

MMR

MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

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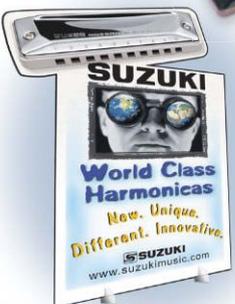
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— Laura Taylor, Guitar Center

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Paging Don Draper — Your Time's Up, Bub

There is a belief, which is just not true, that women are just in bad occupations and if we just put them in better occupations, we would solve the gender gap problem," noted Dr. Claudio Goldin, a Harvard University labor economist, in an April 2014 *New York Times* piece on the "Pay Gap." The idea being discussed was the notion — which a number of Republicans who voted down the equal pay bill in April of this year cited — that the lower average pay of women in today's professional climate is not a byproduct of any rampant sexism in the workplace, but rather a result of females "choosing" lower-paying careers. As the Republican National Committee put it, "There's a disparity not because female engineers are making less than male engineers at the same company with comparable experience. The disparity exists because a female social worker makes less than a male engineer."

It's not my or *MMR's* role to overtly align with any one political ideology, so, yeah, please feel free to talk that above assertion out amongst yourselves (Really! Any and

all letters and emails are always welcome: cwismuller@timelesscom.com).

Lisa Maatz' compelling and convincing editorial in an April *Forbes* article noted, "I know my calendar says 2014, but I'm having trouble believing it. The *Mad Men* era isn't just on TV. It's real life for women and their families who are struggling to make ends meet."

Of course that so-called pay gap amongst the sexes — these days commonly reported/accepted to be 78 percent* (i.e., a woman with a similar skill-set and background to her male counterpart in a given field will make roughly 78 cents to the dollar earned by that man) — doesn't tell the full story. Preconceived bias, sexual harassment, and historically established societal roles are just a few of the challenges facing women embarking on, or trying to successfully navigate through, professional careers in virtually every industry.

So how does the MI world stack up when it comes to gender equality and balanced, unprejudiced treatment of all professionals working within the field?

In Matt Parish's in-depth article on the topic on page 26 of this issue, Cindy Cook of Santa Fe's Candyman Strings and Things describes attending her first NAMM Show in 2010: "I didn't get the impression that I had found myself in a gender-biased industry at all (no 'good ole' boys club anywhere) and as a newbie, I immediately felt included."

Pretty good, then — right?

Before we collectively pat ourselves on

the back, though, take a look at this quote from Guitar Center's vice president of operations, Laura Taylor: "Women go into a store and feel like they're treated as if they know nothing about music. If they walk in with a guy, the guy gets all the questions."

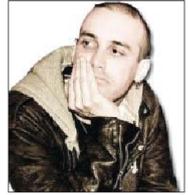
The good news — at least based on those who contributed to our cover story — is that, overall, our industry would seem to be more progressive than most, with women making great strides towards eradicating any leftover inequities of the past.

While I can get a nostalgic thrill out of a well-crafted AMC series as much as the next guy (or gal), in real-life, when it comes to fair treatment of co-workers and colleagues, it's time for us all to step away from the retro office bar-cart and fully engage in the present. Any disparity in pay, treatment, or professional consideration based upon gender, race, personal beliefs, or cultures in 2014 is reprehensible, archaic, and — worth noting — just blatantly stupid business practice.

* U.S. Census Bureau, Income and Poverty in the United States: 2013, published September 16, 2014.



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Steve Wozniak to Speak at 2015 NAMM Show

The 2015 NAMM Show, held January 22-25 in Anaheim, California, will showcase insights from entrepreneurs within and beyond the music industry including Apple co-founder, Steve “Woz” Wozniak. The engineering icon will open Saturday morning’s breakfast session, talking music and technology with NAMM president and CEO Joe Lamond.

“Since the days of Thomas Edison, the NAMM Show has been the place where great thinkers have come together to create the future,” said Lamond. “NAMM members coming to Anaheim this January will benefit from a robust show floor filled with the latest innovations, educational sessions that cannot be found anywhere else, and the chance to hear iconic speakers and thought leaders like Steve Wozniak.”

NAMM members will hear straight from the source about the hard-hitting

lessons learned during the founding of Apple. Wozniak and Lamond will also explore innovations in business, entrepreneurship, and Woz’s passion for music.

“Music is an enormous part of my life. It plays an integral role in creating the whole person, creative innovators that will shape the future,” said Wozniak. “I look forward to witnessing technology and music come together at the NAMM Show. And, of course, playing a few instruments, too!”

One of the early innovators of the microcomputer revolution, Wozniak co-founded Apple Computers (now Apple Inc.), designing both the Apple I and the Apple II. He was awarded the National Medal of Technology from President Ronald Reagan for his innovations, which effectively paved the way for the personal computer industry.

Breakfast starts at 8 a.m. An hour-long chat with Wozniak begins at 8:30 a.m.

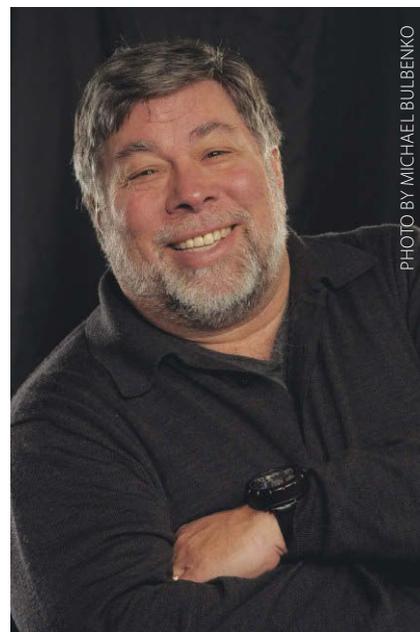


PHOTO BY MICHAEL BULBENKO

Hal Leonard and Groove3 Announce Partnership

Hal Leonard Books and Groove3 have announced a long-term strategic partnership to develop and deliver authoritative content to the world.

This collaboration will transform Hal Leonard’s content, including series such as *Music Pro Guides* and *Quick Pro Guides*, using Groove3’s online video delivery system and subscription model, while expanding Groove3’s reach beyond the robust community the company has built over the last 10 years, addressing all aspects of the music-making process, including recording, production, engineering, mixing, songwriting, DAW guides, and more.

“Groove3 has always had the end user’s best interest in mind and is dedicated to delivering the best tutorials about today’s audio tools and recording and production techniques. Now having the opportunity to partner with Hal Leonard and offer their first-class content alongside ours, it’s a match made in heaven for all audio profes-



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sionals and hobbyists alike around the world,” said Groove3 vice president Antony Livoti.

“Groove3 is the most trusted and time-tested online quality resource for training videos for musicians, and bringing Hal Leonard’s reputable brands and content into their community will be a huge benefit to all musicians interested in learning online,” said John Cerullo, group publisher of Hal Leonard Books.

“Hal Leonard has been a pioneer in offering digital content to active music makers for decades, and the Groove3 partnership, along with our many oth-

er recent digital and web-based initiatives, will allow us to continue to offer the best in music instruction for years to come,” added Hal Leonard Corporation president Larry Morton.

Groove3 currently offers more than 850 hours of top-notch online training. The new, exclusive content from Hal Leonard will include product by world-renowned recording, audio, and music experts from many fields, including the *Hal Leonard Recording Method* by Bill Gibson, the *Bruce Swedien Recording Method*, Ricki Rooksby’s series of books on songwriting, and much more. Additional courses and products will be announced and released in the coming weeks.

In addition, the partnership allows for the development and offering of customized online programs for traditional resellers, such as musical instrument dealers, and licensing programs to audio-trade outlets, secondary and higher educational institutions, and industry organizations.

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Music & Arts Adds Two New N. Houston Locations

Music & Arts recently opened two new locations in the North Houston, Texas areas of Humble and Tomball. The roughly 3,000-square-foot Music & Arts stores offer a large selection of instruments and accessories, as well as six music lesson studios, which will have the capacity to serve about 250 students. Instructors at these locations will offer a variety of one-on-one or group music lessons, including: piano, violin, viola, flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, trombone, tuba, guitar, bass, banjo, ukulele, percussion, voice, and more.

"We are excited to expand our presence in the North Houston market especially during this time of year," said Vince Chiappone, regional sales director for Music & Arts. "We work with numerous school music programs in the area, so having these two additional locations will help us help them."

The location will service nearly every school district in Northwest Houston and surrounding areas, including: Aldine, New Caney, Klein, Spring, Cy-Fair, Magnolia, Houston, and many more. Music & Arts has also added three educational representatives in the market who have a combined 30+ years of experience. The new educational reps are Steven Hill, David Ford, and Rene Gutierrez.



Inside the new Tomball, Texas storefront.

"Our job is to coordinate with music educators in all grade levels to ensure each program has the instruments and accessories its students and directors need," said Rene Gutierrez. "There's nothing better than knowing we play a part in helping to keep music programs alive."

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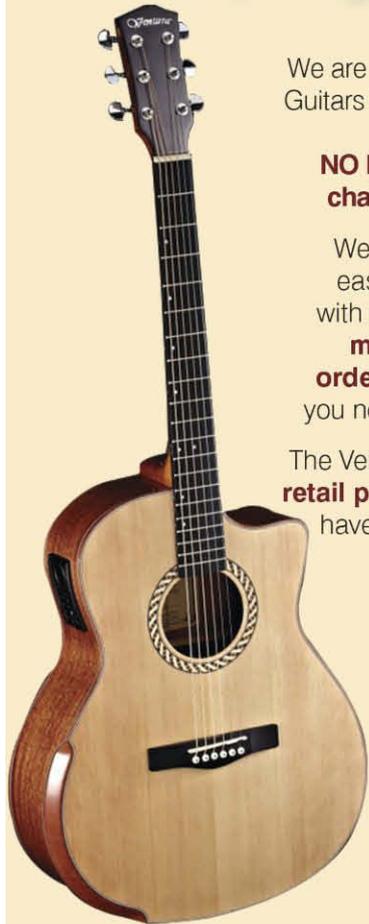
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TMP to Distribute Audiofly in the U.S.

TMP Pro Distribution has announced an agreement with Audiofly to be the exclusive distributor for their full line of Performance Series IEMs to the MI and professional markets in the United States. Based in Australia, Audiofly is an award-winning innovator of premium IEM products for the professional audio market. Recognized for its fresh approach, Audiofly has quickly acquired impressive industry recognition, earning Innovation Honors from International CES and a Best-In-Show award from the CEA Line Show.

"TMP Pro is always looking to strengthen and nurture its line card," says Eugene Mulcahy, director of Pro Audio Products at TMP, "especially with new companies that bring a passion for making the pro audio experience a memorable and reliable one. Dave Thompson and his staff at Audiofly have delivered a new take on the personal monitoring experience with their professional IEM monitoring products. Audiofly is known throughout the world and the audio community for its personal listening devices such as the AF78, which has received glowing reviews from around the globe. Dave Thompson's approach to the overall picture of a product is an art within itself. From hybrid speaker designs, to tough CORDURA® fabric cables, to a leather-bound carrying case for storage, Dave Thompson understands the entire experience a client desires in today's market demands. TMP Pro is excited to welcome Dave Thompson and Audiofly to TMP Pro's family of professional audio products."



"Audiofly is extremely proud to have TMP Pro as a distribution partner across North America," says Aaron Newman, international sales manager for Audiofly. "We're very confident that their knowledge and fine reputation within the MI and pro markets will help us grow our brand and boost sales within the United States."

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Study Shows Music Programs Benefit At-Risk Youth

A new Northwestern University study funded by the NAMM Foundation provides the first direct evidence that a community music program for at-risk youth has a biological effect on children's developing nervous systems. Two years of music lessons improved the precision with which the children's brains



distinguished similar speech sounds, a neural process that is linked to language and reading skills.

"Music Enrichment Programs Improve the Neural Encoding of Speech in At-Risk Children," published in *The Journal of Neuroscience*, is one of the few studies to evaluate biological changes following participation in an existing, successful music education program.

Nina Kraus, director of Northwestern's Auditory Neuroscience Laboratory, and her team collaborated with Harmony Project. Harmony Project, a NAMM Foundation grantee, provides free music instruction to thousands of disadvantaged children from gang-reduction zones in Los Angeles. Children between the ages of 6 and 9 participated in the study. The research team traveled to Los Angeles to evaluate them as they enrolled in Harmony Project's programs and returned each summer for the following two years to evaluate them longitudinally.

Research from around the world has suggested links between music training, enhanced brain function and heightened language skills. This is the first study, however, that uses random assignment to evaluate brain changes in collaboration with an existing and successful community music program that targets disadvantaged children. Prior research has focused on individuals from affluent homes who received private lessons.

Martin approached Kraus several years ago, having observed the positive impact that music was having on Harmony kids' lives. Since 2008, 93 percent of Harmony Project seniors have graduated in four years and gone on to colleges despite dropout rates of 50 percent or more in the neighborhoods where they live.

These findings provide biological backing for the large-scale implementation of these programs to promote child brain health and development.

Kraus co-authored the study with Jessica Slater, Elaine C. Thompson, Dana L. Strait, Jane Hornickel, Trent Nicol, and Travis White-Schwoch of Northwestern.

For more about the Auditory Neuroscience Laboratory's research on music and learning-associated brain plasticity, visit www.brainvolts.northwestern.edu. Start with "friendly overviews."

The Grammy Foundation and the Hugh Knowles Center join the NAMM Foundation in supporting this important work.

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I just got around to reading the September issue of *MMR*.

Re: your editorial, I've reflected on the same general topic after every AES/NAMM/Messe, et cetera. It seems to me that "new instruments" fall into three general categories:

1) Things that make new sounds. These are quite frequently successful. Early synths were really bad, but they had unique sounds and people jumped on board. (This, by the way, was way before RCA's interest, which was primarily economic. Synths are cheaper than orchestras.) The success list is fairly long: Fender Rhodes; Crybabies; a million foot pedals; rain sticks; boobams, et cetera – they are all successful more or less according to

their usefulness. There's a fair list of urban legends about classical composers "hiding" their "new" instruments, so the introduction would be exciting – the glockenspiel in Mozart's *Magic Flute* and the tam-tam in Tchaikovsky's *Pathetique Symphony* being two examples. Mozart was a big-time early adopter – he wrote a concerto for the new instrument called the clarinet and also music for the glass harmonica, which was less successful.

2) Things that let a musician apply his or her existing skills in a new way – the two that come to mind are the Key-tar of the '80s and MIDI tap shoes. Each allows existing skills to be used in a novel way. These seem to have modest, usually short-lived, success.

3) Things that invite the musician to completely relearn his hard-won skills in order to make the same sounds he or she is making now. If you think about it in terms of simple economics, these are simply rude and arrogant self-indulgences. They nearly always fail and IMHO, the failure is richly deserved.

I could also go on (at length) about how really hard it is to make a controller that is even marginally as expressive as existing instruments and controllers. When they are new, they're nearly always fairly crude, which also hurts their acceptance.

Jan Wissmuller

**Former VP Engineering, Numark
& former VP Engineering, Lexicon**
[And, yes, my father – Ed.]

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Supplier Scene

Zildjian Launches 'My Pit's the Pits' Contest



In an effort to help out a few deserving high school marching band programs, Zildjian has teamed up with Calderwood Percussion, Remo, Vic Firth, Steve Weiss Music, Lone Star Percussion, Music & Arts Centers, and Woodwind & Brasswind to launch the "My Pit's the Pits!" video contest. Music programs across the United States are being given a chance to win over \$25,000 in prizes from the top names in percussion equipment. Videos will be submitted for judging, but students can also share and promote their videos via social media to be considered for a "Viewer's Choice" award. Submissions will be accepted until October 31.

Students in high school band programs and percussion ensembles from across the country are being asked to rally their percussion pals to create a brief, entertaining video detailing who they are, why they need new percussion equipment, and what they're going to do with it should they win. Production quality is of no major concern, but creativity of presentation will factor heavily into the judging criteria. Prizes include new cymbals from Zildjian, custom made drums from Calderwood Percussion, mallets and drumsticks from Vic Firth, marching heads from Remo and gift certificates from Lone Star Percussion, Music & Arts Centers, Steve Weiss Music and Woodwind & Brasswind.

zildjian.com/mypitsthepits

Richard Fortus Signs with D'Addario

D'Addario welcomes the Guns N' Roses lead guitarist Richard Fortus to its artist roster. A variety of D'Addario string sets help Fortus develop his sound, including D'Addario NYXL Light Top/Heavy Bottom electric guitar strings, Phosphor Bronze Custom Light acoustic guitar strings, and Planet Waves American Stage instrument cables. "Only D'Addario can single-handedly cover all of my string needs," says Fortus. "The NYXLs are the best electric string I have come across."

In 2001, Fortus joined Guns N' Roses and began touring with the band and recording for the band's long awaited *Chinese Democracy* record. The album was released to great anticipation in

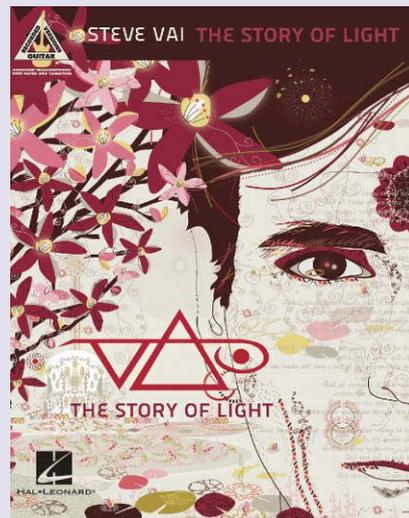


2008 and Fortus has continued to tour with the band in support of the record. Fortus has also performed and recorded with a diverse lineup of stars, including Enrique Iglesias, Rihanna, and Thin Lizzy.
daddario.com

Hal Leonard Honored with Paul Revere Awards

Hal Leonard has earned top honors in the Music Publishers Association's annual Paul Revere Awards for two of its publications. *101 Flute Tips* placed first in "Book Design in Educational Folios," and *Steve Vai - The Story of Light* won in the category of "Guitar Music." Another new Hal Leonard instructional guitar folio, *Journey Through the Classics - Complete*, won second prize for "Book Design in Popular Folios." The awards are named in honor of American Revolutionary War hero Paul Revere, who was a celebrated engraver and printer by profession.

halleonard.com



Korg Donates UkEs to Encourage Music in the Classroom

Korg USA recently partnered with Guitars in the Classroom, a non-profit organization that provides schools with guitars and ukuleles to incorporate music into the education curriculum. The goal of this organization is to enhance the student's academic experience by introducing music throughout various subjects which stimulate their ability to learn, increase motivation and build self-confidence through classroom participation. Korg USA donated Lag-branded ukuleles to be distributed to various classrooms across the coun-

try, supporting this non-profit's innovative stance on the importance of music in schools.

Founded in 1998, Guitars in the Classroom's organization currently has locations in 31 different states and in parts of Canada. GITC equips and trains teachers to sing, play, teach, lead, and write new songs for every subject and any lesson, employing collaborative student music making as a powerful strategy for learning.

guitarsintheclassroom.org and
korgusa.com

Latin Percussion Artists Rekow and Viloria Participate in China Drum Festival

Latin Percussion artists Raul Rekow and Bulu Viloria participated in the 5th Annual 9Beats 2014 China International Drum Festival, which took place in Tianjin, China in August. LP's John Shand, KMC international managing director, said, "China is a growing market for Latin Percussion and we, together with our educational sales channel partner, Toning Drum and Percussion, were happy to put our full support behind Raul Rekow's residency at the 9Beats Summer Camp in Tianjin, China.

"One of the key elements of our approach to developing the market for LP products in China is to work with educational institutions such as 9Beats to promote Latin instruments to drum and percussion teachers. Together with Toning, we have sponsored LP artists at the 9Beats camp for several years now."



Viloria, who participated in the camp at the invitation of Drums United of The Netherlands, accompanied Rekow in two workshops and one Latin Percussion clinic. Over the course of the five-day event attendees had the chance to watch and learn from LP artists, as well as several other international instructors.

lpmusic.com

Percussionist Korpela Joins Majestic/Mapex Roster

Mapex & Majestic Concert percussion recently welcomed Pete Korpela to their roster of artists. Korpela is a Latin Grammy Award-nominated percussionist. Since moving to Los Angeles in 1997, he has gained a reputation as a versatile musician in orchestral, Latin, jazz, world, rock, and pop music. Korpela employs the Majestic Prophonic Snare Drum and Concert toms within his array of percussion instruments on tour with Josh Groban. He has also chosen a stand-mounted Mapex Saturn IV bass drum.

Pete's most notable touring and recording collaborations include Robbie Williams, *The Lion King* national tour, Cirque Du Soleil, Ben Gibbard (Death Cab for Cutie), and more.

usa.mapexdrums.com and majesticpercussion.com



Aguilar and Fodera Guitars Run Clinic with Bassist Tony Grey

Aguilar Amplification and Fodera Guitars recently hosted a jazz bassist Tony Grey. Grey is renowned for his melodic style of playing as well as his versatility as an accompanist. In addition to his four releases as a bandleader – including his most recent album 2013's *Elevation* – Grey has recorded and/or performed with Hiromi, Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter and Tomoyasu Hotei.

Grey is also an avid educator with numerous books and clinics to his credit. He has successfully launched an online course called the Tony Grey Bass Academy. For this clinic, Tony brought special guests – keyboardist Cliff Barnes and drummer David Throckmorton – to demonstrate the interplay between improvising musicians and developing a groove within this format. The event was held at the Aguilar Artist Loft in New York City on September 25. All proceeds from tickets sales went directly to benefit Little Kids Rock.

aguilaramp.com



DJ Joe Bunn Sports New Mackie SRM650

Veteran DJ Joe Bunn recently added Mackie's new SRM650 powered monitors and SRM1850 powered subwoofers to his company's arsenal. The North Carolina native, who started spinning records as a teen, founded Joe Bunn DJ Company in the late 1990s. Since then, the company has grown to a staff of more than 17 mobile DJs, covering around 400 weddings and another 200 events per year, including graduations, corporate events, and a host of other celebrations.

"We had some of the older SRM450s, and they served us really well," he observes. "But the new SRM Series is just fantastic. They look great, which is important for some of the very high-end ballrooms we work in. But more importantly, they sound great. I couldn't be happier."



mackie.com

Radial SW8 on Tour with Billy Joel

For 21 years, Rosenthal has performed with Billy Joel as keyboardist, adding "musical director" to his title along the way. A longtime Radial user, the Rosenthal says the Radial SW8 figures prominently in his equipment plan. "I've been using SW8s for quite some time, but most recently in the new generation of my keyboard rig that I'm using on this tour," he says. "Everything is Mainstage based, I'm streaming my sounds and it all lives on solid state drives. It's really great but if something does go wrong, it takes time to restart the computer and reload everything and I can't take that chance during a live show. I am actually running two Mainstage systems simultaneously in real time and I have my SW8 controlling all of the outputs so if one happens to glitch I can switch to the other one instantly from the stage using the JR2 remote and I can keep playing away while the first computer gets restarted.



radialeng.com

KMC Music Takes on Full Line of Suzuki Harmonicas and Melodions



Suzuki Music announced the availability of Suzuki Harmonicas and Melodions through KMC Music. Users' existing accounts will allow them to take advantage of this new availability. A free countertop display comes with each opening order. suzukimusic.com

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Peavey Electronics Sponsors Playcade Pop-Up Event



Peavey Electronics has announced a sponsor partnership with Playcade (Where Frequencies Vibe), a new monthly pop-up playground event located in Downtown L.A.

The first-ever Playcade event took place on September 19, 2014, at The Event Space (435 South Broadway St.) The event will celebrated the launch of a new interactive video game created in collaboration between Disney, Harmonix, and DubSpot. Audio and remixes of the game's music were also be premiered during the event via special DJ performances and presentations.

Playcade is hosted by legendary DJ/producer Keith Shocklee of Public Enemy/Spectrum City. The event provides a space where creatives and executives can mix and share interactive audio, visual and gaming design with the goal of fostering a more creative future. Featuring a cocktail reception, DJ performances, presentations, Q&A sessions and more, Playcade gives attendees the opportunity to interact with and demo new hardware, software and other content.

Keith Shocklee will rely on Peavey audio gear for all of his Playcade performances. Playcade events are limited in capacity and require a private invitation/RSVP.

peavey.com

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Photo by Keith Dwiggins.

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Trade Regrets



Yoshi Kobayashi, the former import manager for Yamaha Corporation of America, passed away on September 13th at the age of 85.

Kobayashi began working for Yamaha in 1958 and was tasked with supervising the import and export of the motorcycle division. As the musical instrument side of the company grew and expanded into

the United States, Yoshi-san was placed in charge and soon created the foundation for the Yamaha distribution plan. He and his team worked hard to manage the customs rules, as well as ensure the products arrived safe and on time. He retired from the company in 1995.

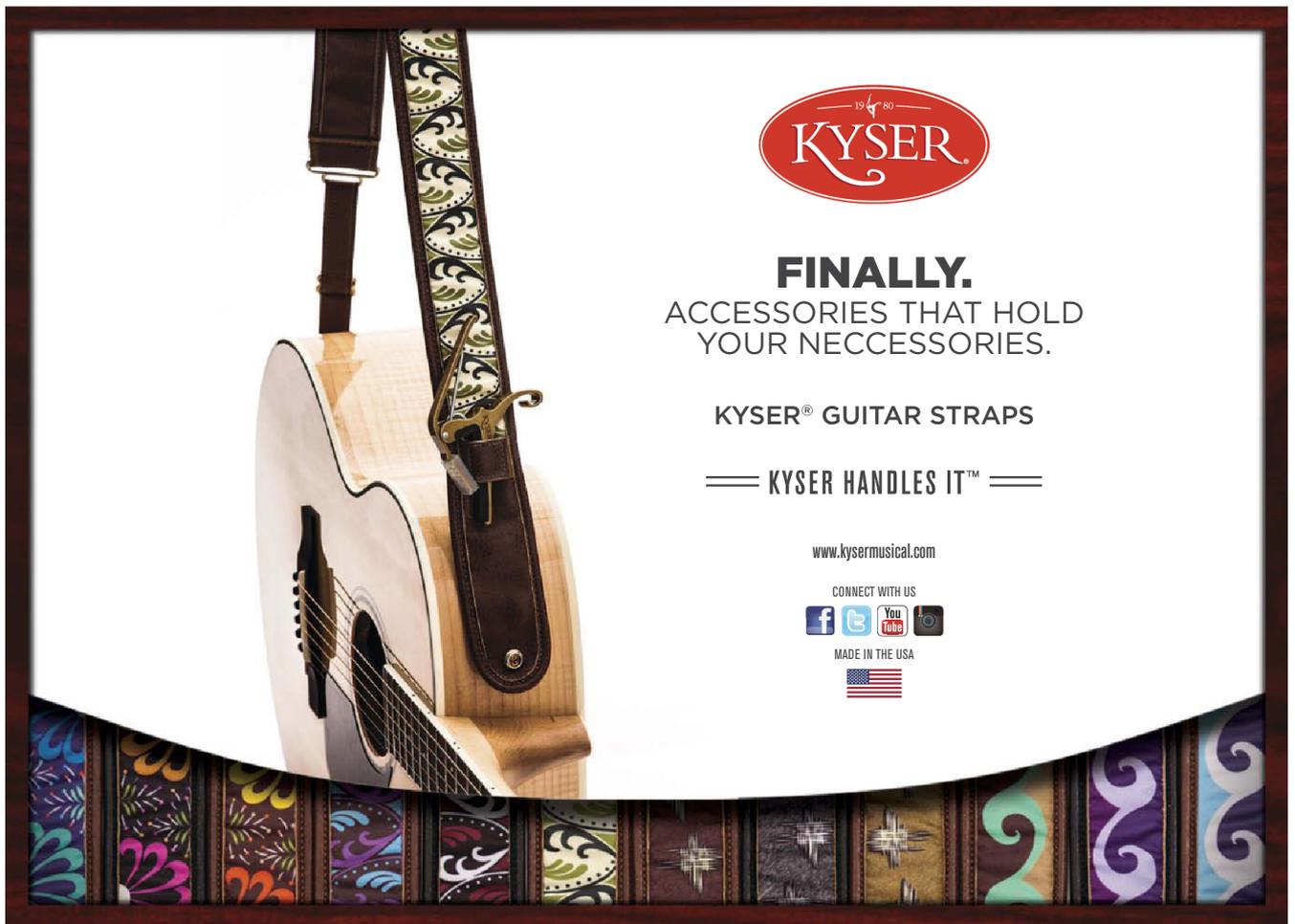
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Music retailer, teacher, and philanthropist **Ruth J. Charles** passed away on September 4. She was 89.

Ruth was born in Birmingham, Michigan, June 26, 1925. In 1947, she and her late husband, Dick, both graduates of Michigan State University, moved to California, where, in 1950, they founded the Charles Music Store and Studios on Glendale Avenue. From the beginning, it was and remains today a highly successful and respected institution where Dick concentrated on band instrument sales and Ruth, in addition to running the store, taught piano and organ. Until recently, she continued to teach privately in her



home where she has positively impacted the lives of many students, both adults and beginners.

Ruth Charles established music scholarship funds in both her husband's and her names at Michigan State University and Glendale Community College. In 2011 Mrs. Charles became the first music retail gallery sponsor of the Museum of Making Music in Carlsbad, California.



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ON THE MOVE

KMC Music has appointed **Darren Wallace** as brand manager for Ovation Guitars. As a master luthier, Wallace has been an integral part of Ovation's product design and development throughout his 21 years with the company. He began his career at Ovation managing the Standard Balladeer Cell, working up to production manager and then Engineering and R&D manager. As brand manager, Wallace will oversee all Ovation brand activity, including manufacturing, new product development, and strategic marketing.



Although the company recently ceased manufacturing guitars in its Connecticut facilities, production continues in its overseas plants.

PreSonus has announced that **Tony Flammia** has accepted the position of commercial channel manager. In his new position, Flammia will work closely with PreSonus/Worx-Audio Loudspeaker Division managing director Hugh Sarvis on new loudspeaker systems that integrate AVB (Audio Video Bridging) and Dante digital audio networking technologies. In addition, he will train systems integrators to install and use these systems.



Renkus-Heinz has appointed industry veteran **Jim Bailey** to a newly created product marketing position.



Bailey comes to Renkus-Heinz after serving as general manager of Aphex, a manufacturer of professional audio processing hardware. His lengthy career in pro audio has also included product management positions at Avid and TASCAM, playing a major role in the development of numerous award-winning products at both companies. His many years as a successful recording engineer and studio owner served as his launching point into manufacturing, applying that experience in the development of new audio products.

In his new position, Bailey will fill a number of vital roles within the company, including the creation of technical documentation, educational videos, and software development. He will interface directly with both marketing and engineering.

Guitar Center CEO Mike Pratt recently announced the appointment of **Eddie Combs** to the position of Guitar Center senior vice president, Marketing. Combs' appointment is the result of an extensive, nationwide search by Guitar Center management that led to an elite pool of candidates, with Combs' skill set and personal history as a musician resonating with the selection team. In his role, Combs will work closely with Christopher Ian Bennett, VP, Communications and Corporate Affairs; Dustin Hinz, VP, Brand Experience and Entertainment Marketing; and Jeff Hiller, VP, Brand Manager, to strengthen GC's retail marketing strategy to help elevate sales and store traffic.



Carl Harris has been appointed as **Yamaha Corporation of America** (YCA)'s customer support manager, leading the company's commitment to serving the needs of its customers as effectively as possible.



Harris, who brings over 15 years of customer service experience to his new position, said he plans to boost Yamaha's renowned support for those who use the company's instruments, other music products, technology, and services.

Harris will be responsible for end-user support across YCA, which currently offers round-the-clock customer assistance via phone, email, online content, and social media, including Facebook and Twitter.

Harris previously spent a decade and a half building, improving, and leading call centers in the cable TV and credit processing industries.

He is also experienced in Total Quality Management, or TQM, a widely touted business model effective in continuously improving a company's ability to deliver high-quality products and services to customers.

In late August, **St Louis Music** announced that **Jim Eaton**, vice president of Knilling and Orchestral Sales for over six years, had decided to retire effective Oct 1, 2014. He will remain with St Louis Music in an advisory role after his retirement.



D'Addario has announced that **Richard LaBonté** has accepted the position of chief commercial officer, and **Shabbir Ahmed** has joined the company as chief financial & administrative officer. Both are newly-created positions.

As CCO, Richard LaBonté will be responsible for the commercial strategy and development of the organization, relating to marketing, sales, product development, artist relations, and customer service to drive business growth and market share. LaBonté will report directly to Jim D'Addario, CEO.



As CF&AO, Ahmed will work to develop and execute the company's overall strategy by driving all business planning activities, monitoring profit opportunities, and protecting the organization's financial health through robust systems and solid internal controls. Additionally, he will work across all levels of the organization to encourage and reinforce D'Addario's LEAN culture. As CF&AO, Ahmed will direct the efforts of director of IT, Amal Abbasi, CFO, Rob Dodaro, and Ray Irizarry, director of HR. Ahmed will report directly to John D'Addario III, president.



Fender Musical Instruments Corporation (FMIC) has announced that Beats Electronics (Beats) president, **Luke Wood**, has joined Fender's Board of Directors. Under Wood's leadership, Beats, which is owned by Apple, has grown into a global household name and one of the most successful and recognizable consumer electronics companies in the world. Wood was also instrumental in facilitating the company's recent acquisition by Apple Inc. Today he lends his more than 20 years of experience to Fender's board. Wood will join Fender's most recent additions to the company's Board of Directors, U2's Bono and The Edge, who were both appointed in May of this year.



König & Meyer at 65

By Christian **Wissmuller**

A global leader in the design and manufacture of music stands and accessories, Germany's König & Meyer – most commonly referred to simply as “K&M” – has been celebrating its 65th year in 2014. Distinguished by pioneering designs which both respond to and anticipate emerging technologies within the market and the needs of end-users, the organization is also widely respected for its early (and continued) dedication to environmentally sound, “green” practices.

MMR recently spoke with CEO Gabriela König and Dave Trout, U.S. brand manager with K&M's stateside distributor Connolly Music, to get the scoop on how the company is marking the anniversary and what's in store for the future.

MMR: 2014 marks K&M's 65th anniversary. Could you provide a brief background on the genesis and early history of the organization?

Gabriela König: Certainly. The company was founded in 1949 by toolmakers Karl König and Erich Meyer. The pair set up a metalworking company in a small city in Eastern Germany. The first K&M products were ice skate blades and specialized measuring gauges. König and Meyer eventually established their business in Wertheim with a handful of employees, expanding into the production of music stands in the early 1950s. Since then, they have led the way in innovative technology and design to create industry favorites in the areas of microphone stands, speaker stands, guitar stands, and a host of stage, studio, and practical application products – most recently iPad and tablet holders.

Can you describe the present-day K&M structure?

GK: The company is still a family-run organization, led by descendants of the founders, including myself, Martin König, president, and



Gabriela König



Dave Trout



Picturesque Wertheim, Germany – home to König & Meyer.

“ K&M caters particularly well to audiences who value quality and long-term dependability. ”
– Dave Trout



A shot of the K&M factory floor circa 1940.

Heiko Wolz, chief technical officer. Currently, the factory employs approximately 270 people in Wertheim and is certified to meet the most demanding ISO 14001 standard for green companies, and also is ISO-9001 certified for manufacturing precision. The specialized manufacturing equipment and highly skilled craftsmen ensure only the highest quality products are built by K&M. Almost all metal and plastic items are manufactured in-house. Over 1,500 stands and brackets are produced in two plants in Germany and sold in 80 countries worldwide.

Dave Trout: K&M's uncompromising focus on quality and long-term customer satisfaction is backed by a full five-year product warranty, plus a 10-year replacement parts program. This is a huge benefit for our users, who are able to replace individual parts when needed to preserve an otherwise functional stand. The long-term benefits of this are many – including reliability, improved value, longevity, and less landfill.

Speaking of landfill, environmental protection has been a fundamental focal point for decades. As Gabriella mentioned, the facility is ISO 14001 certified, preventing waste, conserving water, and reducing emissions whenever possible. K&M continues to review and develop strategies to minimize their impact on the environment. As one example, they have reduced water consumption by 94 percent since 1979, and even turn the wastewater into drinking-quality water at the end of the process.

Can you discuss Connolly Music's relationship with K&M? When did the partnership begin and what's the nature of it today?

Dave Trout: Connolly is the U.S. distribution arm of K&M. We began the partnership in late 2006 as a sales agent for the factory and in 2007 were invited to become the official U.S. distributor. We set up a warehouse operation sufficient to handle the breadth and scope of the K&M line, which has changed twice due to the accelerated growth in sales and expanded dealer base, as well as the need to have a more centrally located outlet for improved delivery. Marketing and sales are handled by Connolly and its reps – with the ad-



A precision laser-cutter at work in the current K&M factory.



KÖNIG & MEYER
Stands For Music

dition of a network of reps across the country who provide specific support to the pro audio market, in particular, as K&M caters particularly well to audiences who value quality and long-term dependability.

Are there any events or promotions planned to mark the company's 65th?

GK: K&M had a larger celebration in Germany for the 60th anniversary complete with factory tours, live bands, party and family events, including life-size games of "foosball" with real employees – celebrated with distributors and partners from around the globe. A smaller 65th celebration with our employees involved a two-day outing in Bavaria featuring sightseeing, a boat ride on the Donau River, and a big celebration party. A special 65th Anniversary logo marks the milestone year.

Are there any upcoming developments, product introductions, or other news you'd like to share with our readers?

DT: Since the company first began making music products, K&M designs have been hailed as classics and many have been



One of K&M's present-day, high-tech laser cutting machines.

in the line for 65 years. The 210/9 microphone stand and the 101 music stand rank as two of the most widely copied products in the world. But also the in-bell instrument stands or the invention of the Ring-Lock system to firmly position speakers have become standards in the music industry over the decades. This year, K&M has introduced a completely redesigned guitar stand, "Heli 2,"

an easy fold/easy open music stand, and new iPad Air holders and stands. For 2015, we are working on new orchestra stands, as well as several Pro Audio items in white, which speaks to particular event locations and houses of worship, in particular.

The R&D team in Germany is always developing new products based on innovation and what the market needs. As an example, the original iPad holders were introduced in 2011, and then quickly followed by the iPad 2, iPad Mini, and most recently the iPad Air. As the tablets changed we quickly answered with the proper holders to enable their use in all aspects of live and studio applications.

In addition, the engineers are constantly looking at small

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improvements to extend the life of K&M products. As another example, the thread receivers on the boom arms of stands were improved by lengthening the receiver, thus increasing the number of threads to ensure a secure set of the adjustment. In addition, nearly all speaker and lighting stands, as well as all background band instrument stands, underwent a complete revamp, changing leg assemblies, locking assemblies, and mounting flanges, and ensuring more stable, longer-lasting assemblies.

The K&M factory recently added a new flat sheet laser cutting machine, and added a second laser tube-cutting machine. The laser cutters enable the factory to do intricate detail cutting and also lower volume runs on highly specialized models. They also allow for perfection on even the smallest product details.

These unique manufacturing processes and standards contribute greatly to the quality products. These include: the use of the finest materials available, such as Swiss alloy; thicker-walled, precision-rolled tubing that is laser-cut and machined for smooth, non-marring elevation with a consistently perfect fit; in-house production of all plastic fittings; unique powder coating process; and rock-solid, die-cast bases and high performance solid rivets.

“While K&M is already very well known among the professional audio crowd, we are looking to gain more awareness amongst the younger generation in the industry.”

What are your expectations for the coming months and years – both for the MI industry, as a whole, and for K&M, specifically?

GK: Our long-term goal is to keep our “Made in Germany” premium quality production. The big advantages to our production facilities in Wertheim, Germany are the good infrastructure and our skilled and dedicated workers. To keep costs down in the manufacturing process, we will continue to invest in new state-of-the-art technologies. Through innovations and more intensified sales and marketing activities (social media, videos, trade shows, events, point-of-purchase activities, and so on) we want to expand and strengthen the brand knowledge of König & Meyer in the U.S. While it’s already very well known among the professional audio crowd, we are looking to gain more awareness amongst the younger generation in the industry.

DT: We are feeling that there is a resurgence in quality and price both being important factors in value recently in some areas of the marketplace – as opposed to simply price – as well as retailers and consumers being more interested in the practices and philosophies of the companies they support.

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Women in MI

By MattParish

The number and variety of women in leadership roles throughout the industry is cause for celebration, but there's still plenty of room for improvement. Luckily for us, a number of folks are hard at work making MI a great place for female musicians, sales associates, retailers, and manufacturers.



Fanny's Music has reinvented how the interior of a guitar shop can function, here viewed from the store's vintage clothing room.

This year, the 52-year-old National Association of Music Dealers (NASMD) will inaugurate the first woman president in the history of the organization. Rosi Johnson, CEO of Mississippi Music in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, is a long-time member of the group, currently serving on its board as vice president, so her ascendancy to the position isn't unexpected. But it serves as yet another in a series of important steps toward the increasing visibility of women in the MI world.

Whether you're looking at instrument manufacturers, print publishers, music dealers, or simply the vast population of consumers (given a kickstart in recent years by robust "Girls Rock" programs around the country), women are playing a more important role than ever. There's still plenty to work on, though - from greater outreach to aspiring female musicians to fine-tuning retail displays and training staff on customer relations, there are lots of ways to ensure that more of the world's women feel at home in MI.



Rosi Johnson

Boys' Club No More

"I think that women are the primary decision makers in our industry, for school music especially," says Beth Houlihan, who owns Kidder Music, based in Bloomington, Illinois. "It's the mothers of band students and the mothers dropping their kids off at guitar lessons. And I think there's a lot of online shopping which is also female driven. We customize our websites to appeal to that. It's something you have to keep in mind."

Houlihan, an MI veteran who became the first female president of Young NAMM in 1998, was part of an informal group of women who have helped change things within the industry in recent years. That women have had such a strong showing at the NAMM Dealer of the Year awards has been a sign of the fact that a welcoming atmosphere in business is the norm.

Cindy Cook, who co-owns Candyman Strings and Things in Santa Fe, New Mexico, accepted the NAMM Top 100 Dealer award for Dealer of the Year this past summer in Nashville. Cook says she's never perceived a lack of balance in the industry.

"While attending my first NAMM Show in January 2010, I remember being incredibly impressed at the many women who either owned or managed a music retailer and were giving presentations at the NAMM U sessions," she says. "I was pleased at the numbers of women in general walking up and down the trade floor aisles, meeting with vendors, giving talks, manning booths, and so on. There also seemed to be a majority of women on the NAMM team. I didn't get the impression that I had found myself in a gender-biased industry at all (no 'good ole' boys club anywhere) and as a newbie, I immediately felt included."

Cook says that she's noticed a balance up and down the chain in MI. "Women hold high-level positions in the financial institutions that serve the MI industry. They are vendors. They are NAMM."

She recalls her first Summer NAMM and watching Senseney Music president Lori Supinie accept the industry's Dealer of the Year Award and that it didn't even register to her that a woman was winning. "I didn't give it a thought and I don't think anyone else did either. The reaction was more like, 'Wow! What an incredible store and what an amazing and deserving person that just won!'"

Supinie agrees that, in most cases, judging success based on business merits is ideal. "To succeed, it just has to be the right people involved, regardless of gender," she says. "I've been fortunate to have a lot of mentors, most of whom were men – it just worked out that way. I've always been fortunate to have overachieving friends. I was in a class of very smart women in high school and I just never saw any limits."

Still, many see every small step for women as cause for celebration. "Just like any other ceiling being broken, whether it's Michael Sam's inclusion in the NFL or whatever it might be, it's always good blaze new paths for the future," says Houlihan.

Clientele Change

On the other side of operations, the music industry is seeing a shift in its consumer base. Part of that is organic, as more females gain interest in instrumental genres (females have traditionally been trained as piano and violin players, rather than learning to play guitars and drums). But another factor has been an industry learning how to market to this part of the population.

Gayle Beacock, vice president at Beacock Music (another recipient of NAMM's Dealer of the Year award) says that increased efforts

from manufacturers to cater to women customers haven't always been simple. New girl-friendly guitar designs are great, but it takes industry-wide cooperation to make sure everyone is on the same page. "I remember asking manufacturers, 'I've got this new guitar, so how do I sell it?'" says Beacock. "They couldn't really answer. I think we can all do a better job of figuring that out, and I need to do a better job with our own sales team."

"It's a newer thing that we have to get into the habit of researching and not just spewing the same old thing. I think we're just now starting to get really good at that."

Tish Ciravolo is the founder of Daisy Rock Guitars, in many ways the most visible effort from the industry to create product for females. She says the numbers for women customers has risen dramatically in the guitar market over the last 15 years.

"When we started Daisy Rock in 2000, approximately four percent of the guitar playing population was female," she says. "Presently we figure it to be 25-30 percent. We are seeing more and more girls pick up guitars and other fretted instruments. We're seeing incredibly talented musicians like Orianthi, Kate Nash, Haim, and more proving that they can do everything the boys can do. My goal is to see just as many female guitarists as male guitarists playing and performing."

New Nashville guitar shop Fanny's Music opened five years ago with a specific mission to include women in all of their development and marketing operations. A homey store in the city's eclectic Five Points neighborhood that includes vintage fashion along with retro

electrics and acoustics (and walls full of legendary female musicians), Fanny's has created a unique atmosphere that works to welcome females, as well as encourage men to rethink their ideas of women musicians.

"Because Taylor Swift has been in our store a couple of times and mentioned us in the press, once a week a young girl will come in who has read about us," says store co-owner Pamela Cole. "She has inspired a million girls to get a guitar and write songs."

Cole says the combination of strong women teachers, a well-run store, and great product can really add up to change society a bit. "Exposure, role models, and philosophy all add up to make young girls feel empowered to do anything. We have several female teachers that will help break the stereotype to male students. We have several female employees who show customers respect and expertise."

Similar efforts across the country have helped alter the musician landscape at all levels. At Candyman Strings and Things, the percentage of female customers has been gradually increasing over the last five years. "We have women who are retired and now have the gift of time that allows them to start playing an instrument or to get back to playing an instrument they haven't played since high school. We've also seen an increase of elementary to high school-aged girls coming in for lessons, instruments, and gear. We also work closely with the public schools music programs and have seen an increase of women filling the music teacher positions."



Guitar Center has made efforts to include female musicians as an everyday part of its marketing efforts.

Shop Adjustments

As these shifts in the market toward a more balanced consumer base occur, retail stores are gradually changing to reflect them. Guitar Center made waves four years ago when it began a mission to research and improve its relationship with female consumers. Laura Taylor, who is GC's vice president of operations, was chosen to lead that effort.

"I and my boss at the time, Gene Jolly, who's the president of Musician's Friend now, were having discussions about what we could improve in our stores," she says. "One of the things that came up was how do we handle different cultures, different types of music, and of course different genders. I'm very passionate because I'm

decision-making roles can make for very important aesthetic changes in retail design. "Women just don't want to hang out in a dirty, junky store," she says. "It has to be a warm, comfortable environment for women to want to bring the children in for lessons. Especially today, parents want a real 'safe zone' feel. They want to know that the restrooms are clean. Women just love interesting displays and really respond well to better signage and, in turn, buy more."

Beacock, whose mother, Susan, first lent her careful eye to the store's merchandise when she helped found the store 1976, says that they've always strived for great atmosphere. "We have kicked it up a notch," she says. "Not just making the shop environmentally comfortable but

shop and on bulletin boards, and began holding family events (while maintaining relationships with their loyal pro customers). They also provide a lounge for moms to relax in during their kids' music lessons and added a gift shop that's a proven hit.

Staff Adjustments

A pervasive stereotype of the guitar store experience, in particular, is that it's an adolescent boy's playground, where attitudes can be stuck in junior high levels of maturity. Hilken Mancini, who founded the Boston Girls Rock Campaign, puts it bluntly.

"I think that the way men in guitar and music stores generally act towards women is still, sadly, very typically sexist and demeaning," she says. "The world of

“ We put a heavy focus on training our sales staff to never assume that anyone is or is not a musician. You treat everyone the same. Everyone needs to understand that – music has no gender. ”
- Laura Taylor, Guitar Center



a guitar player – I went to GIT as I was beginning to work here. Just understanding the industry in general and how females are treated, we knew there was room for improvement."

One of the first things they realized needed an update was the store's marketing effort. "We became aware that when you went into a Guitar Center back then, all you would see would be pictures of Slash or pictures of other heavy metal artists on our windows and in our buyer's guides. All of our marketing materials. It was all very 'tractor pull' types of marketing tactics."

"So we changed a lot of that. We started focusing females in our buyer's guides, female photos on the outside of our stores, and looked at our entire marketing package. We started doing things like female-centric types of clinics and contests." To help make the company's long-running "King of the Blues" contest more accepting, they renamed it "Battle of the Blues." After the rename, female entries increased. "We had around 14,000 entries, and 30 percent of those were female."

Beacock says that, at an even more elemental shop design level, women in de-

looking at the displays and matching them up with women and buying some products geared toward women. Once we did that, our female customer base really changed. Not only did they come in with their husbands or boyfriends or whatever, but they'd actually try things out and it took that intimidation level down so we could broaden our customer base."

She says items like Daisy Rock guitars help on a few levels because they provide entry points for lessons programs, live opportunities, and more. "People can walk right up to those products because they're captivated by those sparkly guitars, and then you can start talking to them about the classes or whatever you have to offer them."

And sometimes it's just the simple things that make a difference. At Candyman, Cook says that it was her mission to change the shop's reputation as a pros-only shop to a place for everyone. "We wanted to create a vibe and openness to promote a community standing that anyone could come in our store and feel safe and comfortable." She brightened the space, became strict about vulgar language in the

rock'n'roll loves to treat women as either groupies or muses and it makes me wanna puke. Things have changed when women are writing most of the hits and bigger selling hit songs in our industry and why they don't really know or acknowledge this is beyond me."

Needless to say, one of the most important lines on the retailers' battlefield is its own staff. Just as manufacturers strive to include more female options in their products and to create more inclusive marketing, so too can retailers work to level their own playing field.

Laura Taylor says that she learned a lot when Guitar Center first looked into how their staff and customers interacted: "We reached out to around 1,500 female customers just to get their feedback. It was definitely eye-opening. It's not just Guitar Center, but the MI industry in general. They go into a store and feel like they're treated as if they know nothing about music. If they walk in with a guy, the guy gets all the questions.

"So we put a heavy focus on training our sales staff to never assume that anyone is or is not a musician. You treat everyone the same. Everyone needs to understand

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Note From Joe The NAMM Foundation, Supporting Music Education for All Children

With relentless lobbying and promotion about the importance of music education, 94 percent of America's children return to school this fall with the opportunity to learn music.*

While every child should have the opportunity to make music, all too often music is among the first classes cut from public school budgets. The government statistic above is encouraging, but we know it will not be a reality for far too many kids. Here's where all NAMM Members can use the tools found on the NAMM Foundation's website to play a vital role in creating more supply (number of quality music programs) and demand (kids who want to play music).

The NAMM Foundation is dedicated to advocating for music education at the local, state and national levels. And now, with the debut of a new, user-friendly website packed with great tools and information, the Foundation arms you with everything you need to strengthen music education in your community.

Advocacy

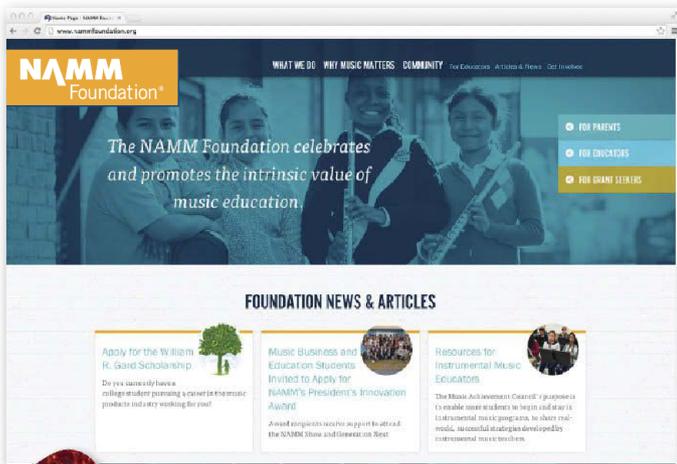
Music and the arts are essential to every child's education and SupportMusic, a NAMM Foundation initiative, provides teachers, parents and community leaders with the tools and resources they need to advance community support for music education

Research

The NAMM Foundation supports groundbreaking research projects that explore the benefits of music making for people of all ages and levels of experience. This research helps to validate a complete education that includes music and proves to be an important tool when advocating for the arts at budget time

Promotion

From promoting the results of our research studies to finding the Best Communities for Music Education in America, NAMM helps keep music making top of mind with the public by getting the word out through the media. The NAMM Foundation also airs its "Just Play" PSAs on TV stations throughout the U.S. and Latin America.



Check out nammfoundation.org for yourself and learn more about how you can change the lives of students in your area by becoming a music education advocate. *Our vision is a world in which every child has a deep desire to learn music and a recognized right to be taught; and in which every adult is a passionate champion and defender of that right.* The NAMM Foundation is our industry's path towards achieving that vision.

Joe Lamond

Joe Lamond
NAMM PRESIDENT AND CEO

• Research citation: See <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011078.pdf>



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that – music has no gender. That’s always something we need to be educating our store associates on as we grow.”

Taylor says another difficult issue was making sure that Guitar Center’s female employees, themselves, were being treated right.

“At the time of the study, we found that our female associates are only seven percent of our overall store population. How do we grow that?”

Numbers have been increasing year over year for GC’s female associates, but it has been a challenge. When the current initiative began, female associates stayed with the company a year less than the males, on average. “An enlightening part of our studies was the way our customers treated our female associates. We had gone on a big campaign to make sure our employees were treating each other with

respect, but this was actually a whole different issue. Dealing with customers. When our associates are on the sales floor and have to deal with things like customers telling them, ‘You don’t know what I’m talking about – I want to talk to a guy,’ all the way down to getting poked with drum sticks. It wouldn’t take long for them to say, ‘This isn’t worth it.’

Winning the PR Battle

When the She Rocks Awards debuted at the NAMM Show in 2013, it marked a new effort to recognize women in all aspects of the music industry. Headed by longtime advocate Laura B. Whitmore, the awards were an extension of her Women’s International Music Network (WiMN). “I’m just trying to help expose role models to other girls and women so they can realize, ‘I can do that,’” says Whitmore.

This effort, just like the fight for increased support for music education, is vital for the industry both in terms of supporting its young women and accomplished stars, but also in ensuring that every future customer feels confident in their equal footing in MI. “I especially think for teenagers or women

in college who are trying to figure out what they want to do, they don’t really see those role models. So like myself, the MI industry is not on their radar as something they might do.”

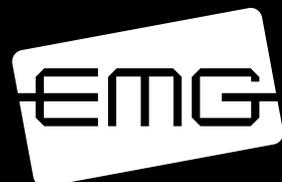
The WiMN website features weekly interviews with a woman in the industry (there are over 100 published already, from all walks of the trade). Recent features included engineer Kim Watson, NAMM



Rand and Cindy Cook (center) with the 2014 Dealer of the Year award.

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operations director Cindy Sample, Seymour Duncan art director Andrina Diaz, and West Music's Robin Walenta.

The name of the game is advocacy and, for the most part, the industry is taking a very proactive role. "I think the MI Industry as a whole has done a remarkable job in music advocacy," says Cook. "These efforts have created new music makers in both genders and all ages, but the increase in women customers can partly be contributed to the awareness and the connections gleaned from these efforts."

Through efforts like brick-and-mortar lesson programs as well as sponsorship of initiatives like Little Kids Rock, Girls Rock camps, and more, retailers are helping to pick up the slack in places where school music doesn't have the budget or expertise to help.

The Boston Girls Rock contingent, like its sister programs throughout the country, is seeking to simply make girls comfortable with the tools of the trade. "We are making every effort to dismantle the traditional mystique most men like to put upon gear and instrument maintenance so that girls and women feel as though it is a simple and easy job done," says Mancini. "It is not impossible to understand or within our grasp to change tubes, clean knobs, eyeball the

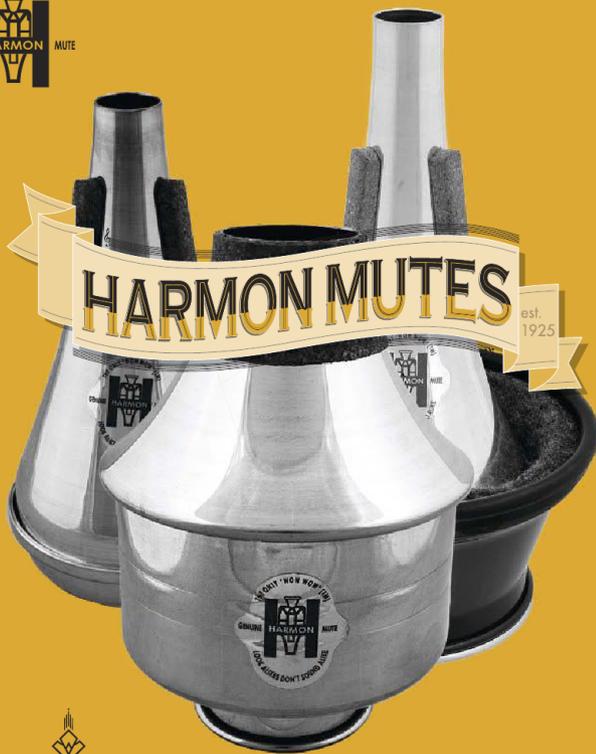
neck of a guitar, lower and raise your pick-up in your guitar – this is not brain surgery."

Beacock says the support of out-of-school programs is supremely important. "We have to provide most of those opportunities because there really aren't a lot of them out there," says Beacock. "I think NAMM has spearheaded that more than anything. We, in turn, pass that on to our customers and there becomes more women customers and women players and it's just a good thing for everybody."

Malina Moya performs at the 2014 She Rocks Awards at the NAMM Show.



Ciravolo agrees that non-traditional music education programs have been a huge help. "In the past decade, there has been an awesome movement to host girls' rock camps that teach young women musicianship while building their self-esteem and confidence at a time when it is needed in spades," she says. "At Daisy Rock Girl Guitars, we are very serious about our mission to get guitars into the hands of every girl that wants to play, so each year we donate dozens of instruments to these camps. With these programs, we are seeing the MI landscape change before our eyes, while also empowering girls to be successful in other areas of their lives." **MMA**



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Keeping Up with Keyboard Workstations

A man with short brown hair and a beard, wearing a dark denim jacket over a red shirt, is leaning over a black keyboard workstation. He is looking down at the keys with a focused expression. The background is dark with several bright, out-of-focus light sources, creating a warm, bokeh effect. The overall lighting is dim, with the primary light source being the background lights and the light reflecting off the keyboard keys.

All-in-one workstation wizardry has lately been trumped by endless laptop and tablet innovation, but there are still plenty of reasons why these dependable standalone machines continue to thrive

by Sean L. Maloney



It's a Swiss Army knife for keyboard guys." Ed Diaz, a member of Roland Corporation's keyboard product team, cuts straight to the chase when describing the keyboard workstation. While it may not be the most fashionable of instruments in 2014, it is arguably one of the most utilitarian and efficient ways to write and produce music on the market today, a workhorse whose appeal lies not in gimmickry or trendiness, but in power, reliability, and functionality.

As at home in the studio or the writing room as it is on stage, the keyboard workstation is not as fawned over as it was during its '90s peak, but that doesn't mean it's going away anytime soon. With enhanced features and increased compatibility, 2014's crop of workstations – from the Roland FA series to Korg's Kross and Yamaha's MOTIF series and beyond – make a strong case for their continued relevance in the marketplace.

"I see it as a transitional instrument," says Karl Myers of Brooklyn's Main Drag Music, a retailer serving the bustling Williamsburg music community. "When it would have been most relevant would be the late '90s or early 2000's before everybody had Pro Tools on their iPhone."

iPhone and tablet music production may be the toast of the tech blogs and a great topic for a viral video, but it is not a replacement for high quality production- and performance-ready equipment.

The Dawn of the Workstation

Richard Formidoni, product training manager at Korg USA, notes that the keyboard workstation's place in the studio has evolved over the years, from star pupil to team player. "Workstations were formerly seen as alternatives to using another recording method, but now they blend in seamlessly with whatever method you're using (like a DAW).

"From a recording and songwriting perspective, workstations also allow a player to create music quickly, with one single interface," says Formidoni. "In the DAW landscape, you're often juggling multiple software interfaces and spending your time trying to make different technologies work together instead of being creative. If you spend too much time trying to make tab A fit into slot B, you might lose the creative spark that brought you into your studio in the first place. Workstations solve that problem. The 'one-stop shop' workflow is a catalyst for fast production, and that resonates for thousands of musicians."

John Grabowski, senior director of merchandising for national retail powerhouse Sweetwater Sound Inc., points out that contemporary workstations are light years ahead of their predecessors, featuring more sounds and features than ever before.

"Even the 'entry-level' workstations available today would be envied by most of the workstations that were being sold 10 years ago," says Grabowski. "The fact that workstations also offer an all-in-one solution for both playing and sequencing/recording still appeals to many keyboardists – even those who also use a computer-based DAW."

"Historically, people were conceivably working entirely on a workstation from beginning to end," says Duane McDonald, another member of the Roland Team. "But it's now much more common that people will start an idea on a workstation and eventually bring it to a computer."



The Yamaha Motif XF8

Workstation Power Users

So we've established that, yes, the keyboard workstation is relevant, but who still uses them? Who are the people buying workstations when there are so many flashier options available? The answer is simple: experienced professionals and longtime workstation users.

"There are guys, especially in the film world and higher end television world who still use [workstations], guys that learned on these thing 25, 30 years ago," says Main Drag Music's Karl Myers. "There's a generation of people that

grew up in production – a certain level of sound design and production – that are still using these things and are just used to them."

Diaz echoes that sentiment: "Ultimately, we would like everyone to buy them, but I think that our audience are anywhere between 35 to 50 years old... There are a lot of us from that early generation, about the mid '90s – in '95 we had our XP-50 out – that still sequence or arrange or compose music in that way."

But the keyboard workstation is not just confined to the studio. There are

many musicians that embrace the keyboard workstation as a live performance instrument. The workstation offers a veritable cornucopia of sonic possibilities that can fit a multitude of styles and situations. As Formidoni says: "We find that many players are gravitating toward workstations because they contain the best sounds that we have to offer. This includes live players as well as studio or home musicians. Quite simply, if you want the most detailed, flexible sounds from a keyboard, you'll find them in a workstation."

“If a salesperson takes some time to demonstrate what a workstation can do and how it can add to the flexibility of a computer-based music rig, there's really very little challenge.”

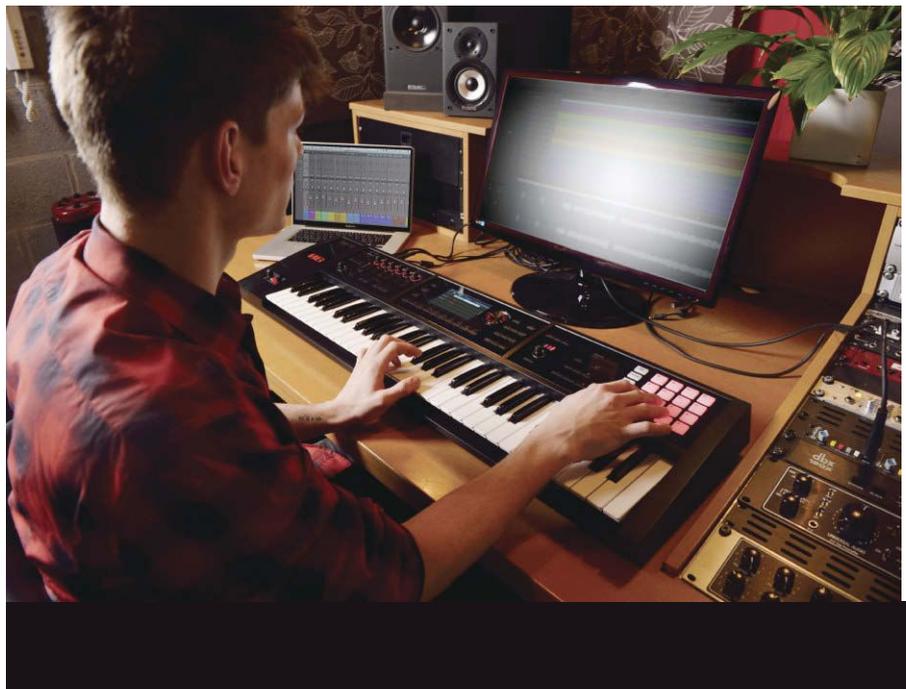
- John Grabowski, Sweetwater Sound

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Roland's FA-08 workstation

Sweetwater's Grabowski confirms that message, elaborating on the workstations' unique advantages: "Many gigging keyboardists also utilize workstations since they are a stable, reliable, self-contained instrument that doesn't require a separate computer and whatever complications or risks may come from that in a live setting. A keyboard workstation is also very useful for a single keyboardist who is required to duplicate the many different keyboard parts found in most popular music."

Nate Tscetter, manager for Yamaha's Music Production Marketing Pro Audio and Combo Division, tells *MMR*: "There's always need for an instrument centered between standalone and system."

Breaking Through to Younger Consumers

Though workstations may seem like the ultimate easy-sell thanks to their simplicity of use and seemingly infinite functionality, there are still some challenges to moving these units in a crowded marketplace.

"Sometimes the younger generation doesn't know the history of workstations or understand how to use them," says Diaz. "It's about teaching the new generation the value of something like that and how to use it, because they are so computer centered and iPad-centric that they don't even know that [the workstation] is a viable option."

"More customers than ever before are comfortable sequencing and recording on a computer or even an iOS device, and they may feel as though workstation functions are unnecessary," says Grabowski. "But if a salesperson takes some time to demonstrate what a workstation can do and how it can add to the flexibility of a computer-based music rig, there's really very little challenge."

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Roland Fantom-G8



Korg Kronos X 61

The advantages to recording and performing with a keyboard workstation aren't the trendiest – workstations are built for function rather than form, and won't match your flat-billed ball cap or impress the kids at the club with its flashing lights – but for musicians that are serious about their art, the workstation can provide an incomparable user experience.

"You can get started immediately – immediately – with recording tracks," says Diaz. "Where as with a computer you are going to need the computer, some kind of software DAW, and an audio interface. But with our keyboard and no computer, you can start creating sounds, layering sounds, recording sounds, and actually recording samples into the keyboard and doing everything within the box.

"A workstation takes a long time to die and a long time to grow outdated. A computer, no matter how powerful or if you're talking Mac or PC, will see its OS change very quickly, usually every two years. Sometimes, unfortunately, if you have a software DAW or an awesome sample package – like a Native Instruments sort of thing – when that OS changes, maybe they don't support the old OS and you have to re-buy that software rather than get a new license.

"Ease of use is big – every time we change to a new OS or there is a DAW with a new version, there's a learning curve," continues Diaz. "Our keyboards tend to last 15 or 20 years before they die. That is a great value."

McDonald explains that workstations have a "wider audience than just a keyboard with sounds in it, which you're talking about primarily keyboard players. A workstation opens up to songwriters or other musicians that play just enough keyboard and need

help getting their ideas together. Workstations appeal to that market as well."

A Stage Workhorse

"Let's think about it from a live performance perspective," says Formidoni. "[Workstations] take some of the most important elements of studio production, and turn them into a single performance instrument. This means you can have backing tracks, pre-recorded vocal accompaniment, song backups for emergencies, all on demand. Plus, unlike having a computer on stage, it's a dedicated solution. You don't have to worry about an email notification sound, or an unexpected auto-update, or any other interference. It just works."

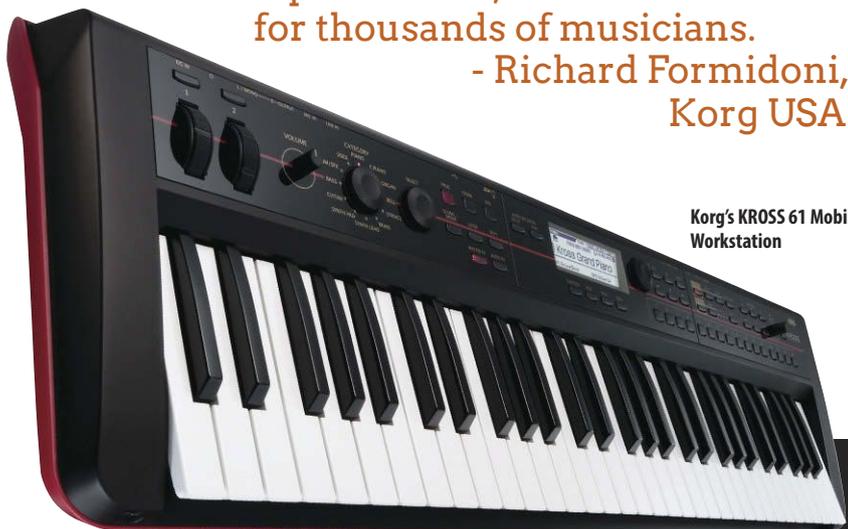
Anybody that has ever had the dubious honor of witnessing – or partaking in – an onstage laptop meltdown understands that this is the sort of incident that will not just ruin a song but can ruin an entire show. Stability and durability shouldn't be just be on a customer's wish list of functions – they should be at the top of that list. In a crowded field where audiences are more fickle and less attentive than ever, having a stable rig is essential. When you can combine stability with the latest in sound and sequencing at a competitive price you have a must-own instrument for serious musicians.

As Grabowski puts it: "Keyboard workstations aren't really that much more expensive than many other synthesizers and stage pianos, so the additional functionality offered by a workstation can be a great customer benefit and a great way to close a sale."

"In the eyes of the customer, carrying and stocking workstations places retailers in an upper echelon of keyboard dealers," says Formidoni. "Keyboard players tend to see workstation dealers as more savvy and successful than those who offer only a limited selection, and that respect creates loyalty."

“The ‘one-stop shop’ workflow is a catalyst for fast production, and that resonates for thousands of musicians.”

- Richard Formidoni,
Korg USA



Korg's KROSS 61 Mobile Workstation

A Framework for the Future

Loyalty and respect are the cornerstones of any lasting relationship and the manufacturers of keyboard workstations are in it for the long haul – by not only fulfilling their customers' current needs, but anticipating their future needs too. Main Drag's Karl Meyer sees potential in the hybridization of workstations and tablets, for instance.

"Arturia have an interesting take on it: they've got a new line of controllers coming out that combine a regular keyboard platform with

an iPad dock, so that your iPad becomes the brain of this thing and it has all the control features that people have gotten used to. It's kind of a blending which I think is smart because then [the workstation] is infinitely variable."

"For a long time, the downside of older keyboards was that you got locked into a set of sounds," says MacDonald. "Now with the FAs we take the approach of integrating with the computer, making that a virtual experience so that people can download these virtual sound sets to give new life to their keyboard."

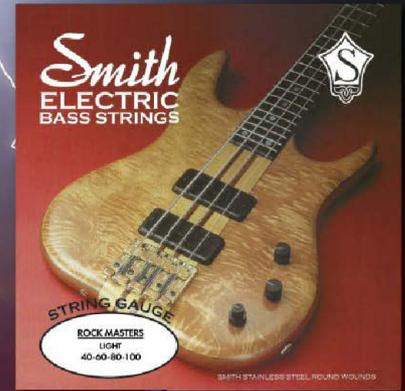
Diaz adds: "Before, our sounds were built off of PCM samples. A lot of keyboards still use that, but the technology is well over 30 years old now. We have a whole new type of sound architecture in our keyboards...You'll see us evolve with the computer but you'll also see the sounds evolve so customers don't have to download so many samples and they can actually create within our boards."

For Grabowski, the future lies in better integration and ease of transfers from apps and DAWs to and from the workstation. "Former limitations like polyphony and track count are negligible at this point," he says. "The real opportunity lies in making workstations easily integrate with computer-based setups and portable computing devices so that keyboard workstations really can offer musicians the best of both worlds."

"Moore's law [that computer processing speed will double every two years] is quite apt for these instruments, so there will likely be more content, more powerful synthesis technologies, and improved UI," Yamaha's Nate Tschetter notes. "With more content, how users interact with finding what they want becomes key."

And so it seems that, contrary to popular belief, the keyboard workstation is very much alive and very much kicking. That the instrument, a pioneer in the world of digital music creation, still has so much life in it is not just good for musicians and manufacturers but also retailers. With increasing connectivity and exponentially growing possibilities for both production and performance, the workstation looks like it will be around for years to come. As Formidoni told us: "The future is looking bright!" **MMR**

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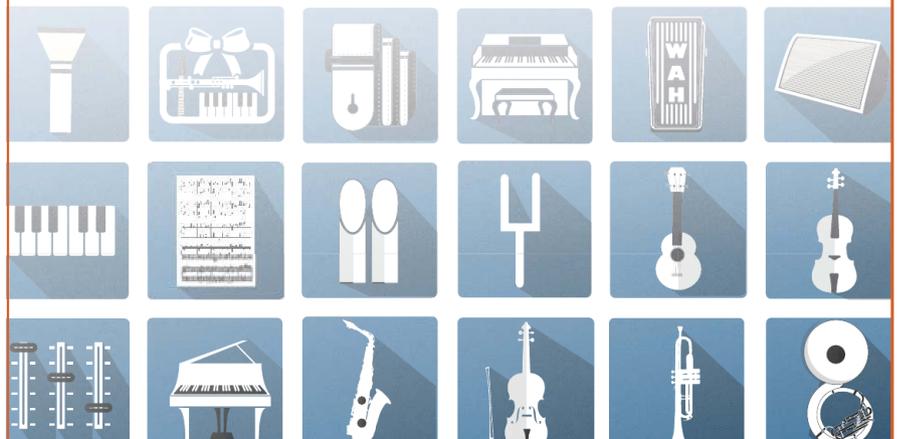


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Finding Keys to Success in a Struggling Segment

Piano & Keyboard Retailers Chime in on Trends Affecting the Market

By Christian **Wissmuller**

As any longtime reader of *MMR* knows, the past few – well, unfortunately, many – years have represented something of an uphill struggle for those who supply and sell pianos and keyboards in the U.S.

Long gone are the days when most American families aspired to not only own a comfortable home with a white picket fence, but to also purchase a piano for the living room within that home. The current national market for keyboard products is more accurately a number disparate of markets with widely ranging purchasing habits from region to region. For example, organ sales continue to be strongest in areas with high senior and retired populations, while regions such as the Northwest see comparatively healthy traffic of traditional piano consoles due to large numbers of immigrants from the Pacific Rim where, culturally, the piano remains vital to homelife and family.

The results of this recent survey, sent to over 500 MI retailers,

point to a somewhat downward-trending, but still mostly “stable,” market. Many dealers noted increased customer interest in digital consoles (37 percent of participants claim that digital instrument sales account for more than 50 percent of total sales) and consumers’ desire to have the ability to connect between musical instruments and computers/smartphones/the Internet. The majority we heard from (53 percent) reported that “intermediate” priced keyboards and pianos are where the action has been in 2014 – though, obviously, it only takes a few of those big-ticket (over \$10,000) piano sales to have a huge impact on an individual retail business’s overall annual picture.

It may not be all sunshine and lollipops when it comes to piano and keyboard sales in today’s American marketplace, but those who participated in this poll are spotting significant trends and buying habits – and a greater awareness of these factors will hopefully assist both their operations and yours in the coming months.

Compared to this time last year, your piano & keyboard sales are:

Level	31%
Up	34%
Down	35%

“Acoustic [sales] have remained flat at a very low level. The number of digital units is also flat, but the continuing lower prices have resulted in lower gross and profits.”
Brad Jahn
 Dorsey Music
 Nampa, Idaho

“[We] can barely sell acoustics unless they are drastically reduced. Too many have been thrown on the market because of so many losing their homes.”
Larry Miller
 Metronome Music, Inc.
 Mansfield, Ohio

“[We are] moving more smaller items that quickly add up. We’ve had success with larger, more expensive grand pianos this year, but it has not been constant.”
Patrick Downing
 West Music Co.
 Moline, Ill.

“Sales are up 18.5 percent over last year.”
Jim Ripp
 Full Compass Systems
 Madison, Wis.

What price points are performing best for your operation?

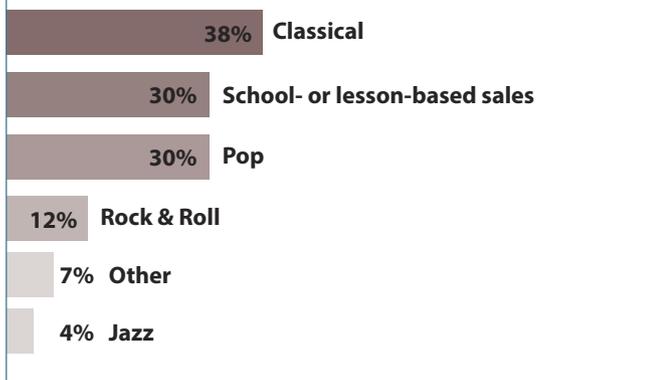
Low	30%
High-end	17%
Intermediate	53%

“High-end and under \$10,000 seems to be moving. Middle of the range is non-existent, though.”
Peter Sides
 Robert M. Sides Family Music Center
 Williamsport, Pa.

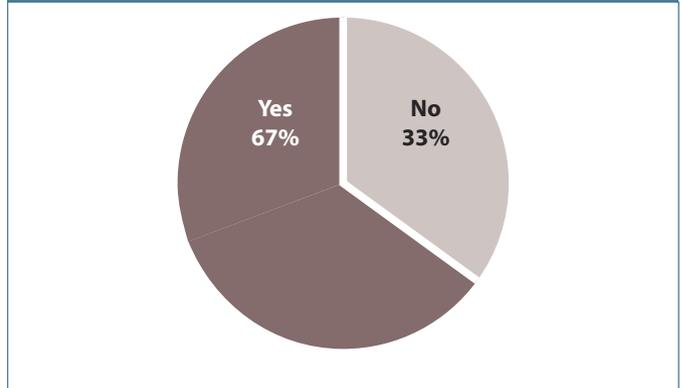
“The mix is 70 percent [high-end] to 30 percent [Intermediate] with high-end grands doing extremely well.”
Mark Love
 Steinway Piano Gallery – Charlotte
 Charlotte, N.C.

“Upright pianos in the \$4,000-\$6,000 range are doing well, grand pianos in the \$12,000-\$17,000 range are doing well and we’re seeing digital sales in nearly all price points from \$1,000-\$5,000.”
James Harding
 Gist Piano Center
 Louisville, Ky.

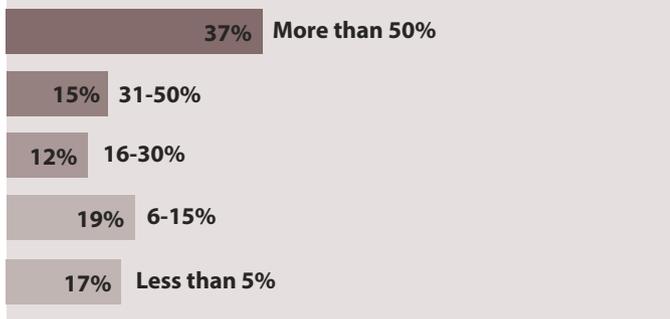
What genre of music is driving the most "new customer" traffic to your piano & keyboard department in 2014?



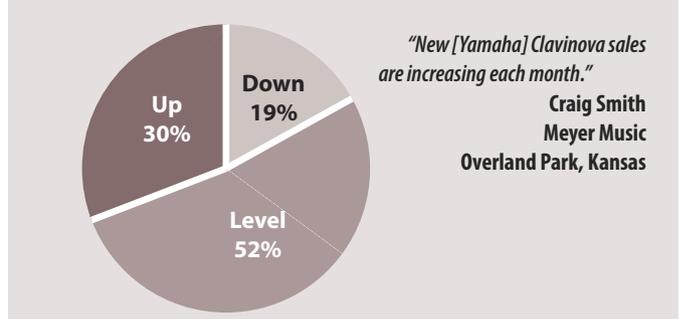
Does your store carry digital consoles/emulators?



If you do carry digital keyboards and pianos, what percentage of your overall business does that type of product account for?



If your operation does stock digital pianos, are sales of those consoles increasing, decreasing, or staying the same as compared to this same time in 2013?



What larger trends have you been noticing in the market with respect to pianos, keyboards, and related gear?

"Player pianos are driving the market."

Greg Billings
 Steinway Piano Gallery – Naples
 Bonita Springs, Fla.

"People are very concerned about price. They search the Internet for the cheapest price. They do not understand about quality and performance."

Anne Shepherd
 Chick Piano DBA Chick Music
 Athens, Ga.

"Most [consumer] interest seems to be in digital consoles."

Mike White
 White's Music Box
 Las Cruces, N.M.

"Only instruments with 'pricing power' warrant attention."

Jim Foster
 Foster Family Music Center LLC
 Bettendorf, Iowa

"There's an increase of weighted, 88-key keyboards."

Robert Degraaf
 Sound Vibrations, Inc.
 Corpus Christi, Texas

"[There are] few impulse buyers for acoustic pianos. Most [customers] have done their research and want complete justification for the price you are asking. This is a good thing for piano stores with a shop, and a positive history in the community."

Fred Forshley
 Forshley Piano Company
 Houston, Texas

"Churches are switching from traditional piano to digital pianos."

Case Brothers
 Spartanburg, S.C.

"Baby boomers are buying their last piano to retire with."

Joe Woods
 Woods and Son Piano Co.
 Brighton, Colo.

"Parents are looking for a quality digital keyboard for their beginning students. Nothing fancy – just good piano sound and feel."

Terri Miller
 Kudzu Music
 Boone, N.C.

"Prices on Craigslist in the Chicagoland market have been going up in the last year or so, so it's a more level playing field for us stores. Prices tend to be around 40 percent to 80 percent of retail, in my humble opinion."

Brendan Alviani
Family Piano Co.
Waukegan, Ill.

"Manufacturers are lowering the bar on \$ volume and profit potential because of Internet sales of competing products to ours from the same manufacturer."

Steven Trawford
Piano Distributors
Chesterfield, Mo.

"My work this year is based off of people wanting to fix their family heirloom. I have been doing scads of rebuilding their vintage uprights and have been doing very little selling."

Martha Taylor
The Immortal Piano Company
Portland, Oregon

"Parents aren't buying as many furniture-style digital pianos, but choosing the more affordable and portable stage pianos. [The] majority of sales are 88-key consoles and the \$1,500 to \$2,000 sale price workstations sell much better than 61- and 76-key versions."

John Bond
Ken Stanton Music
Marietta, Ga.

"There is greater acceptance by the teaching community of digital pianos."

Julie Romeo
Romeo Music
Dallas, Texas

"In our small market, a good sounding piano and good weighted feel for under \$1,000 seems to be what is sought out the most – for schools, churches, and home players."

Kevin Bucklew
Palen Music Center
Columbia, Mo.

"Customers want to be able to incorporate the digital piano with their computer to use music software."

Rick Lindquist
Schmitt Music
Fargo, N.D.

"I see a greater need for technology. People want to enjoy the beauty and performance of their acoustic piano (or the closest representation they can afford) and still have the ability to use software, apps, and learning aids to enhance their experience."

James Harding
Gist Piano Center
Louisville, Ky.

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Piano & Keyboard Products Spotlight

Our bi-annual look at a few of the hottest new keyboard products on the market.

Korg Pa3X LE

Designed primarily for the live performer, Korg Professional Arrangers have a dual playback sequencer for non-stop performances, extra articulation, and a number of ready-to-use styles.



The Pa3X LE contains a slim, aluminum cabinet with a main panel that was designed for the controls to be intuitively positioned for natural performance. The 7" Touchview color TFT display provides the user with information and access to deeper parameters.

The enhanced RX Technology sound engine offers realistic sound, while the Defined Nuance Control allows for optimal control and improved sound articulation levels. Pa3X comes with 1,100 unique and high quality sounds, all supported by the improved internal ROM. There is also 192 MB of PCM data, which allows for new sounds to be added quicker and easier.

The Pa3X LE offers over 410 styles. Each style offers four Fill-ins and Breaks; one for each variation. The Chord Sequencer function records chord progressions on-the-fly in Style Play mode. The new fully programmable SongBook is an easy searchable Music Database.

korg.com

Lowrey EY 400 Inspire

The EY400 "Inspire" is Lowrey's newest offering in its line of recreational music making instruments. A global collection of presets numbering in the thousands gives the Inspire the now-famous Lowrey "touch and play" operation. The Inspire also offers a substantial collection of fully customizable styles, sounds, and effects for a variety of musical expression



lowrey.com

Cline Vertical Pianos from Hailun

After extensive testing in the market, Hailun USA is launching its line of Cline vertical pianos. According to the company, many say it's the best performing upright piano and value they have played in its price category.

Made in the Hailun Factory in Ningbo, China, features include the Hailun Performance Plus action of European hornbeam, cold pressed hammers, wet sand-cast plates, and other high quality components and materials. The beautiful tone is the result of the

Dave Smith Instruments Curtis Filter Module

This compact, 8H Eurorack-format module features a switchable 2/4-pole, resonant, low-pass analog filter based on the filter chip originally designed by the late Doug



Curtis. The Curtis filter has been an integral part of the sound of Dave Smith's instruments from the classic Sequential Circuits Prophet 5, all the way up to recent synths such as the Evolver, Mopho, Prophet 08, and Prophet 12. MAP: \$179.

davesmithinstruments.com

Yamaha 'TransAcoustic' U1TA Piano

The "TransAcoustic" U1TA is an acoustic instrument enveloping a conventional grand piano sound which can also be fully adjusted with a volume control or enjoyed in privacy via headphones.



The U1TA's specially designed, electro-acoustic transducers are designed to cause the soundboard to vibrate in much the same way a speaker cone would. The naturally resonant soundboard - in fact, the entire piano - effectively becomes one giant speaker, projecting a digitally sampled sound in the same manner as if it were doing so acoustically. The U1TA TransAcoustic piano provides four distinct experiences: the Acoustic Experience, the "TransAcoustic Experience," in which Yamaha's CFX concert grand piano is volume-controllable, the "Layered Experience" in which real acoustic sound can be combined with internal digital voices, and the "Intimate Experience," in which all sound is limited to headphones. Retail: \$16,699.

<http://4wrd.it/TRANSACOUSTICHOME>

collaboration between the factory and American technicians and designers.

Models include the CL118, CL121 and CL123, all available in high polished ebony, walnut and mahogany, with matching benches.

hailun-pianos.com



Joe Satriani

By Bryan Reesman

Legendary guitar wizard Joe Satriani has built up a career that most six-stringers would love to have. He has released 14 successful solo albums, racked up 15 Grammy nominations, masterminded and co-headlined the popular G3 tour, and played around the planet numerous times. His latest album, last year's *Unstoppable Momentum*, is one of his best with its blend of muscular riffing balanced with melodic hooks. The man has an ear for catchy guitar instrumentals, which elevates his music above stereotypical shred fare. We certainly have heard that combo in effect on hits like "Summer Song" and "Flying In A Blue Dream." New tracks "Can't Go Back" and "Shine On American Dreamer" are awesome in their own right.

MMR caught up with Satch just prior to his recent South American tour to get the 411 on his latest gear.

“I’m using fewer effects on this tour because my signature JVM410JS Marshall head and cabinets sound so good!”

MMR: You play your own specially designed Ibanez guitars. Which ones do you prefer lately and why?

Joe Satriani: The last few years I have moved exclusively to the 24-fret JS models. The 2400 and 2410 remain my favorites for sound and feel.

You've been playing your own Ibanez guitars for over 25 years now, haven't you?

JS: Yeah. And you know what? The Ibanez guys were over my house recently, and we are still working on several new designs that will maybe take six months or a year or three years. Some of the stuff we've been working on for over 10 years. We're tireless. We just keep pushing it. Sometimes it's a hit, sometimes it's a miss, but it's fun.

Is there any one pedal that you can't live without?

JS: Wow. It's a funny thing. I think maybe my delay pedal is the most "my friend" of all my effects. The Time Machine pedal that I put together with VOX probably has all the elements that I really like about a delay pedal. But the close second would be the wah-wah pedal. The Big Bad Wah is sort of an homage to the original VOX wah-wah pedal, but it also has a second inductor coil in there that you can switch to if you want to get more of the late '70s, '80s sound. I shunned that wah-wah pedal for many years until one day when I was heading into the studio to record *Surfing with the Alien*. I remember looking at it in my apartment in the corner covered in dust. I thought, "What the hell." I hadn't played it in five or six years and just threw it in my bag. When I put it on the ground, I remember [producer John] Cuniberti going, "Oh, no, I thought we hated those things!" I thought, "Let's just try it." And all of a sudden something new came out of it. So maybe the wah-wah pedal is a close second.

Which effects are you using more of lately?

JS: I'm using fewer effects on this tour because my signature JVM410JS Marshall head and cabinets sound so good! For live shows, I still use two delays, two Ibanez chorus pedals, a whammy, POG, and wah-wah pedals.

What are your favorite amps lately and why do you like their sound?

JS: My JVM410JS Marshall! It's so very versatile and always sounds big and natural.

What kind of cables are you using and why?

JS: I use Planet Waves cables. They are my favorite for their tone and toughness on the road.

Any preference on picks?

JS: This past year I switched to "extra heavy" picks made by Planet Waves. They make a bigger, warmer sound.

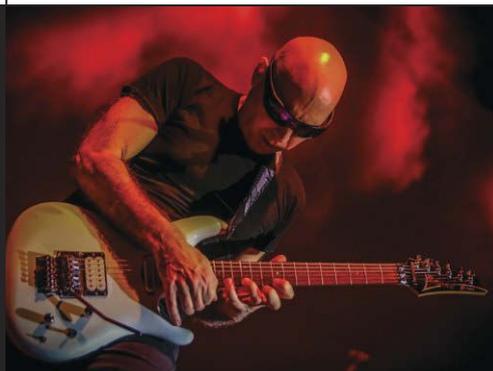
What about strings and any other accessories?

JS: I use D'Addario .010 to .046 strings tuned to E flat. They have the best tone there is. And of course, my very own signature straps from Planet Waves featuring my artwork!

For each album sound, the musical approach is dictated as much by the gear as the ideas that you have in your head. Why is that synergy of artistry and technology so important to you?

JS: I think there is the music in your head and how emotional you are about it. A great example of that would be the title track of *Not of This Earth*, which I brought in to Cuniberti and said, "This is a very weird song. It's got these chords that change key and there are only two bass notes in the entire song. It's very strict in the rhythm section and the guitar is doing all of this crazy stuff on top." He's trying to process all of this emotion that I'm laying on him about how I feel about this and what it sounds like in my head. He said, "I have this idea, there's this machine over here..." He couldn't explain it to me, but he showed me the "Non Linear" reverb setting – what was it called? The EMT 251 – and I flipped out because it sounded very much like what I heard in my head, which was a time-distorted reverb or delay effect. I didn't know how to put it into words when I was describing the sound in my head to him. He listened to what I was saying. It wound up being the sonic hook of the song because after these strange chords come in, you hear this kick and snare that are just hysterical sounding, and it played into both of our fascination with robotic music with Kraftwerk and trying to figure out how to marry what was the beginning of techno music with expressive guitar music.

MMR



Joe Satriani Go-to Gear

Guitars: Ibanez JS2400 and 2410 models, Boogie Body Strat-type electric, '58 Fender Esquire, '06 Gibson JPP #1, '83 Gibson 335, '61 Fender Stratocaster.

Amps: Marshall JVM410HJS amps, '59 Fender Twin Amp, assorted '50s Fender amps, Peavey 5150 head, Wizard 100-watt head, Roland JC120, Fargen Retro Classic, '64 Fender Bassman, Two-Rock

Classic Reverb and 10th Anniversary amps.

Effects: Vox Big Bad Wah and Time Machine pedals, Boss DM-2 and OC-2 pedals, Digitech Whammy pedal, Sustainiac pickup system.

Accessories: D'Addario .010 to .046 strings; Planet Waves straps, cables, and "extra heavy" picks.

An Angel in the Acoustic Room

Charlotte N.C. Sam Ash Serves as Sanctuary for 16-Year-Old Angel Paez

By Bryan Reesman



Sam Ash's Jeff Wiggins with Angel Paez.

The retail experience can be enlivened by employees who are knowledgeable and personal, and in some cases, inspirational. Since he began working at the Sam Ash megastore in Charlotte, North Carolina this past July, 16-year-old Angel Paez has been surprising and delighting customers with his skills and passion. He is not only well versed in playing numerous instruments – guitar, bass, drums, keyboards, accordion, violin, and his favorite, mandolin – but he also re-strings guitars with speed and precision. And he does it all easily, despite being blind.

Paez had been coming to the Sam Ash store for years to check out the latest instruments and make purchases, and after visiting there frequently and getting to know Jeff Wiggins, the sales associate in the acoustic room, he knew that he wanted to work there. He was able to secure a job through the Division of Services for the Blind, which is part of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, and he now works with Wiggins every Monday and Thursday for four-hour shifts. "Angel is my paid intern, so he works mainly with me," explains Wiggins. "He is paid through Services for the Blind,

which also pays his workman's comp insurance and such. Only a few weeks in, he is doing string changes and demos and just generally supporting the sales staff in any way he can."

Wiggins, a 32-year industry veteran who has worked at this 34,000-square foot Sam Ash megastore for seven and a half years, is beyond pleased with the arrangement. "When they first asked me about this, I figured I would have Angel tuning strings each day," recalls Wiggins. "We got a little further into it, and I wanted to teach him how to change strings on a guitar. The first thing that came up was a banjo,

and he did great with that. Now all I do is lay down a winder, a bridge pin puller, and a small string beside the guitar for him and just leave him alone, and he has them restrung in no time."

Paez often surprises people when they see him tuning something like a 12-string guitar, but he understands that they have never seen something like that before. "When they do see me, for example, doing something that I would need to know if I'm a musician [despite being blind], it challenges their expectations," he offers. "For me, to be able to help them reconsider their notions is kind of awesome, because then they won't assume things that aren't necessarily true. It's a good thing for them to know."

According to the young musician, "interacting with people is the best part" of his job. He loves learning new things as well, he says, "because if I were just sitting at home, I wouldn't have learned to restring guitars or to tune them, or I wouldn't have learned about all the tools there are [for] setting up a guitar. For me, hearing Jeff working with other customers while I'm tuning or restringing is a great way to learn. It's cool."

Wiggins says the store's customers are fans of Paez. "They love him to death. We are working on getting him involved in doing setups for store demos – anything I can do to teach him how to feel things better." He also emphasizes that this Sam Ash location is very education oriented, which enhances Paez's work experience. "Everything Angel knew before working here was self-taught, but everyone here has reached out to expand his knowledge of music and the instruments he plays. I have concentrated on things I can teach him about the music retail business."

On top of music sales, this Sam Ash location, which boasts around 21 employees and has been open since 2003, offers a full lesson program in the back at the Sam Ash Learning Center. Currently, they teach guitar, drums, keyboard, violin, flute, trumpet, bass, banjo, and voice. They also have weekly music events for each day of the week, including Drummers Unite, Free Pro Tools and Technology classes, and Front Porch Pickin', a bluegrass jam on Thursdays which Paez has attended on numerous occasions, although he confesses that school work and church choir have kept him busy lately.

"We have our little bluegrass circle that has been getting together for a couple years now," says Wiggins, "and we always put [Angel] on the mandolin because he's one of the best mandolin players around here. I wish you could hear him play in the group. You'd be amazed because he'll sit and listen to the song for a minute, then he has the progression and starts playing."

“ Everything Angel knew before working here was self-taught, but everyone here has reached out to expand his knowledge of music and the instruments he plays. ”



Angel Paez expertly restrings an acoustic guitar.

While he picked up his first and main instrument, keyboard, at age three, Paez began his love affair with the mandolin five or six years ago after he had been playing violin. "I really loved the sound of the mandolin," he recalls. "I had never seen one before, and I think I came down here to Sam Ash to check one out. I just loved it, and I've been playing it at church and everywhere ever since. For me, it's just the way it sounds and the way you're able to express yourself through it. The difference in that is really cool, and it's a nice sounding instrument. You don't get to play a tiny, double stringed instrument too often."

Being a multi-instrumentalist has allowed Paez to learn more about music, and he feels that knowledge of different instruments can affect the music that one plays. He also has a broad range of musical tastes. He says he grew up listening to hip-hop and pop on the radio, and then discovered classical music in middle school.

"I was trying to expand," explains Paez, "but I think what musicians sometimes run into is that other genres of music sound boring or foreign to them. But for me it's part of music – it's a different type of music, but nonetheless music. I like that all these genres are different and cool in their own ways. I did listen to a lot of country back then and discovered bluegrass not too long ago."

Paez loves to listen to players who are better than him because they inspire him to pick up his guitar or keyboard and improve as well. One of his favorite mandolinists is Chris Thile from Nickel Creek,

whom he calls a "monster" player. "I'm also a really big fan of Justin Timberlake and how he sings," says Paez. "He's got a really good falsetto voice and is really creative. I also grew up listening to a lot of Mexican music, and I picked up the accordion. It's just one of those other things that maybe people would say sounds foreign, but it's really fun music to play."

While he is still in high school, Paez has been contemplating his future. "I'm thinking about going to do something in broadcasting or maybe in radio," he muses. "I definitely love radio. It's what I grew up listening to, so I'm really looking forward to doing something with that or maybe something in recording because I like to record things as well. I'm still in the deciding process, I guess."

Wiggins is full of love for Paez and holds him up as a strong role model in many ways. "Even discounting his blindness, Angel is a great player and adds to every life he touches," declares Wiggins. "He plays at his church and at various bluegrass festivals in the area, too. Angel's personality has enriched every aspect of our store. If everyone who works in our store could 'see' things with his senses, we'd be beating people away from the front door." **MMA**

Sustained Growth and the Customer Experience



By Rick Young,
Senior Vice President
Yamaha Corporation
of America



New business is falling out of the sky. All you have to do is accept the great margin and write up the deal. Well maybe it wasn't quite that easy back in the day, but staying on top of the latest buying trends and consumer preferences can go a long way in sustained growth for your business now.

The global economy is experiencing minimal growth in 2014 as we see challenges from the lingering global recession, weaker than expected growth from emerging markets, and escalating geo-political tensions. When you add the major shift and increasing prominence of Internet purchasing, one has to see that the competitive waters are still rather choppy.

Now comes the good news. The economy is recovering. Maybe not at the rate we would all like, but it's heading in the right direction. Home values have rebounded quite a bit, the market is still moving forward, and the unemployment rate is coming down. Yes, the overall participation rate is not that good, but there are so many factors to consider. I sometimes wonder if we ever really know the whole truth, or if we have to be okay with relying on trends for one of our strategy pillars. Then I shiver myself back into reality – Yes, of course it is the trends that really matter, as the truth is much too elusive. So then, retail trends are changing on an almost day-to-day basis and here are a few thoughts regarding the trends that are current in retail today.

“Retail trends are changing on almost a day-to-day basis.”

Social media has to be part of your marketing efforts and using the data you capture through that to leverage your company image and profile is crucial. Everyone knows this. You have hopefully attended the NAMM University sessions, read the articles in our trade publications, and so on. Just had to say it, as there may be a few out there that are still not buying into the importance of this trend.

Most in-store sales now are described as “ROPO” or “research online and purchase offline.” That is good news for everyone that can offer a really good in-store customer experience. Just think of the way you shop now, whether it is for goods, services, or even going to a restaurant. Most people that I know look at the restaurant's website, for example, and obtain menus, directions, et cetera, and then go to Yelp and see what the review comments are. This is exactly what customers are doing with your store. You may feel that you have a good base of customers that do not need to do that, because they already know your store. Not anymore. Even the good, longtime customer will look online, probably at a number of manufactur-

ers first, to obtain a feel for the instrument they are looking to purchase. Why? Because you are not open 24/7 and that is when they want to research. With that being said, it is imperative for all brick and mortar dealers to have a web presence and sell product *both* in-store and online. The question here is, how do you provide the customer experience in your store to compete with the Internet experience – your site or someone else’s? The answer is: Do not try to fight against it. Embrace it. Your sales people should not shudder when a millennial comes into the store with a smart device and is looking at other models, stores, and pricing. A statistic I’ve heard is that 50 percent of millennials use a smart device to compare while shopping in a brick and mortar store. Your sales people should have their own device and help the customer willingly while they’re in your store. Bring the Internet experience into your store.

With the steady increase in consumer confidence for buying online (and as online purchases are becoming more popular through mobile devices), you need a strategy for this retail buying trend, as well. A study showed that 15 percent of all e-commerce sales were completed on a mobile device in 2013 and experts say it will rise to 24 percent by 2016. What this means is that your social media pages, web pages, and shopping carts all have to be mobile friendly.

Today, consumers are in control of almost every step of the buying process. Instant gratification, exceptional service, and 24/7 access to products and purchasing is expected. It is truly a buyers’ market! The service experience that you provide the customer can make or break your business and the bottom line. Research* shows that the customer’s service experience was the most important factor in making a purchase decision for 26 percent of the consumers surveyed. This is huge! Brand reputation, at 25 percent, was the next most important factor with price, product features, and quality lagging. As a factor in the purchase decision, service has increased markedly for 74 percent of respondents over the past few years. And finally, 82 percent of consumers see a tight link between service and the product. Why? Because by now many of those who purchase online have had a bad service experience.

When you add service experience and brand reputation together (51 percent), it is a much larger factor that many of us would have imagined. We are all so focused on the gear and price negotiations that we may be selling ourselves and our service capabilities short and not focusing on what our staff need to have as part of their presentation. Do your employees spend an ample amount of their time making the service experience outstanding and touting your brand, no matter what department they represent? Continuously training your entire staff to know what the customer is expecting and giving them the knowledge and tools to meet and exceed those expectations sets you on the path to sustained growth.

Any wild new revelations here? Not really, from a foundational perspective. However, coming off of a self-serve merchandising wave, new generations of buyers with new expectations, new shopping tools and trends, all new mediums for speaking with your customers and prospective buyers, and a slow recession rebound, it seems like a new world for those of us that have been around for a while. We need to fully embrace it to keep our businesses growing. **MMA**

* (source: Accenture Service Experience Study, 2011)

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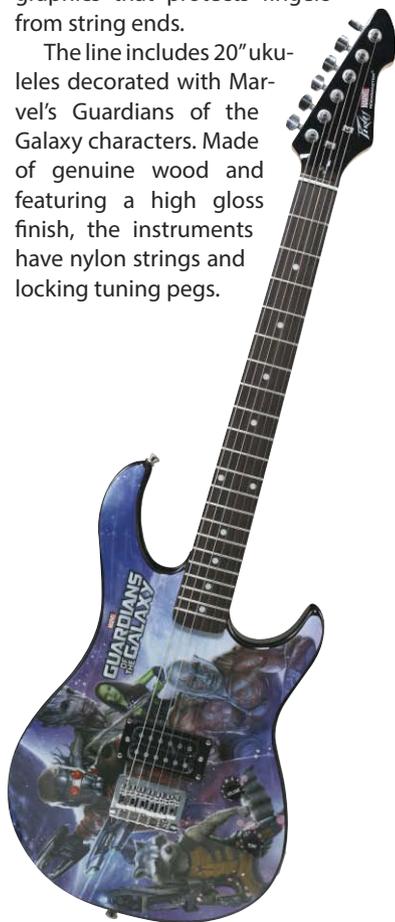
New Products

Guardians of the Galaxy Collection from Peavey

Featuring Marvel's Guardians of the Galaxy characters in a high gloss finish, Peavey's Rockmaster® guitar provides balance, playability, and tone with a basswood body, maple neck, and rosewood fretboard. A three-quarter size student model of the Rockmaster electric guitar is also available, and both guitars come with a cable and picks.

Peavey's half-size acoustic guitars are made of genuine wood with steel strings, and are ideal for starter musicians. The guitars include a removable headstock cover with matching graphics that protects fingers from string ends.

The line includes 20" ukuleles decorated with Marvel's Guardians of the Galaxy characters. Made of genuine wood and featuring a high gloss finish, the instruments have nylon strings and locking tuning pegs.



peavey.com

FRETTED

Ibanez Kaoss Guitar and Bass

Ibanez takes on the world of electronic music with the introduction of the new RGKP6 and SRKP4 Korg mini kaoss pad 2s-equipped guitar and bass, with an expected street price near \$400. Each model includes a built-in/detachable Korg mini kaoss pad 2s to create a unique hybrid instrument. This detachable "fast-swap" design is ready to accept new generations of kaoss technology. The kaoss pad 2s puts 100 effect programs within the reach of a finger for seamless, "real-time" manipulation. Other kaoss features include a synthesizer, a built-in mp3 player, and a digital recorder to capture performances. The kaoss can implement elements such as built-in gain/distortion, an effect bypass toggle, and a 1/8" headphone jack for private jam sessions.



ibanez.com

Mitchell Element Series Acoustic Guitars

Mitchell Guitars' new Element Series combines features like solid spruce or red cedar tops with sapele or Indian rosewood bodies. Mitchell's shifted, scalloped bracing enables each instrument's top to breathe and resonate. High-ratio die-cast tuners keep tuning stable, while ebony keys and flame maple binding enhance the guitar's appearance.

Element Series acoustic-electric models are outfitted with Fishman's new INK preamps and electronics along with a built-in chromatic tuner for added convenience. The guitars are available in two combinations of premium woods: the ME1, ME1CE and ME1ACE feature striped sapele bodies with a solid spruce top, while the ME2CEC model is built with Indian rosewood back and sides and a solid red cedar top. The guitars are available in dreadnaught and auditorium styles, with some models featuring modified Venetian-style cutaways. Street: \$299 to \$399.



mitchellguitars.com

B.C. Rich 7- & 8-String Extended Range Guitars

All of B.C. Rich's new seven-string guitars have a 25.5" scale length and the eight-string models feature a 27" scale length. All six models are now available worldwide in iconic Warlock, V, and Villain body shapes.

The Warlock Lucky 7 and Lucky 8 feature a mahogany body and bolt on neck with a 12" radius, rosewood fretboard, jumbo frets, and an inline pointed headstock, finished with a high gloss black on the body and a fast black satin on the neck. A single ply, white binding around the fretboard completes the aesthetics, along with a pair of Duncan Designed Blackout pickups.

The Villain Escape 7 and Escape 8 features a basswood body and bolt on maple neck with a 16" radius, rosewood fretboard, pearl bones inlays, jumbo frets, and an inline pointed headstock. Includes B.D.S.M. humbucker pickups. The Jr. V Lucky 7 and Lucky 8 features a mahogany body and maple bolt on neck with a 12" radius, rosewood fretboard, jumbo frets, and an inline pointed headstock and also includes the Blackout pickups. Retail: \$640-\$700 (Warlock Lucky 7-8), \$570-\$640 (Villain Escape 7-8), \$640-\$700 (Jr. V Lucky 7-8).



bcrich.com

Jackson Pro DK2M Dinky Limited Run

The DK2M Pro Series Dinky features an alder body, flat-sawn graphite-reinforced bolt-on maple neck with wrap-around heel, 24-fret compound radius (12"-16") maple fingerboard with offset black dot inlays, black neck and headstock binding, direct mount Seymour Duncan® JB Zebra (bridge) and '59 Zebra (neck) humbucking pickups with five-way blade switching, Floyd Rose® bridge, black hardware and Dunlop® strap locks. Limited run in "Slime Green Swirl."



jacksonguitars.com

AMPLIFIERS

VOX Limited Edition Two-Tone Custom ACTV



Covered in a retro chic two-tone color scheme, this amp recreates one of VOX's most coveted and short-lived designs for the AC Series, originally introduced in the 1960s. The classic reissued lineup consists of three models: 4W, 15W, and 30W. The VOX custom AVTV limited Two-Tone amplifiers are available in both blue/cream and maroon/cream two-tone vinyl covering for a limited time at select retailers.

vox.com

Kala Thinline Guitars

Kala Thinline acoustic/electric guitars are six-string models available in both steel string and nylon string versions. Both are cutaway models that feature a Shadow SH Performer Pro Tuner NFX preamp with tuner and Nanoflex pickup. Kala originally offered a limited edition of the Thinline guitar series from 2008 to 2010.

Kala's Thinline guitars offer a performance style cutaway design with a 2.75" body depth, a solid spruce top, mahogany back and sides, gloss finish, and rosewood fingerboard. The Steel string model, KA-GTR-SMETS-E comes with die-cast chrome tuners while the Nylon String model, KA-GTR-SMTN-E, features gold classical-style tuners. Controls include Bass, Lo-Mid, Hi-Mid, Treble, Phase Invert, and Chromatic tuner with on/off switch. Retail: \$549.99.



kalabrand.com

Carbon Fiber Guitars from Journey Instruments

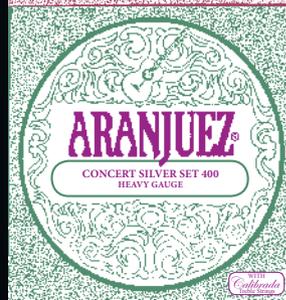
The patented removable neck system allows this carbon fiber acoustic travel guitar to collapse into an airline carry-on size case for the traveling musician or backpacker. Carbon fiber composite material provides durability and can function in any climate without cracking, warping, or changing tone.

The Overhead is able to carry a full sound through the use of a Manzer wedge, which increases the air volume while keeping the top of the guitar close to the body for comfort. It also provides access to the upper frets through a Scoopaway™ at the neck.



journeyinstruments.com

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Hughes & Kettner 30th Anniversary NOS Limited Edition TubeMeisters

For Hughes & Kettner's 30th Anniversary, the company is producing a Limited Edition 30th Anniversary Series of its TubeMeister range. The amps – which are set to be available as TubeMeister 18 Head and TubeMeister 36 Head models – all feature Soviet "New Old Stock" EL84 power tubes that were built long before Hughes & Kettner was founded.

The tubes comply with military-grade specifications for the aircraft industry (which require the highest levels of reliability and the strictest tolerances), and are built to last for a lifetime. According to K&K, they deliver noticeably more output than standard EL84s. As with all TubeMeister amps, the anniversary models feature Red Box DI output, a flexible Power Soak, and the trademark blue-lit logo.



hughes-and-kettner.com

LIGHTING & DJ

Chauvet DJ Scorpion Script

The Scorpion Script laser effect is a compact 532nm/50mW green laser that comes with its own detachable keyboard to display custom text. Use the keyboard to type out any customized text (name of a venue, DJ, performer) and the fixture stores it for recall later via keyboard or a wireless controller. The Scorpion Script's keyboard can be used to create customized laser patterns and to apply eye-catching rotation effects to words and graphics. The laser also features built-in patterns.



The Scorpion Script features manual size adjustment to enlarge or shrink displays to fit venues.

chauvetdj.com

PRO AUDIO

PreSonus Ceres BT-series Bluetooth Speakers

PreSonus® Ceres™ C3.5BT and C4.5BT active speakers include wireless Bluetooth audio streaming and a front-panel 1/8" stereo input. Ceres BT-series speakers have EQ to adjust the listening environment and provide a dedicated Sub Out to integrate a subwoofer. Energy Conservation mode saves energy when the speakers are not in use and meets the European ErP directive.



The Ceres C3.5BT and C4.5BT feature 3.5-inch and 4.5-inch Kevlar™ low frequency transducers, respectively. Both models have 1" low-mass, silk-dome tweeters and responsive 25W Class AB amplification per speaker. In addition to the 1/8" stereo input, the front panel sports a 1/8" stereo headphone output and a volume control. The rear panel is dominated by a round bass-reflex port and hosts balanced 1/4" TRS and unbalanced RCA inputs and the 1/4" balanced TRS subwoofer output.

hear.presonus.com

Zoom iQ6

The compact and lightweight iQ6 turns any Lightning-equipped device into a field recorder. It features two unidirectional condenser microphones in an X/Y configuration—the same elements used in the Zoom H4n Handy Recorder—and comes with an extended Lightning connector and removable spacer that allow it to be used with most iPhone, iPod, and iPad cases. The mic angles can be adjusted between 90 degrees for a tightly focused image to 120 degrees. Advanced features include an analog-type Mic Gain wheel for precision adjustment of input level, plus three-segment LED meters for visual monitoring and a dedicated headphone/line out jack.



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PEDALS & EFFECTS

Electro-Harmonix Nano Looper 360 Pedal

The small NanoLooper 360 offers a total of 360 seconds of loop recording time, which can be divided into 11 different loops. With uncompressed audio, 24-bit A/D/A and a 44.1kHz sample rate, the 360 Looper delivers high quality sound and unlimited overdubbing with no degradation in fidelity. The user interface, featuring two knobs, three LEDs and a single footswitch, offers intuitive control of functions such as recording a loop, overdubbing, undo-redo, and erasing a loop. List price: \$179.99.



ehx.com

The Aggressor from MOD Kits DIY

The Aggressor is high gain distortion pedal kit that delivers contemporary distortion. The distortion effect goes from subtle break up to over-the-top distortion at maximum gain. The Aggressor features true bypass, LED indicator and a versatile tone control with a scoop/bump switch that shifts the mid-frequency response. MODTM Kits and Assemblies are designed to give novice and experienced musicians the opportunity to build or modify their own amps, effects pedals and guitars. All effect pedals and amplifiers come with a pre-drilled enclosure and all necessary parts are included.



modkitsdiy.com

Boss RC-1 Loop Station

The RC-1 is designed as the entry-level model into Boss's loop recording technology. Built to record loops and nothing else, and housed in the durable Boss compact pedal case, the stripped-down RC-1 is designed so record, overdub, play/stop, undo/redo, and clear operations are all accomplished with one integrated pedal, while the loop level is controlled with the panel's single knob. The unique circular loop indicator features 24 multi-colored LEDs, providing instant feedback on the operation mode and cycle status of the current loop. The RC-1 offers high-quality sound with up to 12 full minutes of stereo recording time. The pedal can be powered with an optional PSA-series AC adapter or a single 9-volt battery, which offers up to 4.5 hours of operation



bossus.com

Decibel Eleven Dual Voltage Hot Stone Power Supplies

The Hot Stone Deluxe features eight isolated and two split outputs for a total of 10 that can be used simultaneously. Two of the outputs are high powered 400mA sections at 9V and 12VDC. This gives the user the capacity to feed high-current pedals like Eventide, Strymon, TC Electronic Nova, four-button Line 6 modelers and many others.

The Hot Stone SMD features six isolated outputs with a total of eight available outputs that can be used at the same time. The Hot Stone SMD also has two high powered outputs, 400mA sections at 9V and 12VDC.



decibel11.com

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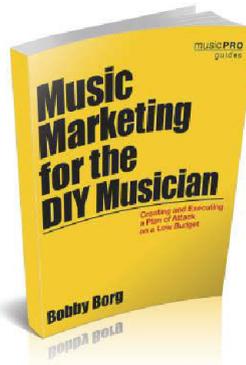
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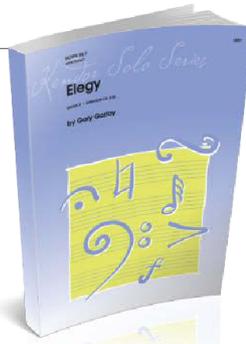
This new book is designed for serious musicians as a strategic, step-by-step guide to producing a fully customized, low-budget plan to market their music at a time when new technologies make it possible to attract attention independently and leverage their own careers. Written in a conversational tone with samples, examples, expert Q&A, and graphics, *Music Marketing for the DIY Musician* book is the culmination of Bobby Borg's 25 years in the trenches as a musician and entrepreneur. The goal is to help musical artists take control of their own destiny, save time and money, and eventually draw the full attention of top music industry professionals. Retail: \$29.99.



halleonardbooks.com

"Elegy" by Gary Gazlay from Kendor Music

Written as a tribute to the composer's parents, this Grade 2 original for horn features an expressive melody that's expanded through a series of simple variations marked by rallentandos. A piano interlude after the opening thematic statement allows adequate resting time for young performers. Duration ca. 2:30. Retail: \$7.50



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reunionblues.com

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AIM Gifts' new Music Gifts Catalog contains thousands of profitable music gift accessories with hundreds of new music gifts added, including everything from air fresheners to zebra-striped tote bags. These gifts sell year-round, but offer many options for the holidays.



aimgifts.com

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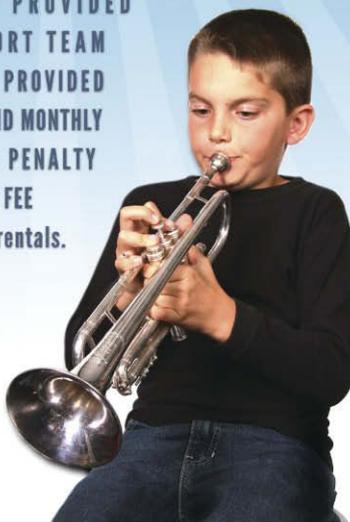
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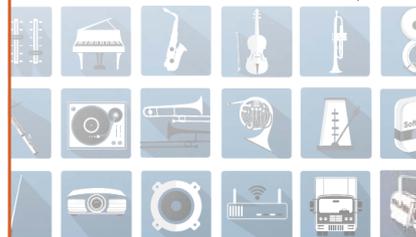
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a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)	10,298	10,273
b. Legitimate Paid and Requested Distribution (By mail and outside the mail)	7,917	8,196
c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Sum of 15b(1), (2), (3), and (4))	7,971	8,252
d. Non-Requester Distribution (By mail and outside the mail)	0	0
e. Total Non-Requester Distribution (Sum of 15d(1), (2), (3) and (4))	2,217	1,907
f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and e)	10,188	10,159
g. Copies not Distributed (See Instructions to Publishers #4, page #3)	110	114
h. Total (Sum of 15f and g)	10,298	10,273
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b. Total Requested and Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Requested/Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	9,101	9,422
c. Total Requested Copy Distribution (Line 15c) + Requested/Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	11,318	11,329
d. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Both Print & Electronic Copies) (16a divided by 15c * 100)	80.4%	83.2%

17. Publication of Statement of Ownership for a Requester Publication is required and will be printed on the _____, _____, 2014, issue of this publication.

18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner: Terry Lowe, Publisher, 8/1/14

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Haliun Pianos	15	haliun-pianos.com	Visual Sound	C4	visualsound.net
Hamilton Stands Inc.	14	hamiltonstands.com	W.D. Music Products Inc.	42	wdmusic.com



By Dan Daley

Retail is Ready for Its Close-Up

Marshall McLuhan's famous dictum, "The medium is the message," rings as true for retail as it does for media. While the Internet-era nostrum that "content is king" remains plenty valid, the package that content comes in has proven at least tantamount in value. Transpose "inventory" for "content" and we're talking about store design. At a time when shopping has become an "experience" instead of simply a gerund, the store has to become a destination rather than a mere repository of stuff.

Design In Mind

The importance of store design is clear from a few recent examples. The Apple Store is the iconic manifestation of the destination store, so much so that the store's distinctive retail layout – dazzlingly illuminated white walls

cossetting long, spare product display tables that double as workbenches for the hipster-garbed staff as they demystify your iPhone for you – has been granted trademark status by both the U.S. Patent Office (in 2013) and the European Court of Justice (the E.U.'s version of the Supreme Court).

Two other companies' stores have not fared as well. Radio Shack, which saw its stock price fall to a stomach-turning 63 cents over the summer, has been touting a handful of redesigned stores as evidence of a prospective turnaround. But these new shops, larger than the typically tiny Radio Shack outlet and freed from their usual dingy carpeting and malaria-toned fluorescent lighting, number only 125 to date, a drop in the bucket compared to the 4,000 stores the chain still operates. It's that overwhelming mass that more than anything reinforces Radio Shack's perceptual presence in the market. (The irony is that Apple founder Steve Jobs used to shop at Radio Shack for diodes and transistors when he was building his first devices.)

Then there's Sears, once the largest retailer and employer in America, now reduced to the point where its own CEO acknowledges that consumers come to use its parking lots without ever entering the doors. Sears' stores increasingly look worse than the K-Marts they bought in 2004 ago to extend their reach into down-market retail, and after posting its ninth-straight losing quarter this year, it's unrealistic to expect the giant retailer to invest

much more into them. Retail analyst Brian Sozzi told CNN Money that, "Sears becomes more irrelevant by the day." He says that the company's unwillingness to invest in their stores has left them antiquated.

Fashion Sense

Both of these companies are finding that their store designs have become millstones around their corporate necks, reinforcing images they desperately need to refresh. In the opposite direction is Guitar Center's new Times Square location, 28,000 square feet that's almost as brightly lit as the surrounding neighborhood, and whose

video wall helps it blend into the visual cacophony of what's become New York's biggest pedestrian mall (and home to a confusingly large array of cigarette-smoking Elmos). GC went to the well for the store's design – 8

“The traditional musty neighborhood store is on its way out.”

Inc. has worked on Apple's stores as well as emporia for Virgin, Nike, Coach, and other upscale brands. And like many of the fashion houses that line the better avenues of creative-class cities like San Francisco, London, Tokyo, and Beijing (where 8 Inc. maintains offices), the contents of those stores are framed by the environment that the consumer experiences them in. In the right kind of place, one may want to buy a Stratocaster even if one can barely play the radio, much less a musical instrument. Looked at another way, a music store like this is an extension of why Fender sells clothing and whiskey glasses.

The music store of the future isn't necessarily something out of a Philip K. Dick novel and won't inevitably require Bain Capital bucks, but the traditional musty neighborhood store is on its way out. Plenty of music retailers have already gotten that message, modernizing stores and in some cases paying attention to the growing body of science about retail store design, which comprises psychology as well as architecture, anthropology as well as industrial design. It may in fact be headed for that strange tipping point where brand consultants present an invoice with six zeros in it for putting a period in between "music" and "store," making the generic music emporium into a sui generis "music.store" destination. (All letters must also be lower case, demonstrating a capacity for self-referential irony.) But GC's new Manhattan flagship serves to remind that when it comes to retail, the medium is indeed the message. **MMR**

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