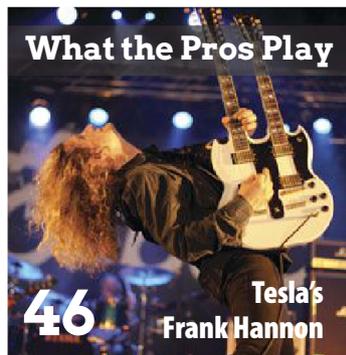


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MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

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No.9

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Will China Save the Piano?

It's been a heady month for the piano business. Hedge fund billionaire John Paulson won a bidding war and took home one of our industry's most iconic brands, Steinway & Sons, for a \$40-per-share bid, twice the price of a share this past December (see story page 6). It sent us in the trades into high gear, and the mainstream media attention was unusual for our humble industry indeed.

The question arose: What do these deep-pocket, smart investors, who haven't previously run a musical instrument company, see in us? For some, there's a one-word answer: China.

Yes, says the conventional wisdom, the acoustic piano market elsewhere is tapped out, but there's China! Its rising cities, its growing middle class... China will be the new frontier.

But some developments this past year that might give some pause. In the August 15 *New York Times*, there was a feature on how the banks' response to widespread default on loans has tightened money so severely that in once-booming Shenmu, a northwestern community, luxury retailers who were recently recording as much as \$500,000 a day in sales are now shuttered. It's not an isolated incident, and interest rates for the small- and medium-sized business as high as 125 percent are being felt there and elsewhere in the country.

"Will that golden goose of China's middle class really appear?"

Three days later, the *Los Angeles Times* reported another phenomenon: China's slowing economy has led to a growing number of college graduates who can't find work. They reported that the unemployment rate for graduates is 16 percent compared to four percent for blue-collar workers. When those grads do take a job, it's often for lower wages than what the factory positions – which require no education – are offering.

The question might be, "Will that golden goose of China's middle class really appear?"

China will always be worth pursuing, of course, but it does not seem to be the basket one should put *all* of one's eggs – or pianos – in. It'll be part of the answer but maybe not *the* answer. On the other hand, I dare anyone who follows the piano market here in the U.S. to read the feature on what is working in acoustic piano sales [page 24] and not be encouraged, even inspired. There are good things happening for smart manufacturers and even smarter dealers right here in the States.

Meanwhile, we all look forward to Steinway's new chapter and continued success. With Paulson's vast resources and emotional connection to the instrument (he owns three), we are confident he'll do well with one of our most treasured brands. **MMMR**



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Industry News

- Industry News
- Financial
- Trade Regrets
- Supplier Scene
- People on the Move

Steinway Sale: Paulson Tops Samick and Kohlberg in Bid



John Paulson

Hedge fund billionaire John Paulson really wants Steinway. While just this past December Steinway stock was selling at \$20 a share, he offered \$40 in mid-August.

A bidding war was sparked by Paulson's unexpected bid on August 13, which initially came in at \$38 a share. The move prompted Steinway's biggest shareholder, Samick Musical Instruments, to attempt to grab the company for \$39 a share. Paulson & Co. quickly shot back with a \$40 a share offer, pushing the value of the company to \$512 million.

Private equity firm Kohlberg & Co., which had made an offer on the company on July 1 of this year, waived its right to negotiate upon Paulson's initial bid this week. Kohlberg had made a \$35 a share bid, which many in this industry saw as a generous offer for the 160-year-old American piano maker.

Going once, going twice? It appears so.

The deal also includes Elkhart-based Conn-Selmer, who acquired Steinway in 1995. The company will now be taken private, and Kohlberg will receive a termination fee of about \$6.7 million from the company.

Paulson is so far tight-lipped on what his specific plans for the company will be, but has said he will "keep the business largely as it is," according to the *New York Times*. The *Times* also reported he owns three Steinway pianos himself, though he doesn't play.

"We're fortunate in this case that John is a personal fan of our product," said Michael Sweeney, Steinway's chairman and chief executive. "His love for the instrument gives him the insight as to how we can build the business."



STEINWAY & SONS

This leveraged buyout is an unusual move for Paulson, who in 2007 bet against subprime mortgages making a fortune when the housing bubble burst. He would repeat that success in 2009, this time putting his money in gold. As of March, *Forbes* puts Paulson's net worth at \$11.2 billion, and lists him as the 28th richest man in America.

Paulson was born in 1955 in Queens, New York. He is a graduate of New York University's College of Business and Public Administration and the Harvard Business School with an MBA. He started his investing career in 1980 and has worked for Boston Consulting Group and Bear Stearns. In 1994, he founded Paulson & Co.

During the 2007-2008 housing crisis, he amassed a fortune betting against subprime mortgages. In 2009 he did well investing heavily in gold, though *Forbes* reported in April that the fall in gold prices cost him dearly, and his company lost a total of \$601 million.

Paulson is politically active, contributing significantly to both political and special interest groups (he was "honored" on Stephen Colbert's *The Colbert Report* for being among the 22 largest Super PAC donors in a 2011 episode). His philanthropic efforts include giving millions to the New York University Stern School of Business and the London School of Economics. Last year he donated \$100 million to New York City's Central Park. He also gave \$15 million to build a children's hospital in Ecuador, the country where his father was born.



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GC Unionization in Chicago

Just a few months since the late-May unionization of the Manhattan Guitar Center retail outlet, employees at a Guitar Center store in Chicago have voted to form the company's second-ever retail union. This is another significant win for the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU), which was unable to unionize two additional New York stores earlier this summer. The new bargaining unit in Chicago will seek to improve wages and to change the store's sales commission structure.

In June, amid vocal disagreement between management and pro-union employees, two attempts to unionize Guitar Center stores in Brooklyn and Queens were either unsuccessful or called off.

RWDSU is claiming that Guitar Center's management not only made frequent "anti-union" comments at employee meetings, but even went so far as to suggest to Chicago workers that winning a robust union contract could lead management to consider shuttering their entire store. (Guitar Center claims the accusation is "positively untrue.")



Musser Arrives in Elkhart

With new positions in its south plant and the equipment in place, mallet percussion maker Musser is settling in well to its new home at the Conn-Selmer Elkhart Campus. Full production began the week of August 18.

This transition has the facility environment excited and moving full speed ahead. Plant manager Perry Richards stated, "The Musser consolidation from LaGrange to Elkhart is nearing completion. A move of this size takes careful planning, intense focus on training, considerable time, and a lot of attention to detail. Our team has really done an outstanding job in each of these areas. We are on-schedule, the equipment and processes from La Grange have been precisely moved. We have a combination of highly skilled incumbent employees moving to Elkhart and well-trained new employees anxious to begin producing the highest quality percussion instruments that are synonymous with the Musser brand."



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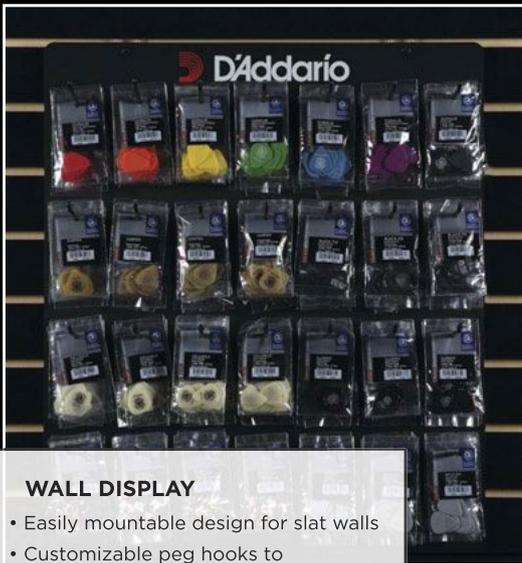


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NAMM Accepting Applications for President's Innovation Award



The NAMM Foundation is accepting applications at www.nammfoundation.org for its 2014 President's Innovation Award to support undergraduate and graduate students pursuing careers in the music products industry.

The cash award supports qualified college students' travel to attend NAMM's annual global music products trade show in Anaheim, Calif., Jan. 23-26, 2014. At the show, awardees will be invited to participate in a special collegiate program offering information, mentoring, and the opportunity to network with industry laureates and professionals.

Awardees will have the opportunity to visit the more than 1,400 exhibits during the four-day event, representing the product offerings

available from the industry's top-tier global music product manufacturers. They are also encouraged to attend the "Generation Next" program at the NAMM Show, which offers college students seminars, networking and career-ready learning experiences.

"NAMM's Innovation Award helps students glean the experience to kick off a successful career path in the music-products industry," said Joe Lamond, president and CEO of NAMM. "The networking opportunities available to students at the NAMM Show and the experience of seeing the music industry in action are unparalleled. We hope this award encourages bright, young minds to become part of a vibrant and exciting industry, fostering its future growth and continuity.

To apply for a 2014 President's Innovation Award, interested parties should visit www.nammfoundation.org or e-mail grants@namm.org. Submission Deadline: Sept. 30, 2013. Awards will be announced on November 1, 2013.

Dean Markley Names Korg UK Distributor

Dean Markley

Dean Markley International, Ltd has announced that Korg UK is now the exclusive distributor of Dean Markley product throughout the United Kingdom and Eire.

"The addition of Korg UK as a partner is yet another example of our strategy to enhance our worldwide distribution network to better support the demands and needs of our customers. We look forward to a strong relationship with the Korg UK organization and driving growth opportunities for both companies while expanding our global customer footprint," says Lori McCallian, CEO, Dean Markley International Ltd.

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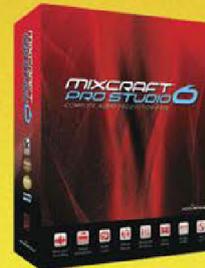
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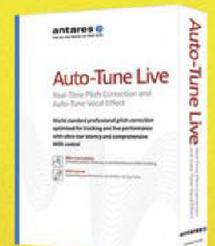
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Taking Gretsch's 130th Anniversary Celebration to New Heights

After crisscrossing the United States to attend a series of events celebrating Gretsch's 130th anniversary this year, Fred and Dinah Gretsch recently took the celebration international. Following an anniversary show at the Sam Ash store in Hollywood on July 20th, they left Los Angeles on the 22nd for a flight to Tokyo, Japan. Because they crossed the International

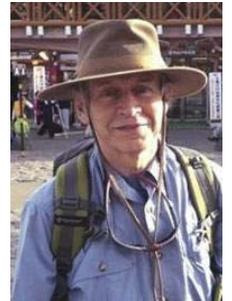
Date Line they arrived on the 23rd — an auspicious date in itself, since it was Fred Gretsch's birthday.

The Gretsches were actually in Japan to celebrate two anniversaries. The first is the Gretsch Company's 130th. The second is the 25th anniversary of Gretsch's distribution partnership with the Kanda Shokai Company. To make that celebration par-

ticularly special, the directors of Kanda Shokai arranged for Fred and Dinah to take part in a unique excursion: a journey to the top of Japan's iconic Mt. Fuji.

And so it was that on July 26 at 4:30 a.m. Fred Gretsch left his hotel for a car trip to a point nearly 8,000 feet up on the mountain. (Dinah followed in a car a bit later to a station at 6,600 feet.) After spending an hour acclimating to the lower air pressure at that elevation, Fred embarked with a Kanda Shokai team and an experienced mountain guide on a six-hour climb to the summit. There — at an elevation of just over 12,000 feet — Fred proudly displayed Gretsch drum and guitar banners to commemorate his accomplishment and celebrate the double anniversary. Then it was another six-hour descent back to the 7,300-foot point and a welcome car ride back to the hotel.

Kanda Shokai has been the Japanese distributor for Gretsch guitars since 1989. Says Fred Gretsch, "When we purchased the company back from Baldwin in 1984 it was our goal to begin



Fred at Mt. Fuji's 5th station, before his climb to the top.

guitar production again. To do that at a professional level required a worldwide search for our old tooling, designs, and engineering. This effort was led by Duke Kramer, who was nearly seventy at the time. While Dinah and I focused on renewing drum production in Ridgeland, South Carolina, Duke traveled the world for the Gretsch Guitar re-launch initiative.

"As Duke traveled in Japan visiting suppliers and factories," Fred continues, "he also visited the best distributors. As the number-two market for musical instruments after the US, Japan is served by several top distribution companies with worldwide reputations. Kanda Shokai welcomed Duke with interest and won his allegiance. In turn, he recommended them to the Gretsch family. Dinah and I visited Japan several times in 1988 and 1989, and we agreed that Kanda had the product team and know-how to service the Gretsch market in Japan. They first offered Gretsch guitars for sale at the Tokyo show in the fall of 1989. And we've been going strong together ever since."

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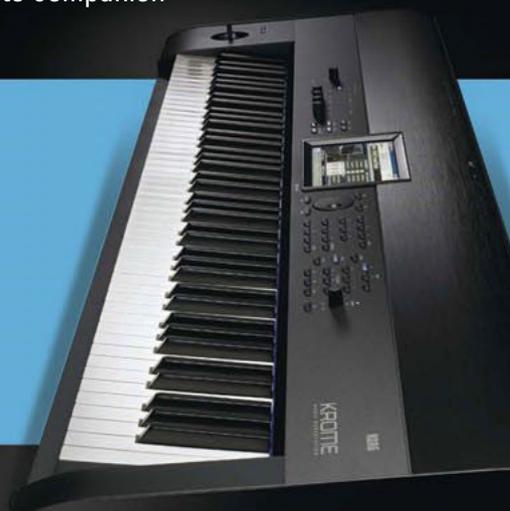
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Steinway Reports Second Quarter 2013 Results

Steinway Musical Instruments, Inc. (NYSE: LVB) recently announced its financial results for the second quarter and six months ended June 30, 2013.

Net sales for the second quarter of 2013 totaled \$92.4 million compared to \$85.7 million for the prior-year quarter. The Company reported net income of \$20.2 million, or \$1.60 per diluted share, for the second quarter of 2013 compared to \$2.4 million, or \$0.19 per diluted share, for the second quarter of 2012.

During the second quarter of 2013, the Company recognized a net \$22.7 million gain on the sale of its West 57th Street office building and \$0.5 million in impairment charges related to its online music business. Before giving effect to those items, second quarter net income was \$4.5 million, or \$0.35 per diluted share.

CEO Michael Sweeney commented on the quarter, "We delivered solid results, improving total revenues by 8 percent while boosting gross margin by 200 basis points and Adjusted EBITDA by 42 percent. We're especially pleased with our double-digit increase in piano sales. Both our band and piano divisions turned in strong operating performances this quarter.

"At the end of June, we achieved a major objective with the sale of Steinway Hall. Shortly thereafter, we redeemed our Senior Notes, paying down all of the Company's long-term debt. With these actions completed, we can now concentrate all our efforts on achieving our operational objectives and continuing our heritage of offering the world's finest musical instruments."

SECOND QUARTER RESULTS

Piano Operations Second quarter revenue increased to \$56.8 million, or 12.7 percent, over the prior-year quarter due to strong wholesale piano sales. Worldwide, unit shipments of Steinway grand pianos increased 20.7 percent and Boston and Essex piano shipments rose 21.0%. In the Americas and Europe, revenue increased 18.2 percent and 19.6 percent, respectively, while exchange rate changes negatively impacted revenue in the Asia-Pacific region. Without these changes, revenue from the region would have been stable.

On a combined basis, production at the Company's New York and Hamburg factories rose approximately 25 percent over the prior-year quarter, helping meet the increased demand for Steinway pianos. Overall gross margin increased 80 basis points over the prior year. The gross margin improvement that results from higher production levels was somewhat offset by lower revenue from the Company's retail operations during the quarter. Training processes in the Company's Hamburg factory progressed during the second quarter, resulting in gross margin improvement of 160 basis points over the first quarter of 2013.

Band Operations Revenues for the second quarter totaled \$35.6 million, an increase of 0.7 percent over the prior-year period. Results were mixed, with a 2.2 percent increase in student unit shipments and a 2.7 percent decrease in professional unit sales. Strong sales of background brass instruments and higher sales of drum outfits offset lower sales of accessories.

Gross margin improved 310 basis points over the second quarter of 2012. Firm control over manufacturing costs allowed price increases to directly benefit gross profit. A higher mix of brass instru-

ments and more efficient production also contributed to the improvement.

Operating Expenses Operating expenses for the quarter increased \$1.3 million over the prior-year period. For the second quarter, legal and consulting fees associated with the Company's evaluation of strategic alternatives were \$2.4 million in 2013 and \$1.9 million in 2012. Excluding these costs and \$0.5 million and \$0.2 million in impairment charges from each period, respectively, operating expenses were up 2.7 percent.

YTD RESULTS

Piano Operations Year-to-date, revenue increased 8.1 percent over the prior-year period, to \$102.2 million. Sales in the Americas were robust, up 18.5 percent, while sales in the Company's Europe and Asia-Pacific regions were on par with prior year. Worldwide, unit shipments of Steinway grand pianos increased 9.2 percent and Boston and Essex piano shipments increased 22.2 percent. Overall gross margin improved 90 basis points over the prior-year period, somewhat less than expected due to the higher mix of lower-margin pianos.

Band Operations Year-to-date, revenue decreased 3.1 percent from the prior-year period, to \$67.0 million. Increased revenue from brass instruments mitigated lower sales of accessories and percussion instruments. Relatively stable manufacturing costs, coupled with price increases, contributed to an increase in gross margin of 450 basis points over the prior-year period. A higher mix of professional instruments and more efficient production also contributed to the increase.

TRADEREGRETS

Longtime music retailer **Maurice Fox** passed away August 9th, at the age of 82.

Even after a retirement from the presidency of Fox's Music in Charleston, South Carolina, (his son now holds that position), Fox still traveled the state selling Allen Organs. Maurice served on the NAMM board and was president of NAYMM and the AMC boards.

Carl Henderson opened his first piano store in Covington, Kentucky in 1963, after nearly 20 years in the finance business. In the early days he struggled to increase his inventory but ensured that he always allowed a budget for advertising. Over the years his newspaper and TV ads have not only helped sell pianos, but have made him a familiar face and name

within his community. Henderson also worked to create meaningful promotions such as their Midnight Madness Sale. At one time, Carl and his son expanded the store to six locations in Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana.

Carl Henderson passed away on Thursday, July 25 at the age of 92.

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Supplier Scene

Orange Amps Present Progressive Music Awards



Orange Amplification is the headline sponsor of the second annual "Orange presents Progressive Music Awards." *Prog Magazine* hosts the event at Kew Gardens in London on September 3, 2013. Newsnight presenter Gavin Esler will once again be the host for the evening's proceedings.

The awards celebrates legendary progressive rock stars and the new up and coming bands in this music genre. This year sees the addition of two new categories – Best Band and Break-through Artist.

"Orange Amplification is synonymous with the British tone that is respected by so many progressive rock musicians," said Damon Waller, managing director. "Supporting the celebration of this music is our way of thanking artists and fans for their continued support over the past forty-five years."

orangeamps.com

Yamaha Supports DCI Corps Through a Long Tradition of Winning

Beginning 29 years ago, Yamaha sponsored its first drum and bugle corps within Drum Corps International activity (DCI). Over the years, the company has deepened its relationship with other successful corps and expanded the range of instruments and musical equipment it supplies. From 1985 on, corps that depend on Yamaha have won almost half of the DCI World Championship titles.

DCI drum corps using Yamaha instruments have collected 13 Fred Sanford High Percussion Awards and seven Jim Ott High Brass Awards. Drum corps affiliated with Yamaha have also won 15 DCI World Championship titles since 1985, representing almost half the titles during that time period.

Marking a new trend in drum and bugle corps performance practices, 81 percent of all World Class Drum Corps use Yamaha Pro Audio equipment to augment their sound, including the 01V96 digital mixer, P Series power amps and Club VC loudspeakers. Several corps also perform with Yamaha synthesizers and the DTX Multi-12 Electronic Percussion Pad system, which features more than 1,200 drum, percussion and effects, including the Madison Scouts, The Cavaliers, The Cadets, and The Bluecoats, among others.



The Madison Scouts DCI Corps.

4wrdr.it/marchperc

Gator Launches New Rotational Molding Website



With the acquisition of a U.S.A. manufacturing plant in 2009, Gator has increased its line of rotationally molded plastic products. Based in Grabill, Indiana, the new Gator factory has since seen continued growth and increases in production efficiency including the installation of an additional Rotoline

brand rotational molding machine.

Now Gator has launched a new website, Gator Molding (www.gatormolding.com) to increase awareness and promote these new rotational molding capabilities. Rotational or 'Roto' molding is a method of forming plastic to create an extremely durable yet lightweight product. The site includes detailed information on the Gator facility, manufacturing capabilities, featured projects, and easy to use contact forms. Lastly, a factory tour video includes a walk through on the production of a molded plastic rack case from start to finish.

gatormolding.com

Steve Morse Takes PreSonus on the Road

Steve Morse, who founded the instrumental group the Dixie Dregs in 1973, continues to pack halls to this day. For the past 15 years, he's also toured and recorded with Deep Purple, as well as his own Steve Morse Band, Angelfire, and his latest project, Flying Colors.

A lot of Steve's writing and recording is squeezed in on the road. "I carry everything I need with me, in my shoulder bag," he says. It's a compact but powerful rig that includes a PreSonus® ADL 600 pre-amp and a FireStudio™ Mobile. Many of the tracks for the Flying Colors album, as well as some of the Deep Purple overdubs, were recorded on the road through his PreSonus rig.



presonus.com

Bassist Shane Hendrickson Tours with the Radial Firefly



Canadian native and bassist Shane Hendrickson currently juggles a roster of shows touring with fellow Canadians Natalie MacMaster and Aaron Pritchett and now also

Nick and Sophie Tweed-Simmons.

Hendrickson has long relied on Radial products. "I remember pulling into gigs where they had all in-house gear that was pretty subpar," he says. "However, when I'd see that old beat up Radial DI in their box of 'stuff' I breathed a little easier."

Hendrickson says that his latest darling piece of gear is Radial's Firefly tube DI, which he uses with a JR-2 Remote. "On gigs where we have an opener, I always offer my rig to the bass player to play through to simplify things," he says. "With the two channels, they can run their bass through the one I'm not using and mess with the channel trim to their heart's desire – it saves time for the crew and makes everyone happy."

radialeng.com

Boosey & Hawkes Signs Béla Fleck



Boosey & Hawkes announced the addition of two classical works – *The Impostor* and *Night Flight Over Water* – by eminent banjoist Béla Fleck to its catalog. Upon signing, Fleck's existing and future classical compositions will now be represented by

Boosey & Hawkes.

Banjoist and composer Béla Fleck is the winner of 15 Grammy Awards and has been nominated in more categories than any other artist in Grammy history. Fleck makes his Deutsche Grammophon/Mercury Classics debut as composer-performer with *The Impostor*, which includes the eponymous concerto for banjo and orchestra, as well as his *Night Flight Over Water* for banjo and string quartet, releasing August 13.

belafleck.com; boosey.com

D'Addario honored in Italy

The D'Addario family was honored this past June in their hometown of Salle, Italy at the inauguration of the Museo Delle Corde Armoniche. The museum was created to pay tribute to the many cordari (string-making families) that arose from the town. The mayor of Salle presented a key to the city to Suzanne and Robert D'Addario, along with a commemorative plate to highlight the D'Addario family's contribution to instrument string-making in the world today.

daddario.com



The D'Addario family received honors from the city of Salle, Italy.

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Receiving the accolade for the sixth time, Shure Incorporated has been named one of "Chicago's 101 Best and Brightest Companies To Work For" by the National Association for Business Resources (NABR).

Shure was selected for recognizing its associates as the company's greatest asset and for showcasing best practices across human

resources and employee enrichment programs. Shure is the only audio company on the 2013 list and also won the award in 2006, 2007, 2008, 2011, and 2012. The evaluation included ten categories that associates value in a company: communication and shared vision, community initiatives, compensation and benefits, diversity and inclusion, employee education and development, recruitment and selection, strategic company performance, employee achievement and recognition, employee enrichment and retention, and work/life balance.

shure.com

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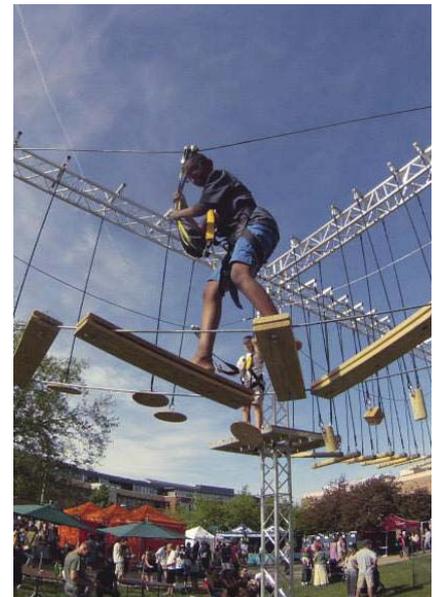
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AirBound Uses TRUSST to Build Portable High-Ropes Course



Making its debut at the Boulder Creek Festival, a portable 20-by-40-by-22-foot high-ropes course built by TRUSST[®] proved to be more than a physical challenge – it was a spectacle. The event generated a line that averaged 100 people for 10 hours straight over the course of the three day festival. Don Kennedy, owner of AirBound, created the course to provide a fun, interactive and physically challenging form of entertainment.

"There is a demand for rope courses and zip line structures across the country and we wanted to create a portable system," Kennedy said. "We built it with TRUSST because we wanted an install that was extremely strong, as well as easy to set up and tear down – being able to secure pins and tear it down in sections really simplifies the process."

trusst.com

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Neutrik USA Supports Lennon Education Bus on Warped Tour



The John Lennon Tour Bus is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization that has traveled across the U.S. and Canada for the past 16 years serving as a living legacy to John Lennon, providing emerging musicians and young people the opportunity to a first-hand music and video education at no cost. This year, Neutrik decided to support the group on the road.

The Lennon Bus made stops with the Warped Tour this year along the West Coast. The Neutrik name was a prominent part of the entire tour's promotion encompassing print, online, and the second annual AP Cover Stars Live Chats. The live stream events were hosted by Warped Tour founder Kevin Lyman, and brought the action of the festival to countless music fans across the world.

Attendees were encouraged to download the official free Neutrik-branded Lennon Bus app to tweet their questions to their favorite cover stars and have them answered live. The John Lennon Songwriting Contest's Vans Warped Tour Prize was presented by Neutrik USA to The Royal, who had the chance to experience a week on the road in California, complete with an exclusive 'Lennon Bus Live' session.

neutrik.com

Rotosound Endorses The Vaccines, Skindred, White Lies, and More



The Vaccines.

Rotosound Endorses played to millions of fans this summer at the year's highest profile festivals and stages throughout the country. At this year's V Festival, three accomplished bass players, Michael "Smooth Groove" Hamilton, Andrea Goldsworthy, and Henry Guy, will be supporting multi-award winning ladies Jessie J, Paloma Faith, and Katy B. Following on from a big set at Glastonbury are The Vaccines, with guitarists Justin Hayward and Freddie Cowan with bassist Arni Arnason.

Rotosound also had over twelve endorsees at the Reading and Leeds Festivals. On the main stage Mikey Demus, from the UK's premier reggae metal band Skindred will be using his signature strings. The White Lies, with a new album due this summer, has guitarist Harry McVeigh and bassist Charles Cave using Rotosound strings.

rotosound.com



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ON THE MOVE

Fishman has appointed **Bill Norton** as VP of Retail Sales. Formerly a professional musician with an extensive background in global distribution and sales, Norton brings a wealth of experience to his new position. Prior to joining Fishman, Norton spent several years as COO at New Hampshire-based Earthworks Microphones.



In his new position, Norton will be responsible for the company retail sales revenue of Fishman branded products, and participate in the planning and launch of new products by implementing short and long-term strategies consistent with the company's growth goals.

Glenn Clutter has rejoined the sales team at **Young Chang North America**. He will be representing Young Chang, Weber, Albert Weber, and Kurzweil pianos in the Southeastern United States plus Texas. Clutter has had an extensive career as a manufacturer's representative in the piano industry. "I'm excited to be joining the team at HDC Young Chang North America," he said. "The company has made an incredible commitment and investment in an optimal new scale design and new products throughout the line. This is an exciting opportunity to help dealers improve their sales numbers and profits in both acoustic and digitals."



Additionally, **Charles Rempel** has joined the Young Chang sales team as district sales manager for the Western United States region. Rempel began his career as a piano technician in Canada. He later moved to Albuquerque, N.M. with his family where he continued his service business and ultimately transitioned into sales.



The Zildjian Company has announced **Mark Sapienza** will join its management team as executive vice president, overseeing the company's sales, marketing, and product management functions worldwide.



Sapienza brings a strong background in all three areas, most recently serving in multiple positions of successive responsibility with ACCO Brands Corporation, one of the world's largest suppliers of branded office products, based in Lincolnshire, Illinois. An amateur musician (saxophone and guitar), Mark is excited

by the opportunity to apply his business experience to his new role in the music industry. Mark will be based at the Company's Norwell headquarters and report directly to Zildjian's CEO, Craigie Zildjian.

Yamaha Corporation of America (YCA) has appointed **Chris Larpenteur** to guitar product specialist for Yamaha Guitars. Larpenteur will be responsible for educating dealers about new products and sales methods, conducting regular store inventories to help identify sales opportunities, and serving as an intermediary between Yamaha and retail personnel. He will report to Dennis Webster, manager of marketing, Pro Audio & Combo Division at YCA.



Larpenteur previously was product specialist at Gibson Guitar Company, where he trained store sales associates on sales techniques and products and served as a liaison between dealers and the company to address needs and issues. Highlighting his career at Gibson, Larpenteur won the Guitar Center Representative of the Year award in 2012. Prior to that he worked at major music retail outlets, including Brook Mays Music in Arlington, Texas, Guitar Center in Lynnwood, Washington, and Mars Music in Atlanta.

Guitar Center has appointed **Christopher Ian Bennett** to the newly created position of vice president, communications and corporate Affairs. This announcement comes as part of a new set of initiatives at GC, which includes a formalized and dedicated communications/corporate affairs department. In his previous role, Bennett led Best Buy Canada's Corporate Communications department under Mike Pratt, now Guitar Center's new CEO. A graduate of a performing arts school in Canada, Bennett's passion for music and new media make him the ideal candidate to lead the new communications strategy for Guitar Center.



In his new role, Bennett will be responsible for the overall internal and external communications strategy of the entire GC organization and affiliated brands, working to drive a clear and singular message. Working closely with GC's current PR agency partners, Clyne Media and Filter Creative, Bennett will be the new spokesperson for the organization.

Larry Morton

Hal Leonard President Larry Morton Takes on an Additional Gig: NAMM Chairman

Apparently someone thought Larry Morton wasn't busy enough. His day job as president of Hal Leonard has kept his head, hands, and heart busy as the company expands into new directions and forges new partnerships (including distributing decidedly non-print items like Line 6 products). Now, in addition to all that, he takes over as NAMM chairman. It wasn't easy, but I got Morton to sit down for a few minutes to talk about what he thinks about the evolution of the organization, the challenges that need to be faced, the hard choices that lie ahead, and what he's going to do to try to make the organization better.



Larry Morton, president of Hal Leonard and new NAMM chairman.

MMR: For the uninitiated or those predisposed to presumption, tell us, what exactly are the responsibilities of the NAMM chairman?

Larry Morton: The chairman role has important functions within the NAMM organization and among the wider music industry. On an internal level, the chairman leads the executive committee and the board of directors as part of the oversight and guidance that NAMM members require of their non-profit organization. This means working closely with NAMM CEO Joe Lamond and his team to ensure that NAMM's programs and services are on track.

On a broader level, the NAMM chairman plays a key ambassador role to promote NAMM's mission of creating more music makers and supporting the importance of music in our society. This involves giving presentations domestically and internationally, meeting with NAMM members and key industry partners, and attending many industry shows, events, and functions.

MMR: What is your history with NAMM?

LM: I originally served on the NAMM Board from 1998-2000, and then later was elected to the executive committee as secretary, starting in 2007. So, that's a lot of years in being involved and gaining an understanding of how to work within a volunteer-driven board. Joe Lamond leads an incredible group of talented NAMM directors and it's an honor to support them and help them in their important mission.

MMR: How has the NAMM Board changed in your years of involvement?

LM: I've been in the music industry for 29 years, so I've witnessed the long-term evolution of NAMM, both the organization and the board. We've seen it change from a "just a trade show" perception to a far-reaching, high-level market-building organization.

Many NAMM members now contact the NAMM organization for support and resources, which is both a huge compliment and a huge challenge.

I have seen an amazing transformation of the board over the years. It is now a fully balanced and comprehensive group

of both retailers and suppliers, representing all segments of the industry. We've seen suppliers have an equal voice and equal vote. We've seen great international representation on the board. We've seen women getting better representation, culminating in Robin Walenta of West Music, now serving as treasurer, who will become our first female chairwoman of NAMM. That's exciting!

I would also add that NAMM is more transparent than ever before and that is a direct result of guidance and leadership from the board over the years.

MMR: By your own admission, you've got big shoes to fill taking over from former chairman Kevin Cranley.

LM: Kevin [of Willis Music] did a phenomenal job as NAMM chairman. He brought many things to the role, including great leadership, careful and thoughtful guidance, a passionate belief in music, broad-based experience as a music retailer – I could go on and on!

But perhaps his biggest contribution is the unwavering integrity he brought to the role. Kevin always wanted to do the right thing, no matter how difficult, with no ego or personal agenda. I'll definitely do my best to follow his example.

MMR: So what are Larry Morton's goals?

LM: With help from the NAMM board and a strategic planning committee, NAMM recently did a complete overhaul of its Vision, Mission, and Objectives (VMO). This allowed the organization to define its priorities and help narrow the focus to those programs and services that matter the most to our members and to the industry.

One of my goals is to work with the NAMM staff to take this to the next level in its implementation. We need to apply our significant resources in the areas that can have the biggest impact on creating music makers. Another goal I have is to help NAMM define what exactly a "music maker" is and what the products are that today's musicians are using to create music. With technology, the internet, apps, tablets, and other mobile devices, the whole set of tools that musicians are using has changed. As a result, new companies are creating new types of products, and those companies need to be brought into the NAMM circle.

I've witnessed the long-term evolution of NAMM...we've seen it change from a 'just a tradeshow' perception to a far-reaching, high-level market-building organization."

MMR: What do you think a couple of the biggest challenges are going to be?

There will always be challenges, so I'm sure we'll have a few more in the next few years. Presently, NAMM is still dealing with an unresolved class-action lawsuit that we hope will get dismissed and off our plate. The economy is still difficult, especially for independent music retailers, so NAMM has to continue to find ways to help those members.

On a macro level, NAMM will continue to look for areas where it can do the most good. Sometimes that might be doing less of some older programs, in order to do more of newer programs.

MMR: We've heard from some dealers that NAMM isn't always as responsive/supportive as it should be. Fair?

LM: NAMM is deeply committed to serving its members. The annual survey of NAMM members illustrates how incredibly responsive and helpful NAMM staff is to the members. The positive ratings are off the chart, amazingly good. Naturally, it is simply not possible to say "yes" to every single request that comes along. The NAMM organization is really great at "yes" and tries not to say "no." If there is a request that is outside NAMM's domain, or not possible for NAMM to do, the staff does its best to refer members to other resources where they can get more information or services.

MMR: Where do you hope NAMM will be at the end of your term?

LM: At the end of the day, all of us who volunteer, elected board members – chairman included – are the "stewards" of NAMM. Our members have entrusted us to provide careful and thoughtful guidance to the organization. We have to be good listeners and help guide the organization forward. My hope for the end of my two-year term as chairman is



The NAMM 2013-2015 executive committee. Mark Goff of Paige's Music, Chris Martin of Martin Guitar, Robin Walenta of West Music, Larry Morton of Hal Leonard Corporation, and NAMM president and CEO Joe Lamond.

that I can leave NAMM in an even better place than when I was elected. I hope to help NAMM grow and gain in its ability to support music.

My dad always used to say "leave a little more wood on the pile" when you are done. That's my goal as well.

MMR: Well, we're rooting for your success.

LM: Thank you. I must add that I am extremely humbled and honored to be-

come NAMM chairman. I attended my first NAMM show in 1985 and I still vividly recall the excitement I felt walking onto the show floor. It is still that exciting to me today. The very idea that a lifetime musician and long term music industry guy like me would be given this opportunity speaks to the amazing business we are all lucky enough to be part of. I take great motivation from the long line of past chairs and presidents of NAMM who paved the trail before me. **MMR**



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by Kevin M. Mitchell

Acoustic Pianos



Acoustic Pianos Today:

12 Successful Ideas That Are Moving Pianos Dealers Getting Creative in a Recovering Market

The buyer is smarter and smarter," declares Thomas Solich of Solich Piano. "We all are. How I buy today is drastically different from even three years ago."

Solich, who has a thriving operation in Boardman, Ohio and a newly opened one in Columbus, is one of several progressive dealers I spoke with for this article. Everyone included here has several traits in common, starting with the fact that they aren't waiting for the customer to come to them, but are creatively and assertively going after sales. They are marketing differently, applying old ideas in new ways, and even doing the opposite of what others are doing. Most importantly, they are doing much more than merely persevering.

"We're almost like the George Costanza of the piano business," laughs Downtown Piano Works' [Frederick, Md.] Don Shykind, referring to the *Seinfeld* sitcom character. "We do the opposite of what everybody else does, and it works!"

"We don't have [traditional] sales!" says Theresa Shykind, almost in disbelief. "We have not had a 'sale' event/promotion in five years. Rather than spend money on a print ad about some fictitious 'sale,' we'd rather invest that into the community by giving away pianos to a school that



Thomas Solich of Solich Piano.

needs one. That's the key to building brand equity, too – they grow up seeing that piano in their community."

Sure, the numbers in employment and housing are inching up, but the smarter people in the acoustic piano business know that that's not going to be enough. Today's piano retailer needs focus on what he or she does best, and explore new ideas.

Internet Marketing. Solich says Kawai pianos are his business' "bread and butter," but are also doing well with Mason & Hamlin, especially when paired with their QRS i-devices. "We're also doing well with Charles Walter Pianos – my customers are touring his factory [in Elkhart, Indiana] and picking out their own pianos." Perzina and Young Chang are also found in Solich's showrooms.

"The piano store with the website that is best optimized for the iPhone is going to be the first store that person visits." – Thomas Solich, Solich Pianos

And all are moving out the door because he's embraced new marketing approaches. Solich says he's pumping thousands of dollars into Internet marketing, accounting for 95 percent of his total marketing budget. "We surround every event with Internet marketing," he says. The money is spent primarily with Google, and by working with renowned AdWord manager David Rothwell, Solich Piano lists high for anyone in the region searching on anything "piano" related.

David Gatt at Colton Piano in San Jose agrees. He also has thrown his marketing dollars at the Internet, patronizing Google AdWords and Yelp. "It's extremely cost effective and it works," he says.

It's a Smartphone World. Embracing the reality of how important the smartphone is to the shopping experience, Solich made sure his site was optimized for it. "The piano store with the website that is best optimized for the iPhone is going to be the first store that a person visits. And if the store personnel do their job, it's the last one as they leave with a piano. People don't even go home and shop on



Solich Piano has great success with special events, like this one he did with the Pittsburgh Opera in 2012.

their computer any more."

Embracing technology and the new normal is key to Solich's success. To dealers who are fearful or don't understand the common technology of the day, he has advice: "Hire someone who *does* understand it, because if you don't use this technology, you're missing a whole stream of buyers."

Get Out of the Store. Solich advocates taking advantage of what manufacturers can do, including going on trips. This past June, he went to a special event for top Shigeru Kawai dealers that Kawai hosted in San Pedro, Calif. "It was exciting for me as a 29-year-old first generation piano dealer to be there with all these heavy-hitters," he says. "I just shut up and listened! It was a day of absolute substance [because] we were all noticing the same trends."



Theresa and Dan Shykind of Downtown Piano Works.

Solich still gets his pianos out of the store, too. While the "college piano sale" seems to have lost its luster with many dealers, Solich reports that his business is still doing well with in-store events and sales through colleges and even the Pittsburgh Opera. "But the key to success on these is there must be credibility," he says. "A college offers that. What isn't credibility is just a 'regular old sale.' We stay away from that."

Return to The Mall. Lacefield Music in St. Louis is a nationally known Lowrey dealer that has increasingly embraced the piano market with success. Now four stores strong ("Four stores too many," jokes Steve Lacefield), they forge ahead with their offerings of Kawai and Pearl River pianos, and Kawai and Casio digital pianos.

Coming full circle, Lacefield has gone back into the mall, opening a location in a popular shopping center in the suburbs this past January. He says that the mall managers were aggressive in bringing Lacefield Music in, offering good terms and prices, so they decided to try it.

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Crescent Super Band Director



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SpotLight: Acoustic Pianos

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Steve Lacefield of Lacefield Music.

“It’s smaller than our other stores, so we have fewer Lowrey organs, more Kawai digitals, and one player grand there,” he says. “We’re just trying to make it open for that impulse buy.”

Pianos as an impulse buy? Yes... including Steinways. “Anything can be an impulse buy,” says David Slan, president of Steinway Piano Gallery St. Louis, which now has a location in a mall in the D.C. area. “Maybe you don’t sell them the first time a customer walks into your mall location,” but buy they do.

In 2009, Slan and vice president and long time partner Gerry Malzone opened their first Washington D.C.-area operation. It was a return of sorts. “We started in a mall all the way back to 1981,” he says. It was in Central Illinois, and while they did some combo business, their emphasis was pianos and organs. They would evolve into having many stores, then one: Steinway Piano Gallery St. Louis.



Steinway Piano Gallery has done well in the Tysons Corner Center mall in the Washington D.C. area.



Slan and Malzone also operate this Steinway showroom in Richmond, Va.

Now they are back, though their mall store isn’t in an ordinary mall – it’s in Tysons Corner Center, Fairfax County, Virginia, the largest shopping mall in the Baltimore-Washington area, drawing some 55,000 shoppers every weekday. Five of the 10 wealthiest suburbs in the country are within driving distance of it.

“We had picked out a freestanding building similar to what we have in St. Louis,” explains Slan. “Such and such promises were made, and in the end, the deal didn’t work out.” A Tysons Corner leasing agent saw a good fit, and Slan was convinced enough to at least try it. “We did so much from that very first day we ended up staying.”

He reminds us that music stores didn’t leave the malls as much as the malls left them – higher rents and unfavorable lease agreements in the 1980s sent MI stores packing. “It’s a great place to sell what we sell,” Slan says, adding one disadvantage: “The [mall] hours can be hard, and we work hard to make sure our people don’t burn out.”

Adult Piano Classes. The Lacefields (Steve, mom Cathy, sons Steve and Larry) have built a successful operation with Lowrey, and are among of the brand’s top dealers. That happened by embracing the Lowrey marketing method, which is a turnkey adult teaching system that gets adults, particularly retirees, taking organ classes, and falling in love with those instruments... with purchases following.

With that idea in mind, Lacefield is having success creating their own program for adults looking to take piano lessons.

“That’s what the mall [location] is so good for – recruiting adults to take lessons,” Lacefield says. The way they see it, even more than other hobbies, even more than other piano stores, their biggest competition is used pianos. “Even badly made pianos can last

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Colton Piano's David Gatt.

a hundred years." So what they noticed is that adults with kids of a certain age, in college or at least driving themselves to soccer practices, are looking closely at their "bucket list" and if they have an old piano around, "learning piano" is on that list.

"So we recruit them, teach them how to play in fun classes, and every week they are learning on incredible products like a Kawai piano, and it's so much better than what they have at home. We eventually convert that situation into a sale, because really every lesson is an hour-long commercial for our Kawais!"

The Lacefield teaching program – which Steve says he's still tweaking – is different from Lowrey in many ways. Interestingly,

Weber pianos in the first range, up to \$5,000," Gatt explains. "We have Hailun in the \$5,000 to \$10,000 range, and then Schimmel in the \$11,000 and up range." For grands, it's a similar formula: Young Chang/Weber to the \$11,000 level; Hailun from there to \$20,000; and then Schimmel above that. (Digital pianos include Roland and Kurzweil.)

"Pianos are in two categories – ducks and swans," says Gatt. "Hailun is a swan, and they have come a long way recently. They are way ahead of the pack in terms of quality, and for a lot less money. Their quality level has really jumped and that's when they got my attention." He adds that Hailun hiring master piano designer Frank Emerson proved that

"You have to recreate and adapt in this business – today we're a lean, mean machine." – David Gatt, Colton Piano

the Lowrey day classes are most successful, but adult piano classes are best at night.

Don't Confuse the Customer, Part I. David Gatt of Colton Pianos in San Jose has had a career that could be described as a microcosm of the piano industry. At one point he had six stores, including a 14,000-square-foot operation with 230 pianos on display. Gatt has downsized all the way to one location with around 50 pianos on display. "You have to recreate and adapt in this business," he states. "Today, we're a lean, mean machine." (Though things are going so well for Colton Pianos that he has plans for more locations in the works.)

The transition doesn't mean Gatt is any less successful – in fact he's doing well, and it's all in the math.

Colton Pianos features three brands for three price points for his two segments. "For uprights, we feature Young Chang and

they meant business. Also they invested in high quality precision C&C machines which greatly increased the consistency of the pianos. "Then there's the 15-year warranty... Hailun is the dragon with the biggest fire in the industry, and I think they are just getting started."

The key is having is all of the ducks – er, swans – in a row. "What is working for me is focusing on a [single] product within a price range," he says. "When you duplicate products in a price range, it causes confusion with the customer and even with the salespeople. I looked at what was best in the low end and got that, and then took the next step up with Hailun, and then finally there's Schimmel in the upper end."

Gatt talked about the "too much" situation in acoustic pianos in general, and the long-term problem of when two or three manufacturers are vying for the same price in the store: "Sales staff doesn't focus."



Colton Piano Store, San Jose.



Greg Depner, owner of Montana Piano in Billings, sells only high-end pianos.

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Don't Confuse the Customer, Part II. Or make it *really* simple for the customer... in what reminded me of Henry Ford's quote, "People can have the Model T in *any color* – so long as it's black," at Downtown Piano Works, you can have any brand piano you want, as long as it's Yamaha. "We're exclusively Yamaha, and sell nothing else – like the Apple Store, we deal with one good brand and we are the experts on them."

And that is working out spectacularly for owners the Shykind. "Sales couldn't be any better," Dan Shykind declares. Sales are up 37 percent and their business is now at the \$2 million mark.

In-Store Concerts. While not a new idea, it's hard to think of any piano retail operation which does as impressive a job with in-store concerts as Downtown Piano Works. They've staged 85 concerts in five years, and are already booked through 2014. Their intimate

65-person concert room brings in some of world's best and emerging artists. "It's such a great experience," says Dan Shykind. "There's great interaction as the artists talk about the pieces they are playing, while attendees can have a conversation with the artist and play on our beautiful Yamaha pianos."

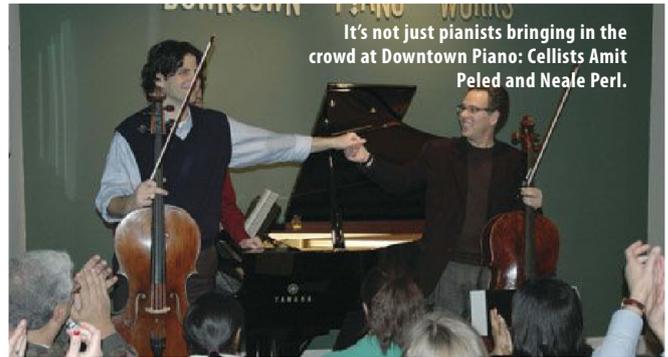
Relaxed No-Nonsense Sales Team. When you walk through the doors at Downtown Piano Works, you won't find any suits and skirts – only laid-back professionals in jeans and T-shirts. "Some piano sales people have a used car salesman approach, and we don't do that," Don Shykind says.

"We don't play games with pricing, either," adds Theresa Shykind. "We don't have an 'A' price and a 'B' price, and we treat everyone as if they are a lifelong friend."

And lifelong friends return to buy pianos, apparently. **MMR**



Pianist Alon Goldstein performed recently at Downtown Piano Works in Maryland. Those in attendance received a preview of his playing before he debuted at the London Philharmonic.



It's not just pianists bringing in the crowd at Downtown Piano: Cellists Amit Peled and Neale Perl.

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The Tried and True: What Still Works in Acoustic Piano Sales

Then there are some things that never change, even if they get a little harder ...

In learning what is working for piano sales in a market yearning to grow, but still a bit stunted, it turns out that there were a few rock solid truths that never go out of style.

Quality People. "Truthfully, the business hasn't changed that much in terms of what has to happen to be a good piano store," says David Slan of Steinway Piano Gallery. "It's always been hard work, and it's always required really good piano sales people." The supply for top-flight professionals for a brand like Steinway is in relatively short supply, he says. "Every market is different, but when we expanded here in D.C., we were lucky to get very good people who are at the top of their game."

Slan pauses and adds: "I'd like to tell you I'm a genius and have all the answers, and while I do have a pretty good idea about how to run a piano store, my people deserve the credit. They work hard every day and it's a real pleasure to work with them."

Quality Sells. Greg Depner of Montana Piano likes

to point out the full, *official* name of his store: "Montana Piano Premium Quality Instruments." He backs that up by only selling two pianos: Steinways and Mason & Hamlins.

As to that "Made in America" label, he says not everybody is swayed by it, "but for some that 'Made in America' instrument is certainly a plus. But at the end of the day, these Steinway and Mason & Hamlins speak for themselves!"



David Slan, president of Steinway Piano Gallery with locations in Missouri, Illinois, and the D.C. area.

"Truthfully, the business hasn't changed that much in terms of what has to happen to be a good piano store." – David Slan, Steinway Piano Gallery

Keep on Keepin' On. If you make it to Depner's store in Billings – and you should as it is one of the most unique operations in the business – you'll be surprised to hear his unlikely tale of selling pricy pianos in a town of only 120,000 people.

"It's unusual here because we really serve a region that has a disproportional amount of educated professionals. There are a lot of doctors, surgeons, scientist, attorneys ... too many attorneys, really!" Depner laughs. Montana in general has been in an envious position in having been left largely unscathed by the Great Recession. Yet he's seen a lot of other piano stores not make it through, and he seems to think a "race to the bottom" had something to do with it.

He says he doesn't have any "sales secrets" to share because he's not a piano salesman – he's a piano technician, and that allows him to talk in-depth about the quality of a Mason & Hamlin, for example. His expertise as a piano technician has earned him the respect of buyers to the point that they are willing to drive several hours to get to his stores. Teachers send their students his way – one in the area has sent 12 who all left his shop with one of his pianos.



Pianist and composer Philip Aaberg holding a master class at Montana Music.

"I take a low key approach to selling, because I don't like it when I'm shopping and someone tries to pressure me. I do tell people that when you buy a quality instrument, it's actually less expensive in the long run. There are little maintenance costs, and they increase in value. I really love these pianos."

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Keys to Education

by Matt Parish

New technologies have allowed for a wide variety of improvements in educational tools, including the ways group music classes are taught. Seen here is Korg's microLAB in action.



As music education continues to evolve beyond traditional classroom environments, keyboard manufacturers have been at work developing new ways to incorporate learning experiences into their latest models. This is a seriously value-added market.

Trade shows in recent years have been buried in an avalanche of new digital technology – apps for iPads and other tablets, upgraded audio interfaces built for access to diverse recording platforms, effects pedals with constantly updated and downloadable effects, and more. Like a lot of software, a calling card of these advances is their open-ended nature – once a consumer makes their purchase, they're often wired into an endless array of updates and new features for the foreseeable future.

In a way, it's been a broad consumer cultural shift. The integration of powerful new software has changed the way many sectors of the industry have done business, from recording software to live sound and lighting and even at-home guitar rig design. But one segment that's been poised to take advantage of this shift for years is electric keyboards, specifically those designed in tandem with educational programs.

It's all about options, according to Roland key accounts manager Ellen Gonzales. "We, as a consumer nation, have changed the way that we consume things," she says. "We're not just looking for things that we can buy to use today. We want something that can grow with us. Just think of iPads – people buy them and then constantly upgrade and add to them. I do think that's a trend that won't go away and it's wise to play into that mentality."

For retailers, this added value that's increasingly inherent in electronic keyboards can open up worlds of possibilities. From improved in-store lesson experiences to completely improved personal education programs on increasingly portable hardware, there are always new ways to get into the action.



HOME LEARNING SYSTEMS

Recent advances like a more universal acceptance of USB and MIDI, recording functions, and iPad compatibility have led to a wide variety of instruments with sophisticated educational features made by most major manufacturers in the game. Casio's continued pursuit of a great, affordable keyboard with lots of educational features expanded last year with their introduction of new Privia models, as well as their "LK" series of lighted keyboards.

Casio's marketing general manager Mike Martin, feels that the key is staying on top of technology. "Unlike other music companies, Casio is also in the consumer electronics business," he says. "Our company has always been forward thinking and has adapted quickly to new technology." Something like recording, which used to require separate hardware and a certain level of know-how, is now simple. "Without cables, wires, or computer interfaces you can make a recording with an ordinary USB thumb drive."

Meanwhile, Gonzales says that products like Roland's successful HPi (Home Piano Interactive) line of electronic pianos have continued to evolve. "We're really taking that original concept and updating it for 21st century learners," she says. Users can manipulate all sorts of audio files by changing pitch, speed, and even remove lead parts from existing recordings.



Casio Privia PX-350

The HPi series use Roland's DigiScore technology, which is a digitized notation tool that appears on the piano's video screen. The tool notates new compositions as students perform them, as well as offering notation of existing songs on the instrument's own drives. The software also offers "visual lessons," which Gonzales calls an "instant assessment tool" and can rate student performances based on missed notes, rhythms, and more.

"This generation has grown up with computer games and all, so they're trained to strive for the next level and the highest score," she says. "A lot of the programs inside the instrument are geared toward teaching them while tapping into that 'gaming drive' that this generation has. We used to call it 'practice!'"

Roland has developed several apps available as free downloads to supplement these programs, including tools focused on flashcards, recoding, rhythmic games, notepads, and ear training. In many ways, it's these types of small updates that could shape the future of digital keyboards. Gonzales says it's simply a matter of support.

"You're getting more than just an instrument now – you're getting ongoing support which will always be growing and changing. It will feed you changing, evolving tools as time goes on and it keeps your instrument new and fresh."

Yamaha has continued a decades-long run of innovation in the keyboard segment, including their own proprietary education system – the Yamaha Education Suite (Y.E.S.) – that's included on everything from their portable PSR-E models to the new DGX-650 digital piano. Yamaha product manager Nate Tschetter says education is key in the company's product development. "Education plays a big role – it's a part of every instrument we have," he says. The system works as an assessment tool and a versatile accompaniment program. Additionally, the company has a partnership with Hal Leonard Corporation to apply the playback lesson functions to popular music by artists like Coldplay, Adele, or Elton John.

"The dealer tie-in with that almost works the other way around," notes Tschetter. "We realized that our dealers mostly all carry these Hal Leonard books, and we have probably a 15-year history of creating MIDI file accompaniments using our XG protocol that our instruments have, so why don't we put the two together? We have a great relationship with Hal Leonard – if we make accompaniment for these books that can tie in this learning component, we can have a really powerful way for people to teach themselves the songs they need to play."

Tschetter also points to Yamaha's EZ-220 as a key model in the company's push for educational instruments. The model can be paired with an iPad app that displays a piece of music



Korg microKEY-25

and turn the page at appropriate times by "listening" to the performance using a technology called "InfoSound."

The company has also developed two portable keyboard sets (the PSR-E243 and PSR-E343) that tie into an app dubbed "My Music Recorder," designed for parents to record their kids' performances. "It'll record video and MIDI files at the same time, so you can use it for playback and to share with friends and relatives," says Tschetter. "They can give them little virtual stamps and things, so when you practice every day, you can accumulate these little stamps."

Kawai pianos also points to a partnership with a publishing company – in this case Alfred Music – to bolster its onboard play-a-long libraries. Tom Love (senior director of online marketing and electronics) says the two companies have worked together for 10 years. "The value of this to a student is that they have a flawless example of the song they are practicing to listen to," he says. "They can slow it down, practice along with it, and even turn off the left-or right-hand part. Upper digital models also have built-in finger exercises – scales, arpeggios, chord, and Hanon exercises – with which they can do the same."

Love says the majority of Kawai's digital models feature USB audio capabilities, including the ability to play and record in both WAV and MP3 formats.

Note From Our Members

NAMM Members on the Benefits of Belonging

As your industry association, NAMM continually works to offer events, training, programs and services designed to help its Members grow and prosper, but there is also a more personal connection to the work we do each and every day. Best told by them, here are two perspectives on the benefits of joining this close-knit international community and staying current by renewing your NAMM Membership along with thousands of other companies in September and October.



Doug John and Francie Denis are new to the business, starting from scratch to build Legend Music in Manteca, Calif., in March of 2011, and adding their Fresno location about one year later. As Doug explains, being part of a larger

network of music product professionals has been invaluable as they work to grow their retail business, lesson programs and community connections.

“I find that NAMM has a great network for meeting people, talking to manufacturers and distributors, and other dealers especially. It helps to find out their tricks of the trade, how

they do things, how they promote things. Those connections have been the biggest thing we’ve taken advantage of so far, being so new. This last Nashville show, we made some very good contacts and met some really nice people.

“After winning the Top 100 Dealer Award for Rookie of the Year, we got a copy of the press release before we even returned home. We plan to send it to the local press and share it with our customers. I think it will be a real asset to our business. Like I said when we won our award, this is a unique industry. I was in the industrial sector for 47 years, and in the not-quite three years of doing this we’ve had more fun, met more nice people and made more friends than during those 47 years. The kids in our lesson program are a major part of that—it makes you walk three feet off the ground when you see somebody click with music.”



Dale and Phyllis Webb, owners of The Magic Fluke Company, in Sheffield, Mass., manufacture ukuleles in the United States and are focused on creating music-making opportunities within their community. A Member for

10 years, Phyllis reflects on how the industry comes together through NAMM.

“One line I say regularly is that ‘we cannot afford to *not* be at the NAMM Show.’ That, traditionally, has been where we

make connections with new dealers and come face-to-face with retailers we may have gotten over the phone but are now meeting in person for the first time. Technology can’t erase what it is to talk business, network and solidify our relationship face-to-face. We’re creating new relationships with other manufacturers too. In this changing world, we really need one another—and we need to market our community together.

“I’m also really proud of the work the association is doing for music advocacy. Districts are losing music and arts because there’s no time or budget. NAMM’s work to keep music in the schools is so important and something I think the association does well.”



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Yamaha PSR-E243



DISTANCE LEARNING CAPABILITIES

Distance learning has picked up steam in every sector, from wired-in college lectures down to free online course material. As always, Yamaha's remote lesson capabilities on their digital enhanced Disklavier models are a standard bearer, but other interesting developments continue to sprout up.

One notable player is PianoDisc, the modern "player piano" system that has made waves with its technology for translating digital files from iPods, iPads, YouTube, and various other media, into a real-time performance on a piano.

But the next level is surfacing now, and it involves a reversal of that formula – where students can upload performance files



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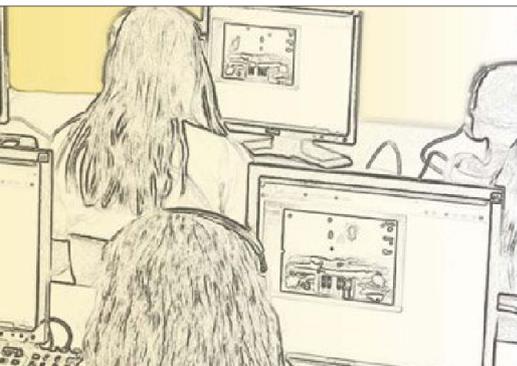
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over the Internet via the company's remote learning network and YouTube channel. PianoDisc expects a new sort of community, set to involve pianists, educators, and fans who can all share performances and feedback with one another. Pianist Jarrod Radnich has sung the system's praises. "This system allows me to see exactly how the musician is handling the dampers on the strings, timings, velocities, and durations, and I can review the performance any time it is convenient for me to do so," he says.

SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS

Korg has installed lab systems and educational tools in over 1,200 schools across the country. Korg's Tiffany Stalker, senior manager of their educational division, says that a solid relationship with school programs is of utmost importance. "As an education division of a piano and keyboard manufacturer, of course our main focus is on getting the best keyboard and piano technology in schools," she says. "This exposure to students is a great way to build brand loyalty and hopefully a customer for life, but we have a great responsibility to make sure these students have the technology and quality they need to be successful musicians."

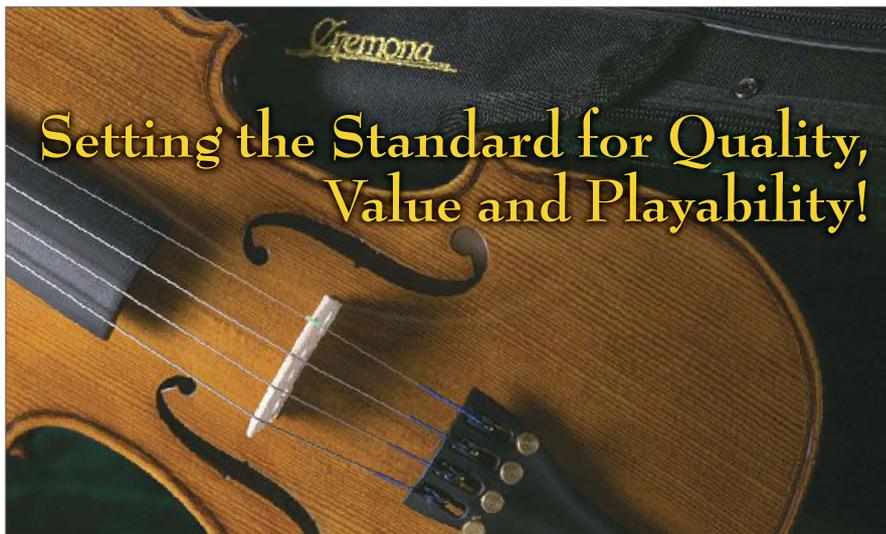
Stalker says the company's progression of products – from the new Korg Kross to its flagship keyboard, the Kronos X – is designed so students can grow with them. "Students have the ability to learn at their level," she says. "Korg has made an effort to create technologies that will attract customers for life."

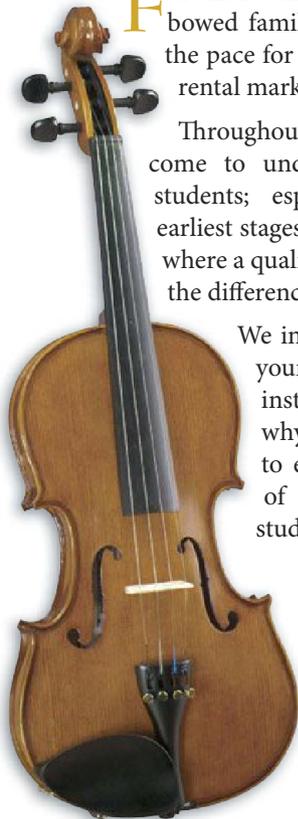
At Roland, Gonzales says that she's finding an increased dependence on tablets at schools, which in turn affects the types of products manufacturers and retailers need to focus on to hold their attention: "A lot of the schools are

becoming all-Apple schools. The Core Curriculum standards are changing and the districts are having to incorporate technology. Textbooks aren't as common – they're getting an iPad with the text on it. So for the music department to be able to also take advantage of the technology, it's wonderful."

Beyond simply keyboards, many of these companies are also developing

ever-more advanced music lab systems, some taking direct advantage of the growing technology in those schools. The new Korg microLAB, introduced just this summer, is a perfect example. "This is a new lab concept that really speaks to schools who never thought they'd be able to afford any kind of music technology," says Stalker. "It takes advantage of any existing





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computer or iPad lab the school might already have and enables it to also be used as a turn-key, portable music lab for a fraction of the cost of a traditional music lab." The system comes as a package, which includes 31 compact Korg microKEY keyboard controllers (either 37 or 25-key models, depending on the lab chosen). These can then plug into a computer or iPad. The package also includes headphones and different curriculum options for any K-12 or college music program.

Of course, there are also a variety of new and improved traditional lab programs. Korg's GEC3 is built for class-size flexibility and includes curriculums for many age groups. Kawai offers a digital lab system, the KLCS, which allows a teacher to conduct a class of up to 48 student instruments, pairing them or isolating them in countless configurations. Roland's lab system, the GLC-1, allows up to 48 instruments as well, and is currently in use in a variety of applications, including at the USC Thornton School of Music's percussion labs.

IN-STORE DIGITAL LESSONS

Of course, it's a given that in-store lessons have been and will probably always be an unmatched way to build community and loyalty to the retail shops that host them, but a few innovations unique to the keyboard market are always worth special consideration.

Yamaha's "Keyboard Encounters" program celebrated its 20th anniversary last year and continues to roll with popular group piano classes for ages 10-adult throughout the country, and the educational software they have written for the Clavinova and portable keyboards is always being updated.

Charles Anderson, the program's director, says that Keyboard Encounters is not only adding new accompaniment styles, but is also beginning to utilize its more portable models of keyboards. "In the last year, we've decided to expand the program out to portable keyboards, especially in the DGX series," he says. "That has opened up a lot of doors to people teaching in non-traditional places like community centers, smaller dealers and charter schools. This is very new for us."



Yamaha CVP-509 Clavinova



Roland HPI-7F

The Keyboard Encounters program has six modules or books. Depending on the group, the program could last a year and a half to two years, after which students progress to private instruction. The student software includes all the accompaniments for songs and exercises, while the software that is provided to the teachers includes music appreciation, music history, ensemble playing, theory, and improvisation.

Anderson says the program goes a long way toward building a solid cus-

tomers base for retailers. "When we look at market development, the dealers who understand that Keyboard Encounters is a process that leads to sustainable growth, they'll do well no matter what's happening in the market," says Anderson. "The students will keep coming in and learning, developing loyalty to the store."

AUTHENTICITY

All advances aside, most educators and students alike agree that an

SoundTree Spreads Its Roots

Korg's massive online learning program – the SoundTree Institute – has continued to develop as a full supplement to music teachers of all types. "SoundTree plays an integral part in the Korg Education Division," says Korg's Tiffany Stalker. "It allows us to have tight-knit relationships directly with schools and educators that gives us a unique and necessary insight to their needs."

Korg's SoundTree division is designed as a full service educational solution. "SoundTree has grown and branched with the SoundTree Institute (institute.soundtree.com), a tech-savvy online professional development solution for music educators to stay on top of the most current music technology in the classroom. Music instructors have the ability to lean on the expertise

of SoundTree for hardware, software, training, and support for anything music technology in the classroom."

She adds that the SoundTree Institute will continue to grow as they introduce more and more lesson plans, training and technology sessions to help teachers grow and develop music technology in their programs. "SoundTree has been a huge supporter over the years in music education and you will see that develop and grow in the years to come," [s/he says.] "Korg understands and appreciates the critical part educators play in our kids' lives and their dedication to teaching them the love of music and we are devoted to supporting their efforts in any way we can."

authentic, traditional feel is integral to any musical education experience. "Any exposure to actual keys is always a benefit in teaching," says Stalker. "There really is only so much you can do with an app and a small screen – no matter how cool or well thought out." Stalker points to the Korg microKEY's ability to pair with the iPad to create a tactile experience.

Casio's Privia models, which weigh in at a portable 25 pounds, have always boasted accurate weighted feel on all of the keys, as well as improved audio processing to react to pressure on each key realistically. Similarly, both Yamaha and Kawai place great importance on "true" piano feel. "We focus intently on developing tone and touch that emulate our acoustic pianos as closely as humanly and technically possible," says Kawai's Tom Love. "If it doesn't deliver the proper feel and sound, then it doesn't matter what new technical frill adorns a digital piano."

Gonzales touts the surprise many educators will experience at modern keyboards as a major selling point. "A lot of teachers haven't played a digital piano in many years and still have this idea that every digital instrument is this electronic machine with no weighted keys that doesn't feel authentic," she says. "It's great to see them when they first sit down to play the pianos and realize that the action is in many ways superior to a lot of acoustic pianos. If not at least as good.

"The most rewarding thing for me, since I work with educators all the time, is seeing educators realize how far we've come." **MMR**

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Gruhn Guitars' Big Move

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George Gruhn holding a 1924 Gibson L-5 (\$60,000) and a 1940 Stromberg Master 400 (\$90,000).



A vintage SG awaits repair on the third floor at 2120.



A 1964 Gibson Firebird III hangs on the wall alongside its brethren.



by Christian Wissmuller

“That area is just so noisy now,” says George Gruhn of Gruhn Guitars’ former longtime location at 400 Broadway in downtown Nashville. “It felt like a cross between Bourbon Street and Daytona Beach during Spring Break. It was great as far as sales tax revenue for the city, but it’s *not* the ideal place for selling guitars. It’s the ideal place for selling beer, bar-b-que, and Western Wear. Also, parking is nearly impossible anywhere near that block. It can be as much as \$20 to park on a regular day and as much as \$40 on ‘event days.’ Locals were beginning to avoid the store.”

Such ruckus and other related issues are no longer a concern for the storied guitar dealer, which celebrated a grand opening at 2120 Eighth Avenue South earlier this summer. While the new digs aren’t nearly as immediately accessible to the casual tourist, that doesn’t seem to be negatively affecting business – and also has some upsides as a result. Not only was the parking lot completely full at the new location when *MMR* dropped by to visit with George at 11 a.m. on a recent Wednesday, but at 400 Broadway: “The people coming through the door were 95 percent folks who did *not* come to us as a destination, but would get in the neighborhood and go in and out of every door. Here we have 45 parking places, we have an 18,000 square-foot building, and we have better floor layout that’s custom-done to suit us.”

Gruhn Guitars’ first opened in Nashville back in 1970 along Fourth Avenue. Four years later, the operation moved to the Broadway location where it remained until this June – during which time it gained worldwide recognition as one of (perhaps *the*) premier outlet for vintage and high-end guitars and related gear (though Gruhn does stock a select number of new instruments, as well).

“Moving wasn’t an easy decision,” Gruhn concedes. It’s unquestionably the end of an era and there’s certainly plenty that would (on the surface, anyway) make the previous spot on Broadway’s honky-tonk strip seem ideal – proximity to famed destinations such as the Ryman Auditorium, Ernest Tubb’s, and Robert’s Western World, and the resultant guaranteed foot-traffic – but the change in the neighborhood’s character in recent years was enough to serve as a catalyst for George to make the big move. “My entire career up until this point had been spent with-



“It took no more than three days in the new location to realize that it was the right move.”

in 100-foot radius of the previous store. But we’re now only 10 minutes away from downtown, this is an up-and-coming neighborhood, and the new facility is more suited to our needs. It took no more than three days in the new location to realize that it was the right move.”

Specifically, the 2120 Building features a customer-friendly showroom on the first floor, an additional showroom on the second floor that houses more high-end items and administrative offices, a third floor which serves as the new repair shop, and a 45-car (free) customer parking lot. All of this is the result of a comprehensive \$500,000-plus building renovation.

“We now have ample space and the instruments are all visible at eye-level,” notes Gruhn. “We didn’t use to have the physical space to display everything that we had. Now everything that’s for sale is on display. You can see it, there’s room to try it out, and the staff can wait on you if you want the help or leave you alone if you don’t.

“We’re happier here.” **MMR**



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Chromatic Improvement

Budding musician Mark A. Sanderson's homemade deck of cards took his own understanding of music theory to the next level. Now his company, Knowledge of Music, is taking this simple but innovative new concept to musicians everywhere.



Mark A. Sanderson,
founder of Knowledge of
Music and inventor
of Chromatics Music
Playing Cards.



Mark A. Sanderson was well into a career in software engineering by the time music theory clicked for him. As a friend watched him in awe while Sanderson rattled away at 70 words per minute on a computer keyboard, he heard himself explain that he was able to type so fast because he had long ago stopped thinking about the keys and the computer.

"I don't play the computer," he told his friend, a guitarist named Chris Couture. "I play the music inside the computer, and I know that music really well." Sanderson soon realized that years of off-and-on music training, which had amounted to very little in the way of results, had all failed on one particular level. They hadn't actually taught him the vocabulary of music to the extent that he could stop thinking about it.

Sanderson's deceptively simple music ed innovation – "Chromatics Music Playing Cards" – are designed to make mastering those basic building blocks of music vocabulary easier than ever. For him, the equation was simple. "Everybody knows how to build a royal flush," he says. "Why don't we know how to build a Cmaj7 chord?"

Chromatics made their first splash at the Winter NAMM Show in 2011. That earned Sanderson's company, Knowledge of Music, a Best Tools for Schools honor for the cards' ease of use and ingenious method of teaching intervals and chord structures. At the following Summer NAMM Show, the product won similar acclaim. The cards are slowly growing steam. Sanderson says they've already made their way into over 200 music retailers nationwide, and he's just finalized a distribution deal this summer with Hal Leonard, which should see the expansion continue to new levels.

The cards themselves are built nearly identically to a standard deck of poker cards. Each suit represents one of four octaves, which are divided into 12 notes (a special "K" card can be added for certain games). These cards translate into traditional card games like Rummy 500, Poker, Solitaire, and even Go Fish.

It all goes back to Sanderson's realization about music and language. After his conversation with Couture about "playing the computer," Sanderson encountered a similar message from his Naples,

Florida piano instructor, Don Barber. “Music is a language, he told me,” says Sanderson. “The vocabulary of that language is scales and chords. What you need to do is learn all of them, and learn them so well that you don’t have to think about them when you want to use them.” The sentiment was echoed later that year when Sanderson attended a camp led by jazz legend Jamey Aebersold, who preached to his students that same refrain – “Music is language.”

He created a set of index cards with intervals of chromatic



“Everybody knows how to build a royal flush. Why don’t we know how to build a Cmaj7 chord?”

scales on them and, as he was flipping through them, began to wonder – could he play poker with these cards? Sanderson curiously figured the odds of drawing a ninth chord randomly from a full set of piano keys. To his surprise, the odds ended up being remarkably similar to drawing a royal straight flush from a poker deck.

“Well, as I came to realize that, I thought that if I could design this deck of cards so that the way to build chords was self-evident thanks to their design, we could play card games with little tiny children,” says Sanderson. “Just play ‘High-Low’ or ‘War.’ You could take a six-year-old (and I’ve done this myself) and play these games, and they’ll learn the chromatic scale very quickly. They learn 26 letters in the alphabet, so there’s no reason they can’t learn the 12 letters in the chromatic scale.”

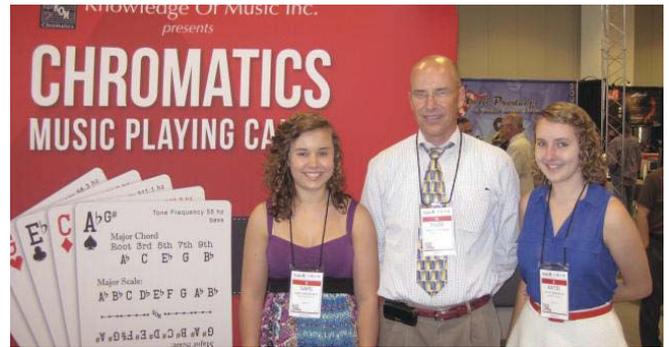
With the help of his own invention, Sanderson himself evolved into a highly competent musician, eventually getting a gig with a pro local band doing three-hour shows a few nights a week. He figured if the cards could help him master musical language, he might be onto something. The ensuing success has been almost non-stop, with new customers all the time and new ideas for games rolling in, including Knowledge of Music’s first mobile app, a free version of the solitaire game that Sanderson designed, with further games available for a few dollars.

“One of my favorite customers said this past January, ‘Mark, I bought your deck last year and we’ve worn out several of them

now because we’re in a band and we’re playing poker every night, and we always use your cards. Thousands of dollars are being bet on your cards every week!’”

While Sanderson looks forward to growing the business – he currently runs it with his daughters, Sami and Katie, while also working full-time in software – he seems to light up at the thought of a changed culture around music theory.

“What I’d love to see happen is to have our product become so commonplace in music education that everyone knows our scales and chords,” he says. “Just imagine a kid going to their very first music lesson and they already know all their scales and chords. Wouldn’t that be a mindblower?” **MMR**



Mark Sanderson flanked by daughters Sami and Katie at this past Summer NAMM show.

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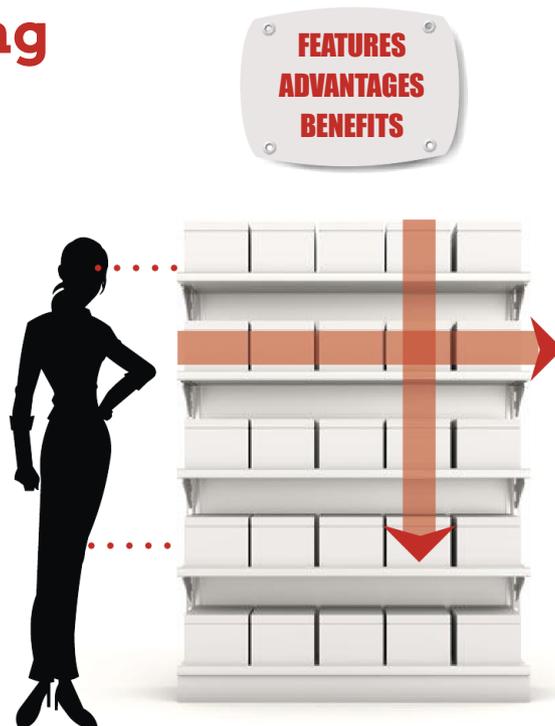
Ten Simple Merchandising Tips that Maximize In-Store Sales

Are you as customer-friendly as you could be?

by Tracy Leenman

Today's customer has less and less time for shopping. Most people consider shopping a chore – and a stressful one at that – so they place a premium on convenience. Is your store merchandised in a way that contributes to that stress, or is it set up to provide each customer with an enjoyable, stress-free shopping experience?

You want customers to be comfortable in your store and able to find what they need easily. The more comfortable they are, the more time and money they will spend with you. Here are some quick and easy ideas for making your store more shopper-friendly:



“If people have to ask for an item frequently, it needs to be remerchandised.”

- 1 Give your customers space.**

Leave at least four feet between fixtures and at least six feet between fixtures and walls. The trend in retail today is toward more space, especially at entryways. Space says “class.” (Notice that discount stores tend to be crowded.) Aim for an open look, particularly in the parts of your store where you offer higher-end instruments.
- 2 Display for the uninitiated, not the professional.**

Professional musicians know what they want and will usually find it no matter where you put it. First time visitors to your store should be able to find what they need easily – preferably without having to ask for help.

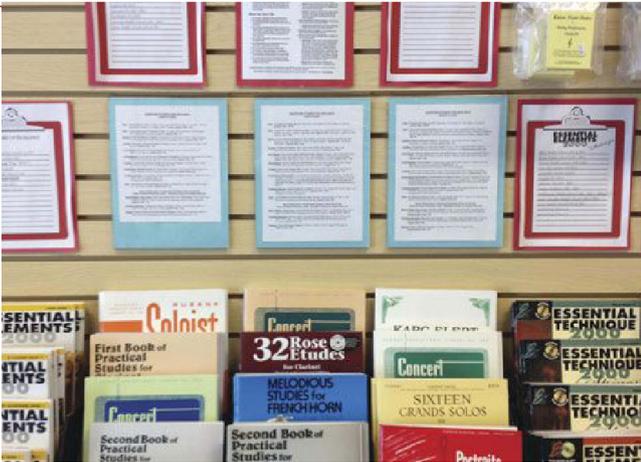
One store I visited put instrument care kits in a row, neatly, in score order. But for a parent of a new beginning band student, score order is meaningless. If you put all the accessories for each instrument together, parents do not have to wade through trombone accessories to find something they need for their beginning clarinetist.
- 3 Eliminate SKUs.**

Customers with little knowledge or experience with musical products shouldn't have to make complicated comparisons or decide between too many SKUs. Customer confusion usually leads to the customer buying the least expensive product available or walking out, frustrated, with no purchase at all.
- 4 Display vertically, not horizontally.**

People can comfortably survey a visual field up to about two and a half feet wide. Displaying vertically brings more items into sight range. Put related items together – such as mouthpieces and reeds, trumpet valve oil and tuning slide grease – to promote add-on sales.
- 5 Place merchandise between knee level and just above eye level.**

Customers shouldn't have to bend down or get on their knees to find merchandise. They also shouldn't have to ask for someone to get out a ladder. Wall space above eight feet high is perfect for larger signage and other graphics, but not for merchandise, even back stock.

Placing slow-selling items in a more comfortable sight range can help your turn.



Spelling out the information that customers need makes for a better shopping experience.

Display left to right, top to bottom.

6

We read left to right, so our eyes move in that direction across our visual field and stop at the right. Put less-expensive options to the left and more expensive to the right. Place smaller items higher and larger items lower so the visual field looks balanced. Be willing to move items if they aren't selling.

In general, if people have to ask for an item frequently, it needs to be remerchandised

Be careful with patterns.

7

We hate to disrupt patterns. Putting items in neat, little rows looks nice but discourages customers, who may hesitate to mess up the pattern. Try a "bowling pin" arrangement instead. The odd man out just gets to be taken home.

Get customers the information they need to be comfortable making buying decisions.

8

Having to ask questions can add stress to the shopping experience. Use signage that educates. For instance, we label beginner band books so parents can find them easily. Clipboards hang above the books, so customers can see the area schools that use each title.

Spelling out the information that customers need makes for a better shopping experience.

Signs should include features, advantages, and benefits (FABs). Signs listing specs that aren't connected to a tangible user benefit are meaningless. Include prices on merchandise, as a lack of visible pricing can create suspicion. That said, put prices on the back, so customers have to pick up items and turn them over to see prices. Customers will be more likely to buy an item if they hold it.

Package items that belong together.

9

Save your customers the frustration of getting home and realizing they're missing one item that they needed. We offer an Encore Package at a discounted price to every beginning band and string customer. The pack includes a method book (which we call a textbook), a folding stand, and an instrument care kit. We don't want to upset a customer because a child went to school and found out he really did need that folding stand and we didn't offer it.



Placing items like valve oil in a "bowling pin" pattern can yield better results.

10 Clean up, including the bathrooms.

A clean store shows you care and will inspire confidence in your customers. Dust display instruments regularly, replace burned-out light bulbs, and make sure the bathroom has plenty of soap and paper goods.

As you strive for more customer-friendly merchandising, you will find more creative ways to display and package your merchandise. You will also find that your customers and employees are more comfortable with what you sell, and you will see your sales increase.



Tracy Leenman

Tracy Leenman is the owner of Musical Innovations, a school music retailer based in Greenville, S.C. She received a Bachelor of Music (magna cum laude) degree from Syracuse University, with a double major in Choral and Instrumental Music Education. She earned a Master of Music in Music Education with an emphasis in conducting, also from Syracuse University, in 1983; and has done course work towards a Ph.D. in Music Education at the Eastman School of Music. In addition to nearly 40 years of teaching experience, she has over 14 years' experience in the music industry. She is a frequent featured speaker at industry trade shows.

This article is courtesy of NAMM U Online, namm.org/nammu.

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House of Troy 

Tesla's Frank Hannon



As founding guitarist of veteran rock act Tesla, Frank Hannon's playing style has been a defining element behind numerous classic radio staples, including two massive top-10 hits in the late '80s and early '90s. Be it the acoustic stomp of "Signs," the aggressive almost-metal of "Edison's Medicine," or the arena-rock grandiosity of "Love Song," Hannon's distinctive approach to the instrument – drawing upon obvious influences, while putting his own signature spin on everything – has impacted many and made an indelible mark on popular music.

Currently touring behind his band's summer 2013 single, "Taste My Pain" (their first new studio recording since the 2008 LP, *Forever More*), Hannon recently took a break to speak with *MMR* about the gear he uses to achieve that unmistakable Tesla groove...

MMR: Let's dive right in: What guitars are you playing these days?

Frank Hannon: In general, I mostly favor Gibson SGs. The mahogany body resonates a little bit more than a Les Paul. I'm playing the Gibson Custom Robbie Krieger model SG that's designed like the original SG I had that got stolen years ago. It's essentially a '68 SG reissue with the ABR-1 Bridge and Maestro tailpiece tremolo system – the whole bit. On this tour, I'm using my 1987 cherry red double-neck SG [Gibson EDS-1275] a lot, as well. That's the oldest guitar I still have. It's the only original of mine left from "back in the day" at this point.

MMR: But you're not a 100 percent "Gibson guy." I know I've seen footage of you playing other guitars.

FH: True! In the past I've used Telecasters. As far as Fenders go, my favorite is a Telecaster. They're real solid and have the feel like a Gibson, but with that distinctive Tele twang.

Branching out from the traditional stuff, I've recently discovered C.R. Alsip Guitars. I have four of theirs on the road with me: A Flying V, a hollow-body, and a couple of their Vintage series models. They're handmade guitars – just beautiful – and they sound really chunky and thick. A C.R. Alsip is like a Gibson on steroids.

MMR: Tesla's obviously had a lot of success with some of your acoustic arrangements. What acoustic guitars are you into?

FH: I think Gibsons are the warmest sounding acoustic guitars. I don't like really bright acoustics – I personally like the warm sound, with lots of low-end. So I go for the Gibson J45 and the J50 Rosewood and the Hummingbird.

MMR: Am I right in thinking you're a Marshall guy when it comes to amps?

FH: Yes and no. My Marshall JCM900 I have for onstage, but just recently we got turned on to the Krank model nineteen80. Krank is known more for their metal tones, but these are more the classic rock tone. The amp I'm going to be getting next is an EVH head from the factory, because it's real simple. It's a simple two or three channel amp and it's got great tone.

My favorite amp of all time is the Vox AC30. It just has a barking, signature voice of its own that growls. My second all-time favorite is a Fender Hot Rod DeVille. I loaned mine to Rick Derringer a while back and he wound up wanting to take it on the road, but I wouldn't let him. *[laughs]*

I personally prefer a cleaner sound. I'm a bit of a purist – I like getting the tone from the guitar and the way I bend the strings and just a couple pedals. When you have too much distortion, too much gain, it's too fuzzy and you don't really hear any character. Then to make it worse, guys take all the midrange out of their sound, making it really sound like garbage. I set all my knobs to 5, straight up. Pull your gain back from 10 to 6 and if you open your master volume to 5 or 6 and everything else to 5 across the board, it *should* sound great.

MMR: How about effects?

FH: I go directly into a BOSS TU-2 pedal tuner, and from there into a Voodoo Labs Micro Vibe. I also have a Fulltone DejaVibe. From *that* into a Fulltone OCD. I really, really like that pedal. I used to have go through a TubeScreamer, but I love the OCD.

Let's see... Oh, also a Dunlop Cry Baby. Oh, and I go from a DLS RotoSIM into the MXR Phase 90. That gives me the swirling Leslie sound with the phase,

like what Peter Frampton was famous for. If you listen to the recording of "Love Song" I'm using a Leslie, but now I use the RotoSIM. There's also the DLS Echo TAP delay pedal. They're absolutely phenomenal pedals. The construction the tone, very warm sounds – I love those DLS pedals.

MMR: How about picks?

FH: I play Dunlop yellow Tortex picks and also In Tune guitar picks. In Tune picks are made out of that celluloid material and when you do pick scrapes and noises with the pick, it just sounds better.

MMR: We're nearing the home stretch. Cables? Strings?

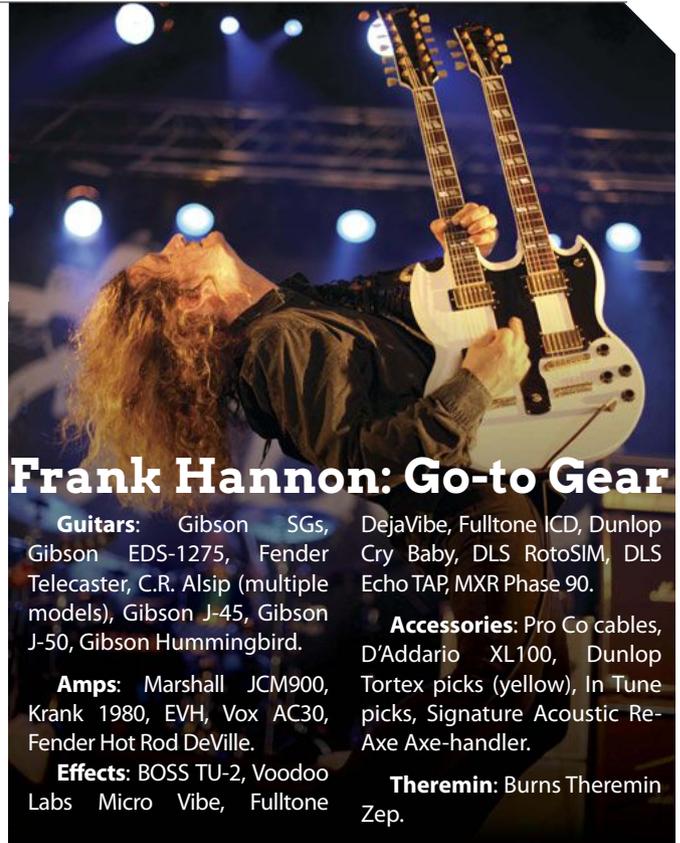
FH: We just got a deal with Pro Co cables and they're freakin' awesome. Strings? D'Addario XL110s. Best strings out there.

MMR: Have we left anything out?

FH: Hmm... Oh, I'm working with Re-Axe Axe-handler and we're going to be making a signature acoustic guitar stand. I also play a theremin. There are a lot of different guys who make theremins, but the kind that I've found that I like is called The Zep made by Burns Theremins. It just sounds like Led Zeppelin: killer and aggressive tone. It's dependable and small. Love it!

MMR: Very cool. Thank you for your time, Frank. Have a good time out on the road!

FH: Thanks, man – this has been fun! **MMR**



Frank Hannon: Go-to Gear

Guitars: Gibson SGs, Gibson EDS-1275, Fender Telecaster, C.R. Alsip (multiple models), Gibson J-45, Gibson J-50, Gibson Hummingbird.

Amps: Marshall JCM900, Krank 1980, EVH, Vox AC30, Fender Hot Rod DeVille.

Effects: BOSS TU-2, Voodoo Labs Micro Vibe, Fulltone

DejaVibe, Fulltone ICD, Dunlop Cry Baby, DLS RotoSIM, DLS Echo TAP, MXR Phase 90.

Accessories: Pro Co cables, D'Addario XL100, Dunlop Tortex picks (yellow), In Tune picks, Signature Acoustic Re-Axe Axe-handler.

Theremin: Burns Theremin Zep.

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New Products

Yamaha POKETRAK PR7 Digital Recorder

Equipped with newly developed XY stereo microphones, Yamaha's new PR7 captures high-resolution stereo recordings and offers practice functions such as an onboard tuner and metronome. It comes with 2GB of internal memory (with the ability to expand the capacity with micro SD/SDHC memory cards) and features long battery life, mic line inputs for microphones or instruments, 24bit/96kHz recording, and a built-in speaker.



The PR7 is equipped with a dedicated overdubbing button, which allows for the instant addition of solo sections and harmonies over an existing track. Marker editing lets users insert up to 36 index markers in audio files either during recordings or playback. The PR7 also features five optimized presets tailored to a variety of applications and environments. In addition, the PR7 comes with Steinberg's WaveLab LE audio editing and mastering software that provides 2-track audio editing with high-end EQ and dynamics processing. Retail price: \$249.

4wrd.it/mp

Kentucky Master Model KM-1050 Mandolins

The KM-1050 has several pro-level, player-friendly features originally pioneered by Saga in the late 1970s. Each instrument features a highly polished ebony fingerboard with a compound radius, a wider nut and saddle, larger frets, and a scooped fingerboard extension with inlaid nickel-silver fret markers. The KM-1050 features a hand-carved and expertly graduated Adirondack spruce top and a back, sides and slim, v-shaped neck carved from a single piece of select Northern Maple.



sagamusic.com

ADJ WiFLY Series

ADJ's new WiFLY Series consists of a wireless DMX transceiver and three compatible battery-powered LED fixtures, which, when used together, could eliminate the need for both DMX cables and electrical power cords. WiFLY products are designed to work well in RF-crowded environments for consistently reliable, interference-free wireless DMX control.



The ADJ WiFLY Series includes a WiFLY Transceiver (a wireless DMX transmitter/receiver in one; \$189.95), the WiFLY Bar QA5 (a compact 20-inch/0.5-meter RGBA LED linear color wash bar powered by its own internal lithium battery) MSRP of \$559.95, the WiFLY Bar RGBA, MSRP is \$559.95, the WiFLY Par QA (MSRP is \$559.95), the WiFLY RGBW8C (\$179.95), and the WiFLY D6 Branch (\$419.95).

adj.com

Ernie Ball Musician's Tool Kit

The Musician's Tool Kit includes heavy duty cutters, pegwinder, 13 hex wrenches, 6-inch stainless steel ruler, 6-in-1 screwdriver, microfiber polish cloth, and a sample of wonder wipes – all nestled in a convenient zip-up carrying pouch. Ernie Ball is currently running a free giveaway promotion on their Facebook page for these full toolkits.



ernieball.com

Cremona SV-130 Student Violin

Cremona now offers their SV-130 Premier Student Violin Outfit in a choice of six colored finishes, in addition to the standard warm brown finish. Students can now choose from the available five sparkling colored finishes: Black, Blue, Green, Purple and Rose. The violins utilize material fit for not only beginning students, but more advanced players as well. As with every Cremona instrument, each SV-130 is handcrafted from fine tonewoods with both the tops and backs hand-carved and graduated. The fingerboard and all trimmings (with the exception of the composite tailpiece) are shaped from solid Ebony. Also included are a color-matched lightweight foam case and wood bow with genuine unbleached horsehair.



cremonainc.com

Accent CS-14CE Cutaway Electric Student Folk Guitar

The compact OO-style body shape is designed to be easy to hold, with a traditional look. Each guitar is constructed with a select spruce top and is X-braced in the traditional fashion. The guitar also features a slim mahogany neck and cutaway body with built-in electronics (on-board tuner and EQ controls).



sagamusic.com

AIM Musical Holiday Ornaments

AIM Gifts presents a wide variety of musically themed holiday ornaments – everything from pianos to electric guitars and miniature drum sets. Pictured is the company's newest "boxed three-pack set" along with several other bestsellers. AIM offers over 70 different music-related ornaments.



aimgifts.com

Bohemian Guitars

A Bohemian guitar's body is a one-gallon rectangular oilcan, giving it a vintage feel with a modern design. This instrument is a fully functional electric guitar which can be plugged in and played through any amp. Features include a custom maple-wood neck with rosewood fingerboard, a single coil pickup an adjustable truss rod, rosewood bridge, strap buttons/locks, and volume and tone controls. Retail price: \$269.



bohemianguitars.com

Superior Rattan Cases

CR-1650 Soprano Ukulele cases are hand-crafted from genuine rattan plant fiber, a material used on exotic furniture, handbags and 1950s picnic baskets. This strong natural material, with its hand-woven construction, is light and sturdy. Each case has a double carrying handle of sturdy rattan and a padded interior of a gingham cloth pattern to match the exterior color of the case. These cases are available in Brown, Blue, Green, Orange, Pink and the natural shade of the rattan material. The interior also features a padded neck support for the ukulele and the hinges and latches are of leatherette with metal fasteners.



sagamusic.com

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Roland AC-40 Acoustic Chorus Guitar Amp

The AC-40 Acoustic Chorus Guitar Amplifier is the latest addition to Roland's family of stereo acoustic amps with built-in effects. Compact and weighing less than 12 pounds (5.3 kg), the AC-40 delivers big sound through dual custom-designed 6.5-inch speakers. True stereo output plus onboard stereo chorus and reverb effects provide studio-quality depth and dimension.



The dedicated Guitar channel features a standard 1/4-inch input, while the Mic/Line channel has an XLR/TRS combo input for connecting a microphone or a line-level device. Each channel has its own three-band EQ for sound shaping plus independent chorus and reverb controls. Other features include a stereo Aux In, mono/stereo Line Out jacks, a Phones jack which mutes the internal speakers, and a jack for turning the reverb and chorus effects on/off with optional footswitches.

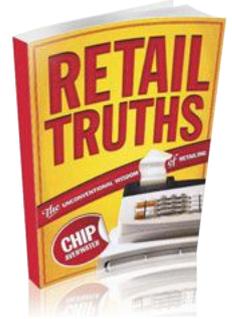
cortguitars.com

Retail Truths from Hal Leonard

Retail Truths: The Unconventional Wisdom of Retailing and 50 Ideas to Train Your Sales Staff in 15 Minutes a Day is a collection of more than 400 street-smart lessons on retailing that Chip Averwater has gathered from his own experience running Amro Music Stores in Memphis, as well as from his mentors and retailer friends.

For managers and staff, quantity discounts available.

Retail price: \$19.95



halleonard.com

Radial ProMS2 Mic Splitter

The Radial ProMS2 is a single-channel mic splitter designed for PA, recording, and broadcast applications. The Radial ProMS2 is completely passive and 100 percent discrete to ensure optimal signal flow. The engine inside is an Eclipse ET-MS10 transformer that is exceptionally linear from 20Hz to 20kHz while exhibiting less than 0.01 percent distortion at 20Hz. The Eclipse transformer is equipped with a mu-metal can that shields the sensitive circuit from outside electro-magnetic fields to ensure the signal is delivered without artifact.

Retail price: \$140.



The engine inside is an Eclipse ET-MS10 transformer that is exceptionally linear from 20Hz to 20kHz while exhibiting less than 0.01 percent distortion at 20Hz. The Eclipse transformer is equipped with a mu-metal can that shields the sensitive circuit from outside electro-magnetic fields to ensure the signal is delivered without artifact.

radialeng.com

Sabian Xs20 Models

The Xs20 series from Sabian now includes three key new models. Designed for low-volume settings, the dB Control Crash is a bright, extra-thin model that is quick, quiet and gets out of the way fast. Best-selling Sabian HHX and AAX X-Celerator Hi-Hat design will also now be available in the Xs20 series as a 14" pair. Their innovative Air-Wave bottom is designed to eliminate air lock for maximum clarity.

Last, a new 21" Xs20 Medium Ride delivers a balance of stick definition and wash for clean, musical tone at all volumes. The Xs20 Ride, like all Xs20 models, is available in natural and brilliant finish. Xs20 Cymbals are crafted from Sabian B20 bronze and are quality protected by a Sabian Two-Year Warranty.



sabian.com

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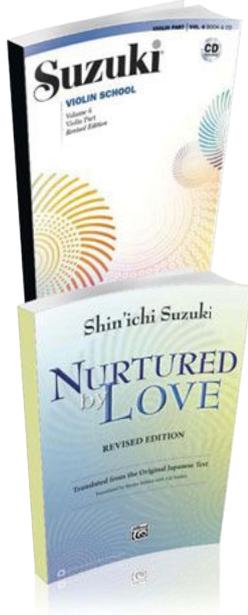
The Jazz Education Network is dedicated to building the jazz arts community by advancing education, promoting performance, and developing new audiences.

JazzEdNet.org

Suzuki Method Products from Alfred Music

The new editions of *Suzuki Violin School Part, Volume 6 (Revised)* and *Nurtured by Love (Revised Edition)* include updates to the method of pedagogue Shin'ichi Suzuki. The revised edition for *Suzuki Violin School, Volume 6* has been edited by the International Violin Committee and is now available for purchase. The revised edition features new engravings in a 9 x 12 format that allows a more readable page for students. The bowings and fingerings have been edited to optimize the musical performance of each piece. The violin part is available both by itself and packaged with the CD, which features soloist William Preucil in a stunning new recording. Additionally, the piano accompaniment for this volume has been revised and is published in a single volume by itself.

Shin'ichi Suzuki's classic textbook, *Nurtured by Love*, has been newly translated directly from the Japanese into English by Kyoko and Lili Selden. The Revised Edition allows new understandings of the concepts Dr. Suzuki's Talent Education philosophy through a personal narrative. Both translations of *Nurtured by Love* will remain available.



alfred.com

Cort Guitars 'Sunset NY'

The Sunset series was initially introduced in 2012 with the Sunset I and Sunset II models, which featured chambered bodies, woods, components, and features. The Sunset NY expands on the line by now offering a thin chambered body, spruce top, nylon string guitar with built in electronics for a wide array of tones.



Specifications include bolt-on neck construction, spruce top on chambered mahogany body, mahogany neck, rosewood fretboard, 25.6" scale – (650 mm), classic tuners, rosewood bridge, a B-Band two-band sound system, and D'Addario strings. Retail price: \$599.

cortguitars.com

Mogami Gold Silent Strings Cable



The new Gold Instrument Silent Series Cable will be offered with either straight or 90 degree angle Neutrik® Silent Plugs. Neutrik Silent Plug allows hot-swapping guitars without the earsplitting pop or risk of blown speakers. Previously, the silent plugs were available only on Mogami Platinum level instrument cables. Now Gold Instrument Cable users can enjoy the convenience of "silent swapping." The Neutrik Silent Plugs have an internal switch which automatically silences the cable until it is connected. MOGAMI Gold Instrument Silent Series Cable carries a lifetime warranty.

mogamicable.com

Griffin Technology StudioConnect with Lightning

StudioConnect with Lightning is Griffin's all-in-one audio interface for music creation on the iPad, now compatible with the new fourth generation iPad and iPad mini. StudioConnect provides plug-and-play convenience for guitars, stereo audio, MIDI-In/Out along with a Lightning charging dock. It also features line-level RCA stereo output and stereo headphone output with separate volume control.



The StudioConnect interface features Audio In that enables users to plug in an instrument through a mono 1/4-inch jack, or connect a mixer via the stereo 1/8-inch jack. Audio Out includes left and right line-level RCA jacks. The 1/8-inch-stereo headphone jack, with its dedicated volume knob, allows for monitoring. Standard 5-pin MIDI In and Out ports accept a sequencer, patch bay or other MIDI gear, allowing the iPad and MIDI apps to act as a MIDI controller. Retail price: \$149.99.

griffintechology.com/music

Decibel Eleven™ • Switch Witch™ MIDI Controller / Loop Switcher



The Decibel Eleven Switch Witch is a master controller that combines fully programmable MIDI control, true-bypass audio effects loops, and amp channel-switching capabilities. The Switch Witch features include 128 presets capable of sending a variety of MIDI program changes, controls, and messages with expression pedal MIDI continuous controller data; up to four true bypass pedal effects loops; up to three switch control functions for amp channel switching; optional analog discrete Class A input buffer for retaining top end sparkle and preventing pickup loading. Retail price: \$425.

decibel11.com

Updated Yamaha Xeno Artist Model 'Chicago' C Trumpet



Intended for use in orchestral, concert band, and other brass ensemble environments, the new Artist Model Chicago C trumpet was crafted with the input of John Hagstrom, member of the legendary Chicago Symphony Orchestra brass section. The trumpet features a MalonePipe® leadpipe design, which provides superior response and accurate slotting. Additional updates include brace placement modifications and heavier valve caps, providing an optimal mix of flexibility and power to fulfill the needs of the highest-level orchestral musicians. The new model replaces the YTR-9445CHS.

4wrd.it/yamaha

Planet Waves NS Micro Tuner



Planet Waves' new NS Micro Tuner's lightweight design allows it to be clipped to the back of the headstock, so this easy-to-use tuner is concealed and blends in with the aesthetics of the instrument. Planet Waves has also improved the ratchet clip-on design.

The NS Micro's improved tuning software offers faster note recognition and accuracy than its forerunner, while still providing accurate tuning by using an ultra-sensitive piezo sensor system. The multi-color, backlit display shows the note name in red when the note is out of tune and green when the note is in tune. Retail price: \$32.99.

planetwaves.com

Samson MediaOne BT Series Monitors

The MediaOne BT Active Studio Monitors with Bluetooth are designed to produce a full-range sound and are available in three models for a variety of budgets. Sold as a packaged stereo pair and available in stores starting in September, MediaOne BT3 (\$99), MediaOne BT4 (\$149) and MediaOne BT5 (\$199) monitors are the latest products from Samson that feature the ability to wirelessly connect to music sources via Bluetooth.

The MediaOne BT Active Studio Monitors come in three different configurations to match a variety of output needs: MediaOne BT3 (3-inch woofer, 1-inch tweeter, 15 watts per channel RMS, 30 watts per channel Peak), MediaOne BT4 (4-inch woofer, 1-inch tweeter, 20 watts per channel RMS, 40 watts per channel Peak) and MediaOne BT5 (5-inch woofer, 1-inch tweeter, 20 watts per channel RMS, 40 watts per channel Peak). Their copolymer woofers deliver a controlled low frequency response, while their one-inch silk dome tweeters give the high frequencies a natural sound without unwanted noise. Each rear-vented, precision-tuned port enclosure is finished in an all-black satin vinyl covering with matching metal grills for the woofers and tweeters.



samsontech.com

Latin Percussion Groove Cajon

The new LP Americana Series Groove Cajon is made in the U.S.A. from hand-selected, 9-ply, plantation-grown Baltic birch. Featuring an adjustable front plate and fixed snare wires in a uniquely slim design, the LP Groove Cajon offers deep bass tones while maintaining precise articulation and sensitivity. Every Americana Series cajon is designed with angled top-front corners as well as rubber feet. Retail price: \$299.00.



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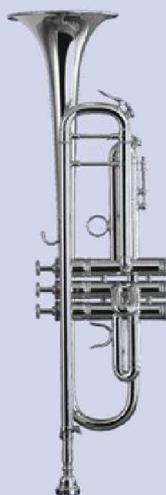
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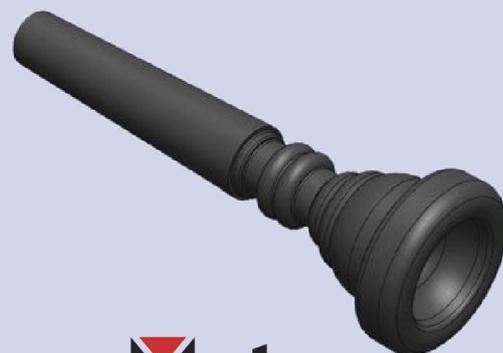


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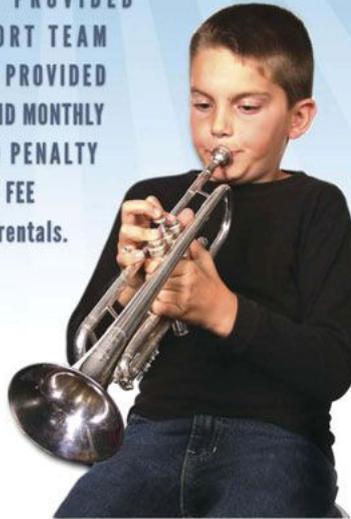
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Why So Serious?

There's been much talk in recent weeks – really in the past months – about developments over at Steinway Musical Instruments: sale of the flagship Manhattan Steinway Hall showroom that closed in June, the early July deal with Kohlberg & Co. to accept that group's \$35 per-share offer, then the most recent offer from Paulson & Co. which brings the (current) sale price for the famed brand to something in the neighborhood of \$500M.

It's legitimately big news, of course: we're talking big money, big names, and lots of action. What I find myself wondering, though, is: What's the big deal?

"It's not often that those who acquire a legendary and beloved name actively run that name into the ground."

I mean, obviously that's a crass oversimplification and – equally obviously – *many* people care. Employees, dealers, stock owners, players, Steinway owners, and fans all care about the future of the company. *I* care about the future stability of Steinway & Sons. Not only is the overall health of the industry pretty directly related to my own financial and professional well-being, but given that Steinway's HQ (for now, anyway) is located in metro-Boston and I'm a pretty unabashed homer, it's a point of pride to have such a legendary marquee down the street.

Not that there's necessarily been a huge hue and cry about Paulson or Kohlberg or whomever else acquiring Steinway. There's been *some* because there always is, but as Larry Fine, author of *The Piano Book*, told New York Public Radio earlier this summer: "Steinway has endured takeovers before... the company's been remarkably stable... through all of these sales, the pianos have overall improved and the management has been very competent and it's transcended the ownership. I'm not particularly worried."

And John Paulson appears to be a true fan of the instruments. "I've always been enamored with the product," he told *The New York Times* on August 14th. "You have Mercedes in cars, and top brands in every other area. But no one has such a high share of the high end [as Steinway]."

So there you go: Deep sigh.

I just wonder at the degree of hand wringing and "Oh, no..." that seems to accompany any big shift within our industry. It's not often that a company of any significant age is still in the hands of the original

owners (in Steinway's case, the sale that transferred ownership from the Steinway family to CBS took place in 1972 – some 120 years after the first "Steinway & Sons" instrument). It's also not often that those who acquire a legendary and beloved name actively run that name into the ground.

I know there are exceptions to that assertion. Colossally poor management, shoddy designs, lamentable employer/employee relationships, risky financial decisions (and on, and on...) have, in fact, submarined plenty of companies and brands with impeccable pedigrees and history.

I've either witnessed in "real time" or read and heard the horror stories about beloved musical instrument suppliers changing hands. Everyone talks about the nightmare that was "the CBS years" over at Fender after the sale in 1965. Meanwhile at Fender's primary competition, just a few years later, the Gibson parallel would be "the Norlin era." Gretsch (both guitars and drums) also endured a relatively bleak period during roughly the same timeframe (I guess the '70s really *were* rough!). And the list goes on.

I'm not saying there wasn't mismanagement during those periods of time for those companies (and others) or that the quality of product may have slipped when compared to "the glory days" for any of those organizations. But, I don't know... have you priced a '70s Gibson Les Paul lately? Have you *played* one? Checked out an early '70s Fender P-Bass? Pretty valuable, gorgeous instruments, if you ask me.

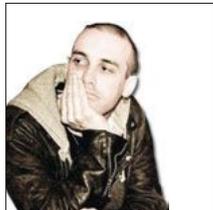
And, back to the present day, both Fender and Gibson's current ownership teams (much like the ownership of many – if not, indeed, *all* – current stewards of longstanding brands) are under close scrutiny and even criticism from those who long for "the good old days."

This could just be a momentary and irrational (I never claimed to be rational) reaction to years of "Oh no! Now we're all in deep trouble because of [fill in the blank with the cause célèbre of the month]" that goes on in the MI trade.

So where am I going with all this? What's the point?

If all goes to plan, the current Steinway deal will close sometime in September. My guess is that, ten years from now, there will still be Steinway pianos and legions of players who adore them. I also suspect that by 2023, any number of other major brands will have been bought (and sold), but that most will still be with us in one form or another.

So, I guess I'm – in highly uncharacteristic fashion – advocating for a cheery outlook. Not just, or specifically, about Steinway. Chin up, MI industry. As Winston Churchill said, "Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference." **MMM**



By Christian
Wissmuller

OUTSTANDING OVATION



2012 SUPPLIER EXCELLENCE AWARD
MUSIC INC. MAGAZINE



2012 DIGITAL HOME KEYBOARD OF THE YEAR
MMR DEALERS' CHOICE



2012 PRODUCT EXCELLENCE AWARD
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2009 SUPPLIER EXCELLENCE AWARD
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2009 ACOUSTIC PIANO OF THE YEAR
MMR DEALERS' CHOICE



2008 GOOD DESIGN AWARD
JAPAN INSTITUTE OF DESIGN PROMOTION



2008 EDITOR'S PICK: BEST OF THE BEST
WORSHIP LEADER MAGAZINE



2008 ACOUSTIC PIANO OF THE YEAR
MMR DEALERS' CHOICE



2007 DIGITAL HOME KEYBOARD OF THE YEAR
MMR DEALERS' CHOICE



2005 ACOUSTIC PIANO LINE OF THE YEAR
MMR DEALERS' CHOICE



2004 ACOUSTIC PIANO LINE OF THE YEAR
MMR DEALERS' CHOICE



2003 ACOUSTIC PIANO LINE OF THE YEAR
MMR DEALERS' CHOICE



2003 SUPPLIER EXCELLENCE AWARD
MUSIC INC. MAGAZINE



2003 READERS' CHOICE AWARD
TASTENWELT MAGAZINE (EUROPE)



2002 DIGITAL HOME KEYBOARD OF THE YEAR
MMR DEALERS' CHOICE



2001 ELECTRONIC PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
GERMAN MUSIC ASSOC.



2001 DIGITAL HOME KEYBOARD OF THE YEAR
MMR DEALERS' CHOICE



2000 MUSICMESSE INTERNATIONAL PRESS AWARD
FRANKFURT MUSICMESSE



2000 KEY BUY KEYBOARD MAGAZINE (USA)



2000 GOOD DESIGN AWARD
JAPAN INSTITUTE OF DESIGN PROMOTION



2000 DIGITAL HOME KEYBOARD OF THE YEAR
MMR DEALERS' CHOICE



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