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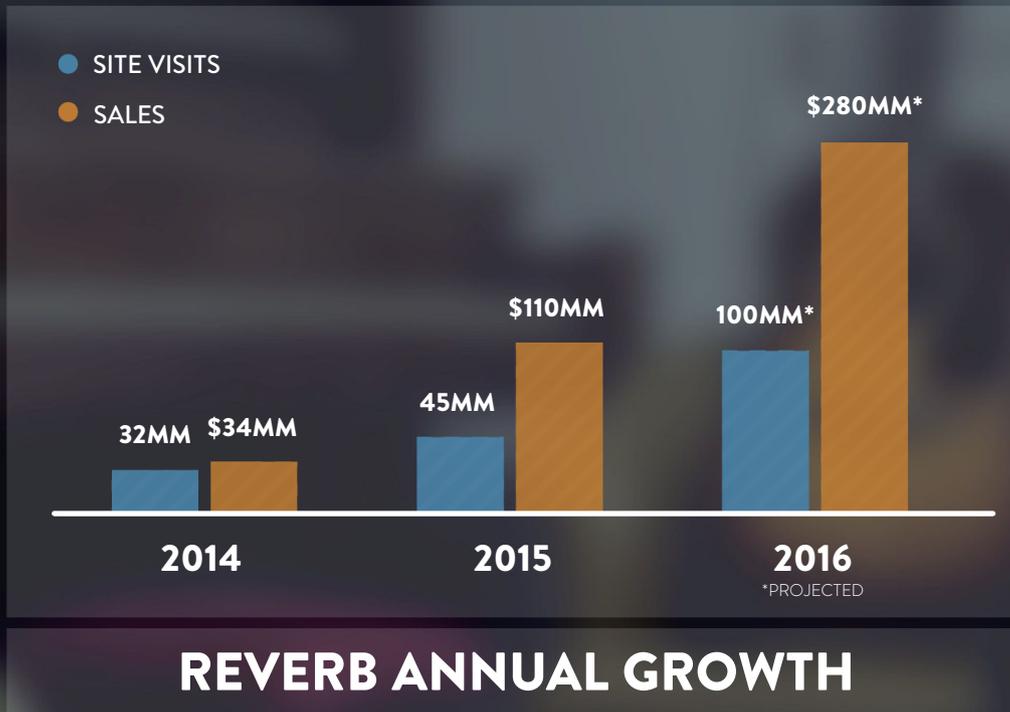
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Getting Roasted

Every spring for the past few years, *MMR* has been profiling folks in MI – on both the retail and supply sides of the equation – who are embracing and advancing “green” initiatives and developing technologies. It’s a feel-good, “fluff” type of story, in some respects, sure, but also shines a light on a truly important issue. Whatever your own personal politics, you can’t consider it a “bad” thing when companies and individuals find ways to *not* pollute the air or water, or contribute to destruction of the ozone layer, et cetera. Right?

So it was with some interest that I read a recent article by Rod Adams in *Forbes* outlining how renowned astrophysicist Frank Shu is now exploring ways in which one might produce ample energy for use by human society while also reducing and controlling atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations via “supertorrefaction.”

Any acoustic guitar retailer or builder likely is very familiar with what torrefaction is, but a brief primer for the uninitiated: Over the past decade or so, a growing number of suppliers have been taking advantage of a particular technique most commonly used in the treatment of oak wood flooring and charcoal manufacturing in order to achieve the dry, light, and stiff wood ideal for acoustic guitars. The process – torrefaction – involves “roasting” wood in the absence of oxygen and thereby removing volatiles and water, resulting in acoustic guitar tops that approximate the molecular composition (and therefore tone) of guitars that have been aged for decades. Vintage acoustic tone – right out of the box! Amazing, right? The process has been in use even longer by certain electric guitar builders in order to achieve necks that are more solid, lighter, and less impacted by changes in humidity and temperature.

Anyway... as the *Forbes* article explains, Shu’s supertorrefaction involves submerging, “wood chips or other forms of shredded biomass into a bath of molten salts – NaOAc/KOAc for example – that is held at an average temperature of 450° C... Shu’s team has been experimenting and refining their process equipment using Leucaena as a raw material source. Leucaena is a woody, nitrogen-fixing bush that is native to Mexico, but is an invasive species that has overrun areas of southeast Asia in a manner similar to the way that kudzu has smothered parts of the U.S. Southeast.”

So, in essence: by employing a (highly) modified form of a process already in place and being used by, among others, acoustic and electric guitar suppliers, we might be able – in the not too distant future – to harvest “nuisance plants,” wood, hay, or even straight-up garbage and create virtually unlimited energy for human use while not only not adding to carbon emissions, but actually helping to reduce them. Pretty wild.

And, no, none of this is necessarily a direct byproduct of any efforts on the parts of individuals in the MI industry. But luthiers and guitar suppliers had the notion to “repurpose” the existing process of torrefaction and the same innovative and groundbreaking mindset is clearly at work amongst Shu and his team.

Original ideas beget additional innovation. No word yet (that I’ve been able to find) as to whether or not Frank Shu is a closet six-string fanatic in his spare time, but regardless... Cool stuff!



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32nd Annual NAMM TEC Awards Nominees Announced

The NAMM Foundation has announced nominees for its 32nd Annual NAMM Technical Excellence & Creativity Awards in the categories of Outstanding Technical and Creative Achievement.

Stand-up comedian and actor Sinbad will return for his third straight year as host. The NAMM TEC Awards are bestowed annually in celebration of the pro audio community by recognizing the individuals, companies and technical innovations behind today's sound recordings, live sound, films, television, and video games.

More than 900 products and projects were considered during the highly-competitive nomination process. This year's Outstanding Technical Achievement Nominees were chosen across twenty-three categories and include selections in two new categories: Audio Education Technology and DJ Production Technology - Hardware/Software.

Represented in many of the nominations for the 2017 show are the creators of more compact and mobile products that reflect the demands of an increasing number of independent and home studio musicians.

Examples in the DJ world include American Audio's VMS5 Controller, which is both portable and compact with an all-in-one Midi Controller (DJ Production Technology - Hardware/Software); double-nominee Moog Music for their Model 15 App - a bonus for on-the-road creativity as the first Moog modular synthesizer and synthesis educational tool created exclusively for iPad and other Apple® devices (Audio Apps & Hardware/Peripherals for Smartphones/Tablets); Blue Microphones' Bottle Mic Locker that offers studio musicians the flexibility and option of layering tracks with different capsules to find the right sound (Microphones - Recording); the Korg Minilogue (Music Instrument Hardware), which is a 37 slim-key fully programmable analog polyphonic synthesizer, reflecting yet another innovative product that helps fuel the 19.9% growth in total unit volume among analog synths in the last five years. Nominees will be recognized in an additional nineteen categories that range

from Wireless Technology to Musical Instrument Amplification & Effects, Computer Audio Hardware and beyond.

"What makes all of the TEC Award nominees so special to us at NAMM is the fact that these results represent the voice of the professionals who are out in the field interfacing with the gear on a daily basis," said Joe Lamond, president & CEO of NAMM. "And before we know it, we'll all be together at the NAMM Show, where the TEC Awards represent the annual 'family reunion' of the world's most technically-intuitive audio and recording inventors and developers. The incredible energy and passion these talented teams bring to our industry and to the world of music-making is simply priceless and it is gratifying to honor them for their contributions."

Eight categories for Outstanding Creative Achievement represent household artists and projects that have long been embraced by the culture at large. They include multi-Platinum recordings by artists Adele (Adele Live 2016 for Tour & Event Sound Production) and Paul McCartney for the One on One Tour in the same category. "Downton Abbey" and "Game of Thrones" and others will battle it out for a Television Sound Production award. Film & Sound Production, Singles Recording Production, Interactive Entertainment (a growing sector), Remote Production, and Sound Design categories will also be awarded. Prior to the show, a Les Paul honoree and Hall of Fame inductee will also be announced.

Voting will begin in November. In total, winners from 31 categories will be selected from the 179 nominees by industry professionals across major music, sound and game audio associations, along with pro audio-focused media groups.

The Saturday, January 21 event begins with a VIP-only reception at 6PM, followed by the awards ceremony at 7PM, held in the Hilton Anaheim Hotel's Pacific Ballroom. Tickets can be purchased on site or in advance here for \$50 (General Admission) or \$175 (VIP). The show will be available via a live event web stream during the NAMM Show.



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GC Names Truesdale Chairman of the Board of Directors



Guitar Center has announced the appointment of retail veteran Tony Truesdale as chairman of the Board of Directors. The current chairman, Norman Axelrod, will remain as member of the board.

Truesdale previously was CEO of Vitamin Shoppe, Inc., a national multi-channel specialty retailer of nutritional products, before his retirement in 2015. During his time at Vitamin Shoppe, Truesdale helped drive long-

term growth, increase EBITDA and grow the number of retail stores from 300 to 800 nationwide. He also was instrumental in taking the company public in late 2009.

Prior to his time at Vitamin Shoppe, Truesdale worked for PetSmart from 1999-2006 in various marketing and merchandising roles and prior to that served for 20 years in senior management, operating and merchandising roles at various supermarkets in England and the United States.

"We are pleased to have Tony as our new Chairman," said Ron Japinga, president and chief executive officer of Guitar Center. "With his 30 years of experience in retail, we look forward to the major contributions Tony will make to help us achieve our goals and grow our business."

"I am excited to assume the role of Chairman of the Board of Directors for Guitar Center," said Truesdale. "Guitar Center is well-positioned to continue its growth, and I am looking forward to working with the team as it continues to build the retail and online businesses."

New Rosewood Proposals at Conference of the Parties



The 17th Conference of the Parties (CoP) of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) took place September 24 in Johannesburg, South Africa. Through a partnership with the League of American Orchestras, NAMM advocated for issues of potential impact to the music products industry.

Included on the agenda were discussions to further restrict the sales of products containing elephant ivory, adding dozens of additional rosewood (*dalbergia*) species to the treaty's Appendix II and streamlining the rules for international travel with musical instruments, which were initially discussed at the last CoP when the concept of a musical instrument passport was approved.

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PROone
SAXOPHONES

Redesigning a musical instrument is a daunting and delicate challenge. Peter Ponzol has been designing saxophones for more than three decades, in addition to being a well-traveled and experienced player. Very few people have Peter's understanding of the design principles of the instrument, and the Antigua Pro-One is the ultimate expression of his concepts. As Peter says, "This collaboration finally gets a lifetime of ideas out of my head and into reality."

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New Rosewood Proposals at Conference of the Parties

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The rosewood proposal presents the most significant challenge for the music products industry. Adding species to Appendix II would require imports and exports of instruments containing rosewood to be accompanied by permits issued by the exporting country. Currently, the 50-plus rosewood species listed on Appendix

II are annotated with an exemption for finished products. NAMM will continue to advocate for such an exemption if all rosewood species are added to Appendix II.

NAMM will also be closely watching the elephant ivory discussion in order to preserve the exemption for most musical instruments contained in rules issued in June

by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service pertaining to domestic interstate transactions.

In cooperation with the League of American Orchestras, NAMM co-sponsored a reception for the more than 3,000 delegates attending this international gathering and provide information on key issues along with ongoing concerns for safe-guarding ALL natural resources.

NAMM monitors and advocates for regulatory compliance issues that impact the music products industry including materials content requirements, musician's travel and wood import. NAMM members are encouraged to follow and stay informed.

Roli Acquires FXpansion



Roland Lamb, founder and CEO of ROLI (third from left), chats with Angus Hewlett, Skot McDonald, and Rhiannon Bankston-Thomas, the founders of FXpansion and new ROLI team members.

Roli, maker of Seaboard Rise, announced the purchased of fellow London-based plugin company FXpansion on September 1.

While Roli is still comparatively new to studios, FXpansion has 15 years of experience developing plugins, and the potential exists for Roli to become an even more significant player in this particular field.

As Roli put it in the official company release: "Big news! We've acquired FXpansion, adding brilliant software instruments and brilliant thinkers to our fast-growing family of people and products. We're very excited to develop the instruments of the future under one roof."

Although nothing will immediately change for the Seaboard RISE and Seaboard GRAND, users will feel the benefits of FXpansion in coming months and years. The FXpansion team's expertise is now part of ROLI, and they'll accelerate development of hardware-software instruments that are redefining musical expression.

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Chauvet Opens Larger Showroom In Mexico

Responding to the rapidly increasing demand for its lighting and trussing products in Mexico, Chauvet has opened a new office, warehouse, service center and showroom in Lerma, just west of the nation's capital.

Located close to major highway and rail transit channels, the spacious new facility will house an extensive inventory of Chauvet Professional, ILUMINARC and Chauvet DJ lighting fixtures, as well as from the company's TRUSST division.

"The new facility in Lerma represents an important step in our global expansion plans," said Albert Chauvet, CEO of Chauvet. "Working closely with our network of dealers and distributors, Chauvet has been fortunate to build up a very loyal following among Mexican customers for our professional, architectural and DJ products. By expanding our capabilities to sell and service our wide range of products, the new facility will allow us to grow even further and take our Mexican business to the next level."

Among the many enhanced features that distinguish Chauvet's new Mexican home office from the old facility that it replaced is a greatly expanded showroom. Far larger than its predecessor, the new showroom will afford more

and better opportunities to demo the company's lighting fixtures and LED video panels.

"The new showroom should be a great sales and educational tool for our team as well as for our distributors and dealers," said Stéphane Gressier, international sales director of Chauvet. "In lighting there is no substitute for actually seeing in person how a fixture performs, so we will be encouraging our customers to bring their customers to our expanded showroom."

For Jaime Friedstadt, Chauvet's director of business development Hispanic markets, the home office relocation reflects the company's commitment to serving the Mexican market. "Chauvet has established deep roots in Mexico, and this office shows that we intend to make them even deeper," he said. "We are in Mexico for the long run."



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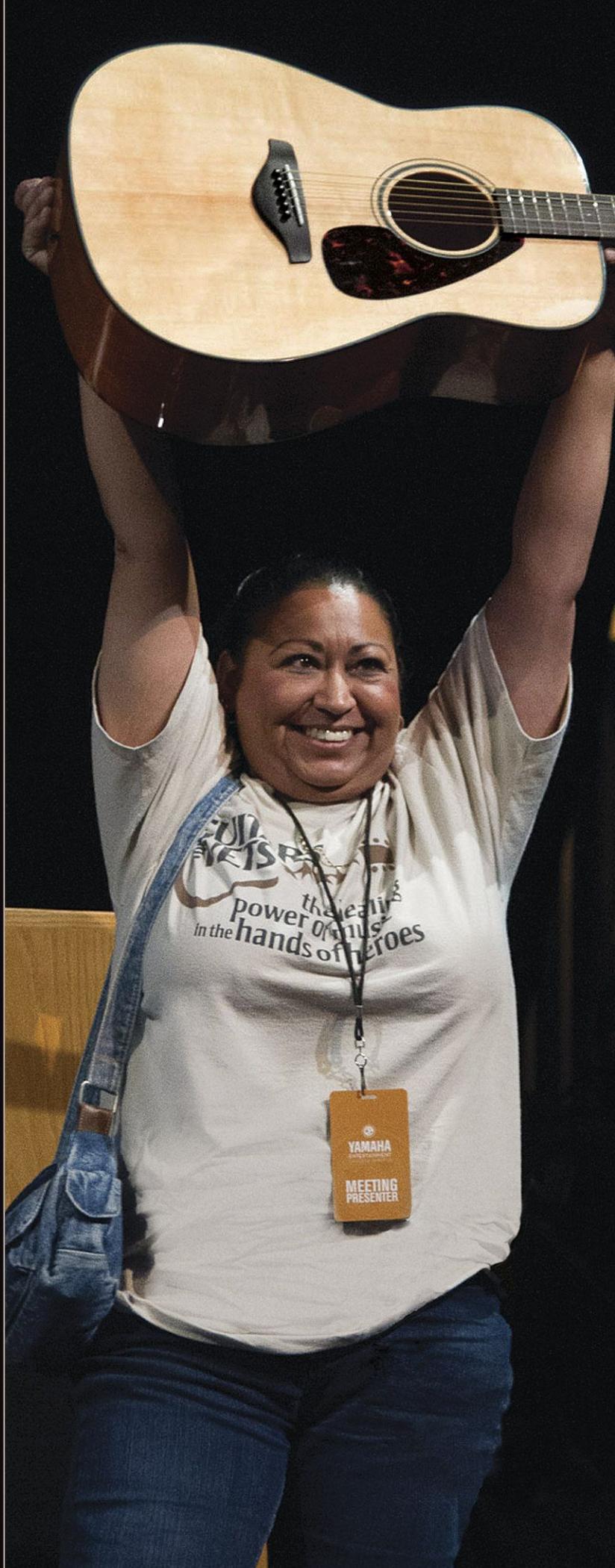
— For Community Involvement —

Every society has members who face unfortunate circumstances. Yamaha employees are dedicated to helping them overcome their challenges, so we support organizations like Guitars for Vets, with its mission of spreading the healing power of music. Veteran Nancy Ruiz (at right) has become an enthusiastic musician as a result. Since performing with other vets, despite knowing how to play only a G chord, her musical ability – and outlook on life – have improved immeasurably. She's even become a Guitars for Vets volunteer. Through our Yamaha Cares initiative, we hope to help and inspire people like Nancy and bring harmony to the world.



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Supplier Scene

Casio Names Dallas Piano Gallery as 2016 Grand Hybrid Dealer of The Year

Casio America, Inc., has honored Bob Rosenthal, owner of the Dallas Piano Gallery, with the Casio 2016 Digital Piano Dealer of the Year Award. This award recognizes one outstanding Casio dealer for its exceptional sales achievements for Grand Hybrid Pianos, as well as its continued advocacy and support for the digital piano industry overall.

Bob Rosenthal has been a veteran of the electronic musical instrument industry for over 41 years. He opened the Dallas Piano Gallery in 1998 and the store currently carries the largest selection of quality, affordable pianos in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, with each piano line being carefully selected because of the unique characteristics it offers. In the case of Casio's Grand Hybrid piano line, every customer that visits the Dallas Piano Gallery receives a demo of the instrument in the store's specially-designed CELVIANO room. Mr. Rosenthal is a staunch believer in the future of the hybrid piano and, in particular, its relevance to the millennial generation.

casiomusicgear.com



Bob Rosenthal, owner of the Dallas Piano Gallery, and recipient of the Casio 2016 Digital Piano Dealer of the Year Award.

Chauvet Creates Worship Environment in Former Outlet Store

StoneBridge Christian Church opened their first permanent off-site campus in a single-story building in suburban Omaha—previously a Wonder Bread Outlet store and Hallmark gift shop. The CCI Solutions team transformed the former store with help from Chauvet Professional Ovation, Rogue and COLORdash fixtures.



In keeping with a user-friendly goal, the CCI team specified 11 Rogue R1 Washes for the new church campus. Although the Rogue units are capable of fast pan and tilt movements, they are used primarily as static washes at the new campus. "The ability for live movement from the Rogues is desired and appreciated," said Mike Sessler, CCI Solutions project manager at StoneBridge. "However, the big driver of the R1 Washes is to provide flexible, easy-to-aim light, so volunteers don't have to get a ladder out to re-aim lights every week."

The CCI team flew five of the Rogue R1 Washes on upstage truss to backwash the stage, while the remaining six are evenly split between two overhead truss structures on either side of the stage. From these positions, the RGBW moving LED fixtures provide the stage with a wide array of rich color washes to support the varying elements of worship services.

Added stage color is provided by seven COLORdash Batten-Quad 12 RGBA linear wash fixtures that are positioned on the deck and are used to wash walls and scenic elements. "The colors we get from the Rogues and COLORdash fixtures really warm up the room and reflect the mood of services," said Sessler. "The color makes it feel like church, not a former store."

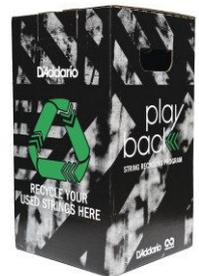
Stage lighting that makes it easy for worshipper to see and follow the activities on stage is another key contributor to creating a genuine church environment at the StoneBridge campus. The CCI team relied on the soft, flat field of the Ovation F-95WW Fresnel to achieve this level of stage lighting. A total of seven of the LED Fresnels were flown on truss just beyond the stage apron. The wide zoom range of 21°-83° and 16-bit dimming of these units have allowed the church's volunteer staff to create optimal stage lighting for a variety of different activities.

chauvetlighting.com
ccisolutions.com

D'Addario Announced Official String Sponsorship at the Lockn' Festival

D'Addario was the official string sponsor of this year's Lockn' Festival held this past August 28 in Arrington, Virginia.

As a part of the sponsorship, D'Addario teamed up with Lockn' to request the artists and musicians to save all their used strings for the month leading up to the festival deposit them in one of the D'Addario Playback string recycling containers located throughout the backstage area. D'Addario artists participating in the festival as well as this initiative include Umphrey's McGee, MMJ, Moon Taxi, Gary Clark Jr, and more.



D'Addario has been a pioneer in sustainability for decades. From environmentally responsible packaging to a tree re-planting program, D'Addario is continuing their environmental commitment in 2016, with Playback, a safe and independent way to recycle and upcycle instrument strings.

Other events where D'Addario has partnered with this initiative, and had string recycling bins available, include this year's Bonnaroo, Telluride, and WXPn's XPoNential Music Festival.

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Sweetwater Settles Copyright Infringement Suit with Hello Music

Sweetwater Sound, Inc. has settled its trademark infringement lawsuit against Hello Music.

In the lawsuit, which was filed earlier this year, Sweetwater alleged that Hello Music illegally copied Sweetwater's online content, including product information and specifications, and posted them on the Hello Music website in order to promote the sale of audio technology and musical instruments. Sweetwater insisted that this abuse was blatant and damaging to its trademark and brand. A number of Hello Music pages even contained the word "Sweetwater." All of this content has now been removed from Hello Music's website.

Sweetwater founder and president Chuck Surack remarked, "I regret having to take legal action, but the abuse was blatant. Our website was the first in the industry and its content is the product of years of hard work on the part of many people here at Sweetwater. I had to act to protect that content as well as the Sweetwater brand. My hope is that others will now think twice before they attempt to infringe on our brand or make unauthorized use of our content."



In the settlement agreement, Hello Music admits and acknowledges that: "its online e-store site at hellomusic.com contained select content, including but not limited to approximately 50 product descriptions that was displayed to the public." The agreement goes on to say, "Hello Music did so without permission or authorization from Sweetwater."

Hello Music also agreed to pay monetary damages to Sweetwater for its acts of trademark infringement and admits that it "could have been, and will be in the future, more diligent about monitoring and protecting against unauthorized use of others' trademarked or copyrighted materials in content it posts to its website."

sweetwater.com

TMP-Pro Adds Roland Professional Audio/Visual to its Pro Line Card

TMP-Pro announced an exclusive distribution partnership with Roland Professional A/V. TMP-Pro specialists' are trained to allow them to guide their clients through Roland's entire line of A/V products, from the multi-channel V-Series Digital Video Switchers to the M-Series Digital Mixing Consoles.

"By adding Roland Video and Professional Audio products to our line card, we can now offer our clients a solution that addresses both the video and audio needs so often associated with a project. Roland has long been a leader in the industry by providing reliable solutions to its clients and at an affordable price," says TMP's Gene Mulcahy, Director of Pro Audio Products. "We welcome Roland to the TMP-Pro family and look forward to successful future together."

"We are very excited to welcome TMP-Pro as a partner for Ro-



land's Professional A/V products. TMP Pro's knowledgeable sales staff and excellent customer service offer a great addition to the Roland Pro A/V team." -Jeremy Engel, national sales manager, Roland Professional A/V

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Whirlwind's IMP 2 Direct Box: More than a Million Units Sold

Whirlwind USA, "the company that connects everything," reports that unit sales of its IMP 2 Direct Box, launched in 1977, exceeded the million mark in unit sales.

"In 1975, when the company created the first commercial direct box, we didn't realize we were creating an industry," said Will Young, Whirlwind's head of marketing and artist relations. "The IMP 2, designed in 1977, became the industry standard in passive direct boxes right out of the gate. This DI box is not our flashiest and feature-filled DI by any stretch, but it has stood the test of time, and can still be found everywhere from small clubs, to churches, to giant stadium productions. A million units later, this tireless workhorse is still hand-built the way it was when we first invented it."

The IMP 2 features 1/4" parallel wired in/out jacks, an XLR output, ground lift switch to help isolate hum and buzz and a tough metal enclosure. It also uses Whirlwind's TRHL transformer, which is riveted, not glued, to the chassis. whirlwindusa.com



The "Q Series" from S.E. Shires Co.

Through the merger with its new parent company, Eastman Music Company, S.E. Shires has developed a more affordable class of professional brass instruments, named "Q Series" after Eastman founder Qian Ni. These instruments represent the philosophy of Eastman to produce the finest musical instruments at every price point and embody the reputation of Shires: to produce the highest quality hand crafted instruments for every player.

"We understand not every musician may be ready for a Shires custom instrument or may find those costs prohibitive," says S.E. Shires founder Stephen Shires, "so the development of the Q Series with Eastman allows the best aspects of our custom instruments to be at a very affordable price; certainly worthy of the Shires name."

S.E. Shires introduced the following Q Series Trumpets and Tenor and Bass Trombones: Bb Trumpets – TRQ10S; Large-Bore Tenor Trombones – TBQ30YR, TBQ30GR, TBQ30YA, TBQ30GA; F/Gb Rotary Valve Bass Trombone – TBQ36YR and TBQ36GR.

The Q Series instruments are set for a fall 2016 release and will be available at S.E. Shires authorized dealers.

seshires.com













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Evans Drumheads Announces Exclusive OEM Partnership with SJC Custom Drums

D'Addario announced that SJC Custom Drums will now exclusively use Evans Drumheads on all their custom-made drum kits shipping from their factory.

SJC Custom Drums was established in 2000. With over a decade of experience and 1,700 artists, SJC Drums offers man options, each kit is custom made to the customer specifications. "SJC" stands for Scott J. Ciprari, co-founder of SJC Drums.

SJC will officially use Evans drumheads exclusively on all of their custom kits, namely Evans' best-selling EMAD and G2 models, along with their newly launched Calfone drumheads.

"SJC is clearly one of the leaders in custom drums," Sergio Bonsignore says, percussion product specialist for Evans at D'Addario. "Positioned as a first-class brand, they are consistently innovating and in high-demand with drummers all over the world. They require a premium drumhead that allows their drums to reach their fullest potential straight out of the box. With their business steadily growing, a partner that can help them turn around custom projects quickly is an absolute necessity, and we are proud to support them and drummers alike."

D'Addario artists who have SJC custom kits include Jay Weinberg (Slipknot), Matt Nichols (Bring Me The Horizon), Jake Bundrick (Mayday Parade), Dan Searle (Architects), and Conor Sullivan (Ice Nine Kills), among many others.

evansdrumheads.com



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MMR GLOBAL



by **Ronnie Dungan**

Musik Meyer Adds Newly Expanded U.K. Brass Specialist

Germany's Musik Meyer has taken on distribution of the newly enlarged Geneva Group's wind instrument range in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and Poland following Geneva's acquisition of Czech manufacturer, Amati.

The purchase of Amati has enabled Geneva to add several new brand names to its Group portfolio which now includes Geneva Instruments, Amati-Denak, VF Cerveny, Oldroyd Cardinal, Blow Monkey Saxophones, Boosey & Hawkes Musical Instruments and Verbier Mouthpieces.



Tim Oldroyd, founder and CEO of Geneva, said: "We started buying parts from Amati-Denak around eight years ago and we developed an outstanding link together, which eventually saw them build and finish our Geneva Instruments. We were keen to make the link more permanent and have now done that with the purchase.

"Amati has fantastic workers with wonderful skills allied to a great work ethic, determination and passion for the brands they produce. This is a world class company in Kraslice with talent that has been passed down through generations."

Founded by Oldroyd in 2000, Geneva exports to Europe and the US and supports the U.K.'s National Brass Band championships at the Royal Albert Hall and also the German 3BA Concert Band and several brass band competitions across Europe.

New Headquarters for BBICO

The British Band Instrument Company (BBICO) has relocated to expanded premises in Edgware.

The new facility will house its warehousing, sales, marketing and administration operations.

Since 2008, the HQ has been located in Berkeley House, Edgware with the warehousing nearby in a separate facility. As the brand portfolio and customer base of BBICO has increased, so has the warehousing and staff required to support a network of foreign distributors and government departments. The new combined office and warehousing facility will increase productivity and promote continued growth, said the firm, which is celebrating ten years in business this year.

Alun Hughes, BBICO managing direc-



tor, said: "We are delighted to be able to combine our warehouse and office facilities at the same location in Edgware. This is part of our continuing quest for efficiency and improvement in customer service."

The new company address is: British Band Instrument Company, 105 High Street, Edgware, HA8 7DB. Tel: 020 8381 3101

Reflecting on the Growth of Reverb.com

I'm not usually one for sitting on a fence on many subjects. Which can sometimes be interpreted as being close-minded or opinionated. It's neither of those, it's more a feeling that you need to decide which side you're on in life. Are you in or out? Tea or coffee? Spurs or Arsenal? Trump or decency?

And as a journalist, what use are you if you don't have an opinion on matters?

But when it comes to reverb.com I know that some can't really decide whether it's a good or bad thing for the market. Maybe it's both. On the one hand it offers perhaps the slickest, best-presented, best-researched online presence in the market and on the other some worry that an 'eBay for musicians' is not going to do a lot of good for retailers, online or on the street, who are trying to make a living selling brand new gear.

I was never the sort of Luddite who bemoaned the presence of online retailing in MI. It has been a natural and logical progression and the best retailers

have grasped the nettle and got on with it in their own way, with varying degrees of success. Calls to action about online retailing were daft.

Thomann was/is held to be enemy within by some small to medium sized retailers in Europe. But which market doesn't have at least one dominating presence? It's just the reality.

The scale of Reverb's ambition is obvious given its recent international expansion, so unless it over-extends its reach too quickly, it's likely that it is here to stay. That being the case, I think sensible dealers would do well to take a long hard look at what it can offer in terms of additional used sales.

I like it. It does a great job of talking to consumers and making them better enthused and informed. But if it eats into sales of new gear, it's not good for dealers or manufacturers. That being the case, there's no reason why some of that second-hand gear it sells shouldn't be yours. Like it or no, I guess it's a case of if you can't beat 'em....

Bandlab Acquires Accessories Firm Mono

BandLab, the Singapore-based social music-making platform, has acquired Mono Creators, a San Francisco-based design studio that creates high-end instrument cases, straps and accessories for gigging musicians.

BandLab and Mono will now execute an integrated marketing and product development strategy including shared stand space at the next NAMM Show in Anaheim.

Mono is a San Francisco-based musical instruments accessories brand founded by designer Daniel Kushner, that makes innovative instrument cases and accessories used by bands ranging from The Roots, Faith No More, Death Cab for Cutie, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Metallica, The Rolling Stones, Mastodon, Phantogram, Black Sabbath and others.

"Mono is a brand that I've admired since they arrived on the music scene", said Meng Ru Kuok, BandLab's CEO / co-founder. "We know the Mono business well as we've already been working with Mono for four years, through Swee Lee Music, our Asian Retail / Distribution business. I am very excited to be able



to take Mono to the next level around the world as part of BandLab. Mono's mantra of #GOPLAY is entirely in sync with BandLab's vision of serving the needs of a fast-growing community of creators—from fans to artists—in a mobile-centric world. We're excited to welcome

the Mono family into the BandLab community, to support them online and offline and continue to take a design-driven approach to the way we develop our products."

"BandLab is the perfect fit for us", said Mono founder, Daniel Kushner, "Being a successful musician today requires a completely different tool kit, and we share a vision for what those tools need to be, and now BandLab and Mono have the ability to create them together; This deal further solidifies Mono's ability to remain an innovation leader and category disruptor in the music industry long-term. As a global company, we are now actively expanding the team to further develop our existing product lines, as well as accelerating our roadmap for new product lines."

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Holy Grail Show Issues Local Woods Challenge

This year's Holy Grail Guitar Show in Berlin will have a new feature - the Local Wood Challenge.

With tropical woods becoming increasingly scarce and governed by restrictions on trade, ecological and climate considerations are coming to the fore, not only for guitar players in general, but also for the European Guitar Builders, the luthier organization behind the show.

To reflect the European Guitar Builder's commitment to sustainable and ecologically friendly instrument building

methods, the show has issued a challenge to its exhibitors - the HGGG 2016 Local Wood Challenge.

The idea behind the Challenge is for participating exhibitors to build one or more instruments using only locally grown woods. The aim is not only to demonstrate what world-class luthiers are capable of, but also to show that there are intriguing alternatives to the use of exotic and especially protected woods growing right in our own back yards.

Exhibitors are being encouraged to step outside of their normal "comfort

zone", to think outside of the box and to explore different aspects of their work in a creative and playful way. For those already using local woods it is also a chance to turn the limelight onto this special aspect of their work and for them to increase their expertise.

Participation in the Challenge is totally voluntary, and is undertaken in a spirit of innovation, curiosity and cooperation, rather than one of competition.

The instruments that exhibitors have built for the Challenge will be labeled as such during the show.

Gear4Music Half-Time Sales Up as it Readies for E.U. Exit

Gear4Music reported a jump in interim sales as it said the business was well placed to cope with the impact of the U.K.'s decision to leave the European Union thanks to its existing distribution centers on the continent and further localization.

In a trading update for the six months

to the end of August, the company said U.K. sales rose 44 per cent to £13.78m while European sales surged 169 per cent to £7.83m. Customer numbers increased to 271,000 from 187,000.

Chief executive officer Andrew Wass, said: "We are very pleased to have sustained the strong sales momentum announced on 29th July and achieved 73 per cent like-for-like revenue growth during the half year, and overall profitability in the period will be ahead of management expectations as we head into the

key second half trading period.

The company said the first two distribution hubs will increase overall capacity of the business to deliver over £100m of revenue. "This additional distribution capability will also be augmented with localization of some purchasing and merchandising functions, ensuring the business is well placed for any Brexit eventuality," Wass added.

Gear4Music is due to release its interim results for the six months to the end of August on October 18.



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JHS Expands Bohemian Range of Oil Can Instruments

JHS continues to grow its range, with the Bohemian range of 'oil can' guitars, basses and ukuleles the latest addition to its catalogue.

Designed in the U.S., and built using recycled metals, all Bohemian guitars have a hollow body with removable back panel. Using a basswood frame for increased amplification and structural integrity, the maple neck features an extended tenon design that reaches to the end of the can. This makes them much lighter than a standard guitar with exceptional balance due to the wood frame and a smaller body shape that allows increased access to the higher frets.

The brainchild of South African brothers Adam and Shaun Lee, they took their inspiration from the resourcefulness of local musicians on the streets of Johannesburg who would often build their own instruments from discarded junk. When the brothers moved to Atlanta, Georgia, Shaun began to manufacture his own instruments out of his parent's basement, and Adam helped him to supply them to the local music community.

Bohemian is also committed to building guitars sustainably by using less lumber than a traditional guitar, with the necks coming from sustainable forests or reclaimed woods, and the bodies are made partially from recycled materials. Additionally, Bohemian plants one tree with every order received through their partner, Trees for the Future, an organization dedicated to improving the livelihoods of impoverished farmers by revitaliz-

ing degraded lands.

Available in seven different designs and a variety of pickup configurations - Bohemian Ale (3 single coils) Motor Oil (2 double coils) Moonshine (2 single coils) Surf Wax (P90 style) Honey (single & double coil) TNT and Hot Sauce (2 P90 style). The U.K. price is £249.

Meanwhile, featuring six different color finishes - Electric Limeade, Surf Wax, TNT, Motor Oil Moonshine, and Hot Sauce - the Bohemian Bass guitar range retails at £269 U.K.

Finally, using the same unique construction as the guitar and bass range, Bohemian ukuleles are finished in a variety of eye-catching designs - Surf Wax, TNT, Motor Oil, Moonshine, Honey, and Hot Sauce - with increased access to the higher frets and retailing at £119.



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Photo by Joy Strotz

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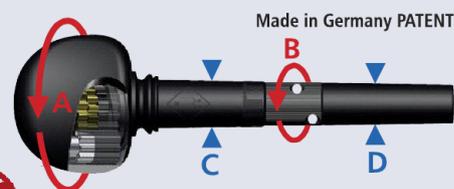
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Trade Regrets

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Trade Regrets

On September 20th, we received the following message from NAMM's Dan Del Fiorentino:



Our friends at Amro Music announced the passing of Skip Buss, who left us last night.

Skip played trumpet for several big bands on the road and in local hotel ballrooms during the great Swing Era of the 1940s. He decided to leave the road when his son was born at which time he gigged at local clubs and ballrooms at night and worked for a small music retailer by day. He joined Capitol Academy of Music in Memphis in 1955. He developed a great working knowledge of violins and soon became the store's expert. Skip was given the chance to buy the store, which he did, and he continued to run it until 1996 when the store was closed. At the time, he sold much of his violin inventory to Amro Music, where he was hired to help run the violin department.

On September 19th, industry veteran Tom Wilson passed away after a long battle with Alzheimer's. He was 83 years old. Among many other roles in MI, Wilson served as district sales manager for Yamaha in Texas.



LEGENDARY

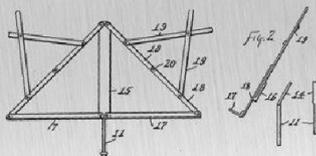
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ON THE MOVE

Reverb.com has hired **Iain Butterwick**, **Manuel Leray**, and **Nick Smethurst** as territory managers for the U.K., France, and Australia, respectively, to drive the company's growth abroad.



Iain Butterwick



Manuel Leray



Nick Smethurst

Drost joined Reverb in 2015 to expand the marketplace globally and has led the company's efforts to support multiple currencies, simplify international shipping, support multilingual customer service, and more. The new territory managers will be charged with continuing the momentum and success achieved in the past year by building brand awareness, recruiting sellers, consulting on development of new features and more in their respective territories.

In addition to establishing dedicated support in Europe and Australia, Reverb today announced the launch of its mobile app outside of North America. The app enables musicians and music lovers all over the world to discover new music gear and easily list items for sale straight from their mobile phone.

"As a global marketplace, Reverb.com is an invaluable tool for both buyers and sellers of music gear. For musicians and gear lovers, it means they can get their hands on that perfect piece of gear, regardless of where they or the instrument are located. For sellers, it means a bigger audience and global sales opportunities," said David Kalt, CEO and founder at Reverb.com.

KMC Music recently announced the appointment of industry veteran **Terri Shaw** to the position of director of sales KMC Division, JAM Industries LTD, with primary responsibility for supporting and expanding sales programs with key national accounts that include Amazon, Guitar Center, and Musician's Friend, among others, according to KMC Music vice president of Sales



James Tsaptinos, to whom she reports.

Terri Shaw joins KMC Music from SABIAN Ltd., where, over a 21-year period, she held a number of positions of increasing responsibility, including sales coordinator, U.S. national sales manager, and, most recently, North American sales manager. As North American sales manager, Shaw's key responsibilities included achieving/exceeding annual sales goals, leading and coaching the North American sales teams, direct account management for national/big box and e-commerce partners, developing and implementing regional and national sales promotional schedules, developing strategic plans to grow the SABIAN brand presence on retailer websites, as well as analyzing market conditions and opportunities and expense budget management.

Yamaha Corporation of America (YCA) has announced that **Brandon Mikkelsen** has been appointed as the company's new social media manager.



In his new role, Mikkelsen will expand the company's presence, developing and implementing strategies dedicated to bolstering online engagement of the music and audio community and enhancing customer engagement to the company's online portals. He reports to Athan Billias, director, Strategic Product Planning at YCA.

Mikkelsen served a total of 13 years at Verizon in communication and marketing roles, most recently as social media manager. Before that he was a product marketing manager for nine years, and a business sales representative. He started his professional career as a retail sales associate for Verizon.

Mikkelsen holds a master's degree in business marketing from Keller Graduate School of Management.

Korg USA has added **Nick Kwas** to their team as Korg's technology product specialist.



Kwas is a graduate of the University of Hartford and lifelong technology enthusiast with extensive experience in music tech and a passion for Korg products, music technology and music creation. He previously worked for Telefunken Microphones, and excels in creating product videos and modifying/restoring vintage synthesizers in his spare time.

Kwas will be based out of Korg USA's headquarters in Melville, New York, in ad-

dition he will travel with Korg USA Inc's national sales team to help train demonstrators across the country. Nick will also be representing Korg at various industry conventions and workshops.

Graph Tech Guitar Labs recently announced the hire of four new team members.

New customer service representative, **Justin Stadig** will be helping with any product specific questions and handling daily orders.



Justin Stadig

Jamie Bobyk is Graph Tech's new marketing and communications manager.



Jamie Bobyk

Shaun Verreault has been hired in a business development capacity. Shaun's main focus is strengthening Graph Tech's sales channels and relationships.



Shaun Verreault

Gary Lambert is another new business development hire with 40 years of guitar playing experience and 25 years of client relations, sales, and business development experience. As well, Gary will be working with new and existing customers throughout the Graph Tech sales channels.



Gary Lambert

Peter LaPlaca, president/PJLA Music Sales recently announced the expanded responsibilities of **David Hayes**, Southeast USA sales representative for Sax Dakota and Phaeton Trumpets.



Hayes will be coordinating and supervising artist relations with endorsing artists of Dakota and Phaeton. He will also be looking after and managing trade show and special events in the USA: NAMM, Midwest Band, JEN, and Atlanta Saxophone Symposium, along with other dealer and educational events. David Hayes resides in Savannah, Georgia, and has been on assignment with PJLA Music since 2011 as artist relations manager and sales representative. Hayes is an accomplished saxophone player, teacher, salesperson, and educator.

Peaksware's Gear Fisher

By Christian Wissmuller

This past summer, one of the most significant names in music publishing, Alfred Music, was acquired by Boulder, Colorado-based Peaksware, parent company of MakeMusic, among others.

MMR recently had the opportunity to speak with company CEO, Gear Fisher, about the recent developments, what it all means for the future of Alfred Music, and where he sees Peaksware going in the coming months and years.

For any of our readers not fully up to speed, can you briefly provide some background regarding both Peaksware and yourself?

The founding story goes back to 1999 when myself, Dirk Friel, and Joe Friel started a software company to help coaches and athletes train and prepare for endurance events like triathlon, running, and cycling. We created TrainingPeaks.com which was an online version of Joe's best-selling books on how to train, *The Triathletes Training Bible*, *The Cyclist's Training Bible*, et cetera. It launched as a subscription business in October 2000 and grew organically until 2007 when we received an email from a customer interested in investing. That customer was Andy Stephens of Launch Equity. Around the same time, Andy invested in MakeMusic, then a public company, and that started our relationship which exists today. Around 2007 we also created Peaksware, which was really just meant to be an umbrella which would oversee multiple companies. In 2014 Andy asked our team and I to take over running MakeMusic, essentially to re-build the company in the image of TrainingPeaks, which had seen significant growth. We eventually moved MakeMusic and TrainingPeaks underneath the Peaksware umbrella, and have now brought Alfred Music into the same fold.

My personal background is mainly rooted in technology. I graduated in 1991 from Colorado State University with a degree in Civil Engineering. After six years of working for a high-tech water resources firm, I changed careers and became a software programmer for an Internet consulting firm in 1997. The Web was exploding at this time and I learned a lot about tech, people, and business. I moved to another Internet consulting firm in 1999, and by 2001, TrainingPeaks was growing enough that I quit my day job and went full time hoping to grow TrainingPeaks into a real business.

Can you discuss how the acquisition of Alfred Music came about? What was the catalyst?



It was no secret that they faced some significant financial challenges. MakeMusic has been working with Alfred Music for over 10 years, and had developed a great relationship. As the financial challenges increased, we saw an opportunity to step in and help. Alfred Music is responsible for about 50 percent of the music used within SmartMusic, our music practice software platform, and we saw many more strategic opportunities, were we to join forces. Over the course of about 1.5 years, we put together a plan to have Alfred Music join Peaksware, and we closed the deal on July 31st.

For longtime dealers of and partners with Alfred Music, some of the big questions are: What's changing and what's going to stay the same? Of the previous primary officers and staff, who'll be sticking around long-term? Will the facilities/HQ be moving?

I greatly value our dealer network – it's one of the reasons we were so interested in Alfred Music. They have key long-term relationships with thousands of teachers, students, and parents. Given that Alfred and MakeMusic are highly focused on the academic music industry, I feel it's critical to support the dealer in the value chain to the consumer. I really don't anticipate much change from the dealer's point of view.

What are your goals for Alfred Music – and Peaksware – going forward?

We are out to build the next generation music publishing and practice platform. Our goal is to build an open platform where all publishers and composers can add their content, musicians and students have access to that content, and instructors can communicate and engage with everyone in the ecosystem. We will wrap that with the best practice and teaching tools, and truly create the world's best practice platform. It's Alfred Music's mission to help people experience the joy of making music, and MakeMusic's mission is to transform how music is taught, learned and performed, and we're going to do just that.

"I greatly value our dealer network – it's one of the reasons we were so interested in Alfred Music."



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Given the drastically changing nature of all things “print,” where do you see Alfred Music – and, really, all print music publishing houses – in a few years?

I think print has a long future ahead. Is it a growing business? Probably not. But it’s a fairly stable one in the academic market. I think it will somewhat mirror the newspaper and magazine industry and print will find a balance alongside digital music consumption. There are great use cases for print, and great use cases for digital, we’re going to have very strong offerings for both.

Are there any developments on the horizon for Alfred Music and Peaksware that you’d like to share with our readers?

We’ve had a lot going on, and now MakeMusic is in the midst of launching an all new version of SmartMusic

which is Web-based, so Chromebook schools and anyone with an Internet connection can access it via the cloud. We also just released a major upgrade to Finale and we have exciting new front-list content coming from Alfred. So, you could say we’re quite busy!

Thanks for taking the time to chat, Gear. Any final thoughts?

I’m looking forward to learning more about the industry and bringing our dream to reality. It’s a privilege to wake up every day and be part of something so many people are passionate about. We are changing how people learn, teach and play music, and I’m very proud of our team and their accomplishments so far. We have so much more to share with the world, stay tuned! **MMA**

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Home Sweet Home



Home Digital Keyboards Driving the Market in 2016 By Christian Wissmuller

Time was, nearly every family had – or aimed to have – a piano in the living-room. Upright, baby grand, or grand – it didn't matter, so long as there was a keyboard that the adults could play for sing-alongs during dinner parties and holiday gatherings, and which the kids could practice their weekly piano lessons on.

It's no question that the piano no longer holds quite as prominent a position in modern-day culture (just wait, though – it'll come around. Everything does...), but home digital keyboards offer a powerful and appealing alternative for homes that may be a little tight on available square footage or families on a budget that doesn't happily accommodate more expensive acoustic consoles.

We recently touched base with a few of the bigger names in this market segment to get a feel for what's good, what's challenging, and what's on the horizon for home digital pianos & keyboards...

For your brand, specifically, how are sales of home digital keyboards, compared to this same time in 2015?

Tom Love: Sales are very steady this year compared to last year. Our established core models, the CN, CA and CP Series, are performing well in a very competitive market. In the under \$1,500 market, we're doing very well with the ES100 and KDP90 models. And our high end digitals (\$3,000 and higher) are doing remarkably well, given the price range.

Mike Martin: Many of our products are equally suited for both situations but the majority of growth is in products that are used in the home. Products like our Privia PX-160 and our CGP-700 are perfect for the family and that would be our most typical user.

There are a percentage of users that seek our great keyboard action and portability they are also used on the stage. Another segment entirely is our Celviano Grand Hybrid which brings the best in piano technology, performance, and keyboard action as well as an elegant look to the home and this has been a dramatic area of growth for Casio.

Antonio Ferranti: 2016 has been a tremendous year for Roland Pianos. We are enjoying excellent sales growth in our piano division, compared to this time last year, and are exceeding even our own forecasts.

James Sajeve: Unit and net sales have increased from STLY. That includes all of our B1, LP, and SP models (we'll keep SV1 strictly classified as a "stage piano" here, even though it does get used in the home often).

Dane Madsen: Calendar year-to-date, our Home Digital Keyboards sell-through data shows that the MI channel is up three percent over 2015 and that Yamaha is well over that trend so we're happy with that figure.

Have you been noticing any emerging trends with these types of consoles – technological developments, materials used, size or style preferred by end-users, et cetera?

AF: At Roland we pride ourselves on always being at the cutting edge of technology and development. We are a company known for "firsts." In late 2015, we were the first brand to introduce onboard Bluetooth Audio, MIDI, and PageTurn technology in our pianos. The ability to connect our pianos with popular mobile devices has created new opportunities for unique solutions



Yamaha's CLP-545 Clavinova Traditional Digital Piano



Kawai's CS11 Classic Series Hybrid Piano

in both private and classroom teaching settings as well as live performance.

JS: As with any technology, consumers can get a lot more in a digital piano for a lot less than they'd have spent only a few years ago. Action, sound quality, increased PCM memory to drive that sound and speaker wattage are all improving at all price points. Various forms of tablet integration – both wired and wireless – are also sure to increase to provide access to the exponentially-increasing availability of music creating and teaching apps

DM: Design-wise, North Americans still prefer digital pianos that emulate the acoustic pianos in design and color. The slimmer, space-saving cabinets with lighter finishes, while popular overseas, have never achieved double-digit share in the U.S. Every manufacturer offers them, but they're mainly produced for other markets. All that said, we're selling more each year... just not that many more. Technologically, customers are interested in connecting their mobile devices to anything digital in their lives. However, many aren't sure why or what music apps can do for them yet. Right now, it's up to manufacturers to show how the user experience can be enhanced on their products with apps on a mobile device.

MM: Casio made a significant impact in the digital piano category last year with the release of our Celviano Grand Hybrid. Thanks to our collaboration with C. Bechstein we're able to deliver a digital piano that actually has a grand piano action in it complete with full length wooden keys. When customers play our Grand Hybrid the technological achievement is clear. At the same time Casio has released three digital pianos including our CGP-700 that have color touch screens. This brings the ease of use that customers expect from their phones and other devices to the musical world where they can explore hundreds of sounds, rhythms, song writing capabilities and more.

TL: There are lots of new developments in this product seg-

ment, not only from Kawai, but from notable competitors as well. It's quite interesting. As for Kawai, our Hybrid instruments continue to surge, especially the CA95 and CS11 models with their innovative Soundboard Speaker Systems.

How would you describe the demographic of the typical purchaser of a home digital keyboard in 2016?

DM: Yamaha sells digital pianos with MSRPs ranging from far below \$1,000 to well-above \$15,000 so there's a model for every type of customer at any income. Many of today's entry digital piano buyers were shopping for portable keyboards as little as 10 years ago. So we're seeing that shift as digital piano price points are lower on average today compared to that time period. Today's portable keyboard customer is often a gift buyer for a child, entry level digital pianos are going to families ready to take piano lessons more seriously, while high-end Clavinova digital pianos are being purchased by higher-income homeowners ready to double down on their family's musical investment.

JS: From a certain perspective, there really is no "type" when it comes to home digital piano consumers. Piano is such a universal instrument; an instrument that all ages and levels gravitate towards. Students, hobbyists, and professional players exist all ages. Supporting this on the more granular level, when we look at who's registering pianos, who calls about them, or who's looking at them when we're visiting retail, it's 20 – 70.

TL: Our "home" digital piano lineup spans a huge price range, from below \$1000.00 to over \$20,000.00. Thus, there is a tremendous variety of customer groups and demographics. It ranges from the quality-minded entry level buyer, to the value-minded mid-range buyer, to the luxury buyer. Sprinkled in are what I call "power user" hobbyists, plus educational institutions, churches, and professional pianists who need a digital in their apartment or condo for practicing at home.

continued on page 32



Tom Love, Kawai America



Mike Martin, Casio America, Inc.



Antonio Ferranti, Roland Corporation U.S.



James Sajeve, Korg USA



Dane Madsen, Yamaha Corporation of America



Education at The NAMM Show
 NAMM U brings a wealth of knowledge to Anaheim as retailers discover how to grow their businesses in ever-changing climates.



Note From Zach

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NAMM U Works

‘I wish I did this sooner’

I can't tell you how often we hear that from first-time NAMM U attendees. It's typically at the close of a NAMM show, and followed by, "These sessions were so relevant. This is going to make a huge difference to my business."

If you're among the retailers who've never attended a NAMM U session, there's no better time to start than at The 2017 NAMM Show. Held in Anaheim, California, from January 19-22, 2017, the education program will address the biggest opportunities, innovations and trends in music retail.

Make no mistake: NAMM U isn't theoretical. It delivers practical, real-world ideas straight from the leading experts and most successful retailers in the music products industry. You'll walk away from the show with proven tips, new approaches and

a better understanding of the current and future retail climate. In short, you'll find out how to grow your business.

Most of all, NAMM U works. Just ask the following NAMM retail members, who recently weighed in on how they've used NAMM U to improve specific areas of their businesses.

See you in Anaheim!

Zach Phillips • Director of Professional Development, NAMM

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What Your **PEERS** are Saying About **NAMM U**

Keep Your Marketing Relevant

NAMM's 2016 Dealer of the Year, **Menzie Pittman of Contemporary Music Center** (contemporarymusiccenter.com), turns to NAMM U when he needs ideas and inspiration to better market his business. "You won't find out more about social media and the latest trends anywhere else," Pittman said. "NAMM U gives us the chance to witness new and innovative ideas being implemented by top dealers. These folks are a wealth of knowledge, as is the NAMM Idea Center in general."

Improve Your Website

In the weeks following 2016 Summer NAMM, **Rand Cook**, NAMM's 2014 Dealer of the Year and co-owner of **The Candyman Strings & Things** (candymanstrings.com), improved his online operations using pointers from the opening NAMM U Breakfast Session. "After arriving back at the ol' Candyman, I followed several pieces of advice parlayed in the session, and already we are seeing positive results," Cook said. Expect even more useful ideas for improving your website at The 2017 NAMM Show.

Grow Your Lesson Program

David Woo purchased his local music store, **La Jolla Music** (lajollamusic.com), to keep it from shuttering its doors. With no previous experience in music retail, he has come to rely on NAMM U to discover the industry's best practices and maintain a successful music lesson program. "It helped propel our store from 18 to 35 teachers and 10 teaching studios to 22," Woo said. "Now I attend every NAMM Show, spending 80 percent of my time at NAMM U. I consider it to be the most valuable benefit of my membership."

Boost the Bottom Line

Michael Stryker of Spindrift Guitars (spindriftguitars.com), attended NAMM U's Retail Boot Camp with hopes of fine-tuning his store's financial practices. "We [learned] the importance of having a point-of-sale system and now use one to manage our inventory more effectively," Stryker said. "Most importantly, we learned how to invest back in our music community through lessons and smart advertising to grow our emerging brand."

Check namm.org/thenammshow as the show draws closer for a complete listing of NAMM U sessions.



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Casio's GP-500BP Celviano Digital Piano



Korg's LP-380 Digital Piano

continued from page 29

AF: The love of piano and the desire to learn to play has no limitations of age, income, or gender. Our dealer network reports growth in all of the traditional consumer demographics, from families with young children to adults following their life-long dream of playing piano.

MM: Generally speaking the typical purchaser is male, college educated, married with children in their mid 30s.

What is your brands' top-selling model?

MM: The Privia PX-160 is Casio's best selling digital piano.

TL: Unit wise, our CN35 is our top seller. Surprisingly, this is not our least expensive model; not by a long shot. But this model has an incredible feature set for a mid-priced instrument. Customers become aware of Kawai through our entry-level offerings, then gravitate to the higher quality CN25. By then, they have already purchased "a ticket into the club".

Then they see that for only a little more money, they can get into the "VIP section."

AF: Since its release, our flagship Roland LX-17 premium upright piano has been our top seller. It continues to exceed every ambitious expectation we have set, and we are challenged to keep up with the demand for this incredible instrument. Additionally, our anything-but-entry-level Roland FP-30 has kept a blistering sales pace since its release at Winter NAMM, where it won several awards.

JS: Our B1 slab and B1SP version with stand and three pedals have been doing extremely well for us since launch.

DM: The biggest dollar generators for Yamaha (and the MI Channel) are the P-115 at the lower end and the Clavinova CLP-545 at the higher-end.

Do you have any new or upcoming product introductions in this category you'd like to share with our readers?

AF: Absolutely! Roland is full speed ahead releasing the very best digital pianos for every segment of the piano market (portable, console, upright, and grand). In the grand piano market, our new GP607 combines the best of our flagship technologies with an industry-best 10-year warranty for parts and labor and a beautiful compact design that will appeal to every budget. In the portable market, look for our new FP-90 which combines our flagship technologies (modeling sound engine, hybrid wood & ivory-feel keys, and Bluetooth technology) with stage-friendly onboard mixer sliders and mic inputs. In console pianos, our RP-series, which won *MMR's* 2015 "Home Digital Piano Line of the Year," will expand with the RP501R, and an all new DP603 combines the beloved flagship technologies found in our HP-series in a best-in-class compact design that will fit any space.

TL: We're working on new ideas and

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Roland's GP607 Digital Grand Piano

new models all the time. We talk to our development partners in Japan and Europe virtually on a daily basis. All I can say now is, stay tuned for 2017.

DM: We're offering a new, low-price point just for the holiday period. The Arius YDP-103 is designed to give customers who are considering a lower-cost competitor a reason to step up to Yamaha.

JS: In addition to the new B1/B1SP, we've also released a limited edition LP-380 in a Rosewood grain black finish. Beyond those, suffice to say that Korg remains deeply invested in the digital piano category and development of new pianos is ongoing.

MM: We had 11 product introductions in 2015 and several more in 2016. I can't say much about future products announcements at the time but Casio's momentum won't be slowing down.

Lastly, what are your expectations for the home digital piano & keyboard market in the coming months?

DM: All signs are pointing to steady growth in this category. Piano is still a popular choice of instrument when a family decides to start getting children into lessons. And even as traditional as American piano buyers and teachers have been in the past, the future is clearly digital and sales trends are reflecting this fact.

JS: If the market stays on the trajectory it's been on over the last few years, we should see a continued shift toward lower-cost slabs and consoles, with increasing unit sales at those price points.

MM: I think this market will continue to grow as it has been for the last several year. The entry 88-key digital piano market is very strong and Casio is a leader in this area. The higher end of the digital piano market will also be growing. Products like our Grand Hybrid offer a solution that is very compelling over a new or used upright acoustic piano.

TL: This product segment is very mature, but innovation and new technology are beginning to stir the pot. This is a good thing, I believe. I expect to continue to see manufacturers, including Kawai, introduce new technologies and concepts in an effort to move the market in their favor.

AF: Since the announcement of four new pianos during "The Future. Redefined." our global launch event on September 9 (#909day)), we have received an outpouring of congratulations and positive feedback. The early demand and pre-orders for our brand-new instruments has been "grand," and we expect further sales growth and market expansion. **MMR**

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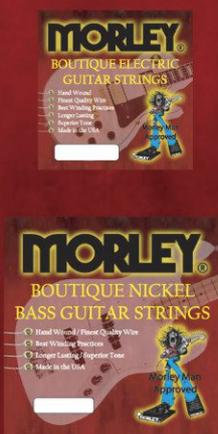
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Piano & Keyboard Sales in 2016

Things Are Looking Up – But It’s Not All Smooth Sailing

By Christian **Wissmuller**

The results from this survey – particularly the individual comments – display a disparity of opinion unlike any *MMR* dealer poll so far this year. For piano & keyboard retailers, perceptions of the state of the market are very much driven by geographic location; regional economic and education-level factors in greatly, which is not terribly surprising, given that many of the instruments in this category are very much “high end” purchases.

Some good news is that, for a segment that was hit particularly hard during the recession of a few years ago, nearly half (46.8%) of the participants in this poll (sent out to over 200 dealers) report that sales are up compared to 2015.

While Internet competition is (as is usually the case) a hot topic/complaint, it’s not limited merely to unfair tax breaks or unbeatable prices for these MI retailers. As Brendan Alviani of Family Pi-

ano Co. in Waukegan, Illinois says: “I think as consumers do more and more research online for the ‘best’ product (for everything!), they are more often demanding a brand name and are less willing to go with a quality lesser-known product.”

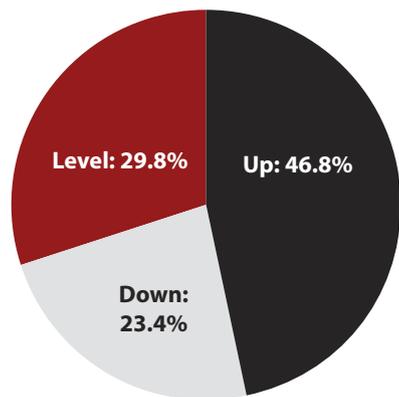
Another trend of note is increased reliance on institutional sales (“The formal relationships we build with our area schools, colleges, and universities are integral to our success,” notes West Music’s Patrick Downing).

There are plenty of bright spots being reported, so read on for more details. As Frank Baxter of Parsonfield, Maine’s PianoWorld.com (note: *not* a retailer) observed in a related conversation recently: “No doubt the piano/keyboard business is tougher right now, heck most business is tough now, but it can be done with hard work and belief.”

Compared to this time in 2015, piano & keyboard sales for your store are:

“We are selling as many units to in-store customers as 2015, if not more. But in 2016 we have intentionally had a major growth in our institutional sales.”

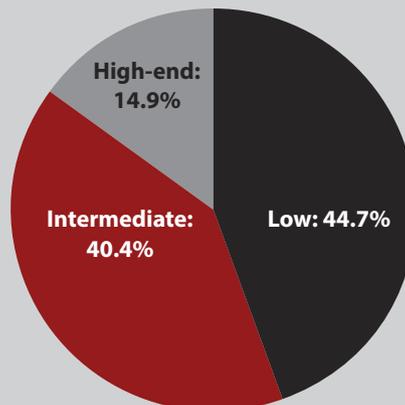
Chris Teesdale
Willis Music Company
Lexington, Kentucky



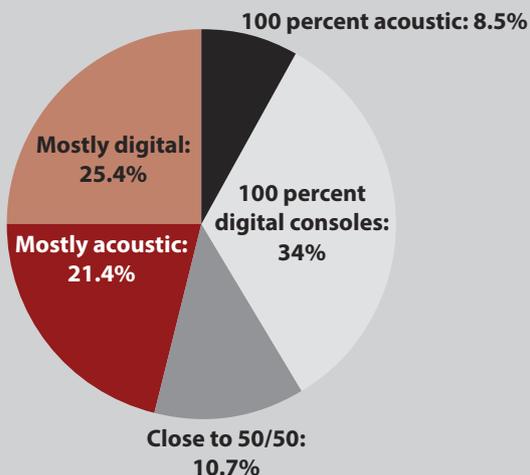
With respect to pianos & keyboards, what price points are doing best for your store?

“The intermediate market is going away. Customers buy exactly what they want in a long-term instrument or buy a beginner and then move to the ‘keeper.’”

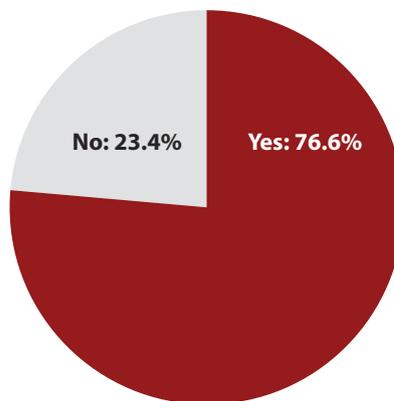
Dan Patterson
Roger’s Pawn & Music
Fort Payne, Alabama



What’s the breakdown, in terms of percentage, of total sales for your operation:



Do you have relationships - formal or informal - with area school systems, colleges, and universities?



“Yamaha and Steinway seem to have an unfair lock on this. I tried very hard to penetrate this by submitting a bid with far superior and significantly more expensive product than Yamaha, at below wholesale cost, only to come to the conclusion that obvious collusion was eminent!”

Dave Gatt
Colton Piano Gallery
San Jose, California

What larger trends have you been noticing with respect to the piano & keyboard market?

"Personally, I have noticed a trend within our market of a push towards quality, weighted key piano options; particularly new digital pianos and new and used uprights. Many of our customers coming to store – especially those with children beginning lessons – seem to be straying further and further away from the older used pianos that are privately sold online, as well as away from new 61 and 76 key portable keyboards. In working with our teachers, parents, and students to help emphasize the simple equation of 'the greater the instrument, the greater the chances of success at the piano,' many of our customers are seeking more excellent quality pianos rather than instruments that will get them by in the short term."

Patrick Downing
West Music Co.
Moline, Illinois

"Too much low-end, entry-level product flooding the market in big box, non-support [from] retailers both on the Internet and brick & mortar competitors. I'm now focusing more on keyboard rentals than sales."

Randall Platt
Hoffman Harp Gallery, LLC
Lenexa, Kansas

"Digitals are really taking over except for the accomplished players, who prefer larger grands."

David Constantino
Piano and Organ Center
North Syracuse, New York

"People will pay higher prices if they can play then pay. We are far enough from GC that we are able to exist. GC & MF are still killing everything in its tracks. Most buyers will avoid a purchase when they do not have to pay tax if they order from MF, so if that is a factor to the consumer that shops here, they will avoid any purchase from ANY mom & pop music store... We sell the crap out of strings/sticks/tuners and other much-needed small items because 60 percent or more of our competitors have closed. May sound like a rant... but at least you might like to know that the individual small music store can now exist because all of the other small music stores have realized that you cannot compete with free shipping/no tax/and being able to somehow avoid MFSRP by shopping online... so they closed..."

Allen Bondar
Dharma Records USA
Grayling, Michigan

"30 years ago when piano teachers did not know what a keyboard was and a parent asked if it was OK

to start with one the answer was always "NO." That answer served as an (unwitting) safety net for the piano industry until recent times. That same safety net was not present for the home organ manufacturers 30 years ago and the keyboard caused significant damage to that category at that time. Recognizing these challenges allows [us] to grow selling home organs, acoustic, and only Clavinova digital pianos which do not fit on a UPS truck."

Jack Melvin
Keyboard Connection
Jacksonville, Florida

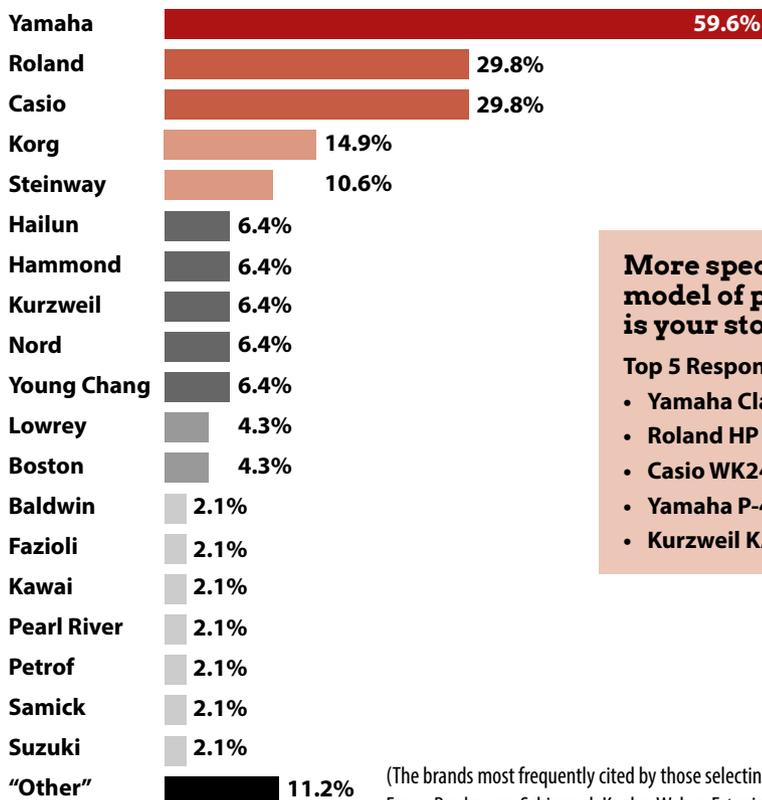
"Music retail stores are getting killed by online websites that 'bundle' keyboards with other products. The practice of bundling needs to be stopped."

Anthony Mantova
Mantova's Two Street Music
Eureka, California

"Misleading internet marketing. Completely unregulated. People are being 'fooled' worse than they were in the '60s."

Ted Good
Steinway Piano Gallery Cleveland
Boston Heights, Ohio

What brands are the strongest sellers for your operation in 2016?



More specifically, what is the one model of piano or keyboard which is your store's top-seller?

Top 5 Responses:

- Yamaha Clavinova CLP Series
- Roland HP Line
- Casio WK245
- Yamaha P-45B
- Kurzweil KA110

(The brands most frequently cited by those selecting "other" were, in order: Essex, Brodmann, Schimmel, Knabe, Weber, Estonia, and Heintzman)

Reimagining the Keyboard

Alternative MIDI Controllers for Expressive Performance

By Stephen Fortner



The 12-note musical keyboard has remained largely unchanged since the 14th century. Arguably this is because they got it right the first time. Even today it fits the needs of most keyboard customers who walk into a music store: They're looking for a piano to learn on, a do-it-all synth for their weekend cover band, or a note-entry device for computer music-making.

However, some synth-focused musicians have long felt that the traditional keyboard under-utilizes the power of synthesizers and virtual instruments. Even a pretty basic synth offers lots of parameters that can mold the sound in real time. However, the musical interface – the keyboard – offers relatively few means to affect those parameters. Synths make up for this with *other* controls you can grab, and sequencers and LFOs can add animation to the sound. But for *playing* synthesis like you play notes, the black-and-white slab remains fairly limited. What's more, what you *can* do usually affects all currently heard notes at the same time. Wouldn't it be great to add expression note by note?

A passionate group of hardware manufacturers thinks the answer is yes, and has answered this call with MIDI controllers that rethink what the keyboard is supposed to be. Likewise, a growing number of software instrument developers are working to optimize their products to take full advantage of the increased musical expression these controllers offer.

One half of the equation here is Multiple Polyphonic Expression (MPE), a.k.a. "Expressive MIDI." Basically, it's a way to use the existing MIDI spec to get a synthesizer to do things to individual notes – bending, adding vibrato, brightening up the filter, or really anything – based on some way in which your finger is interacting with the key. The other half of the equation is mechanical: A controller has to be able to sense types of finger interaction on a per-note basis: aftertouch, where the fingertip is actually touching the key surface (in terms of both X and Y axes), and more. The good news here is that because manufacturers are collaborating and the whole thing doesn't use any proprietary messages beyond good old MIDI 1.0, performance should be consistent across brands and across different supporting soft synths. Retail-wise, differentiation is about how they look, feel, and play physically, which is how things should be!

Haken Continuum

The Continuum is the *grand dame* of alternative expressive controllers. Its first commercial sale was in 1999(!) as an input device for the high-end Kyma sound design system. Not only is it still made today, but it has a large and loyal enough user base that the first music convention dedicated to it, ContinuuCon, happened in June of this year in Asheville, North Carolina.

Unlike a conventional keyboard, its neoprene playing surface is continuous (hence the name) and could rightfully be called the first "fretless keyboard." Underneath this is a matrix of magnetic sensors that allow it to detect finger pressure, X position, and Y position – all with true per-note polyphony. (In fact, it's been capable of this since well before MPE existed.) Experienced Continuum players like Chris Stack and my fellow music tech journalist Geary Yelton tout its resolution as well, which is still among the highest in the business.

Though part of its original appeal was that it could be set up to play microtonal scales, the familiar chromatic keyboard layout is indicated by the subtle stripes which indicate the positions of the "black keys." Musical benefits include being able to glide between notes without lifting one's fingers, apply bend or vibrato similarly to a guitarist, and use the pressure and Y-axis for, well, anything you'd care to assign. For example, pressure could increase filter cutoff while vertical position morphs the sound between different waveforms.

The Continuum also offers internal sounds via its Eagan Matrix synth engine, which is of course hyper-optimized for its hardware. Included editor software lets you customize your control assignments and set up templates for soft synths. The only downside is that it's a handmade, boutique instrument with a price to match: \$5,290 for the full-sized version (about seven and a half octaves) and \$3,390 for the half-sized (about three and a half octaves). For this reason it has been more in the purview of direct sales than retail placement, but no discussion of expression-enhanced MIDI controllers is complete without it. | hakenaudio.com



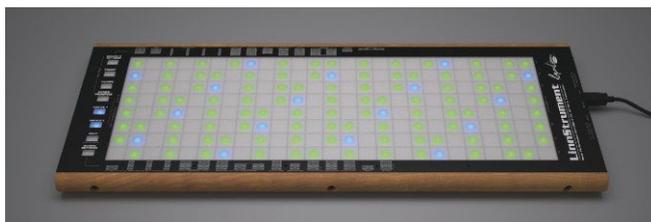
Roli Labs Seaboard Grand and Seaboard Rise

Relative newcomer Roli has been making a lot of waves. Actually that's literal, because "Keywaves" is what they call the key-shaped undulations on the playing surface of their Seaboard line. The concept is similar to the Continuum, but where it's a flat surface with solely visual cues as to where conventional keys would be, the Seaboards provide tactile feedback via those bumpy Keywaves. It's still easy to glide around without lifting your fingers, but playing the Seaboard as though it were a piano or organ is somewhat easier for traditional keyboardists. Doing nothing but that is a waste of its abilities, but the point is that some familiarity in look and feel lowers the barrier to entry.

The Seaboard Grand debuted first, and comes in 37, 61, or 88 keys. It offers four dimensions of touch, all with per-note polyphony: velocity, aftertouch, X-axis finger position, and release velocity. (In Roli's parlance: Strike, Press, Glide, and Lift, respectively.) The flat areas of the playing surface above and below the Keywaves serve as ribbon controllers that let you do big portamento sweeps, but the Grand's keys don't sense Y-position. It's also a self-contained hardware synth with internal sounds thanks to its Equator sound engine. You select presets via the minimalist "Sound Dial," and can do much deeper editing by connecting to a computer. Notably, the Equator editor window has panes that let you determine which sound parameters respond to the various touch gestures and how. Beyond specs, one cannot overemphasize the overall impression of quality and futurism the Seaboard makes on a first-time user: The playing surface feels fantastic – you just want to keep touching it – and the whole unit seems carved out of a single block of some space-alien material.

The Seaboard Rise (shown) is the more affordable follow-up, but it's more its own instrument than a "lite" version of the Grand, and actually adds some features. It *does* sense Y-axis position ("Slide") in addition to all the dimensions of touch of the Grand. To the left of the Keywaves is a cluster of useful controls, including an X/Y pad and three sliders that set the sensitivity of Glide, Slide, and aftertouch. This is especially useful with Glide; there's a definite technique to hitting proper pitches and shallowing out the sensitivity really helps traditional keyboardists feel they can master the instrument. What do you give up on the Seaboard Rise compared to the Grand? The Keywave surfaces are about three-quarters the size of the Grand's. And, it's a controller only with no internal sounds, but instead comes with a soft synth version of Equator you can run on your laptop. For iOS devices, you can download the free app Noise, which includes all the Equator sounds but has a parameter set focused on live performance. You can play Noise from the Seaboard or right on your device's touchscreen. The Seaboard Rise is available in 25 or 49 keys for \$799 or \$1,199 respectively.

CEO Roland Lamb is really out to establish a new milestone in the future history of the keyboard. He's also fond of pointing out that the piano itself was once considered radical compared to the harpsichord and organ. When you hear what a Seaboardist can do with a bit of practice, you know he's onto something. | roli.com



Roger Linn Design LinnStrument

Though he's most famous for inventing the modern drum machine, Roger Linn is both a guitarist and a huge advocate of alternative controllers. That's why the LinnStrument, which I reviewed in *Keyboard* magazine in June 2015, departs from a piano-like layout and instead uses a grid of 200 note squares arranged in eight rows of 25. Though the squares have tactile borders, the overall surface is continuous so pitch gliding is no problem. You can set it down in front of you, but Roger's preferred way to play is to strap it on like a guitar with the left hand approaching the playing surface from the rear and the right from the front. The LinnStrument is a controller only, with no internal sounds, but can be USB bus powered.

Each square senses X and Y position as well as velocity and aftertouch and, again, all with per-note polyphony. As on all the controllers we've looked at so far, X is intended for pitch, Y defaults to filter cutoff (brightness) or modulation, and pressure is for modulation or expression, though of course you can re-assign things. The note layout is chromatic from left to right, and in guitar-like fashion, ascends in fourths within any column of squares.

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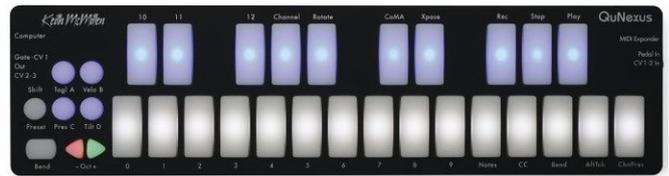
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“Some synth-focused musicians have long felt that the traditional keyboard under-utilizes the power of synthesizers and virtual instruments.”

Notably, the squares light up. By default, C is blue and the rest of the C major scale is green. (You can reprogram the LinnStrument to display any scale you like.) Touch a square, and every other one that plays the same pitch turns red. You can split the playing surface into two zones to play different sounds, and re-task the bottom row to act as a ribbon controller or trigger things like strums and the built-in arpeggiator. We've only scratched the surface, which is all we have room to do here.

One of the LinnStrument's big advantages is that chords and melodic lines have the same physical shape in all musical keys: Learn something in C and you can play it in F#. That can't be said of the piano, and though I'm a keyboardist, I wrapped my head around Roger's machine very quickly – and had fun. In practiced hands, the LinnStrument is uncannily expressive on sounds such as saxophone and acoustic guitar. Its best customers will likely be not only guitarists, but anyone who wants an expressive way to interact with synthesis but isn't necessarily invested in a keyboard layout. Its typical street price is \$1,499. | rogerlinndesign.com



Keith McMillen Instruments QuNexus and K-Board Pro 4

The \$179 QuNexus may come in at the more affordable end of our spectrum here, but it's not lacking in power. It looks like an ultra-slim two-octave controller keyboard made of drum machine-like pads, and that's certainly where it starts. The keypads feel very good, responding to finger pressure very smoothly. Each pad senses velocity, pressure, and what McMillen calls "tilt," which functions mostly like Y-position sensing. All these are per-note polyphonic. Because these are separate keys, left-and-right gliding isn't implemented like on the Continuum, Seaboards, or LinnStrument. Instead, a dedicated pitch-bend pad resides at the lower left corner. In addition to USB MIDI (bus-powered, natch), the QuNexus directly outputs CV/gate signals, making it a great controller for anyone just getting into Eurorack synths. Adding KMI's MIDI expander box (\$59) is how you hook it up to gear that uses 5-pin MIDI ports.

Though not available yet for retail sale, the experimental "Labs" section of McMillen's website teases the compelling K-Board Pro 4. I got my hands on a prototype in San Francisco recently, and it aims to provide Seaboard-like multi-dimensional control in a more traditional keyboard form factor. The four octaves of discrete keys sense velocity, aftertouch, X position, and Y position, all polyphonically. Four horizontal ribbon controls above the keys (arranged end to end) are freely assignable. Keep an eye out for this one. | keithmcmillen.com



CME Xkey and Xkey Air

These almost weren't included as they don't offer the multiple means of expression of the other controllers in this roundup, but the slim and sleek Xkeys deserve an honorable mention for one big reason: They offer polyphonic aftertouch, which not so long ago was the exclusive domain of pricey bucket-list synths like the Prophet-T8 and Yamaha CS-80. These may be "chiclet" keys, but they're the best chiclet keys I've ever played. The 25-key length (\$99) disappears into my laptop bag and goes with me everywhere. Need more real estate? The 37-keyer (\$199) tucks nicely into a carry-on sized airport roller. Add \$100 to either of those prices and you get the same length in the "Air" version, which adds wireless Bluetooth connectivity to your computer or mobile device. | cme-pro.com

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CASIO®

Roland rolls out 30 new products in a one-of-a-kind online music festival

By Sharon Paquette Lose

Roland hosted a 24-hour online music festival, "The Future. Redefined. – Unleash Your Creativity," on September 9. The unique streaming launch event debuted 30 new products, including new synthesizers, digital pianos, electronic drums, DJ equipment, BOSS guitar related products, accordions, and a digital wind instrument.

MMR caught up with the launch in Los Angeles at Six01 Studio, Burbank. The one-of-a-kind event included celebrity artists such as Judith Hill, Lola Astonova, Masego, DJ Trayze, Echosmith, and more demonstrating the new gear. The new products were the real stars of the show as Roland fans meandered about the space throughout the evening auditioning the new equipment, not to be fazed by the brief power outage that

took place during DJ Pierre's set. Roland fans were lining up to play with products such as the DJ-808 Professional DJ Controller, the updated VP-03 Vocoder and TR 909 Rhythm Composer, GP607 Mini Grand Digital Piano, the TD-0KV with KD-A22 V-Drums, the EC-10M ELCajon Mic Processor, and many more. The new introductions were well received and impressive with the Aerophone AE-10 creating some of the biggest buzz—looking like an instrument from a sci-fi fantasy film and keeping pace with a saxophone, demonstrated by artist Masego, with its impressive, soulful tone color.

The festival spanned multiple time zones and featured live performances, product demonstrations, and interviews with leading artists. Roland rolled out its new and updated instruments in Auckland, Tokyo, Berlin, Brussels, Paris, Toronto, NYC, and Los Angeles.



Roland GP607 Digital Piano

The new Roland GP607 Digital Piano is a stylish and sophisticated mini grand piano that offers authentic tone and touch with Roland's advanced piano technologies, as well as a premium multi-channel speaker system that provides top-quality sound for both piano playing and listening to music. It includes onboard learning features and Bluetooth audio/MIDI connectivity with mobile devices. Available in either polished ebony or polished white, the handsome GP607 delivers superior piano performance in an impressive instrument ideally suited for modern living. Price: \$4,999



Roland RP501R Digital Piano

The Roland RP501R Digital Piano is designed as an affordable home instrument with top-quality touch and tone. Roland's latest piano technologies deliver a truly authentic piano experience, while onboard education features and Bluetooth® wireless connectivity with piano apps promote learning and enjoyment. Ideal for young families and anyone who wants to have fun with the piano, the RP501R offers premium performance that will last through years of development.

The RP501R Digital Piano is available in contemporary black, contemporary rosewood, and white finishes, and is offered at \$1,499 street.

DIGITAL PIANOS



L to R: Brad Zell, online marketing manager at QSC Audio; Chris Halon, VP of Marketing at Roland US; Ray Van Straten, VP at QSC Audio; Jay Wanamaker, president and CEO of Roland US; Brian Alli, VP of sales at Roland US; and Bob Lee, director of product marketing at Ustream.

Artist Masego plays the Roland Aerophone AE-10



Roland DP603 Digital Piano

The Roland DP603 Digital Piano features SuperNATURAL Piano Modeling technology and an expressive playing feel with the new PHA-50 keyboard. Numerous onboard practice features are backed up by Bluetooth® wireless support for a tablet or smartphone, allowing audio playback and connectivity with the latest apps. Blending classic sounds with contemporary design, the Roland DP603 is ideal for the modern piano player. The DP603 Digital Piano is offered with street pricing starting at \$1999.



Roland FP-90 Digital Piano

The FP-90 houses the sound engine and premium keyboard from Roland's flagship pianos in a portable body. SuperNATURAL Piano Modeling recreates the entire sound process of an acoustic piano, providing rich, complex sound that authentically responds to the player's touch. The new PHA-50 Progressive Hammer Action Keyboard with Escapement is the perfect match, offering the latest sensing technology and a combination of wood and ivory-feel materials to provide both authentic playability and lasting durability. Available in both black and white finishes, the FP-90 Digital Piano is offered for \$1799 street.



BOSS Katana Amp Lineup

The BOSS Katana Amp lineup consists of three combo amplifiers and an amplifier head. The 50-watt Katana-50 and 100-watt Katana-100 are each equipped with a custom 12-inch speaker. The Katana-100/212 has 100 watts of power and is equipped with two custom 12-inch speakers. The 100-watt Katana-Head is designed for use with an external speaker cabinet such as the Waza Amp Cabinet 412, but includes a convenient integrated monitor speaker for tone preview and practice.

Each Katana amp features five selectable amp characters: Clean, Crunch, Lead, Brown, and Acoustic, and also includes integrated access to 55 BOSS effects, which are customizable using the free BOSS Tone Studio editor software. Up to three effects can be used at once.

U.S. Street prices are as follows: Katana-100 – \$329; Katana-100/212 – \$499; Katana-50 – \$199; Katana Head – \$349.



BOSS GT-1 Guitar Effects Processor

The BOSS GT-1 Guitar Effects Processor is a compact multi-effects unit. Driven by BOSS's flagship GT-series engine, it provides a huge selection of amps and effects for all types of music. The GT-1 features a light, portable design with a built-in expression pedal. Numerous COSM amps are also included, as well as a looper.

The GT-1 supports USB connectivity, allowing users to record and re-amp tones with DAW software and interface with BOSS Tone Central and BOSS Tone Studio.

The GT-1 Guitar Effects Processor has a street price of \$199.

BOSS LINE

PERCUSSION



Roland TD-50KV and TD-50K V-Drums

Roland TD-50KV and TD-50K V-Drums are the two new flagship kits in the acclaimed V-Drums lineup. Both kits feature the powerful new TD-50 sound module with Prismatic Sound Modeling, as well as the newly developed PD-140DS Digital Snare and CY-140DR Digital Ride. Additional features include user sample playback via SD memory, multi-track recording via USB, balanced audio outputs, and more. Packed with the very latest sound and sensing technologies from Roland, the TD-50KV and TD-50K sets give serious players the most expressive V-Drums experience yet. Price: TD-50KV: \$7,499 and TD-50K: \$4,799.



Roland EC-10M ELCajon Mic Processor

The EC-10M ELCajon Mic Processor, a unique and innovative creative tool for acoustic cajon players. Compact and battery-powered, the EC-10M enables the user to trigger electronic layered sounds with their own instrument via an included clip-on mic. The EC-10M also offers the ability to trigger additional sounds with two integrated foot pads or optional kick trigger pedals, and includes a looper function for creating rhythmic phrases with electronic sounds. Price: \$229



INSTRUMENTS

Roland Aerophone AE-10

The Aerophone AE-10 is an all-new digital wind instrument with advanced breath-sensor technology and highly expressive sounds. Powered by Roland's acclaimed SuperNATURAL engine, the Aerophone AE-10 provides a wide selection of saxophone sounds with authentic response and playability. The Aerophone AE-10 also features traditional saxophone fingering, enabling a sax player to start using the instrument right away. It also includes a variety of additional acoustic instrument sounds like clarinet, flute, oboe, trumpet, violin, and more. Price: \$799



Roland FR-4x and FR-4xb V-Accordions

Roland FR-4x (piano type) and FR-4xb (button type) V-Accordions are compact and lightweight instruments featuring a sound engine derived from the flagship FR-8x, which provides a wide range of traditional accordion sounds, orchestral voices, organs, and onboard drum sounds. The FR-4x and FR-4xb also include many other noted V-Accordion features, including authentic playability with pressure-sensing bellows, sound expansion capability, built-in speakers, battery operation, USB song playback, and much more.

The Roland FR-4x (\$3999 street) and FR-4xb (\$4199 street) V-Accordions are available in black or red.

Look for Part II of our coverage of this event in the November 2016 issue of MMR.

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Riversong Tradition 2 GA

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VOX Starstream

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Yamaha Revstar

Electric Bass of the Year

Fender
Fender P-Bass

Ibanez
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Three Strategies for Dealing with the Aftermath and Benefits of Unexpected Events

By Menzie Pittman

This year I celebrate my 27th year as a music retailer, and I believe it's fair to say a lot of unexpected events have happened in that time period. The fallout and aftermath from unexpected events, whether they are good or bad, can wreak havoc on your business. How we deal with and digest those events becomes almost as important as the events themselves. I thought it might be interesting to take a look at the way we react to unexpected situations and the way they affect us.

My business is located outside of the Washington, D.C. area, and the government affects us akin to the way weather affects a farmer. When the government spends, new jobs and consumer spending follow. However, when the government cuts programs and spending, the opposite is true. Clearly, every retailer was affected by the national recession of 2008, but what we really didn't expect in our region was the double dip in the recovery. That was caused by the government's budget sequestration in 2013. Having a business located outside of Washington, D.C. is generally considered "recession proof," but this time the cause and the effect was the opposite of our norm. So what's the trickle down you ask?

When major government jobs are lost, there is less regional spending. Therefore, tax dollars are muted and schools are affected. School music programs get squeezed, and parents also cut back on personal spending because money overall has tightened. How do you deal with an unexpected event like that?

• **The first (and most important) strategy a business should embrace is to operate in as lean a manner as possible.**

Few businesses are ever properly prepared for major unexpected events, so frugal is your friend, and fancy is for fools. One lesson an unexpected event will surely teach you:

What you have prepared for will be easily enjoyed, but what you haven't prepared for will haunt you for a long time.

Dave Ramsey's book, *EntreLeadership*, addresses this topic with practical solutions that could benefit any business owner.

• **The second strategy is to stay as inventive as possible.**

This might seem counterintuitive, but when you find yourself on the wrong side of the abacus because of unforeseen events, this might be the best opportunity you have to embrace your inner-creativity. How do the sayings go? "When you have nothing, you have nothing to lose," or "When you have nothing, you have everything to gain."

I always find when I am challenged, I have a tendency to make sure I find more personal, quiet time to permit myself the space and time to think. I review scenarios in my head, always retracing my steps, reminding myself of how I got to wherever I am; I consider my successes as well as my failures.

• **The third strategy is always to be in alignment with your core values.**

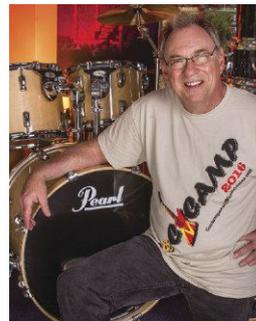
So what happens when an unexpected event positively affects your business? The demand of the positive event is every bit as intense as a negative event, and although this scenario is most likely more enjoyable than the negative event, it can be just as disruptive and just as demanding.

Take the example of a competitor going out of business. Recently I was in discussion with the folks from Blues Angel Music in Florida, and Jim DeStafney expressed that his business was benefiting from two other store closings in his area. One closing was coordinated between Jim's business and the closing business: Blues Angel made the difficult decision to change their retail model and expand into the piano business.

Jim and Nan DeStafney decided to take on the gargantuan challenge of redefining their core retail philosophy, but not their core business values. It is the alignment with their core value of excellence that will enable them to tolerate the demand of change in their business model. As the saying goes, "form follows function."

In closing, recently I had the pleasure of an in-depth conversation with Zach Phillips, NAMM's director of Professional Development regarding a NAMM Idea Center session. We discussed several aspects of best practices and session topics for the January NAMM show. In our conversation, certain words were recurrent – words such as integrity, authenticity, mission, but the one that jumped out to me the most was intention. If your intention is clear and in alignment with your core values, and you are resourceful, the only hurdle left to face is the unexpected. Always keep in mind the Universal principal: the only reality is change.

And let's be honest, we are never really completely prepared, but you never know when the phone will ring with news that will positively affect your business, and the chaos of that event is an enjoyable situation to have. Thomas Jefferson once said, "I'm a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work, the more I have of it." **MMR**



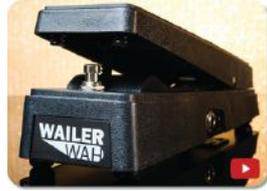
Menzie Pittman is the owner and director of education at Contemporary Music Center in Virginia (CMC). Following a performance and teaching career spanning more than 32 years, he founded CMC in 1989 and continues to perform, teach, and oversee daily operations. He has 50 years of musical experience as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

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

ACCESSORIES

EHX Wailer Wah Pedal

Electro-Harmonix introduced the Wailer Wah which features the circuitry, sound, and tone of the Crying Tone in a traditional rack and pinion style pedal at an affordable price point.



The Wailer Wah delivers expressive wah and cocked wah sounds and, at just over 1.5 pounds, a substantial weight saving over many popular wah wah pedals.

The Wailer Wah comes equipped with a 9V battery or can be powered by an optional 9-volt AC adapter. The pedal is available now and carries a U.S. street price of \$62.75.

www.ehx.com

String Swing Stagehand Drink Holder

String Swing USA's Stagehand Drink Holder is a versatile and affordable product. This unit is produced in-house, on a precision CNC automated bender. It quickly secures to most stands for convenient storage of beverages. The Stagehand Drink Holder fits mic, music, and cymbal stands, ranging from half-inch to one inch in diameter.



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www.soundsynergies.net

J. Rockett Audio Designs Dude OD/Boost

J. Rockett Audio Designs Dude OD/Boost Pedal is the third product release of the Tour Series line. The "Tour Series" is comprised of products designed with the influence of Nashville and LA touring artists to address their needs on the road.



The Dude is J.Rockett Audio Design's take on the Dumble Overdrive Special. Whereas many Dumble style pedals emphasize the Robben Ford and Larry Carlton style tones, the Dude is designed to act as a clean boost, produce classic Dumble sounds, and churn out smooth, high gain tones.

The Dude includes four controls: Level, Ratio, Treble, and Deep; I/O jacks at the head of the pedal; 9V DC operation with standard - tip and + sleeve; and True bypass switching. Price: \$199

www.rockettpedals.com

GluBoost Fill N' Finish Thin

GluBoost Fill n' Finish Thin is the latest product in the Gluboost family of products. Fill n' Finish Thin is formulated to seal cracks, as well as be employed as a top coat over Gluboost Fill n' Finish when doing repairs on wood. Both products are formulated to be non-creeping, flexible, water clear, work with other finishes, and offer minimal witness lines, so repairs look like new.



www.gluboost.com

SoundSynergies STRINGTone Guitar Parts/Strings

SoundSynergies STRINGTone® Guitar Parts/Strings is a music instrument conditioning formula. It is designed as instrument lubrication, conditioning, and protection for guitar and the classical string section- violin, viola, and bass.

STRINGTone is designed to dry-to-the-touch while micro-particle ingredients lubricate without residual mess. The formula is applied with the included applicator and is recommended to use with a lint-free cloth. Dries to the touch in seconds and will not harm plastics, cork, lacquer, wood, or vinyl finishes, and complies with all California "VOC" regulations.



www.soundsynergies.com



ACCESSORIES

MusicNomad's TUNE-IT

MusicNomad's TUNE-IT is designed to keep you in tune longer and reduce string breakage. The pro strength formulation contains anti-wear, anti-oxidants, and anti-corrosion additives fortified with PTFE (Teflon). TUNE-IT is formulated as a clear and non-staining gel which should be applied every string change on all the string touch points such as nut slots, bridge, saddle and string guides to reduce friction, sometimes the culprit of off-tone strings. TUNE IT retails between \$9.99 and \$11.99 and comes in a large tube (10ml/10cc) with two fine tip applicators for those difficult to reach places. Available November 2016.



www.musicnomadcare.com

Floyd Rose Pro Audio Collection Headphones

Floyd Rose FR-18 are wood headphones that are hand-crafted. A 50mm driver diameter and full 20-20K Hz frequency range is designed to give a warm and articulate sound. Anti-tangle detachable fabric cable with built-in microphone and volume control included. Cushioned ear cups offer comfort by contouring around the shape of your ear, designed to deliver isolation from outside noise without adding bulk. The FR-36 Bluetooth model is designed to deliver balanced highs and lows for superior audiophile sound without the cables. Using APTX CSR Audio Technology, these new FR-36BK Bluetooth Wireless/Wired cans boast 14 hours of continuous music on a full charge.



www.floydrose.com

Tech 21 SansAmp Bass Driver (v2)

Tech 21 Introduces the SansAmp Bass Driver DI Version 2. This all-analog multi-function, multi-application pedal is designed with vintage tube tones, bright modern slap sounds, and distortions. Tech 21 has "modernized" Version 2 to enable switching the bass frequency to extend further into lower registers for 5- and 6-string basses. A mid-range control was also added along with a switch to adjust its frequency. The core of the SansAmp Bass Driver and all of its tones remain true to its original design.



www.tech21nyc.com

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www.guitarstorage.com

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The instrument also possesses, Yamaha's AccuPlay technology, an integrated DSP servo drive system that monitors key, hammer, pedal and solenoid movement during playback and automatically adjusts in real-time to ensure accurate performance reproduction. It also includes WPS Wi-Fi adapter adds easy wireless connectivity to the controller app directly or through a wireless network, USB audio recording function, and a self-calibrating record and playback system.

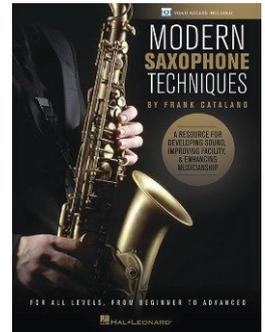
Yamaha Disklavier ENSPIRE is available in 14 models, 48" uprights and grand pianos ranging from 5'0" (DGB1K) to the flagship 9' Concert Grand (DCFX).

www.disklavierenspire.com

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Hal Leonard Modern Saxophone Techniques

Modern Saxophone Techniques by Frank Catalano teaches the developing player how to learn. Listening, exploring, writing original music, and trial and error are some of the methods threaded throughout this new release from Hal Leonard.



The concepts presented will keep players learning, maturing, and mastering the saxophone in modern times, and for many years to come. On the online video, author and virtuoso saxophonist Frank Catalano offers quick tips on many of the topics covered in the book. "In the Band" allows saxophonists to play along on six tunes and studies.

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Phaeton PHT-LV 1200



Phaeton model trumpet PHT-LV 1200 was designed by trumpet player, David Perrico, Las Vegas performer. The design is a conical bore from .460 at the valve section with a gradual increase to .470 at the 3rd valve exit. Heavy duty finger rings, Amado type water keys, fast taper lead pipe, short stroke Monel pistons plus a custom gold plated Perrico mouthpiece for great performance. Available October 2016. Suggested retail \$3,250

www.phaetontrumpet.com

JodyJazz Power Ring Ligature

JodyJazz introduced their new Power Ring Ligature. The self-locking CNC machined taper touches on three points only; the left and right side of the reed and on top of the mouthpiece. There are no moving or added parts, designed to increase the efficiency of vibration.

The first Power Ring Ligature models to be launched have been designed specifically for the JodyJazz DV, DV CHI and DV NY series of saxophone mouthpieces.

They are individually CNC machined from virgin brass at the JodyJazz factory in Savannah, GA. Their standard finish is 24kt gold, the Tenor model is also available in sterling silver finish. JodyJazz Power Ring Ligature comes with a deluxe pouch and has an MSRP of \$59.95.

www.jodyjazz.com

FRETTED

D'Addario Fretted Holiday Bundles

D'Addario Fretted Holiday Bundles offer combinations of their strings with their accessories – at a holiday-friendly price. These bundles are specially packaged and available for a limited time only, while supplies last.

EXP strings, designed for the natural tone and feel of uncoated strings, will be bundled with the NS Micro Soundhole Tuner - bundled specifically for acoustic instruments at a retail price of \$52.40.

Nickle Bronze, D'Addario's newest uncoated acoustic guitar strings, are designed for resonance and projection, as well as harmonically rich overtones. These strings will be paired with the NS Artist Capo, a front-mounted trigger style capo from that uses patented trigger geometry to reduce the force required to open and close the capo and apply even tension regardless of an instrument's neck profile. Retail \$39.95

NYXL strings feature a newly engineered, break-resistant, high-carbon steel core and plain steel alloy. These premium strings will be offered with the best-selling Pro-Winder, a high-quality peg winder with a built-in clipper and bridge pin puller designed to fit most guitars, basses, banjos, and mandolins. Ergonomically designed with durable hardened steel wire cutters, the Pro-Winder is the ultimate all-in-one restringing tool. Retail \$28.80



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By Dan Daley

The Coming Millennial Moment

There has been much fretting published about what the world will look like when it's run – as it inevitably will be – by members of the Millennial generation. The reality is that it will likely look pretty much the way it does now – maybe a little better, maybe a little worse. And that includes the MI retail universe.

"Mills" get a bad rap, with studies abounding that portray them as quixotic and without dedication; demanding of recognition without a willingness to put in the hard work; and shaped by 9/11, texting, and two nasty recessions, all while living at home with their parents. Some research even suggests that male Millennials are the most gullible cohort, the group most likely to lose money in a phone scam.

Of course, much of that research on Millennials was done by Boomers and Generation X-ers, while also yelling at them to get off their lawns. The reality is that Millennials, while shaped by their unique experiences and having been brought up in a media-saturated environment, are as willing to work hard at success as anyone else. They just may not approach it quite the same way. For starters, their definitions of success are different. A 2015 study from Workplace Trends indicates that they are motivated to be leaders because they want to empower others, while only 10 percent care about legacy, and just five percent say they'd take a leadership job for the money. That stands apart from the Horatio Alger-ish mindsets that are the narratives, real and imagined, of much of the current MI retail world, still largely comprised of individual and family owned shops that are heading into their second or third generations.

Then there are the Millennial tools, which are largely mobile, interactive and socially connected, and which are still regarded as Flash Gordon ray guns by preceding generations, who are still wondering why Amazon is looking at trading FedEx for drones.

But Millennials are on the verge of coming into their own era of MI management, in retail and in manufacturing, and they see a business landscape ready for innovation and renovation, one that hasn't fully leveraged the power of social media or connectivity. These are the areas where the next generation will make their marks.

Talk To Them

I asked Adam Levin about that. He's the third generation of Chuck Levin's Washington Music Center, in Wheaton, Maryland. The store is named for his grandfather, who started it with his wife, Marge, in 1958 in Washington, D.C. Nearly 60 years later, Adam, 29, runs the business with aunt and uncle, Abbe and Alan, stepping into his father Robert's shoes after his untimely passing.

"The music business is slow to change," comments Levin, more an observation than a complaint, quickly adding, "What did you expect – it's a business that's largely about vintage instruments."

Levin's philosophy is one common to more thoughtful Mills: "Respect for the past, but flexibility for the future," he says. It's a bit surprising for a generation that has Mark Zuckerberg as its model. But Facebook had no past to ground it – to weight it down or act as its launch pad. The legacy MI retail and manufacturing businesses use the past as both.

Levin's experience seems typical of any next generation's initial interactions with the preceding ones, especially when those who came before were successful. When he came aboard in 2011, Levin immediately focused on the company's website, which he saw as dated and un-integrated with the mainstream business. The family at the time seemed to view Adam and the website as made for each other, in the sense that they both seemed to belong to an alternate universe. But he eventually overcame their single biggest fear – that online sales would cannibalize in-store transactions – and showed them that the future of retail is a synergy of both virtual and physical sales.

It's a happy ending after a fretful time, the kind of narrative that is playing out now and will continue to as the generations cycle. In the process, MI retail is going to come out the other end looking differently in some major ways. Levin says the personal interaction that is at the heart of the MI retail experience today will remain largely intact, even as much of it will take place online.

"Even four years ago, [online sales were] a mouse click and little else in the way of interaction," he says. "Personal interaction seemed like it was becoming obsolete. But it wasn't."

In fact, Levin forecasts, what the current generations of MI executives now view as separate channels will eventually be merged into a single "omni" channel, one in which online and in-person become virtually indistinguishable. That's not far-fetched, considering how deeply the larger retail design industry is embracing the concepts of immersiveness, VR and AR. Blurred lines won't just be a song title anymore.

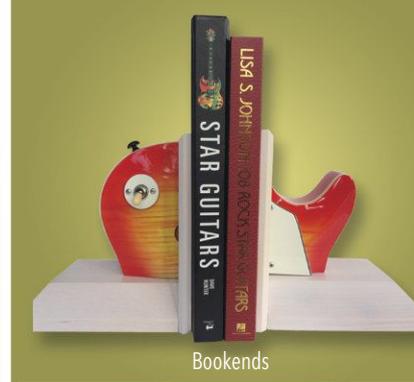
Adam Levin is a member of a small group within NAMM called Young Professionals. YP, as it's also known, has 265 members. Compared with, say the nearly 100,000 who attended the 2016 Winter NAMM Show, it's a drop in the generational bucket. But its under-40 cohort, which also includes names like John D'addario III and West Music president Robin Walenta, comprise the core of what comes next. They arrive with an amazing toolset and will confront an industry that's lauded for its preservation of the past and notorious for its resistance to change. If this was on HBO, I'd watch. **MMF**



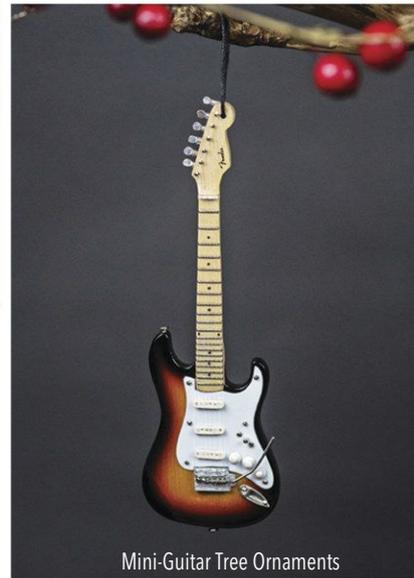
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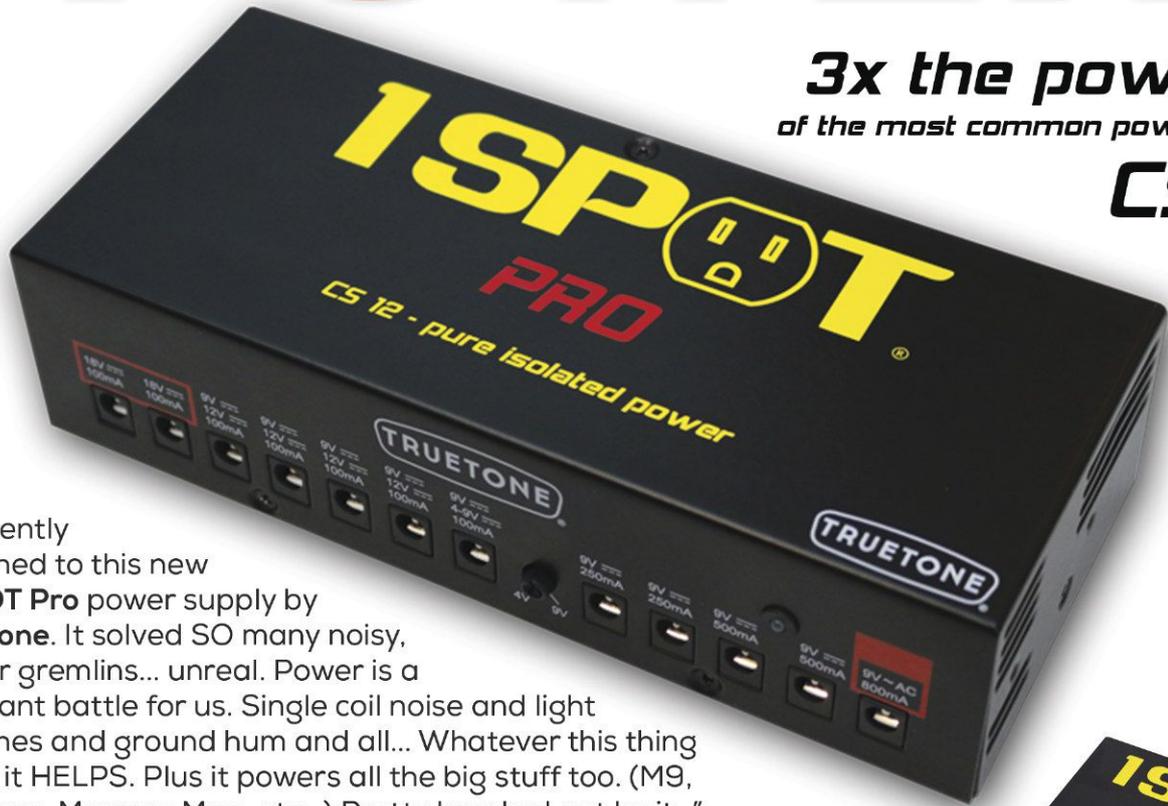
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