

MMR

MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

2017 Dealers' Choice Awards



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- Tish Ciravolo of
Daisy Rock Guitars



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Bring it on Home

"New York's most storied recording studios have been vanishing, victims of more accessible digital recording techniques and escalating real estate prices," noted a September 5, 2017 feature in *The New York Times*. This trend is, of course, not limited to the Big Apple – nor is it "new news." The move away from the pros and towards the home has been ramping up for decades, throughout the U.S.

"As more and more folks eschew heading to a professional studio... the opportunity for MI dealers to tap into that market segment grows as well."

Back in October of 2009, the *Los Angeles Times* observed that, "Inexpensive software is shifting music-recording to the home. Industry experts estimate that up to half of the commercial studios in the L.A. area have closed or been sold to artists for private use." Closer to home (for me), all three of the Boston-area recording studios that I once worked or interned at have shuttered their doors and, of the five studios I've recorded/performed at, all have either gone out of business, downsized, or moved out of the metro area.

This is, clearly, an uncomfortable trend for anyone who had been banking on any type of fiscal stability associated with working at or owning a large-scale commercial recording studio. It's also, however, pretty good news for many MI retailers.

While the gigantor studios of yore could be counted upon to make some very sizable, big-ticket purchases – not only when first getting off the ground, but whenever technology and tastes evolved – even the biggest markets only fielded a handful of such operations. That meant that, while an area music store might expect to make the occasional "big sale," it wasn't a consistent revenue generator.

With the market for computer-related music equipment, software, and other essentials continuing to expand as more and more folks eschew heading to a professional studio in favor of compiling a usable recording space in their garages, basements, or bedrooms, the opportunity for MI dealers to tap into that market segment grows, as well.



by Christian Wissmuller

In this month's issue of *MMR* we examine two product areas which many home studio fanatics consider "must haves": reference monitors and keyboard workstations. This is gear that runs an expansive gamut in terms of price-point and functionality, meaning that not only can you likely target *any* consumer interested in getting his or her foot in the "home recording door," regardless of income or ability level, but you're also looking at a lot of potential repeat and step-up business. Never a bad thing.

While some (fine – *many*) tech-driven trends pose undeniable threats to the venerable brick-and-mortar MI commerce model, here's one area where we can embrace how innovation is ushering "the old ways" out in favor of a new approach. Yes, you still have to contend with Internet competition and big box stores for these potential sales, but it's nonetheless a vibrant, growing segment of the market and one that might represent whole new avenues of profit for your business.



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Industry News

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➤ MMR Global

➤ Trade Regrets

➤ Supplier Scene

➤ People on the Move

Area Sam Ash Stores Rebounding from Recent Storms

On September 15th, Sammy Ash of Sam Ash Music Corp. updated MMR with the information that six of the seven Sam Ash stores affected by the recent hurricanes had opened at regular hours that day and that the company's warehouse opened and started shipping out on the 13th. "We are 95 percent operational," he said.

On the 13th, he sent out the following:

Regarding the Houston store final, we lost about \$36. The flood washed away some banner posts. How we escaped more we will never understand, but will always be thankful for. Business has been strong ever since we were able to get back to the store.

Current donations to Harvey [victims total]: \$30,073.82.

All seven Sam Ash Music store are still closed, some due to power and some due to curfew. There is some moderate flooding in some stores and a lot of roof problems, as to be expected. We had two different cases where the wind pushed some very large HVAC rooftop units, which in turn took some of the roof with it.

Our fulfillment center in Tampa had lost some skylights and some roof as well. We do not know the total extent of the damage but magically very little water in the warehouse.

Florida donations have yet to be determined.

Promark's Houston Plant Up and Running Post-Harvey

Promark has called Houston home since its founding in 1957 and, as of Thursday, August 31, the Promark drumstick factory was running without restriction, working overtime to recover lost production due to Harvey.

With usual freight not operating until September 5, the factory also arranged an extra shipment with six pallets of finished goods to minimize backorders, if not avoid them entirely.

A personal thank you from Jason Talas, Promark production manager: "We are very thankful for all the support we have received during this unbelievable disaster and are blessed that everyone is safe, back at work, making Promark drumsticks... the best in the world!"

While all employees and their families are safe, many have experienced extensive water damage to their homes and property. As a result, D'Addario banded together and created a gofundme page. Funds raised will be matched by a company donation of up to \$2,500. In less than the first 24 hours, the company managed to raise almost \$5,000, far exceeding their \$2,500 goal.

Hurricane Update



Buffet Crampon Resumes Normal Operations Post-Irma

On Wednesday, September 13th, MMR received the following message from François Kloc of Buffet Crampon USA:

All of us at Buffet Crampon USA would like to thank everyone for their concern and support during hurricane Irma and the continuing recovery in Jacksonville.

I am glad to report that all our employees and their families are fine, but there is of course a lot of clean up to do from the flooding and wind damage sustained throughout the area. Our offices have resumed normal operations as of Wednesday, September 13 and I am pleased to report as well that there was no damage to our instruments or facilities.

Thank you again for your continued support.

*François Kloc
President & CEO*



NEMC Provides Rental Amnesty Program for Hurricane Victims

In response to the weather-related devastation and disruption to music programs in Houston, NEMC has unilaterally suspended billing to all of its customers in the area and is streamlining the process to file liability damage waiver claims to receive replacement instruments for those that may have been lost due to flooding.

"Most of our customers have elected to have their monthly rental automatically debited to their credit card via our Easy Pay program. The last thing these families need is to be charged for an instrument they may not even have any more at a time when they are trying to cover the cost of basic human needs like food, clothing and shelter," says NEMC CEO Ron Beaudoin.

The program will not affect the commission cash flow of the company's local affiliated dealers in the area whose businesses have also been materially affected. Because NEMC provides full insurance coverage as part of its Easy Rent Authorized Dealer Program, the dealers also won't take a hit for the tens of thousands of dollars of new rental stock in their stores at the time the storm hit.

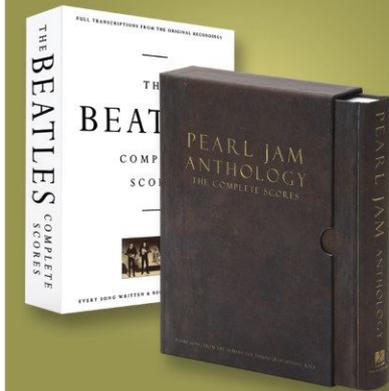
"We have every confidence that music making in the area will resume soon and NEMC will play its part. Right now, we just want to give everyone a little breathing room to sort things out," remarked Beaudoin.



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Music China 2017 Schedule and Program of Events

Music China, to be held on October 11-14, 2017 in Shanghai has completed its new-look show schedule and program of events.

This year's show is expected to attract nearly 2,000 domestic and foreign exhibitors from 30 countries and regions. Assorted western and Chinese musical instruments will be presented in 11 halls and 125,000 square-meter exhibition space.

Brands include Marshall, Bluethner, Buffet, Fazioli, Fender, GEWA, Laney, Line 6, Ludwig, Orange, Roland, Selmer, Samick, Schimmel, Steinway, Tama, Yamaha, Pearl River, Hsinghai, Jinyin, Fengling, and Shanghai No.1 National Musical Instruments Factor. Seminars and activities are listed to keep visitors with the industry pace.

This year, seminars and activities include:

NAMM CMIA Industry Forum: This year 'Promoting community music making and music education' will be discussed and reflect the forefront of 'music education' which is the hottest topic at present.

Dealer Training Courses: Professional visitors can listen to the industry experts analyzing cases and sharing their experience on business, sales, branding, management, new media usage and other hot issues.

Technical Symposiums: To promote scientific and technological innovation and deliver the latest information to professional visitors about piano tuning or MIDI and so on.

music CHINA

The 8th Global Forum on Chinese Traditional Music: Brings famous educators and performers of traditional Chinese music together, demonstrating the essence of Chinese traditional culture and introduces Chinese traditional musical instruments like zheng, bamboo flute, and erhu.

Violin Master Workshop: An on-site workshop where visitors can watch the making of violins by top violin-making masters from all over the world. Visitors can also enjoy performances on violins and pianos at Art Salon.

Jazz Masters Salon: Domestic and foreign jazz musicians will "show you a world of freedom and music."

Educational Programme: Hall E3 plays host to courses mainly designed for music teachers, educators and students. Education organizations will present their teaching models and share new education ideas.

Kids Music Land: Creates a new style of music study through lively activities. Here kids can try different kinds of instruments and learning music under the instruction of professional instructors.

Music Lab: A new event combining technology and music.

Outdoor Live Shows: More than 600 performances scheduled. For more details about Music China 2017, go to www.musicchina-expo.com.

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New Distribution Partnerships for Hal Leonard

Walrus Audio, an electronics company based in Oklahoma City, announced that as of September 1, Hal Leonard is distributing their line of guitar pedals and accessories to U.S. and Canadian music stores.

The announcement came from Colt Westbrook, president of Walrus Audio, and Brad Smith, VP of MI Products with Hal Leonard.

Walrus Audio was formed in 2011 and has captured the attention of many musicians and recording engineers around the world with their innovative sounds and distinctive pedal artwork. Best known for pedals such as the Julia - Analog Chorus/Vibrato, ARP-87 - Delay, Deep Six - Compressor, and the Janus - Fuzz Tremolo with Joystick, Walrus has quickly become an industry leader in the expansive market of guitar effect pedals.

"With growth comes demands," said Westbrook. "We knew we had to either hire an internal sales team and acquire more warehouse space, or partner up with a like-minded group that understands our product and is great in executing the dealer service portion of the business. We are excited to start our new phase with Hal Leonard. They have a focused team to dig into our line and present it with the spirit of what we do, and they certainly are big enough to handle any market and dealer demand. We love their 24/7 service and we're a complementary fit with the other great lines they carry."

Smith added, "We've been looking for this type of product line and now is the right time. Walrus Audio is a special company and we are thrilled to partner with them. They have organically grown

from a group of guitar fanatics to making some of the coolest, most inspiring tools for the guitar market. Walrus now has the platform to concentrate on making more products as Hal Leonard handles the sales, marketing, and distribution to our dealer network. We are excited to get these creative tools into the hands of our dealers that love to introduce new products to their customers."

Hal Leonard has also acquired Gerard & Sarzin Publishing, a boutique publisher of books and methods about jazz and blues music. The announcement was made by Jeff Schroedl, executive vice president of Hal Leonard.

Gerard and Sarzin is best known for its *Scat! Vocal Improvisation Techniques* book by Bob Stoloff. A bestseller since it was released in 1998, it has become the standard literature of choice for singers exploring the scat style.

In addition, the catalog contains music collections by Bud Powell and Thelonious Monk, as well as several other jazz and blues instructional titles for instrumentalists and singers.

"We love to preserve and promote jazz music," said Schroedl, "and we're happy to add this important publisher to our catalog to keep the books in circulation to benefit future generations of jazz artists."

Gerard and Sarzin titles were already distributed by Hal Leonard through their distribution of Music Sales titles in the U.S., so retailers won't need to change any ordering information. New retailers may order Gerard & Sarzin titles or inquire about Walrus Audio products by calling the Hal Leonard E-Z Order Line at (800) 554-0626.



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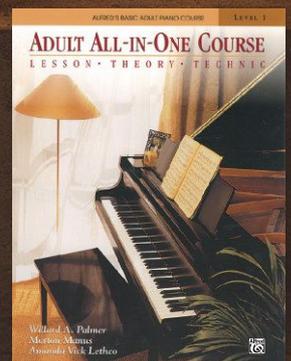
Favorite Genre to Play: Brass music

Favorite Artist: Donald Fagen

First Concert Experience:
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alfred.com

Sweetwater Donates \$500,000 to Local Schools

Sweetwater founder and president Chuck Surack and his wife Lisa have announced they will donate \$500,000 to the Fort Wayne Community Schools Foundation's "b instrumental" program.

The couple also donated 100 band and orchestra instruments, which were presented at a recent media event at North Side High School in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

The "Chuck and Lisa Surack and Sweetwater Challenge" will match donations from the community and officially launches a \$3 million fundraising campaign for the "b instrumental" program. Started two years ago, the program provides musical instruments free of charge to middle school students to use throughout high school, along with added instruction and other enrichment activities.

A successful campaign raising \$3 million will allow the foundation to purchase 4,000 to 5,000 instruments over 12 years, as well as cover refurbishing and repairs. The program will allow participation by students for whom purchasing or renting an instrument is not an option.

Chuck Surack, who is also an honorary chair of the campaign, remarked, "As a musician who got his start in FWCS music programs, I've experienced how important involvement in music education is to creating fully rounded and successful individuals. What I learned as a music student has sustained me throughout my life. Both in my business career and my personal life, music has been incredibly important. That's why my wife Lisa and I are committed to this campaign to significantly increase the number of students involved in



Sweetwater founder and president Chuck Surack presents a \$500,000 Challenge Pledge to Fort Wayne Community Schools. Front row, left to right: Tom Borne, president, Fort Wayne Community Schools Foundation Board, Steve Brody, board member, Fort Wayne Community Schools superintendent Wendy Robinson, Dr. Pam Kelly, board member, Chuck Surack, and Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry. Behind are students from North Side High School and Lakeside Middle School holding the instruments donated by the Suracks.

music at Fort Wayne Community Schools."

Surack also talked about the fact that his entire music education had come from Fort Wayne Community Schools, not having taken even a single private lesson. Today, he performs as many as 60 gigs a year with his Prime Time trio and the Sweetwater house band, the Sweetwater All-Stars.

He listed some of the many benefits of learning to play an instrument: how it promotes craftsmanship and creativity, teaches children about teamwork, builds confidence and self-esteem, relieves stress, and helps with memorization and math skills.

For more information, see www.fwcsfoundation.org.



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Supplier Scene

Zildjian Celebrates the 25th Anniversary of 'A Custom' Cymbal Series



The Avedis Zildjian Company recently announced that it will celebrate the 25th Anniversary of its "A Custom" cymbals, beginning in September of 2017.

In honor of its anniversary, Zildjian has launched a limited edition 23" A Custom 25th Anniversary Ride cymbal, limited to 1,000 pieces.

"Custom cymbals are one of our most popular cymbal lines around the globe and we wanted to create something special that gives drummers the opportunity to own a piece of Zildjian history," said Victor Filonovich, category manager for cymbals at Zildjian.

Also, drummers in the United States and Puerto Rico who purchase an A Custom cymbal (14" or larger) at an authorized Zildjian Dealer can submit their receipt and be entered to win a trip to visit the Zildjian Factory in Norwell, Massachusetts to pick out their own A Custom set-up.

In addition to releasing the new cymbals, Zildjian will also launch a fully integrated marketing campaign with a message of "Celebrating 25 years of cymbal brilliance" that will highlight different A Custom models and 25 different Zildjian artists who have played A Custom over the last 25 years.

Phillips Music Corporation Closes After 72 Years

As of May 31, 2017, Phillips Music Corporation of Missouri, a repair and rebuild service for musical instruments, has closed after 72 years of service.

The store started in 1946 in Elkhart, Indiana when Jack Phillips initially opened the store under the name Elkhart Band Repair. The store later moved to Kirksville, Missouri in 1952 and was renamed Phillips Band Instrument Repair. Later on in their history, the store was renamed again to become Phillips Music Corporation. When Phillips passed away, his two sons Tom and Jeff Phillips took over the business.

"We decided to close the shop due to a continually slowing demand for the restoration of American made brass instruments," said Tom Phillips. "We will miss the actual restoration process and working closely with all of our 'Mom and Pop' music stores to provide them consistent high quality rebuilding!"

Moving forward, Phillips noted "our plans for the future are to sleep for a week and then re-invent ourselves just like the

owner of the Chapel Bell Foundry in London that built the Liberty Bells, Big Ben and West Minister Bells. They have been forced to close also this year in May. We appreciate all of the support the musical instrument industry has provided us and to say THANK YOU to all of all small "Mom & Pop" stores that believed in us for 72 years!"

"Their attention to detail and painstaking dedication to perfection made their work the best in the business. They were literally artists when it came to brass work. From the metallurgy of brass to the fabricating parts when no parts existed, there was nothing Tom and Jeff could not do," said Jack Meister of Meister Music. "They will be missed, as will the beauty of their service to the music industry. As for the artistry and the great volume of experience and dedication they have provided over the years, its final curtain is like the end of a great movie. Like so many precious things now rendered to the past; it has gently 'Gone with the Wind.'"

Music & Arts Open Paramus Location

Music & Arts has announced that their newest musical instrument store and lessons facility will be in Paramus, New Jersey. This new store is a part of Music & Arts' 65th anniversary celebration, with new Music & Arts locations opening throughout 2017.

The new store will serve the residents of Paramus and surrounding towns in the Ridgewood, Fair Lawn, Oradell, New Milford and Bergenfield areas.

"Since day one, services such as rentals, repairs and lessons have been an important part of our retail experience," said Music & Arts president Steve Zapf. "Sixty five years ago our company founder, Benjamin O'Brien, opened the first Music & Arts in a small house in Bethesda, MD. Today, we are proud

to serve communities across the entire US with his same level of dedication to students, parents, and music educators."



"In each new location we open, Music & Arts becomes a strong member of the community it serves. I attribute this to our fully-trained, friendly staff of musicians, our passion for music education, and our commitment to providing a central source for 'everything musical' parents and students need—from instruments, to lessons, to accessories and advice," said Jeremy Mueller, national sales director.

Rise Against Drummer Joins Vater Artist Roster



Brandon Barnes

Rise Against Drummer Brandon Barnes has officially joined the Vater artist roster.

"I am very excited to announce that I am joining the Vater Drumsticks family! It's truly an honor. The Vater 1A's have an amazing balance and durability...long and lean for power and speed without sacrificing a great feel," Barnes said.

Vater products that Barnes currently uses include Vater 1A Drumsticks and Vater Grip Tape.



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Pacific Walnut
Concert (KA-PWC)

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Heritage Guitar Inc. Celebrates 100 Years of Guitar History in Kalamazoo

Heritage Guitar celebrated 100 Years of guitar history in Kalamazoo at the 225 Parsons Street Factory in Michigan this past September.

The free event gathered families and musicians alike to take in live music and check out historical artifacts on display.

Different artists who performed on Saturday, September 9, included Heritage artist Jake Kershaw (who played using his custom Heritage H-555), Miss Kalamazoo (Shelby Lentz), Paul Erdman (the first Heritage artist under the new ownership), Rendal Wall (a Heritage and Gibson employee), Heritage artist Wild Bill Durkin, and Heritage artist Sammy Melchi.

In addition, Heritage Guitar recently partnered with BandLab Technologies of Singapore, which Heritage announced at the event.

"To me, 225 Parsons is one of the most significant establishments in the history of modern music. The world's finest American-made musical instruments were, and continue to be built in this legendary factory," said Meng Ru Kuok, CEO and co-founder of BandLab Technologies. "From the moment I saw the iconic smoke-stack and had a chance to see the Heritage craftsmen in action, I knew that this was something that deserved a wider audience. Heritage Guitar's uncompromising approach to quality, as well as their commitment to their craft makes them stand out in the modern electric guitar marketplace. We are very excited to be a part of bringing Heritage into new markets and territories."

"Since we joined forces with the original founders two years ago, I've been working hard with the team to improve working conditions and increase efficiency while still maintaining traditional methods and the handcrafted beauty that Heritage Guitar is known for," said Archie Leach, owner of Heritage Guitars.

"When my cofounders and I started this company 32 years ago, we had an idea to build the best handcrafted guitars in the USA," said Jim Deurloo, founder of Heritage Guitars. "Our guitars have been loved by guitar aficionados who heard about us through word of mouth or saw us at trade shows. I hoped that we could bring this vision to the world, and with this new partnership in place, we can continue to push awareness of our guitars and love of Heritage. Our new sales partner Meng and his team embrace our policy of quality first - they're a perfect fit for what we are trying to accomplish, as guitar lovers and sales people, to get more people playing Heritage Guitars around the world."



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Photo by Joy Strotz

FINETUNE-PEG

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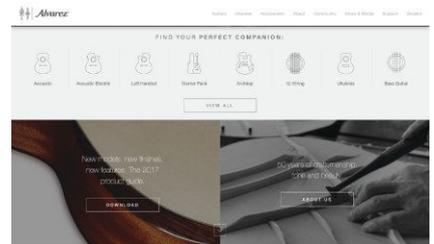
Alvarez Guitars Launches Website Redesign

Alvarez Guitars has redesigned their website AlvarezGuitars.com to feature an in-depth look at the Alvarez story and offer an enhanced product search.

"We wanted to improve our site's user experience and also present our story in a new way," said Chris Meikle, senior vice president at St. Louis Music and head of Alvarez development. "The result is a

more intuitive search mechanism that is singular to Alvarez. With advances in HTML5 we've been able to present our story in a very elegant way and we think users will also enjoy learning more about our brand, our R&D and the purpose behind our work."

With this enhanced search feature, users can browse products by shape, series,



The new Alvarez Guitars Website

and wood types without having to refresh the page. Guitars are listed with detailed specs, and multi-angle photographs and video. The site also includes a locator that can help customers find Alvarez dealers near them.

"It's very refreshing to focus on marketing and branding after such an extensive period of product development," Meikle adds. "While we still spend a lot of time on R&D, it's great to get to a stage where we can show off the products we're proud of. The new site will give us a cutting-edge springboard to feature our guitars, news and promotional activity."

Epiphone Sponsors Americana Music Association Festival and Awards

Epiphone sponsored the Americana Music Association (AMA) Festival and Awards this year in Nashville, Tennessee.



The event, which ran from September 12 to 17, also featured custom-painted Epiphone headstocks for the AMA Award trophies, which will be presented live at Ryman Auditorium on September 13.

The artist lineup for 2017 included Epiphone artists and fans Lillie Mae, Buddy Miller, and Jack Ingram, and Epiphone artist nominees include Margo Price ("Artist of the Year"), Billy Bragg & Joe Henry, and Marty Stuart and his Fabulous Superlatives (with Chris Scruggs, "Group of the Year"). Van Morrison also received the AMA Lifetime Achievement Award.

"The Americana Awards is now the premier showcase for artists who draw on American roots music," said Jim Rosenberg, Epiphone president. "And Epiphone has been there from the beginning—from Jason & the Scorchers to Margo Price. We can't wait!"



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by Ronnie
Dungan

Must Do Better

On a visit to a local music store recently, I was mistaken for a bloke who had actual money. I mean, I had money but not the kind the sales assistant clearly thought I had when he begged me to take a look at a limited edition Martin with an RRP of around £8,500.

I wasn't dressed overly smart so as to give the impression of a recent hereditary peerage, but neither did I look like a deadbeat that had just been dragged out of a bonfire. Maybe he just got over-excited. It was a lovely guitar. And it was good to see a sales guy in love with the product. But maybe it was not worth that much of my hard-earned. Or anyone else's, in fact.

It was a store I knew well, so I have seen it develop over the years from being the type of sticky carpet, spotty Herbert, noodler in the corner store, typical of so many in the MI trade. These days it has survived by upping its game online and refurbishing its shop to create a really pleasant display area for acoustics and separately for electrics. It's now one of the UK's better indie stores I would say. But I could still detect that familiar self-absorbed, muso snobbery in the staff who, other than trying to flog me an over-priced guitar, made very little effort to direct me towards something that might have suited my pocket a little better.

I didn't intend to drop in on a mystery shopper visit but the experience did leave an impression on me. The impression that some retailers still need to think long and hard about how they engage with their customers. Great to have a nice looking store and stunning display, but you must invest in staff training and get that customer interaction right. I fear too many stores are still not doing that.

Korg Brings Back Vox Continental Keyboard

Korg has introduced a number of new products under the Vox brand, bringing back the Vox Continental Keyboard, new VX50 portable amps, and a limited edition maroon version of its popular Custom Series amps.

The original Vox Continental was a transistor organ that appeared in the 1960s, and was used by iconic bands such as The Animals, The Doors, The Beatles, The Monkees, The Velvet Underground, and many others. The relaunched Continental uses a new interface that allows quick accessibility of every function. The sound engine section is centered on organ, electric piano, and acoustic piano.

In addition, it features an effects section to enhance the sounds, and even an analog valve drive powered by a Nutube vacuum tube. It has a starting price of £1,769 and is available from October 2017.

Elsewhere, the VX amp series has been added to with three new 50W models for bass, keyboards and acoustic guitar.

The bass model includes a Vox original eight-inch speaker, with a unique bass reflex structure that ensures ample power and rich low-frequency reproduction with a warm vacuum tube sound. There's also a four-band EQ that allows detailed sound-shaping, a compressor effect for bass, and an overdrive effect.

The keyboard model comes with a coaxial speaker that outputs clear sound up to the high-frequency range, a bass reflex structure that reproduces rich low frequencies, and a three-channel design that provides an independent volume control for each channel.

Nutube vacuum tubes feature on the acoustic model, plus an eight-inch coaxial speaker, bass reflex structure, two-channel design with Instrument and Mic channels (each equipped with independent volume controls), independent EQ and high-quality effects for detailed sound-shaping, Mic



In for phantom power and a Phase switch to minimize acoustic feedback.

Available from September, all three models are priced at £259.

Lastly, the firm introduced new limited edition Maroon Bronco versions of its core Custom Series amp line.

The latest limited edition features a Maroon Bronco color scheme with the amp's iconic diamond fret cloth. The line-up includes the classic AC30 (£999), AC15 (£659), AC10 (£479) and AC4 (£399).

JHS Adds Daisy Rock Distribution

JHS has taken on distribution of the Daisy Rock Guitars range across the UK, ROI, Germany, France, and Benelux.

"We are so thrilled that JHS is distributing the Daisy Rock Guitars brand throughout Europe" says Daisy Rock president and founder Tish Ciravolo. "Daisy Rock Guitars mission has always been to do whatever it takes to get more girls to learn how to play guitar and JHS has an enormous reach to help us achieve that goal. We have a great potential for amazing growth with JHS and will be generating the future of girl guitar players all over Europe! I'm very excited to see what talent JHS and Daisy Rock Guitars encourages in the years to come."

Acoustic and electro-acoustics include the Wildwood, Pixie and the short-scale JR. Miss acoustic models, in a vari-



ety of eye-catching colors and finishes. Meanwhile, the Candy Classic, Elite Venus, and Bangles Signature offer a range of electric models that feature premium woods with high-quality hardware.

Furthermore, the Rock Candy Bass offers a four-string low-end solution in a lightweight and comfortable design.

Orange Boosts Pedal Range

Orange Amplification has added two new pedals to its range - The Fur Coat vintage fuzz and the Getaway Driver overdrive, cab sim, class A type pedal.

Both have been designed by Orange's technical director, Adrian Emsley. The Fur Coat, inspired by the fuzz tones from the seventies is loosely based on the old Foxx Tone Machine originally released in 1971, which was often used by artists such as Peter Frampton and Adrian Belew. Designed with a foot switchable octave, it allows players to adjust the level of the upper octave rather than just turn it on and off. In keeping with the era's vibe, it is built with germanium diodes and is Orange's only true bypass pedal. When used it puts a "dirty, smelly fur coat" on every note produced says the firm.

Meanwhile, the Getaway Driver is an amp-in-a-box type pedal. It has the same transparent, buffered output as the Orange Two Stroke and Kongressor pedals plus a second Cab Sim / headphone output. The three dials, Volume, Bite (tone) and Gain, allow players to "rev their engine", according to Orange. Low gain and high volume



The Fur Coat pedal

The Getaway Driver pedal

makes for a clean boost, pushing amps over the edge into classic overdrive. Armed with one of these, players can be transported back to the fast and furious seventies feeling the heat as this hot rod pedal drives relentlessly forward to produce the closest thing to the buzz of being a real getaway driver.

The Fur Coat can be powered by 9 or 12V DC. Running at 12V increases the headroom and the output volume available. It draws very little current, less than 5mA allowing for a long battery life. The Getaway Driver can be powered by 9 or 12V DC. At 9Vs the pedal has the characteristics of EL84 valves, whereas 12Vs gives it a EL34 flavor.

Neumann Limited Edition Marks 50th

Neumann is celebrating the 50th anniversary of its U87 studio mic with the U 87 Rhodium Edition - a special rhodium-plated version of the classic original.

Exclusive, limited and made to order, Neumann is offering the U 87 Rhodium Edition only once, making only 500 units worldwide. Each of the microphones is individually numbered with a certificate of authenticity hand signed by Wolfgang Fraissinet, president, Neumann Berlin.

Every U 87 Rhodium Edition is supplied with a Neumann aluminum case and a special Rhodium Edition EA 87 elastic suspension. A pair of black gloves is also included for keeping the limited-edition microphone in pristine condition.

It is exclusively available via select dealers with orders starting from September 2017. The firm has also set up a special microsite celebrating 50 years of the U87, which provides an up-to-date list of dealers with available special editions.

Riversong GUITARS



Tradition 2P GA Stage Guitar Triple Play



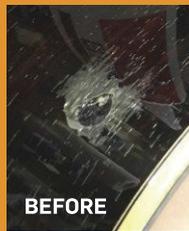
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Nominee
Riversong Tradition 2 GA Stage Triple Play

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Electric Bass of the Year
Nominee
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BEFORE



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2017 MMR DEALER'S CHOICE AWARD
Accessory Line of the Year
Nominee
GluBoost

GluBoost.com
The New Standard





HEADBANGER 6

Stagg

MMR Nomination Lighting Product of the Year

Roland Launch Slate Features New Digital Pianos



HP Series



FP60



RP102

Roland's recent spate of product launches included the launch of no less than four new digital pianos – the FP-60, HP601, HP603A and RP102.

The entry-level FP-60 is designed to offer affordable top-level performance, easy portability, and Bluetooth audio/MIDI support in a streamlined design aimed at home players, stage performers, and music education.

The HP601 and HP603A aim to deliver 'concert class' pianos for homes, education, or for performance. The lower cost HP601 features integrated Bluetooth audio/MIDI connectivity and premium piano action, while the HP603A (based on the current HP603) has support for Bluetooth audio along with Bluetooth MIDI.

Also announced was Piano Partner 2 Version 2.0, an updated version of the free iOS and Android companion app for Roland digital pianos. It is designed to enhance and extend the functionality of compatible Roland pianos, with digital notation, intelligent rhythms, and useful practice functions.

In addition, the firm also unveiled two V-Combo live per-

formance keyboards – the V-Combo VR-730, which features top-quality organ, electric piano, acoustic piano, and synth sounds in a travel-ready instrument with a 73-note waterfall keyboard and the V-Combo VR-09-B – a travel-ready 61-note keyboard.

The VR-730 features onboard organs, historic electric pianos (which include a selection from the acclaimed RD-2000 Stage Piano), a smart user interface, and direct access controls.

The V-Combo VR-09-B is designed to be lightweight, affordable, and outfitted with top-level Roland sounds, as the all-in-one solution for performing keyboard players. Dedicated organ, acoustic/electric piano, and synth engines are organized in three sections on the front panel, providing fingertip access to a variety of tones.

Real-time controls increase the opportunity for expression on stage, with hands-on sliders for tone shaping and a large array of knobs and buttons for tweaking the seven simultaneous effects and other parameters.

Trade Regrets

On September 14th, we received the following from NAMM's Dan Del Fiorentino:

Music publishing pioneer Ed Murphy passed away on September 1.

Ed Murphy clearly enjoyed his career in the field of music publishing! With a big grin, he recounted marvelous stories of songwriting legends for which he became acquainted while serving on the ASCAP Board as well as industry icons he worked with on the Music Publisher's Association (MPA) Board. As the former president of G. Schirmer Music Publishing, Ed saw many of the most significant changes that affected the print business including buyouts and mergers as well as the introduction of the copy machine and the Internet. He was proud of the organizations he represented over his long career and the many friends he made along the way.



John Connolly, Jr., founder of Connolly Music Company, passed away on August 26, at the age of 87. John was a beloved husband, father, and grandfather who was long off the tee and known for his witty (and refreshingly dry) sense of humor.

Jake Connolly's father founded the company (then John M. Connolly & Co.) in 1969 in Fort Salonga, New York after purchasing Wm. R. Gratz Import Company of New York-



where he was previously General Manager. They were the exclusive distributor of products such as Höfner and Paesold among other brands and John was actively involved in marketing the "Beatle bass" in its heyday.

About that time, John Jr. approached Mrs. Margareta Infeld about getting the exclusive distribution for Thomastik-Infeld in the U.S. They had just developed the world's first synthetic string, called Dominant, which was receiving mixed reviews when it was first introduced to the market.

She accepted, and John Jr. became significantly instrumental in the rise of the world's first 'plastic' string – taking significant risk in convincing the multitudes that this was a true paradigm shift in the world of strings. Convince them he did and his relationship with Mrs. Infeld and her company helped revolutionize the string world.

John M. (Jake) Connolly III purchased his father's company in 1994 – and John Jr. moved to Valley of the Sun, Arizona a few years later to pursue his retirement where he enjoyed playing golf, reading John Grisham novels, and never having to shovel another snowy driveway.

John was born in Cincinnati, Ohio (and remained a life-long Reds fan), attended both Harvard University and Columbia Business School and served in the U.S. Army.

Jake's father's key corporate value was that a company be run well for all its partners, suppliers, customers and employees – and remains the key driving force for the business to this day.

ON THE MOVE

Korg USA, Inc. has announced an upgrade to its sales management leadership group. **Matt Phillips**, a veteran employee of eight years at Korg USA, Inc. has been promoted to the new role of director of Sales.



Phillips will be directly responsible for the management, leadership, and results from the Inside Sales Representatives, Territory Sales Managers, and the District Sales Managers.

Phillips has held positions of progressively increasing responsibility in his tenure at Korg USA, Inc. Starting as an inside sales rep, transitioning to a district sales manager for the Rocky Mountain Region. After relocating back to New York, Phillips was promoted as the manager of the Inside Sales team. Utilizing his extensive experience, Phillips lead the creation of several campaigns, strategies and sales programs that have helped drive Korg USA, Inc. to better service its dealer network.

"The creation of this new role, as well as the talents of our sales team will surely contribute in a significant way to Korg USA Inc.'s future growth," says Andy Rossi, SVP of Sales and Marketing at Korg USA. "With eleven brands currently in house and plans to grow further, we set-out to create a position that would lead and inspire. We are incredibly excited for the company and for our customers with Matt in this new role," Rossi concludes.

To strengthen its sales team in North America and to position for future growth **Schimmel** is appointing **Don Glasgow** as director of Sales for the Southwest and Southeast U.S. as of September 1st, 2017.



"By expanding our North American sales team we expect to increase sales growth and be poised for future opportunities in North America," says Hannes Schimmel-Vogel, president of Schimmel Piano.

Glasgow will represent Schimmel piano lines Konzert, Classic, Wilhelm Schim-

mel, and Fridolin Schimmel in the southern states from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans, in cooperation with Rob Slayman, VP of Sales and Marketing for North America. Don had represented Schimmel for many years in the past and comes back on board after furthering his experience in the industry for the past eight years.

Adamson Systems Engineering announced the addition of Harrisburg, NC-based AVLA design and integration firm WAVE to its partner network.

Adamson also announced that long-time network members, Austin, Texas-based Big House Sound, has become a sales partner.

Adamson also noted that Nashville-based Spectrum Sound Inc., has joined the Adamson sales and rental network with a significant investment in the company's E-Series and S-Series audio systems.

Coda Audio UK

named **Steve Norman** head of application UK. Prior to joining Coda Audio, Norman served as an audio engineer for touring artists including Placebo and Massive Attack, and also at festivals including Glastonbury, T in the Park, Latitude and Creamfields, among others.



Core Brands

named **Charlotte Harris** senior manager of technical services. Harris has 20 years of experience at technology-oriented firms and 15 years of technical support management experience.



d&b audiotechnik

promoted **Frank Bothe** to chief technology officer and named **Jan Biermann** to Bothe's previous post as head of research and development. Bothe will now focus on the company's medium-to long-term technology strategy. As head of R&D, Biermann will be responsible for implementing product



development projects. He reports to d&b managing director Markus Strohmeier.

EAW named Audio Americas, which has offices in Mexico City and Santiago, Chile, as their sales rep firm for Latin America. EAW also named Dubai-based Gefco Systems as its distributor in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Fulcrum Acoustic, which named Quest Marketing as their rep firm for Florida in Jan. 2017, has now named the company rep firm for the entire Southeast.

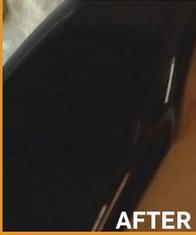
KV2 Audio named **Angus Davidson** technical support director for Asia Pacific and North America. Davidson has mixed for major international acts including Supertramp and Crowded House.

Stage Tec, the Berlin-based manufacturer of professional audio mixing consoles and routers, added **Reinhold Friedrich** and **Michael Müller** to the company's sales team.

Game Changing Repairs. **DONE!**



BEFORE



AFTER

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Rebel Girl

Tish Ciravolo of Daisy Rock Guitars

by Christian Wissmuller

MMR sits down with Daisy Rock Guitars' Tish Ciravolo to discuss why she started the brand, how the company has evolved, her recent partnership with KMC Music, and why the "Girl Guitar Revolution" can't be stopped (and can represent serious profits for your MI retail operation)...

Most of our readers are at least somewhat familiar with both you and the story of Daisy Rock, but for the uninitiated, can you provide a brief background – both for yourself and your involvement in music, as well as the origins of Daisy Rock Guitars, leading to its initial launch in 2000?

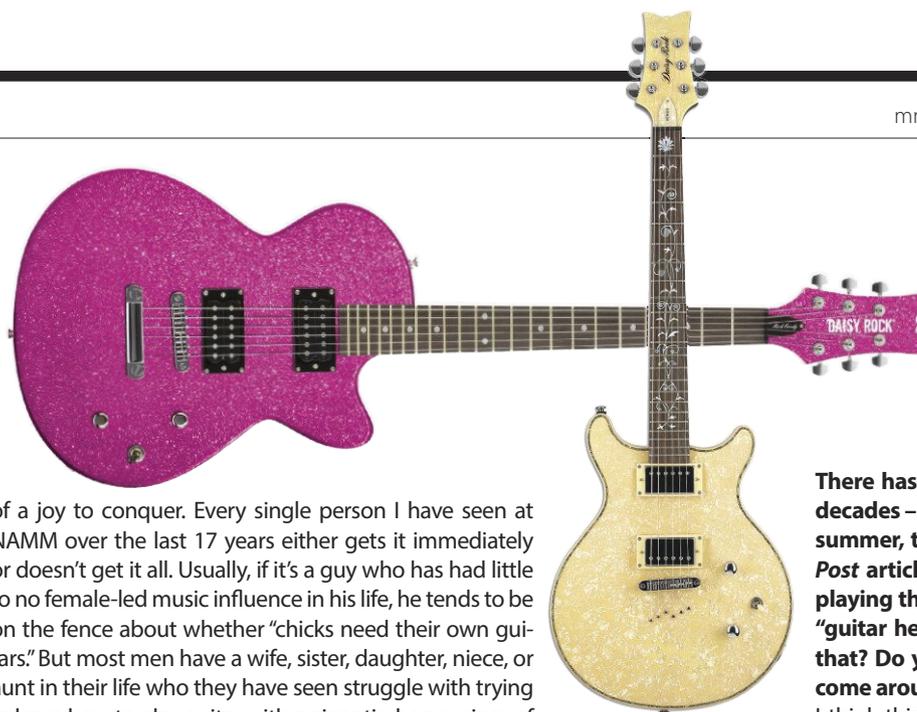
Tish Ciravolo: Of course! I started playing in bands in the '80s in LA. I went to a music store with my boyfriend to buy my first bass guitar; suddenly, my boyfriend and the male employee took it upon themselves to decide what bass I should buy because "girls rarely went into music stores to buy their own instruments." The bass that was chosen for me was too heavy and had the girth of baseball bat. I took it back to the store the next day and proceeded to play every bass there until I found one that worked for me. This was my first encounter with the unfounded notion that instrument could be gender-specific simply because "girls don't play guitar." When my all-girl band LYPSTIK would play shows, we heard a lot of comments like, "Not bad for a girl." The idea that the rock scene was such a boys club felt like discrimination.

Eventually, my husband assisted me in creating a bass I could play comfortably, with customizations like a slimmer neck, lighter weight and purple color. Fast-forward a few years to when my daughter, Nicole, is 1-and-a-half years old and she draws a daisy on a piece of paper. I curiously looked at the drawing before penciling in a neck

and headstock in the shape of a leaf on it. When I showed my husband, Michael Ciravolo, who is president at Schecter Guitars, we began talking about making guitars for girls and what that could be and how that could shape the guitar world. What could the future of the music industry look like if we built something lighter in weight, with a slimmer neck, fun colors, shapes, and designs? And when we got the first samples in of the very first Daisy-shaped instruments, we came up with a name: Daisy Rock Girl Guitars. But when all our musician friends saw what we were doing, women and girls of all ages asked us for one that they could play. Immediately it became a guitar line for females – not just young girls who like daisies, butterflies, hearts, or star guitars. However, as years passed, what was once such a stark line drawn between the genders has begun to blend into a spectrum. We are beginning to re-evaluate what was once a statement to be the first "girl" guitar company and venturing into the idea that perhaps we are the first feminist-specific guitar company. Any little kid who likes butterflies or stars or hearts can learn to play on Daisy Rock. Any person, regardless of what gender-identity they resonate with, can play a guitar just because they like the way it sparkles. The black and white rules of the past are greying, and we are just here to provide a fun-colored time for the musically inclined.

What has been the MI industry's reception to Daisy Rock in the past 17 years? How many dealers and fellow instrument suppliers "get it" and appreciate what you're doing? How many try and reduce the whole concept to something that's "cute," but not particularly relevant?

The first year was challenging and frustrating and, at times, heart-breaking. However, while the challenge continues, it's become more



of a joy to conquer. Every single person I have seen at NAMM over the last 17 years either gets it immediately or doesn't get it all. Usually, if it's a guy who has had little to no female-led music influence in his life, he tends to be on the fence about whether "chicks need their own guitars." But most men have a wife, sister, daughter, niece, or aunt in their life who they have seen struggle with trying to learn how to play guitar with a gigantic, heavy piece of wood. Overall, dealers seem to get it now. When I started the company, I heard the term "cute" 1,000 times, but dealers didn't know if girls would come into their music stores. So I did consignment sales and I told every dealer, "Just put it in your window and see if you can build your female client base." Every dealer came back with a story about how they finally starting building their female demographic and getting girls and mothers and grandmothers in their stores. Why? Because there was finally diversity amongst their selections. Amidst all the guitars colored tan and black and red, there was a pop of pink, a dash of purple, an eye-catching sparkle. There was representation for something specifically marketed away from the traditional.

Can you talk a little about the partnership with KMC and the re-launch of Daisy Rock last winter? How did the relationship come about and how have things evolved since then?

2017 NAMM started off very differently for Daisy Rock Guitars because we ended a 13 year relationship with Alfred Music Publishing serving as our distributor. The experience with Alfred Music was so wonderful and I had made such great friends during my time there that I didn't know what to expect with a new company. But what an amazing transformation we have been going through with the KMC team. Though we had several companies pitching us about picking up the guitar line, I really loved how professional KMC presented itself in the guitar market. There wasn't any doubt in my mind that they could help me grow and expand Daisy Rock Guitars into territories that we had not been in. It's been a very different experience to be distributed by a company that predominantly distributes musical instruments as opposed to books. We've made great strides in our first year of working together and I look forward to an even better year in 2018.

While Daisy Rock Guitars are – or at least initially were – "girl guitars," I can personally attest that I've seen plenty of guys playing the instruments. What's your take on male guitarists who embrace Daisy Rock instruments?

Guys play our guitars because our guitars kick ass. Ron Manus had come up with a really great slogan when I was at Alfred – "ARE YOU MAN ENOUGH?" That was hilarious to me! Due to the expertise employed to help make the guitars sound amazing from the very first one we designed, they have always attracted anyone and everyone. Our guitars aren't just made for women. Initially, they were designed and crafted with women in mind in a refusal to conform to the mu-

sic stores of the '80s that didn't even bother to cater to female players. However, Daisy Rock Guitars has grown into a company who caters to everyone – after all, pink isn't just for girls and blue isn't just for boys. We wish to market towards all spectrums of people because our guitars are easier to play, fun to marvel at and, of course, sound incredible.

There has been a lot of talk over the past couple of decades – and this was a topic that was reignited this summer, thanks in no small part to that *Washington Post* article – about how kids are losing interest in playing the electric guitar, how there aren't any new "guitar heroes," et cetera. What's your take on all of that? Do you feel that interest in guitar playing will come around again?

I think this is the dawning of the age of the girl guitar player. When I started, we looked through all the research that magazines, like *MMR*, had done and determined that female players made up four percent of the music scene. This year, it is coming up closer to 30 percent. Ask me again in 10 years – it will hopefully be closer to 50 percent. We started the Girl Guitar Revolution and it keeps growing, expanding beyond genders and colors and the young and the young at heart.

I think I can guess as to the answer, but related to that last question, do you feel female players represent a segment of the market that has been largely untapped?

Completely untapped. And when you look beyond our industry, you see the actual rock stars out there that totally want to support girls playing guitar. The discrimination against anyone who isn't a man in music is still prevalent in MI, but it's changing every day, especially thanks to events like the She Rocks Awards and all the different women's networking sites that have started.

Recently, of course, there was the blowback in light of the *Vice* article, which made it seem as if, prior to St. Vincent, there had never been a signature guitar with design input from a female artist. Apparently they forgot to run that bit of news by Bonnie Raitt, Joan Jett, Taylor Swift, and others – all of whom have had or have their own signature guitars which they helped to oversee the design of – not to mention Vicki Peterson, Wanda Jackson, and others who've had their own signature Daisy Rock models. Do you chalk *Vice's* error up to poor research, systemic sexism, ignorance, or a comingation of all three?

Definitely a combination of all those factors. Women in this industry have always had to struggle to get their justly deserved recognition. Unfortunately, many in the media haven't helped the situation either. This is one example of that. All any of us women can do is to keep challenging the lies when they occur and keep on fighting for our achievements.

Are there any new Daisy Rock models or developments for you or the company on the horizon that you'd like to share with our readers?

We are developing new models and you will see some new ukelele models at Winter NAMM 2018. But our focus today is supporting the dealers by driving the consumers into their store and demanding their Daisy Rock Guitars!!! *MMR*

Working Wonders

Keyboard Workstations Offer Significant Opportunities to Musicians – and to Retailers...

by Christian **Wissmuller**

Keyboard workstations are powerful “all in one” units that combine a keyboard (shocking!), sound module, and music sequencer. First developed in the 1970s, workstations are immensely powerful music-making tools that afford composers and producers the ability to create electronic music with little to no other gear necessary.

In an age of increasing home recording and more and more independently released songs and albums, these units are absolutely essential to many professionals, semi-pros, and hobbyists.

MMR recently spoke with representatives from three of the biggest names in keyboard workstations to get their take on the evolution of these highly versatile instrument/computer/machine combos, the methods that successful retailers employ to effectively target end-users, and what’s on the horizon for this technology.



How long has your brand been designing and selling keyboard workstations?

Ben Harrison: Almost 30 years. From a synth workstation perspective, the V-50 and SY-77 were launched in 1989. From an Arranger/Digital Workstation perspective, Yamaha considers the first to be the PSR-4000, which launched in 1995. Prior to this, Yamaha designed and sold portable keyboards with similar functionality, but didn’t really consider them workstations.

Nick Kwas: Korg has been designing and selling workstations since we came out with the first workstation ever: the M1 in 1988. We sold that product all the way up until 1994 and it was a long time before someone else came along and shared that space. Of course, our workstations have gotten quite a bit more powerful since then. Our current offering is Kronos, widely renowned as the most powerful synthesizer of all time, Krome, and our recently announced Kross2, an upgrade from our very successful and highly portable and affordable Kross.

Duane McDonald: Roland has been involved in music creation and workstations for decades. You can make an argument that it started with the MC-8 Micro Composer back in 1977, which was a sequencer that used CV/Gate to control other devices. Roland’s first keyboard work-

station was the D-20 in 1988, followed by the W-30 in 1989, which added sampling capability.

What do you consider to have been some of the “milestone” instruments in this market segment?

NK: M1 of course, for creating the concept of the “workstation” in the first place, Triton, for bringing that technology into the new millennium, and Kronos, our current flagship, which encompasses features that the original M1 developers could only dream of.

DM: I would start with the Fairlight CMI and Synclavier as the original inspiration for the keyboard-based music workstation. They were out of reach for the average musician, but that changed with products such as the W-30 and Korg M1 in the late 80s. The biggest ‘milestone’ was probably not a prod-



Nick Kwas, product development, Korg

uct at all, but rather the introduction of the MIDI standard in 1983 by Dave Smith and Ikutaro Kakehashi. MIDI, combined with the MPU-401 computer MIDI interface in 1984, brought music creation to the personal computer, where it thrives today.

BH: The original MOTIF became the most popular workstation of all time, and the series that followed maintained this popularity. From the flagship MOTIF and mid-range MOXF series, these instruments created the soundtrack to the last decade and a half. In the Digital Workstation world, Tyros is where Yamaha focused a lot of R&D, and the technologies developed for that series Tyros through Tyros5, has trickled down into several other Yamaha keyboard series.

The latest milestone instrument is the highly-anticipated Genos digital workstation that launches in October 2017. Genos takes off where Tyros ends and continues in the tradition of being the technology leader for several Yamaha keyboard lines.

What's currently your brand's top-selling keyboard workstation?

DM: Our best-selling workstations are in our FA-Series. They

"You want the sales associate who can tell you everything you want to know about a product, can show you how to get around on it, and will support the sale." – Nick Kwas

are designed to streamline the creative process by giving users thousands of sounds, powerful effects processing, and a sequencing section that lets you create music easily, whether you're using the onboard sequencer or a computer. They also connect to a computer directly via USB and even come with a DAW control button for easy setup with the most popular DAW software. There are three versions: a 61-note synth action keyboard (FA-06), a 76-note synth action keyboard (FA-07), and an 88-note weighted hammer action keyboard (FA-08).

BH: The MOXF8 is currently the top selling Yamaha keyboard workstation.

NK: Kronos, now in its third generation, finds its way onto stages with huge artists all over the world, and is as comfortable and versatile in a stadium as it is in any user's home or professional studio.

Who purchases these units – experience level, age, income, et cetera?

NK: I typically don't use the word "typical" to describe any customer, especially when talking about attaching a customer to a certain type of product. We prefer to look at

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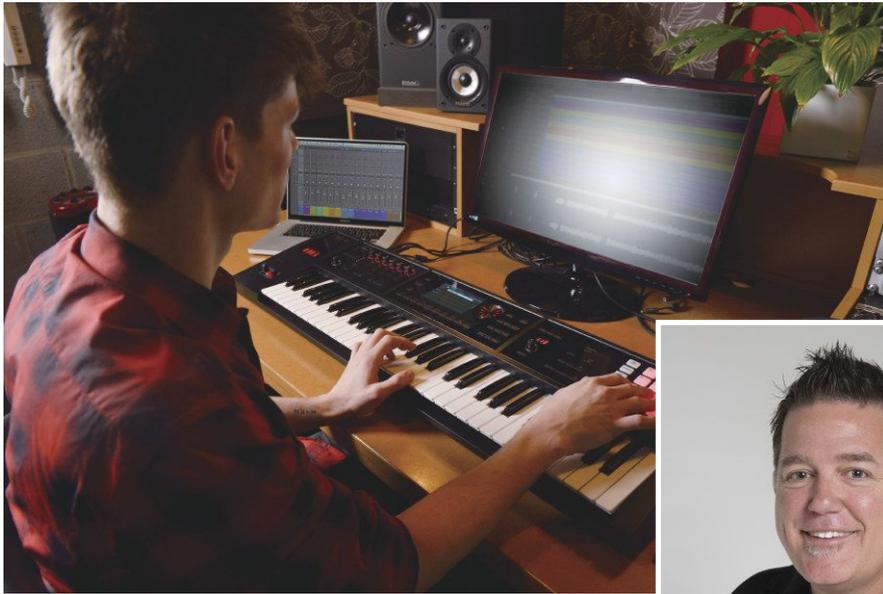
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House of Troy



Duane McDonald, manager, Synthesizers, Roland

each customer as a unique individual, and develop products that can suit the most needs of the most end users. The customer changes dramatically when looking at the product entry/feature set as well. Our Kross tends to show up more on stages as a powerful and portable performance product, Krome has found a home at the helm of many home studios, and Kronos – with its USB MIDI and Audio capabilities along with sheer number of sounds, effects,

and features – has enjoyed success as a top-notch performance keyboard in the hands of a whole host of famous touring keyboardists, in studios at all levels, and working harmoniously with DAW-based rigs as well.

BH: Typical synth-focused workstation end users are in their 40s, they're in professional occupations like IT, or

tech industries. They like to play on the weekends, or in a church setting or are home hobbyists.

Typical arranger/digital workstation end users are in their 50s, and enjoy playing for themselves or entertaining friends or social groups performing favorite songs. Interestingly, songwriters in the 30s also gravitate to these instruments for the speed at which documenting original ideas can occur.

DM: Workstation keyboards are not really considered entry level, so the typical customer has experience with other keyboards before they make a purchase like this. Workstations are very popular with touring professionals and as the centerpiece of production studios.

Have you noticed any particular marketing or display strategies on the parts of dealers who do particularly well with keyboard workstations?

BH: For digital workstations like Genos or Tyros, connecting the specifically designed stereo speaker accessories always helps. For music production synthesizers, connecting to professional studio monitors in stereo creates the appropriate image for the target customers. Yamaha has developed lots of expansion content, available from YamahaMusicSoft.com, that helps dealers attract customers looking for specific genres or types of music. Of course, dealers who are well-trained and know the products well and are able to give excellent demonstrations always do particularly well.

DM: Workstations are usually packed with lots of features, which is great, but the downside is that they can be intimidating. Good marketing and POP displays cut through all that and effec-

“Workstations are usually packed with lots of features, which is great, but the downside is that they can be intimidating.”

– Duane McDonald

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Ben Harrison, product manager, Electronic Keyboards, Yamaha Corporation of America

“People like workstations because they are self-contained and they can quickly get into the zone of making music without needing to interface with computers or external gear.”

– Ben Harrison

NK: People have increasingly come to understand that Workstations aren't just for songwriting. Since they come with a very rich feature set, it is becoming more commonplace to see them being used as performance synths and not with the sequencer that defines them. That goes for world tours as well. Kronos and Krome have found their way onto the live key rigs of some of today's hottest artists' stages, national broadcast live television, and into some of the most dynamic, high profile worship environments as well.

BH: People like workstations because they are self-contained and they can quickly get into the zone of making music without needing to interface with computers or external gear. Workstation technology continues to develop supporting this basic notion, making ease of use and accessibility of features a top priority. **MMA**

tively show the customer how they can do one or two things they want to do. If a customer feels they can master those things easily, they are much more willing to explore the in-depth features.

NK: The person who really invests into understanding the technology and champions it. It's like walking into any showroom in any market; you want the sales associate who can tell you everything you want to know about a product, can show you how to get around on it, and will support the sale. Online, video that explains the product and some of the deeper features (based on user request) go a long way. We strive to create harmony between our in-store presence through retailers, and through the web content that we continually grow and improve.

Lastly, are there any significant recent or ongoing trends in the realm of keyboard workstations that you've been noticing?

DM: I think workstations have really been in a refining stage for quite some time. They sound better than ever and are packed with great feature sets. The trend seems to be polishing an already evolved instrument to levels we couldn't imagine back in the '80s.

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Guy Kawasaki, Chief Evangelist for Canva, speaks at The 2017 NAMM Show

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Note From Zach



Industry Education Designed With YOU in Mind

In the real world, where not everyone gets a participation trophy, only the smartest succeed. That's why The 2018 NAMM Show is your path to success.

We've long dreamt of building a giant clubhouse for industry education. A hotspot where NAMM members could network, share and, most of all, discover new ideas to grow their businesses and careers. A forum with a campus feel that served as an extension of The NAMM Show itself, featuring all the education a NAMM member could ever ask for—ranging from music retail to pro audio to event technology, and everything in between.

If that sounds like a good reason to join us at The NAMM Show, then book your travel now. In 2018, we'll fulfill that vision, bringing you the ultimate industry-education center.

The NAMM U Campus

When you arrive in Anaheim this coming January, you'll find the education programs at their new home, a beautiful five-story campus in the Anaheim Hilton—right next door to the convention center.

The campus even has a name. Yep, you guessed it: NAMM U.

And, in short, NAMM U is now much more than an education program. It's a hang. It's a destination within The NAMM Show. And, of course, it's a center of industry best practices, big ideas and world-class training opportunities, housing hundreds of sessions—and unlike anything you've seen before.

“NAMM U is now much more than an education program. It's a hang. It's a destination within The NAMM Show.”

Highlights of what you'll find at the new NAMM U Hilton Education Center include:

Music Retail: NAMM U Breakfast Sessions each morning of the show, featuring free breakfast, music and insight from industry thought leaders, along with Retail Boot Camp the day before the show kicks off. And for retailers on the show floor, the NAMM Idea Center is staying right where it's been, conveniently located in the lobby of the Anaheim Convention Center. (Think of it as NAMM U's satellite campus.)

Audio Production: More than 300 sessions for seasoned and emerging pro audio professionals from the Audio Engineering Society (AES), TEC Tracks and A3E (Advanced Audio + Applications Exchange), plus Dante Certification Training.

Event Technology: Training and sessions on lighting, lighting networking, safety and rigging from Entertainment Services and Technology Association (ESTA), *Front of House*, *Projection Lights & Staging News* and *Lighting & Sound America*.

Students and Educators: A robust program for music students and faculty, including GenNext College Music Society sessions and Music Education Days.

So make your travel plans. We can't wait to see you in 2018!

Zach Phillips
NAMM DIRECTOR OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

“NAMM U sessions have become a focus of our attendance at the NAMM shows. It’s invaluable to our business to get tips and tricks from the innovators who are on the ground engaging in the same business activities that we are. It’s fair to say that we have been able to pay for our trip by implementing what we learned at NAMM U.”

Robert Christie
A&G Central Music • Madison Heights, MI
2017 NAMM Dealer of the Year



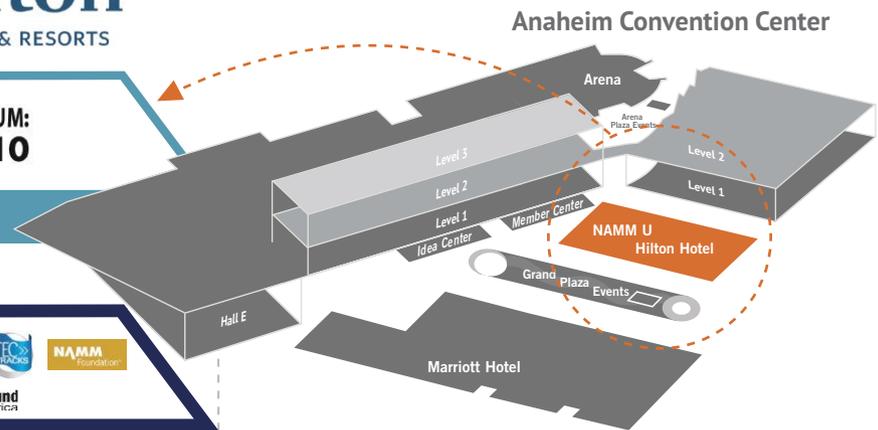
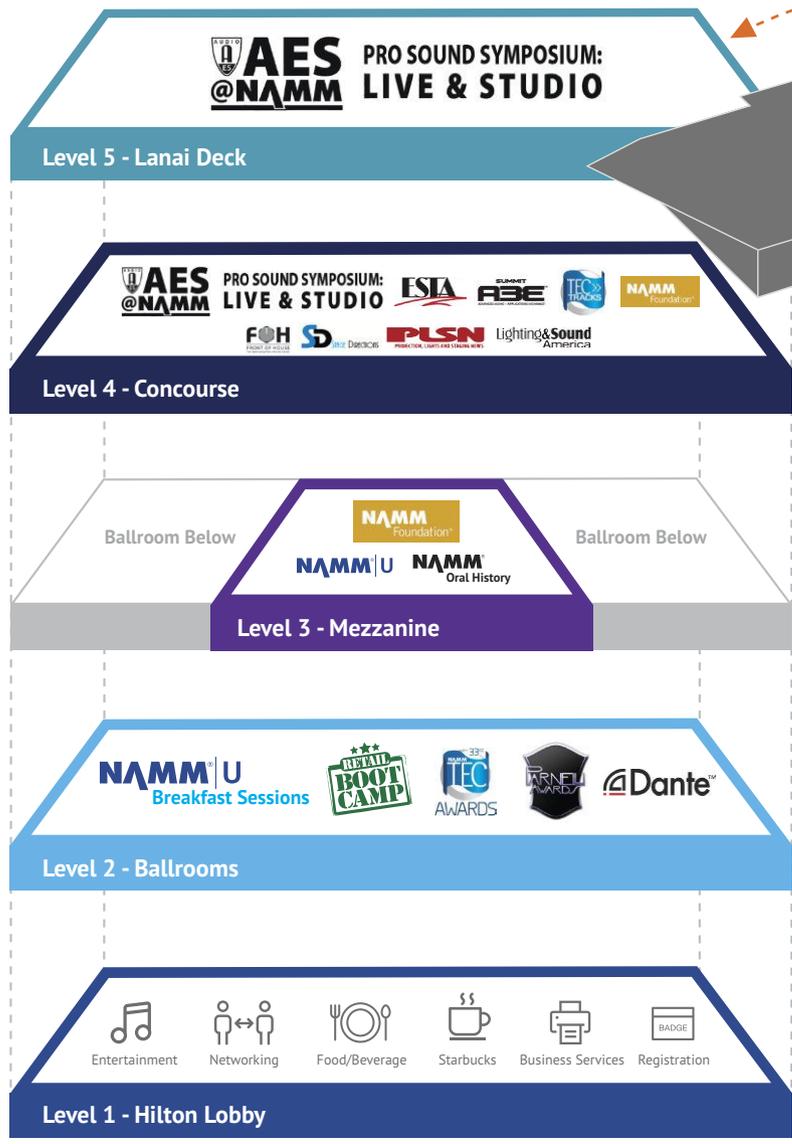
NAMM President and CEO Joe Lamond interviews Robbie Robertson at the NAMM U “Breakfast of Champions”.

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Connect with the NAMM Foundation and the NAMM Oral History program.

Level 2 - Ballrooms
Experience Retail Boot Camp, understand big-picture strategies in daily NAMM U Breakfast Sessions, and enjoy a variety of concerts and awards programs.

Level 1 - Hilton Lobby
Welcome to the NAMM U Hilton Education Center, featuring a new, relaxed vibe; more amenities; education; and events—along with areas to connect and network.

Visit namm.org/attend1 to learn more about NAMM U and to register for The NAMM Show

Monitoring the Situation

Reference Monitor Sales in 2017

By Christian **Wissmuller**

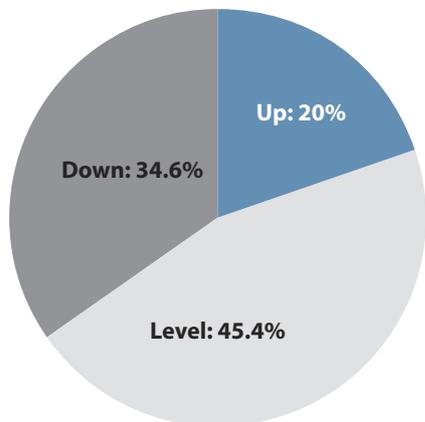
The results of this month's dealer survey – sent out to over 200 MI retailers – suggest that studio monitors represent a fairly steady slice of the overall musical gear market. With just under 50 percent (45.5) reporting level sales when compared to 2016, these speakers seem to be holding consumers' interest.

The above isn't particularly surprising, as more and more musicians, producers, and educators of all income and experience levels are creating their own home or classroom

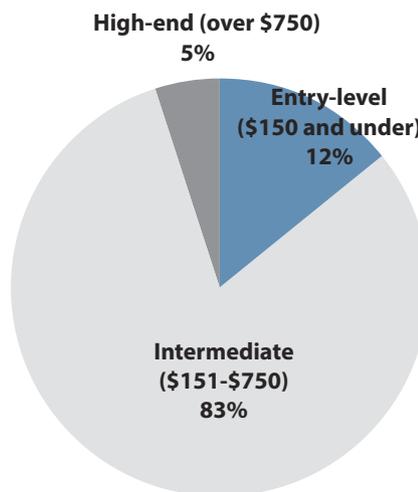
studios. Even the most basic setup needs reference monitors of some type and, interestingly, a decisive majority of survey participants note that intermediate – not entry-level – speakers are selling the most.

As Anthony Mantova of Mantova's Two Street Music (Eureka, California) puts it: "In an age when everyone wants to sit at home in their pajamas and bask in the glory of their undiscovered sound, your customers will purchase a pair of studio monitors."

Compared to fall of 2016, sales of studio monitors (speakers) for your store are...



The majority of reference monitor sales at your store are...



On average, how would you describe the “typical” studio monitor customer (age, income level, ability, et cetera)?

“20-40 years old, making \$25,000-\$35,000, and purchasing for home studio use.”

Wesley Edwards, Sr.
Draisen Edwards
Anderson, South Carolina/Atlanta, Georgia

“School music programs, almost exclusively.”

Don Hausen
White House of Music
Waukesha, Wisconsin

“17-30 year olds who are starting their home studio with a very basic budget.”

Dave St. John
Gard’s Music, LLC
Glendora, California

“Over 30, professional, higher income.”

Steve Zampino
Jupiter Music
Jupiter, Florida

“Mid 20s or late 40s; 20s are dudes with little or no cash, 40s no problems, first timer home studio with moderate knowledge.”

Marc Boon
The Music Shoppe and Pro-Sound Center
Danvers, Illinois

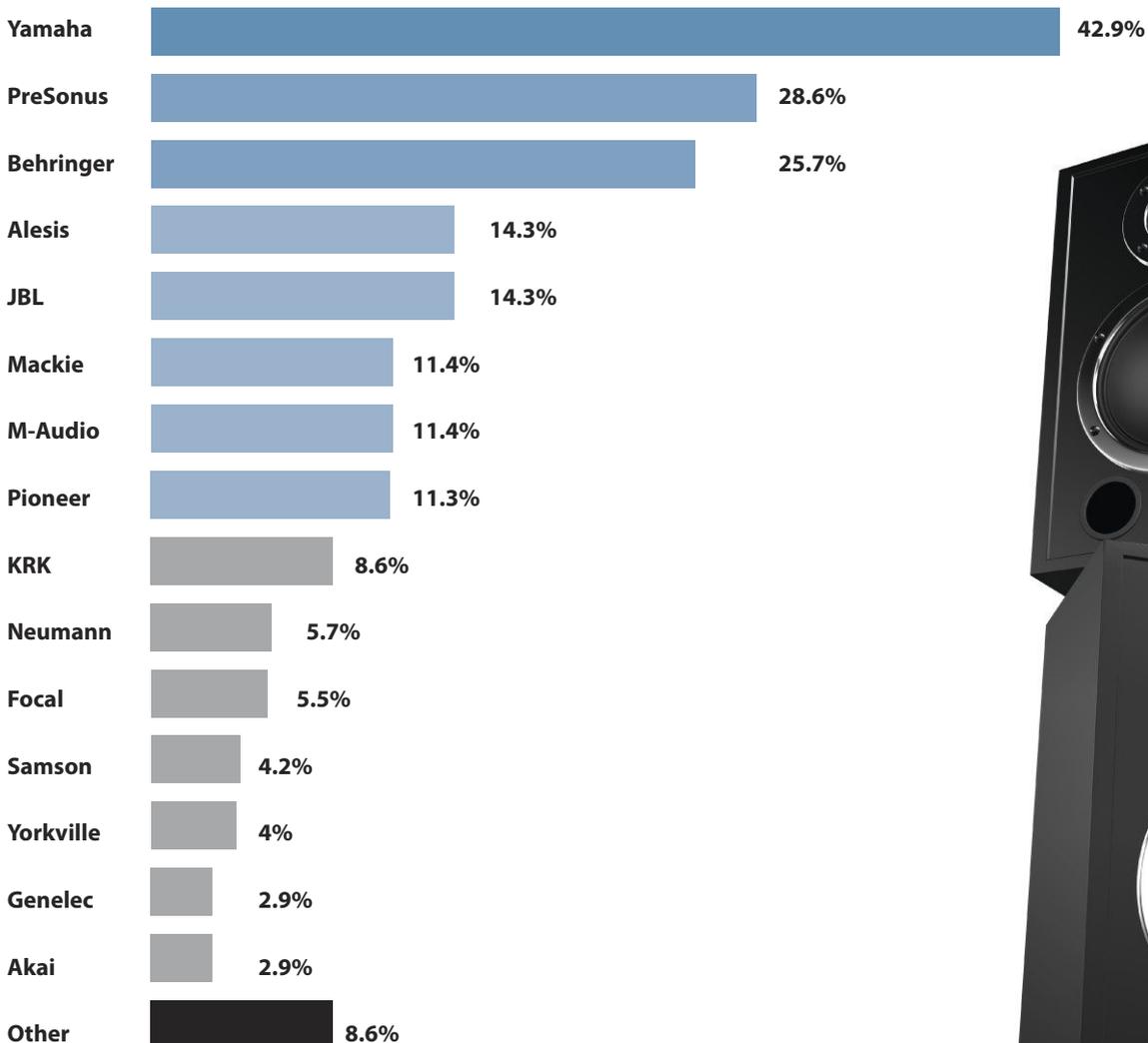
“Average, middle income.”

Scott E. Stone
Music Proz
Indio, California

“Younger, 20s, amateur.”

Nilam Music
Hereford, England

What brands of studio monitor speakers are generating the most profit for your store?



(The “other” brands most frequently mentioned were, in order: Tannoy, Samson, and Augspurger)



Have you been noticing any significant shifts in this market segment, either on the supplier or consumer side?

"Margins are crap all the way around and the internet is killing us. Can't carry them all."

Marc Boon
The Music Shoppe and Pro-Sound Center
Danvers, Illinois

"Growth in headphones."

Alan Day
Music & Arts
Frederick, Maryland

"Online orders from box stores."

JD Kezar
Kezar Music Co.
Thief River Falls, Minnesota

"We've seen more choices in the low price points over the past three years."

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

"Suppliers are not as quality conscious (usually end up upgrading speakers and redoing bad joints), young consumers are not as interested (price over quality, phone-based platform recording), and older (my demographic) are beginning to 'cash out.'"

Guitar Tex
San Antonio, Texas

"People want better products and are willing to spend more."

Dave Malekpour
Pro Audio Design
Hanover, Massachusetts



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Streaming Audio Is Remaking Educational Publishing

Printed Access Codes to Streaming Audio are Replacing CDs with Books

By Dan Daley

Move over Netflix, audio streaming is now king. Boosted by hit albums by Beyoncé, Drake, Rihanna, and other artists, music-streaming services like Apple Music, Pandora, and Spotify have overtaken video streaming as the leading mode of content distribution.

That didn't take some of the publishers of music education content by surprise. Jeff Schroedl, executive vice president at Hal Leonard Publishing, which began connecting some of its educational titles with streaming in 2014, observed, "Once we saw that laptops weren't being made with disc drives anymore, we could see where the market was going."

Media Evolution

Book titles bundled with CDs were common by the end of the 1990s, as CD replication costs plummeted to a few cents apiece, and the thin discs added little in the way of weight or bulk to books, allowing them to be displayed in standard retail racks. (Books packaged with audio cassettes had been a market for years before that, though the cassette was indeed bulky, often bubble-packed with individual books.) The category became a winner for music education, allowing readers and students to easily listen to what was being taught on the printed page. Now, streaming is making its presence felt on the MI publishing side, offering not only to completely eliminate physical media needing to be bundled with books, but also the ability to update and append content from the cloud. Second editions can now also be called 2.0.

Hal Leonard has been including media in one format or another for decades, going back to the Flexi Disc, the bendable records that were once stapled into magazines and used as premiums. (The Beatles sent them out to fan-club members at Christmas in the 1960s and *Mad* magazine included them often in the 1970s.) Historically, audio media connected to lesson books has been popular as a teaching tool, says Schroedl, who devised the GUI

for Hal Leonard's MyLibrary, the company's streaming product, which debuted in January, 2014. "Being able to hear what something is supposed to sound like is critical for teaching," he says. "But transitions [between formats] have never been easy."

Seeing disc drives disappear from laptops was the cue for Hal Leonard to move towards streaming, but many retailers were still caught by surprise. "Some consumers and stores just weren't ready, while others were ready to move to streaming a year earlier," Schroedl recalls. That means that some titles will still be shipped with CDs and others will use a combination of discs and access codes printed in each book to access the title's related audio media, just as the company once had to ship some titles

with either CDs or cassettes 20 years earlier. Some titles will have the streamed media as an option, at additional cost, which requires creating separate SKUs. Other challenges include making the streaming site compatible with multiple browsers (Firefox was just going live as we spoke), and the need to print unique access codes for each copy of a book, which will also somewhat complicate the issue of returns, since those

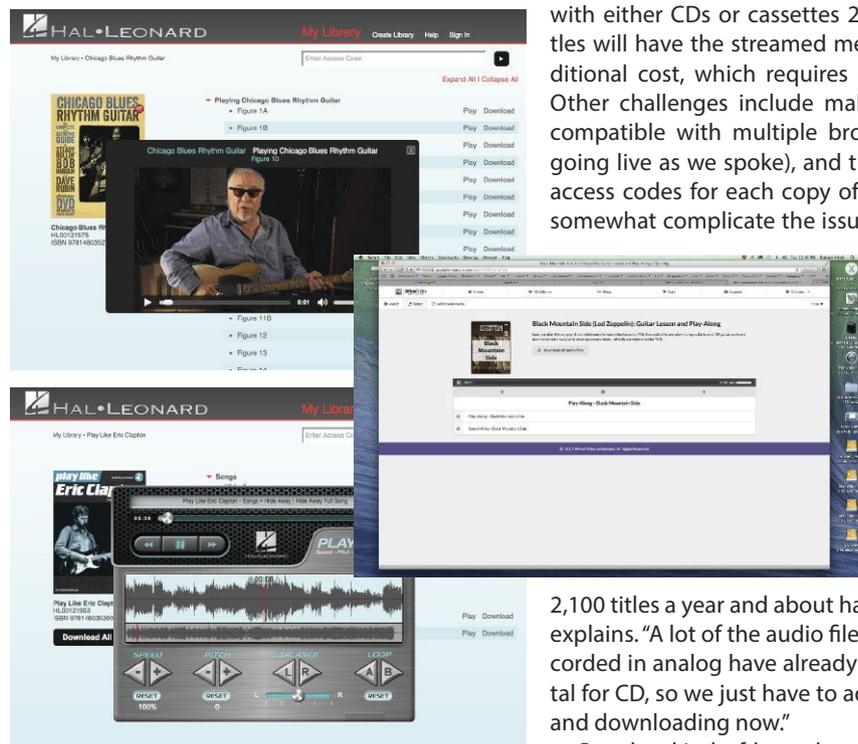
codes will have to be invalidated to prevent piracy.

The big task, he expects, will be going back into tens of thousands of titles and updating them from CD to streaming, as well as working on new titles. "We publish about

2,100 titles a year and about half of them use audio," he explains. "A lot of the audio files that were originally recorded in analog have already been converted to digital for CD, so we just have to adapt them for streaming and downloading now."

But that kind of housekeeping is more than offset by the advantages of streaming, Schroedl stresses. In addition to not having any physical media to manufacture, ship, package and bundle, streamed audio isn't limited to the 79-minute running time of a CD. "And we can also embed video and .pdf files in the stream, to," he adds. Audio quality can also vary, using either basic MP3 or higher-resolution AAC files.

Hal Leonard's first streaming-only audio title is *Soul Fingers: The Music & Life of Legendary Bassist Donald "Duck" Dunn*, which was released earlier this year. The book includes online access to over an hour of audio demonstrations and play-alongs, featuring sound-alike tracks with guest appearances by the legendary Memphis sideman's son Jeff Dunn, and bassist Will Lee using





“With streaming, we can know what tracks were accessed, how long they were listened to, and so much more.”
– Alex Ordoñez, Alfred Music

Duck’s actual bass. The audio is accessed online using the unique code inside each book and can be streamed or downloaded. The audio files include PLAYBACK+, a multi-functional audio player that allows users to slow down audio without changing pitch, set loop points, change keys, and pan left or right. The split-channel tracks separate the bass part so it can be heard soloed or muted so students can play along.

The recordings for Hal Leonard’s audio content will continue to be made as they were for CDs and cassettes, in the company’s recording studio at its Milwaukee headquarters, or by individual book authors who create their own audio content.

Schroedl says the streaming environment is one of constant tweaks. A new feature that was added earlier this year are markers that show the viewer exactly where they are on the sheet music or tablature page. A future feature upgrade will be the inclusion of stems – groups of instruments, such as drums or guitars, that will let students remix tracks and position themselves in a custom mix they play along with.

Data Could Change Everything

Alfred Music has also seen streaming titles gaining traction after a slow start, now with about 60 titles since they launched the project in 2014, an initiative tentatively titled Alfred Music Online. Alfred began with the company’s DIY series of self-teaching series of books, a strategy that was calculated, says Alex Ordoñez, vice president of Marketing. “That series is aimed at the hobbyist, a customer more inclined to learn on his or her own; we thought that would be a good way to gauge interest in the idea,” he explains. Since then, streaming has been added to more traditional teacher-student course series.

Alfred Music has seen acceptance of streaming options on educational book titles vary by retailer, a reflection of a consumer market – mostly teachers – that still prefer either conventional media or none at all. As such, Ordoñez expects they’ll be commissioning CD manufacturing for

some time to come. However, streaming may open new doors that could radically change the entire industry. Beginning this year, Alfred Music is also offering the option to stream audio with many of its catalogs, both physical and digital. (The catalogs will likely be the first products to completely eliminate CDs.) This, from a marketing and production standpoint, is potentially a game changer, as a result of highly granular data and analysis derived from the stream.

“We now have the ability to understand and analyze usage of each track which results in Alfred Music creating better content for both teachers and students,” he says. “For example, if we have 30 different tracks but only 20 are being played multiple times, this may be an indicator of its effectiveness and populari-

ty, which we can take into consideration for future products.

“When you sell a CD, you can only hope they listen to it, but you never know how it’s being received,” he continues. “But with streaming, we can know what tracks were accessed, how long they were listened to, and so much more. What if a track was played for five seconds and then turned off? Do we need to create better intros? We can really look at what people are listening to.” (These are the same kinds of granular analytics that Apple just let their podcasting users have access to.)

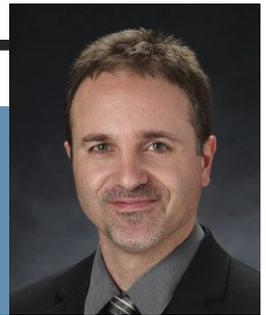
That data analysis could let the company much more precisely tailor its educational-audio content to what the market responds to. In the past, says Ordoñez, Alfred had to rely on feedback

NS
DESIGN

Jacob Collier
Release:
In My Room
Instrument:
NS Electric
Upright Bass

Photo by Betsy Newman

sales@NedSteinberger.com



“Once we saw that laptops weren’t being made with disc drives anymore, we could see where the market was going.” – Jeff Schroedl, Hal Leonard Publishing

from their retail partners, who in turn were getting their input from individual customers. By being able to go to the source for unfiltered customer reaction, Alfred Music would be in a position to provide analysis to its retailers, something he says is part of its long-term strategic plans for streaming. As would collaborative filtering, which would be used to make customers aware of other products similar to ones that data shows they liked.

“Retail is our most important ally in education,” he says. “Streaming is still in its infancy in this area and still small as a percentage of our overall catalog, but we can already see how it can deepen the connection between us, the retailer, and the teacher and the student. If we can keep more people engaged with music, that’s a win for everyone.”

Connecting streaming audio with other educational modalities has been going on nearly since streaming has been a commercial proposition. Universities with subscriptions to music libraries like Naxos for classical and jazz genres have been able to access streaming music that’s used in conjunction with classes that teach instruments. YouTube has morphed into the leading music resource that’s not behind a paywall. Educators have used

it for applications that include creating instrument and software tutorials, evaluating group and individual performances, and sharing content between teachers and students. But MI’s two leading publishers are the first to directly connect it with published book titles. That sets the stage for what will likely be looked at, in retrospect, as a significant inflection point in the music-education market.

Data analysis of the education publishing market is one immediate benefit of its migration towards streaming. However, it could have much longer-range implications, including entirely new categories of titles, especially as music production and pro audio move deeper into networked and laptop domains, and as music distribution further taps social media and other online avenues. It will take time for retail and educators to embrace the idea – after all, some of the first songs many new students still learn were written in the 18th century – but the economic benefits to publishers, from lowered manufacturing and shipping costs to data-driven product refinements and new-product development, suggest that the publishers will be taking the lead on this one. **MMP**



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HAILUN 161
XO XO 1602 LTR Trumpet
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25th Anniversary
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MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW
DEALERS' CHOICE AWARD
Electric Guitar of the Year

D'Angelico Premier Bob Weir SS
ERNE BALL MUSIC MAN St. Vincent

Fender American Professional Stratocaster
Ibanez RG1070PBZ

Gibson Les Paul
YAMAHA RevStar

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

Fender American Precision
Ibanez Soundgear Series

Riversong GUITARS GS 5 String
Spector Euro4 1977

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MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW
DEALERS' CHOICE AWARD
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Martin & Co. EST. 1833 D28

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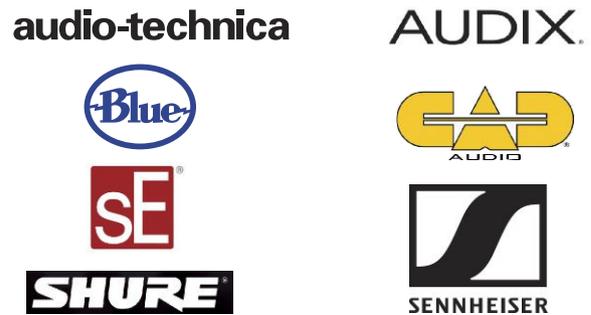
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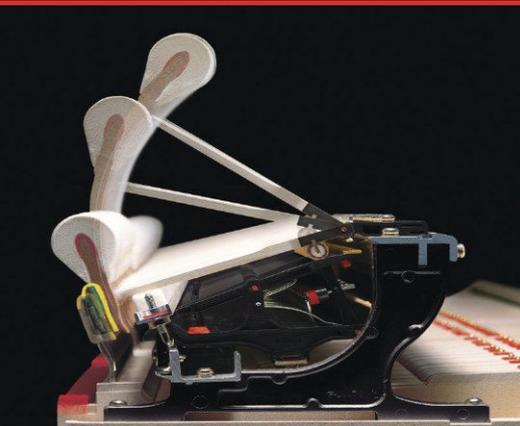
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The Great Piano Pushback

How Vienna International's Joe DeFio is Expanding the Presence of Hailun and Petrof in the U.S. Market

By Victoria Wasylak

Adaptation and a solid expertise of your field have always been the keys to the longevity of a career or independent store, and after 50 years in the business of selling pianos, Joe DeFio is a walking encyclopedia.

"I've seen it all. Pretty much every job in the industry that could be done, I've done. The only thing I don't do is teach or tune," he says.

After leaving the army, DeFio cleverly got a job at an employment agency to scout out all the jobs in the area. When he spotted an opening for a piano salesman, he jumped on it. At 21, he started to learn the piano and organ business, and today at 71, he's still hooked.

Originally from Syracuse, New York, DeFio moved to Kansas City to work with a chain of P&O stores owned by Jenkins Music, later working for the Hammond Organ Company and other manufacturers.

Now executive vice president for Vienna International, DeFio answers his phone seven days a week and uses his expertise to help navigate the company. Since he started working with Vienna International, his work with the company has been instrumental in elevating Hailun from almost unknown in the United States to an in-demand, award-winning brand. In 2012, for instance, *MMR* readers selected Hailun Pianos for the "Piano Line of the Year" Dealers' Choice Award, and the brand has been adding up awards ever since.

Most recently, DeFio's mission has been to push to get acoustic pianos back into MI stores; namely, Hailun and Petrof, both lines that Vienna International sells. His mission is to address all the changes that the market has undergone recently, and make selling acoustic pianos work for those dealers.

"Over the past six or seven years, things have changed drastically," he explains.

With a rise in digital pianos and a fall in acoustic pianos on the market, tackling the piano industry hasn't exactly been a simple ordeal. If anything, DeFio says that he has been pushing for a full-on reversal of how piano stores have been developed in both minor and major market areas.

Over five decades dealing with all aspects of the keyboard business, he's witnessed first-hand the dramatic changes in the music industry, such as the demise of the once popular accordion business, the collapse of the home organ and the spinet piano, and the crash in used piano prices.

"Originally, most piano departments were in full-line stores selling musical instruments, stereos, etc," DeFio says. "They were doing so well with the piano divisions that some of those locations turned into all-piano stores. The way things are going, however, I see a reversal of that. Now at Vienna we are going to concentrate on new small startups (many are piano techs), and MI stores to have small acoustic piano departments, helped in every step by our expertise in marketing the instruments to consumers, using our business model to sell pianos for our dealers not to them."

Years ago DeFio saw big changes coming, and started to map out what the future would hold for the market and planning out what Vienna International should do to be successful in that highly competitive and shrinking market.

"Many cities, even ones that have very large populations, are down to one or two piano stores. They're the only outlets for new



Mantova's Two Street Music in Eureka, California now sells Vienna International's pianos in an outlying location

Joe DeFio

pianos in these cities. The choices for consumers are very limited and dictated by a few very large manufacturers. More outlets in more areas will provide choices for people and, in addition, MI dealers and tech dealers will add to their revenue stream, a win-win situation!" DeFio explains.

The industry has also changed as a result of online shopping, with sites like Amazon being a new go-to for people who need instruments – thus taking away business from local stores. While pianos don't seem like an instrument that customers would buy on a whim ("buying a piano can be very iffy if you don't play it" DeFio notes), but there are still people out there who are making those major purchases online because they can't find new pianos anywhere near where they live.

The current situation makes it even more vital for pianos to get back into musical instrument stores – and Vienna International has the advantage of size on their side. DeFio describes Vienna International as an efficient, hands-on company in which everyone performs many roles. Because they are a relatively small company without a large, cumbersome corporate hierarchy, they can initiate changes and carry out plans much faster than most other distributors can.

"Anybody can try to do what we're doing now, but we've got great products and a five-year head-start on the concept, we address the new norm with our ears to the ground and we are already proficient in dealing with smaller outlets," DeFio says.

Paired with a heavy social media presence, DeFio is dedicated to making pianos accessible to the end user in more places across North America and the world. This has already started as Vienna International has just been awarded the Hailun distribution rights for Europe and Africa (a formal announcement will be forthcoming).

"It's going to get harder before it gets easier," he says. But if anyone can handle the ebb and flow of the market, it's this piano guru. **MMR**




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Ortega Guitars



the company sees itself and the instruments they make.

Jeremy Page has been with Meinl USA Nashville for about ten years and currently manages the guitar department. When the company decided to add Ortega Guitars to Meinl USA distribution, he was transferred into managing the guitar department.

"We do not see us as a typical classical guitar making company but want to make the Nylon String Guitar a modern, attractive instrument bringing young people back to learn an instrument they will like by feel and look," Page says.

While the company's passion and focus on making Nylon String Guitars in different styles, body sizes and variations, the word "classical guitar" doesn't get tossed around much more at the company.

"You hear and see us very seldom using the word 'classical guitar'. That's a major key to what made Ortega Guitars well known in Germany and Europe over the past ten years," Page adds. "Our goal is to expand who the Nylon String Guitar is for. The Family Series brings quality build to fractional guitars for anyone at any age can find a comfortable guitar to learn on. The Feel Series caters to seasoned guitar players that might not have a Nylon Guitar in the arsenal. Expanding the idea of the Nylon Guitar to being a part of the Acoustic Guitar category."

Thomas Supper has been general manager and designer for the company's instruments since 2008, when he took over the position.

Some of their efforts include transferring ideas and concepts from steel string guitars to nylon strings guitars, such as a two-way truss rods for adjustability, the use of slimmer necks and nuts widths, and curved fretboards for comfort.

The twenty-plus years since the company's conception has also spread them across the map, while keeping them rooted in Spain. The process starts in Germany, where the guitars are designed, and then produced in either China or Spain.

"With a rising demand and growing popularity of the brand with our newer non-traditional ideas it was necessary to start carefully choosing relationships in Asia/China with different instrument building partners to fulfill the catalog of more than 250 different instruments today," Page says. Ortega Guitars is planned and designed in Germany and produced in Spain and now China mainly. But we are very honored and pleased we still keep the "day one" relationship in Spain where our brand was started with to today - with the same local people."

In 2017, products from Ortega Guitars are sold in most European countries via distributions or directly from the company. In fact, since 2014, they've expanded distribution to almost 30 countries.

"In 2015 the U.S. and Canada market expanded with the addition to Meinl USA distribution in Nashville, Tennessee," he explains. "This also involves more marketing plans to build our brand awareness more internationally overall."

Thus year, a chunk of that success and growth comes from the brand's newest editions of signature series models, including the new Ben Woods signature model and the Thomas Zwijsen signature model. Both acoustic guitars are limited to 66 models each and are "extralight" from their two-way truss rods.

Putting a New, Global Spin on a Spanish Legacy

By Victoria Wasylak

Any given Ortega Guitar has seen more of the world than most people – perhaps even more than the person playing it. While rooted in Spain, Ortega Guitars are designed in Germany, made in China or Spain, then shipped to their final destination or in-between distributor (in our case, the United States). Clearly, Ortega Guitars is a global operation.

Founded in 1994, the company is owned by the Roland Meinl Musikinstrumente GmbH & Co. KG. – worldwide known as the premium cymbal and percussion company – and has made huge progress in the U.S. and Europe.

Their worldwide impact has been budding since the mid-1990s, when the company started in Spain. But as the years have passed, the company's Spanish heritage is not something that they've forgotten about – just modified slightly.

The New 'Classic'

Ortega Guitars started in 1994 with humble beginnings.

The Roland Meinl company (Meinl Cymbals & Percussion) first launched Ortega Guitars as a classical guitar company with traditional roots and production in Spain with only six guitar models for sale. All of the guitars followed the traditional methods in Spanish guitar making, thus making "classical" and "traditional" major factors in their brand.

But a lot has changed in the new millennium, including how



A master luthier works on creating an Ortega Guitar



A glimpse inside the process of strengthening the sides of an Ortega Guitar

The models represent just two of Ortega's carefully-crafted guitars from well-dried wood. Ortega Guitars takes the quality of their wood so seriously that they even explain the hazards that high and low humidity can pose on their website; quality isn't something that Ortega is willing to leave to chance, especially with an artist roster that includes members of The Scorpions and Gov't Mule.

Ukuleles & More

Ukuleles, while filed under string instruments, are another industry entirely, one that Ortega has also delved into.

"The ukulele market is different than others in that the customer tends to buy [based on] what the ukulele looks like and [its] price," Page explains. "We have a lot of unique models to choose from and a great price range that's easy for dealers to fit in with existing lines to give their customers more choices. I'm really excited about ukuleles in general because almost every store has a ukulele customer."

In fact, Ortega Guitars is kind of a misleading name, considering the wide array of products that the company produces.

"Besides the Nylon String Guitars, we also produce well thought acoustic basses, a massive range of ukuleles, mandolins, banjos, and a huge selection of accessories for the stringed instrument world," Page adds.

But the company's latest milestone has been a step into percussion, as Ortega has pioneered "Hands Free Percussion." From Percussion Stomp Boxes to the new ANN-Alog (an analog percussion stomp box), the company has branched out into percussion, their goal being to develop "small percussion items that can easily [be] used by the stringed instruments players without using their hands but instead their feet," as Page explains it.

"We wanted to approach adding a per-

cussive element while playing a stringed instrument from a guitar company's point of view," he says. It's a unique perspective that Ortega has just recently ventured into.

On top of their instruments (both traditional ones and the newfangled), the colorful assortment of accessories that the company sells is nearly drool-worthy, offering players everything from capos and cases to signature series bluegrass strings for banjos and wall hangers for guitars

and basses.

All together, it's a lot to take in, considering the changes that the company has undergone since their grand opening in 1994. The growth has proven to be more than expanding numbers, however; it's moreso an increasingly broad horizon. From where their guitars get their start, to the global roster of artists who play and purchase them, Ortega Guitars has just begun to master longitudinal growth.

MRR



Understanding the Power of Simplicity and the Empowerment of 'No!'

By Menzie **Pittman**

It took a 9 lb. puppy to finally sober me into accepting and employing the tactic that every business book, self-help book, and dog training book puts as their first order and command. Learn to say "NO!"

Keep in mind, I thought I had been doing it my whole adult life. After all, I am a father, a business owner, and, like you, someone with a very hectic schedule. But the dog exposed the ugly truth: although I had been saying "no," I was vacillating and found I was giving justifications and disclaimers as to why.

A Humorous Tale...Pun Intended

Recently my manager and I found ourselves dealing with a recurring problem. Our teachers would not give credence to a simple request: "For security reasons, please do not use the back door." We debated the language that could best be used on a door sign to clarify the importance of our request. We first addressed every teacher individually (sometimes on multiple occasions). However, music teachers think like artists (enough said...) and contemplate any soft words in the message you deliver. Much like children and dogs, they are masters of manipulation. So, the debate with my manager continued because we needed just the right language. We needed to be firm, but not offensive. Tough gig!

There is a Reason a Dog is Man's Best Friend

When this problem persisted and the urgency of teachers not complying with our basic request amplified, I jokingly said to my manager, "We should take a lesson from my puppy training book."

Chapter one says, NO! Chapter two says, NO! Chapter three says... you're not listening, the word is, NO! That's when it hit us both right between the eyes. The sign needed to be simpler, much simpler. As a matter of fact it needed to be one word: NO!

I'm sure you're curious – is it even possible that this tactic worked? Of course, you already know the answer. 100 percent! And the reason it worked is because the tactic was completely simple. There was no confusion as to *why*, or *what*, or any possible *what if*. The answer was clearly given in advance and in one single word: NO!

Could a Two-Letter Word Really Be that Powerful?

Embracing "NO" is not about a word. It's not about being inflexible, and it's not about getting your way. Understanding and embracing the word "no" is about being in touch with your principles and standing by them. Since I have personally revisited the topic of "NO," I have watched closely to understand two things: *when I choose to say the word*, and more importantly *why I choose to say it*. I have paid much closer heed to any circumstances that evoke the feelings in me that would make me consider summoning that word.

One immediate result of saying "no" is having more time in

your schedule for a truly convicted "yes." The requests you do accept have a greatly improved value. You immediately find that you are more refreshed, and clearer in thought which stimulates creativity. I dare say you are happier because you are less conflicted.

Does 'No' Work When the Stakes are High?

We all deal with bigger fish than ourselves, and there are times business can be intimidating. But your job is to protect the core values on which your business is based, and that means saying "no" and speaking up when it's uncomfortable. I'm not saying it's pleasant, but I am saying it's necessary.

Take, for example, banks with hidden fees that are placed on an account that must be challenged, or suppliers of services that take actions without communications, or business people hiding behind a corporate veil or higher authority, or customers

“You immediately find that you are more refreshed, and clearer in thought which stimulates creativity.”

who leverage how much they have spent in your business, or leverage how long they have been with you. You deal with numerous pressures daily and saying "no" empowers you. It's not a money thing; it's a respect thing. And "no" is the key to this door.

Do you dare speak up for the right circumstance and say "no"? Of course you do, and the more you do it, the more comfortable it is to say. How does the old saying go? "If you stand for everything, you stand for nothing at all."

Here's to dog trainers and business books from all over the world who have whittled it down to one simple two letter word: **NO!**

Can I have my treat now? **MMR**



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

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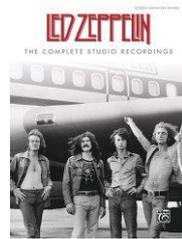
New Releases from Alfred Music

Alfred Music has added two new books to their collection of well-known Greatest Hits Series: *2017 Greatest Pop & Movie Hits* and *2017 Greatest Christian Hits*, both for easy piano.

2017 Greatest Pop & Movie Hits was arranged by Dan Coates and includes 20 chart-topping songs: "7 Years" by Lukas Graham, "Blind Pig" from "Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them," "Blue Ain't Your Color" by Keith Urban, "Chained to the Rhythm" by Katy Perry, "City of Stars" from "La La Land," "Closer" by The Chainsmokers and Halsey, "Don't Wanna Know" by Maroon 5, "The Greatest" by Sia, "Heathens" by Twenty-One Pilots, "How Far I'll Go" from "Moana," "Just Like Fire" from "Alice Through the Looking Glass," "Love on the Brain" by Rihanna, "Mia & Sebastian's Theme" from "La La Land," "Newt Says Goodbye to Tina/Jacob's Bakery" from "Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them," "Not Today" by Imagine Dragons, "Ride" by Twenty-One Pilots, "Shape of You" by Ed Sheeran, "Side to Side" by Ariana Grande, "Starving" by Hailee Steinfeld, and "Tear in My Heart" by Twenty-One Pilots.

2017 Greatest Christian Hits was arranged by Carol Tornquist and includes 12 easy arrangements of the most popular Christian songs from 2017, including "Beloved" by Jordan Feliz, "Chain Breaker" by Zach Williams, "Christ in Me" by Jeremy Camp, "Come Alive" by Dry Bones and Lauren Daigle, "Even If" by MercyMe, "Home" by Chris Tomlin, "I Have This Hope" by Tenth Avenue North, "Magnify" by We Are Messengers, "Oceans" by Where Feet May Fail and Hillsong United, "Something in the Water" by Carrie Underwood, "Thy Will" by Hillary Scott & The Scott Family, and "What a Beautiful Name" by Hillsong Worship.

Alfred Music has also released *Led Zeppelin: The Complete Studio Recordings*, a complete guitar TAB hardcover edition that features all nine of the band's landmark studio albums. These transcriptions offer accuracy for players who want to play the songs exactly as the band wrote them. Included are over 30 vintage photographs and a comprehensive introduction and overview of each album written by Brad Tolinski, former editor-in-chief of *Guitar World* magazine and author of *Light and Shade: Conversations with Jimmy Page*. The book includes the songs from *Led Zeppelin*, *Led Zeppelin II*, *Led Zeppelin III*, *Led Zeppelin IV*, *Houses of the Holy*, *Physical Graffiti*, *Presence*, *In Through the Out Door*, and *Coda*. \$89.99.



www.alfred.com

PRO AUDIO

The ProStudio 4825F from Bittree

The new ProStudio series of audio patchbays from Bittree includes the front-programmable ProStudio 4825F, which is the first-ever patchbay designed specifically for pairing with transportable 500 Series modular chassis. The PS4825F offers 48 TT (bantam) connectors in a 2x24 configuration, with DB25 rear connectors for interfacing with Avid ProTools and Tascam gear. The PS4825F also features gold switching contacts that are welded and electrically bonded to the spring leaves, professional-grade shunts, and designation strips. The 4825F measures up at 12.5 in. x 7 in. x 2.5 in. and weighs only five pounds. MSRP \$625.



www.bittree.com

AMPLIFICATION & EFFECTS



VOX VX50

The VX50 from VOX amplification is a three-model lineup of compact, lightweight, high output amps for acoustic guitar, bass and keyboard. Delivering over 50W of power and equipped with the same high-performance tube found in the MV50 series, Nutube, each amp provides stunning sound quality and rich overtones. For inputs, this amp provides both instrument and mic inputs, the former with a full complement of EQ controls, the latter with phantom power. Unique to the VX50 line is the addition of a Nutube-powered compact vacuum tube bass amp; the VX50 BA. Other features include an original eight-inch speaker and a unique bass reflex structure.

www.vox.com



Dual Expression Pedal from Electro-Harmonix

The Dual Expression Pedal from Electro-Harmonix is a dual output expression pedal that is made from the company's advanced polymer. Through the pedal's dual-output design, users have hands-free control of two devices from a single source. Each expression output has independent range and reverse, in addition to a polarity switch for maximum compatibility with a variety of gear. Price: \$72.70.

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BAND & ORCHESTRA

XO 1602S-LTR Lightweight B \flat Trumpet from KHS America

KHS America has released the XO 1602S-LTR lightweight B \flat Trumpet, the newest addition to their Professional Trumpet line. It features a .460" medium-large bore size, a nickel-silver mouthpiece receiver, a reverse rose brass lead-pipe, and yellow brass valve casings, balusters, and tuning slides. The 1602S-LTR is a lightweight instrument that projects a full, rich sound with low resistance that gives players another voice to express themselves in any musical setting. MSRP: \$3,209



www.khs-america.com

The JP333 Rath Trombone

This step-up trombone is a collaboration between John Packer and the trombone guru Michael Rath that includes a .562 bore, 80:20 brass construction, double adjustable rotors and a JP pro case. From the original JP231Rath .525 bore straight tenor to the JP332ORath .547 F attachment, this is a great horn at a great price point.



www.jpmusicalinstruments.com

CASES & STANDS

New Cases from SKB

SKB Corporation has added four new case sizes to its line of lightweight, heavy-duty Roto-Molded Tripod Cases. All of the cases offer the ultimate protection for transporting professional tripods, lighting stands, hardware, and a wide variety of other types of gear, and are made from rugged linear low density polyethylene. The cases also feature foam in the lid and base to keep gear secure, heavy-duty web straps, two molded-in ergonomic carrying handles and sturdy high-tension slide release buckles. The new cases include the 1SKB-R4111W, which is 41" tall by 11" in diameter, the 1SKB-R3411W, which is 34" tall by 11" in diameter, the 1SKB-R2907, which is 29" tall by 7.5" in diameter, and the 1SKB-R2411, which is 24" tall by 11" in diameter.



www.skbcases.com

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www.majesticpercussion.com

FRETTED

New Models from Godin Guitars

These eight new limited-edition Godin Guitars come equipped with boutique pickups from Lollar, Bare Knuckle and TV Jones. The new models include the Montreal Premiere LTD Desert Blue with Bigsby, the Montreal Premiere LTD Desert Blue, the 5th Avenue Uptown LTD SilverGold, the Summit Classic LTD Desert Blue with Bare Knuckle Mule Pickups, the Summit Classic LTD Cognac Burst Flame with Bare Knuckle Mule Pickups, the Summit Classic Supreme LTD Cognac with Lollar Gold Foil Pickups, the Summit Classic Supreme LTD Cherry Burst with Lollar El Rayo Pickups, and the Custom T 59 Coral Blue RN. Prices start at \$1,050.



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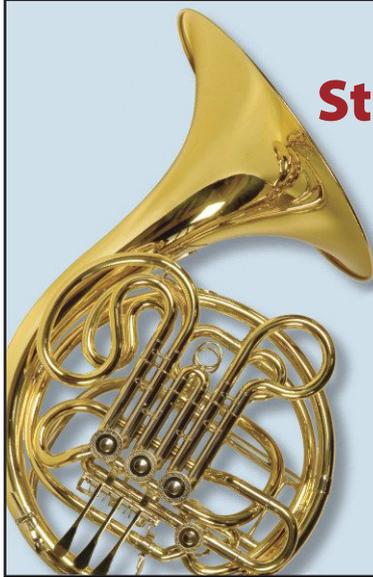
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By Dan Daley

Museumification

A Newish Word: Fortunately, it's not a Dirty One When it Comes to Guitars

We're familiar with the stages of grief and the arc of the typical pop star career. At each of a number of by now well-defined points along the way, you have a pretty clear idea of what the next one will be, whether you're preparing to say goodbye to a loved one or just watching one of the Kardashians crash and burn (again – what was up with that Pepsi commercial?). Creating a taxonomy that guides us through some of the harder-to-navigate passages of life is a tried and true coping method. So what does it tell us when we see a series of museums dedicated to the guitar opening up nationally? Do we have coherent series of stages developing here, or is it just circumstantial evidence?

Earlier this year, two significant museum facilities, both dedicated to the guitar, opened their doors. In Nashville, Belmont University used a 400-plus-piece, \$10.5-million collection of acoustics instruments, donated by the estate of the grandson of Broadway composer Jerome Kern (responsible for such classic songs as "Ol' Man River," "The Way You Look Tonight," and "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes") as the core of its new Vintage Instrument Museum. They're off to a great start – the collection includes six Gibson F-5 mandolins made in 1922-24 and signed by Gibson's acoustic engineer Lloyd Loar, a pair of 1960 sunburst finish Gibson Les Paul Standard guitars made between mid-1958-60, numerous vintage Fender Telecaster and Stratocaster guitars, including a 1955 Stratocaster and a 1952 Telecaster, and a dozen pre-WWII Martin 000-45 and D-45 acoustic guitars, considered by many to be the most ornate Martin guitars made in the 15-inch-wide size. Just as remarkable is who the school has named as the venue's curator: Kern family friend George Gruhn, founder of Gruhn Guitars and a vintage instrument expert, who also serves as co-executor of the estate.

The museum is in it for the long haul: they've made plans to add interactive exhibits, which will let visitors experience the guitars beyond simply looking at them in a glass case, and there are other plans for the museum that include a performance space where many of the instruments will be played by both well-known and student musicians. Several of the instruments may also be made available for students, faculty and musicians to borrow for recordings and concerts. And an ongoing fundraising campaign further seeks to raise another \$300 million for the institution by 2020.

Then there's the new Songbirds Guitar Museum in Chattanooga, where a \$200 million collection of 1,700 significant guitars from the early 20th century to the 1970s are housed in a 7,500-square-foot venue that opened in February. Songbirds also plans to be interactive, displaying approximately 500 of the instruments in permanent and rotating exhibits, grouped by manufacturer, theme and era, with a selection of vintage

acoustic, electric, jazz, bass, mandolin, banjos as well as related memorabilia. And like all encounters between music and fans these days, Songbirds will offer a VIP experience (at additional cost, of course). And as if they didn't have enough in common, the two venues will also share Vince Gill, the Durward Kirby of country music and guitars (and I mean that in a nice way), who will act as part of a seven-member advisory board for Belmont's museum and as the "ambassador" for Songbirds.

No Dead Guitars Here

A certain *Washington Post* article earlier this year predicting the death of the electric guitar was more an elegy than a eulogy. It offered a lot of 50- and 60-year-old voices attributing the guitar's four-decade run as the ultimate musical icon to the talent, ambition and wretched excesses of another batch of 50- and 60-year-

“Taken as group, guitars are treading water, but hardly in danger of dying.”

olds. Their lamentations sounded like a telethon raising funds for a guitar museum or two.

On the other hand, sales of acoustic guitars are on the upswing, at least in terms of dollar value, up 2.6 percent in 2016 versus the electric guitar's 1.7 percent decline last year, and acoustics represent nearly two thirds of guitar market sales now. Taken as group, guitars are treading water, but hardly in danger of dying. More likely, they're in a lull that reflects the change in the nature of popular music of the moment. So a nascent trend of museums dedicated to them should be less a cause for concern and more one of reflection and rumination. The interactive nature of these new guitar venues is also a hopeful note: by offering some hands-on access to a curated collection they increase the chances of inspiring younger potential players.

In fact, museums in general now are less about preserving a fading past than about stimulating thought about their topics for the future. It's why science museums have been the fastest-growing segment of that market for a number of years now. So it's probably a good thing that guitars are getting some curated attention from a museum industry that has spent the last few years learning how not to keep everything they collect under glass. **MMA**

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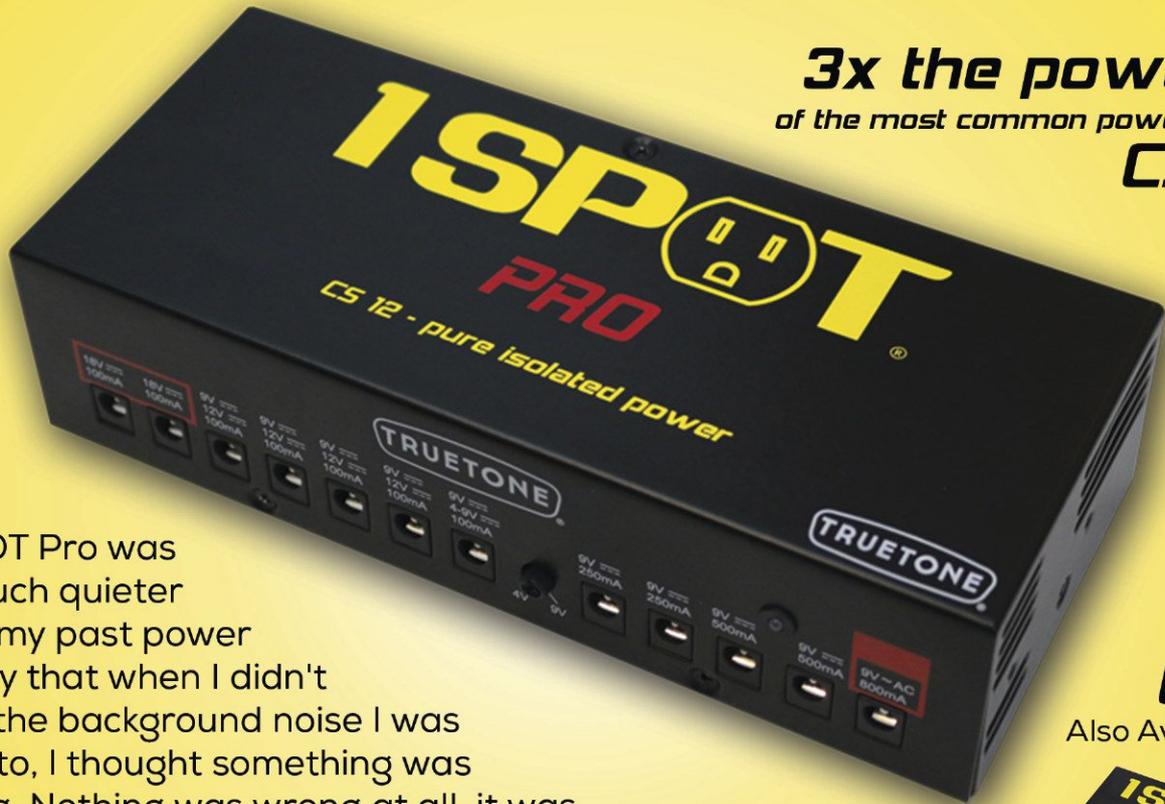
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