a groundbreaking new approach to DJing with its new Mixstream Pro standalone DJ controller. Operating on Engine DJ, the Mixstream Pro grants DJs access to millions of songs through its built-in WiFi and intuitive music streaming functionality. DJs no longer need an established music library or external laptop to DJ online, at a party, or in a club. This ultimate versatility, along with high-quality, built-in speakers makes the Mixstream Pro the most flexible and innovative plug and play DJ product available, especially at this price.

Connect. Stream. Play.

The Mixstream Pro is fully optimized and suited for the future of DJing, setting new standards in connectivity and music access. With its built-in WiFi, the Mixstream Pro can access streaming content virtually anywhere. Connecting quickly to Beatport LINK, Beatsource LINK, TIDAL, Soundcloud Go+, the Mixstream Pro grants DJs access to millions of songs, curated playlists, and top charts. DJs can also sync their entire music library or selected playlists to Dropbox, and seamlessly access them on the Mixstream Pro. Tracks are buffered into the internal memory as they are loaded, making playback ultra-reliable and stable, ensuring uninterrupted performances at every gig or live stream.

On top of its array of connected features, the Mixstream Pro features 2 USB inputs and 1 SD card slot for external media drives, giving DJs optimum versatility when it comes to music selection and curation. Using the Engine DJ desktop software, DJs can quickly and easily export their entire music library or selected playlists to a USB drive or SD card, and then access their music instantly on the Mixstream Pro.

Ultimate Control for Creative Music Interaction

The intuitive layout and 7” high-definition touchscreen allow DJs to browse, load and interact with their music like never before. To provide the ultimate mix, a full-blown EQ and FX section unleashes the power of the DJ in anyone. The 4 built-in effects (Echo, Flanger, Delay, and



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Phaser) are perfectly timed to the beat when they are triggered with the fun, interactive toggle switches. There's no feeling quite like mixing in the perfect song at the perfect time, and the large Filter knobs add even more excitement by providing hands-on control over the low and high frequencies to create dramatic mixes, blends, and transitions. Scratching with the large, 6" touch-sensitive jog wheels is easy thanks to the Smart Scratch feature, which ensures that the music always stays on beat after a scratch is added to the mix. The 8 dual-layer Performance Pads feature 4 pad modes (Cue, Saved Loop, Auto Loop, Roll,) providing limitless possibilities for live mixing and ultimate creative musical freedom. Plus, since the Mixstream Pro harnesses the power of the embedded Engine DJ operating system, DJs have direct access to an ever-expanding set of advanced, professional-grade DJ performance features.

First-Ever Built-In Monitor Speakers

The Mixstream Pro is the first-ever standalone DJ controller to feature high-quality, built-in speaker monitors with a dedicated volume control knob. These custom-tuned drivers produce rich, full sound and make the Mixstream Pro the most versatile, plug and play standalone DJ controller on the market. The high-quality sound output is perfect for casual listening, cookouts, pool parties, and gatherings of family and friends. For the aspiring or professional DJ, the built-in speakers are the ultimate, convenient solution for practicing, live streaming, video content creation, and personal monitoring when connected to a larger

Pricing: \$599 [US], 499.99 [UK], €599.99 [EU]

www.numark.com

PRINT & DIGITAL



Excelcia Music Publishing Expands Two Popular Music Series

New releases from Excelcia Music Publishing bring additions to two favorite series from the publisher, *Flexcel Concert Works*, for flexible ensemble, and *Accessible Solo Repertoire*, new solo works for grades 2 to 2.5. Both of the expanded series provide more accessibility and flexibility at home and in the classroom.

Rounding out its *Accessible Solo Repertoire*, *18 Festival Solos with Piano* series, Excelcia Music Publishing broadens its wind offerings with the addition of oboe, tenor saxophone, horn and tuba books. Each *Accessible Solo Repertoire* book contains 18 beautifully set newly composed or arranged solos with piano accompaniment written at accessible grades 2 to 2.5, and are well-suited for adjudicated solo festival or recital. Each book comes with piano accompaniment recordings and PDF piano part downloads, as well as professionally recorded samples of each piece. Written by composers and music educators Larry Clark and Tyler Arcari, these books will add fresh and unique solos to repertoires that are fun to play and musically stimulating. The new books will soon be included in Smartmusic.

Excelcia Music Publishing's flexible *Flexcel Concert Works* series has three new additions from well-known compos-

ers. Two of the publishers' best-selling *Concert Band* works — *Zig Zag* by Sean O'Loughlin (Grade 1.5) and *Acropolis* by Matthew R. Putnam (Grade .5) — are now available in Flexcel's signature five-part flexible instrumentation. Tyler Arcari's *Sea Shanty Saga* (Grade 2.5), inspired by the 2021 viral resurgence on TikTok of the 13th-century sea shanty, comes with four-part flexible instrumentation, including parts for strings and percussion. Pieces in the *Flexcel Concert Works* series can be used with significantly-reduced ensemble sizes and any combination of wind, string, and percussion instruments. The works can be performed by as few as five (or four) players plus percussion. When their complete band or orchestra is back together again, directors can easily transition to the fully-scored version of the piece published by Excelcia Music Publishing.

Accessible Solo Repertoire books (\$14.99) and *Flexcel Concert Works* pieces (\$60) are available from music retailers and from the publisher.

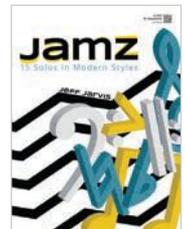
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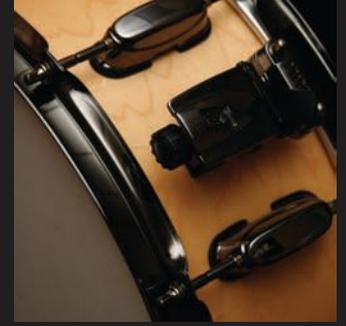
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A man is seen from the side, sitting at a desk in a music studio. He is playing a Korg Nautilus synthesizer. On the desk, there is a computer monitor displaying a digital audio workstation (DAW) interface, a keyboard, and a mouse. Two Korg speakers are positioned on either side of the monitor. A pair of headphones is on a stand to the left. The background features a wall with posters, including one with the Korg logo, and a large potted plant. The lighting is dim and focused on the workspace.

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