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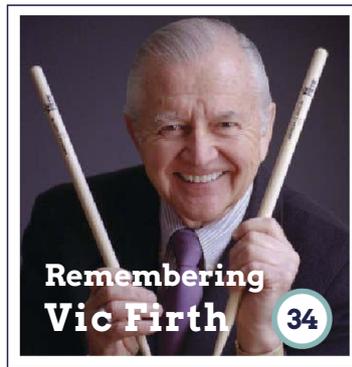
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MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW



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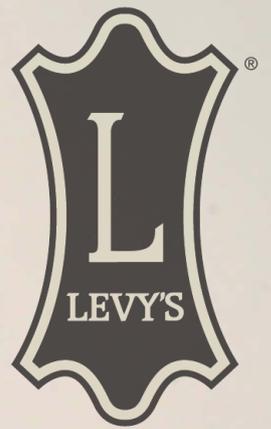
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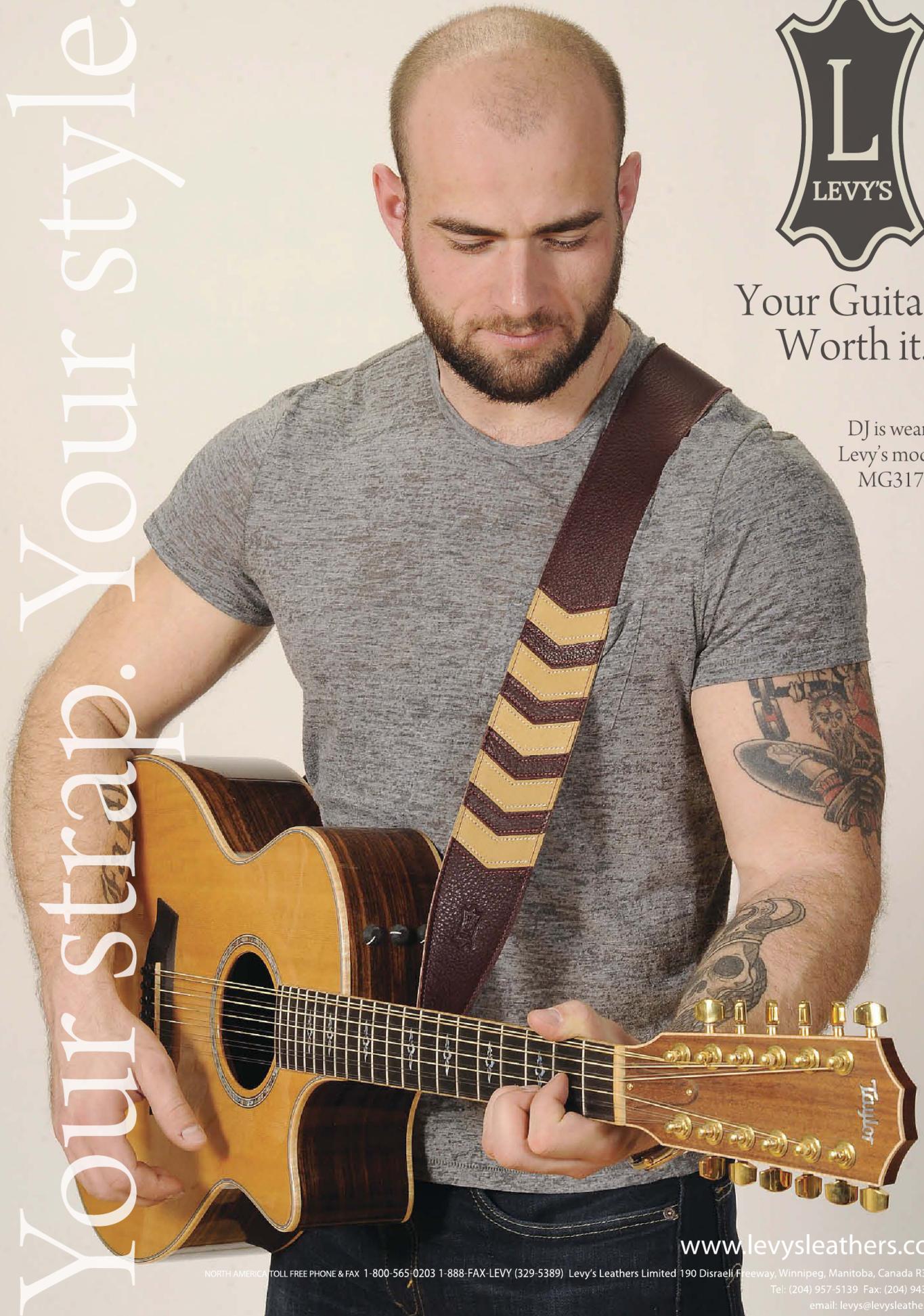
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# MMR

## MUSICAL MERCHANDISE REVIEW

Vol.174 SEPTEMBER 2015 No.09

“ Vic [Firth] was an artist and a successful businessman – probably the only person I can think of who excelled in both realms so completely. He was also an incredibly important teacher, innovator, composer, and industry guiding light. ”

– Peter Erskine

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Ventura/Sound Ideas has practically no online presence, don't make their products available for sale online, and don't sell to big box stores. Read on to find out why their business model keeps them afloat in the modern MI landscape.

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100 percent designed and manufactured in Italy, Physis Pianos are using revolutionary physical modeling technology to change the face of digital pianos. Gary Girouard, director (North America), explains the history behind the instrument's creation.

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The Radial Voco-Loco... a creative tool for those that want to add effects to their sound!

The Radial Voco-Loco... a creative tool for those that want to add effects to their sound!



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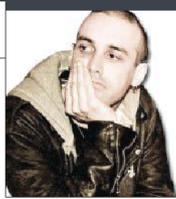
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# The Market is Growing, I Enjoy Having Dire Straits Songs Explained to Me Online, and Other Musings...



by Christian Wissmuller

In late August, Research and Markets announced the addition of the *Global Musical Instruments Market 2015 Report* to their offerings. The report claims the global MI market value was \$16.05 billion for 2014 and forecasts growth for the industry at a CAGR ("Compound Annual Growth Rate." I had to look it up) of 1.89 percent over the next five years, valuing it \$17.63 billion by 2019.

Factors seen as contributing to the growth of the market include a rise in disposable income, a greater number of live performances, and increased music education initiatives, among others. Additionally, the increased availability of non-traditional pathways to learning instruments is seen to be a significant factor. An analyst from the team who compiled the report said, "The availability of learning materials online will encourage consumers to buy musical instruments, which is expected to contribute to the market growth during the forecast period."

This is the part that really interests me (not that the rest of it *doesn't*).

Back in 2007, NPR's "All Things Considered" ran a report, "Learning Guitar for Free (for Now) on YouTube," which I remember listening to while stuck in traffic on I-95 and which is still available for review up on npr.org. The jist of the program was that there's this growing phenomenon of folks teaching guitar online for free, but – dun dun dunnnn!!! – many of those online tutorials would likely not be free for much longer, due to violation of copywritten material (the songs being taught).

Well, cut to eight years later and a quick YouTube search for "guitar lessons" yields over 558,000 results. The first such result, "Play TEN guitar songs with two EASY chords" by one Andy Crowley has well over eight million views

since its initial posting two years ago. Amongst those ten two-chord songs outlined are tracks originally recorded by Buffalo Springfield and U2. I'm not calling out Crowley in hopes that teams of lawyers representing Bono and Neil Young descend upon his home and ruin his online venture. I'm suggesting that, while it is absolutely true that individual artists and labels do (frequently) attempt to block certain content, the notion that perceived copyright infringement would spell the end of online music instruction would seem to be much ado about... not that much.

Also, on a personal level, I'd never have bothered to learn "Sultans of Swing" or the solo from "Round and Round" without YouTube. So there's that.

And how does that sort of online instruction affect the acoustic guitar market – the focus of this month's issue of *MMR* – you ask? "I think technology has played a big part here with YouTube, and similar, giving an audience to the acoustic player that they never had before," says Brian Cleary of Faith Guitars in September's Roundtable (page 37).

So there you have it: our industry is going to grow by two percent over the next five years, online video music lessons aren't going anywhere, I am perfectly comfortable appreciating both Ratt and Dire Straits simultaneously, and YouTube is great for the acoustic guitar market.

I could've simply run the above sentence and been done with this.

Hope everyone had a great summer! **MMR**

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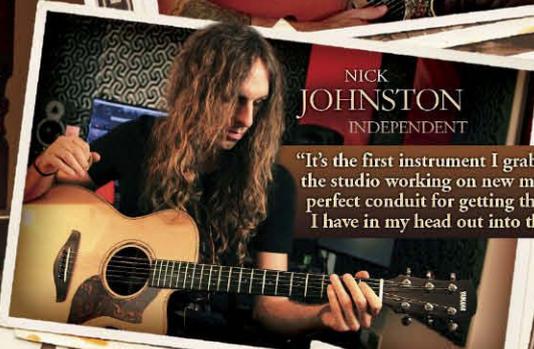
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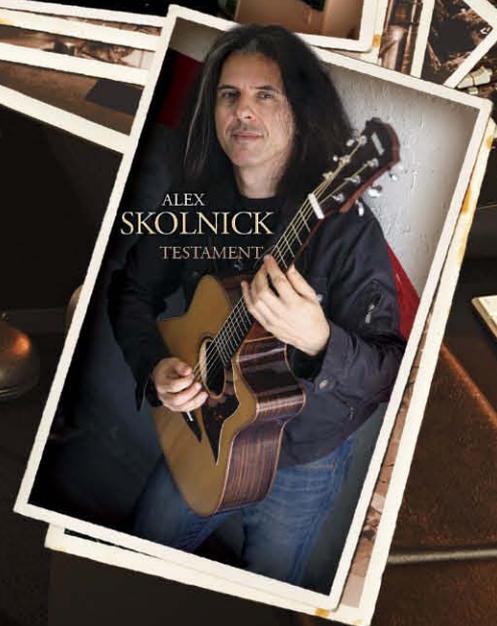
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## DWV Entertainment Sells Aphex to RØDE

DWV Entertainment, parent company of audio brand Aphex for the last several years, has announced the sale of Aphex to Australian pro-audio company RØDE Microphones.

The announcement was made by David Wiener, chairman and CEO of DWV Entertainment. Aphex is well known for its range of audio signal processing equipment that features various proprietary technologies including the iconic "Aural Exciter."

Founded in the mid-1970s, Aphex has since become one of the music and broadcast industries' most revered brands, contributing to nearly every commercially successful record for decades. Today, Aphex products and technologies are used in a wide range of applications for music, film, video, theater, gaming and communications.

Aphex is regarded as an innovation leader, holding numerous patents, and licensing to a wide range of brands around the world. With its expertise in manufacturing, RØDE Microphones' acquisition of Aphex heralds a giant leap for both companies.

Wiener commented, "The past 12 months have been the most successful in Aphex's history, with record sales and profits. This success has attracted the attention of a major industry leader. I am proud to announce that Peter Freedman and RØDE have successfully acquired Aphex and will put their exceptional passion and energy into growing Aphex with new products and programs. I have every confidence in Peter and his team, given the professional association and friendship that have come out of our months of meetings and communications, and I am proud to have put this deal together with a person of Peter's caliber."



Peter Freedman with David Wiener

# Guitar Center Media Day

By Christian Wissmuller

In early August, Guitar Center hosted its annual "Media Day" at company HQ in Westlake Village, California – the third such gathering since the MI retail giant pulled back the relative veil of secrecy and began what remains a far more "open" relationship with the press, in particular the trades.

While that first meeting was revelatory in comparison to the near-silence from GC brass for the decade or so prior (see our November 2013 cover story, 'Guitar Center – Inside THE Big Box'), subsequent Media Days have been – understandably – more about just catching up on whatever fine points *haven't* been fully or satisfactorily explained or addressed in the previous month. Which isn't to say there wasn't plenty to talk about this year. GC is, after all, the unquestioned largest player in MI retail and a lightning rod for debate and speculation and there have been plenty of recent changes and a number of ongoing and future initiatives that are bound to effect the MI retail landscape, overall.

The list of "what's new" this year started at the very top, as CEO Darrell Webb replaced Mike Pratt in November of last year (following 2014's Media Day in NYC, marking the grand opening of GC's flagship store in Times Square), after Pratt had served just barely over a year and a half in that role.

Webb was joined by Michael Amkreutz (vice president – merchandising, marketing, and eCommerce), Tim Martin (execu-

tive vice president and CFO), and Ron Jap- inga (executive vice president – inventory management and supply chain) in hosting media reps for a group Q&A on the morning of August 5<sup>th</sup>. When asked about the persistent, every-couple-of-months rumors of GC's impending bankruptcy, sale, or other doom-and-gloom scenario, Martin echoed

his comments from 2013, saying, "The tales of our demise have been greatly exaggerated... we're having a really strong front-half of this year, the trends we saw in

the first quarter are continuing and, in fact, accelerating. I am sleeping quite well when it comes to our financial condition." He further noted that literally none of the company's 269 stores are operating in the red and reminded folks that the S&P upgraded the company's outlook recently.

With respect to how GC would respond to "the bloggers" – including Eric Garland, whose February 2015 online missive, "The End of Guitar Center" was read (and believed to be credible) by many – Webb said, "We are aware of some of the folks out there saying... interesting things. We *choose* not to reply to them because if you acknowledge them, you give them some credibility and they are *not* credible. At best, they're not very well informed and at worst they're not very well-versed in corporate finance."

Both the CFO and CEO asserted that GC will not need additional recapitalization in order to keep current on its payments.

*continued on next page*



Guitar Center CEO Darrell Webb



Lanita Smith, winner of GC's 'Singer-Songwriter 4' contest, performed at Media Day.

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**SKB** announces two new 32-channel mixer cases, the 1RMM32-DHW Midas M32 case and the 1RMTF5-DHW Yamaha TF5 mixer case. These cases are the same Military Grade, Roto-molded design like the 1RMX32-DHW, for the Behringer X32 mixer, and the 1RMQU32-DHW for the Allen & Heath QU32 mixer. The interiors features custom foam blocks and a roto-molded-hinged doghouse for management of all of the back connectors.



## **1RMM32-DHW Mixer case for the Midas M32**



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continued from page 6

"When a company is taken private it's a lot like buying a house and taking out a mortgage," explained Webb. "As long as you can make the interest payments, most folks never pay off that house. I see comments out there – 'Wow, Guitar Center's debt is so ominous. They'll never be able to pay it off' – well, that's not the point. In a sense we have a mortgage out there and we can easily make the payments on that mortgage. And at some point in time we'll go public and that usually means you're borrowing money from shareholders. So when you say, 'They'll never be able to pay off the debt!' it's the same as saying, 'Well, if you're a public company, you'll never be able to buy back every one of your shares.' Well... that's not what companies do."



Michael Amkreutz in front of the 'Guitar Wall' at GC's Westlake Village, California store.

Neither Webb nor the other executives elaborated on a timeline for the Guitar Center possibly going public: "No. Haven't even talked about it," said Webb.

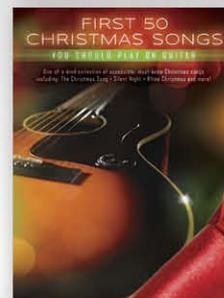
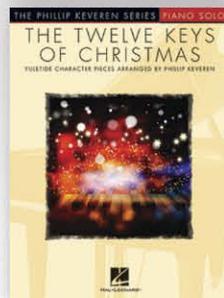
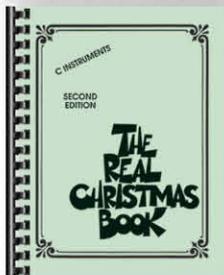
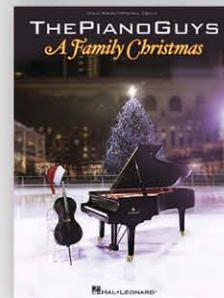
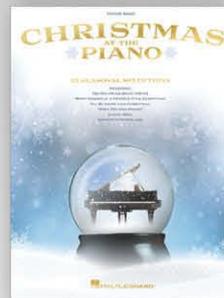
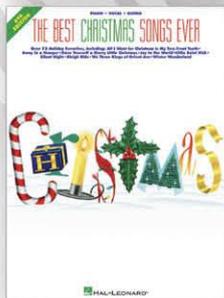
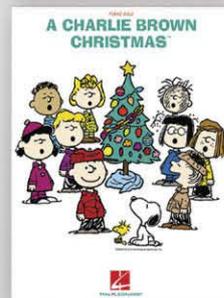
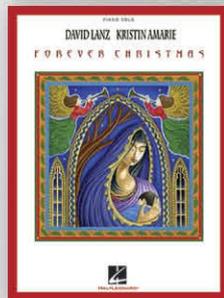
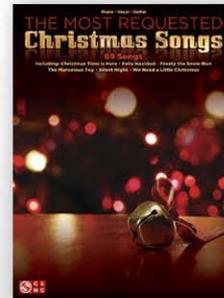
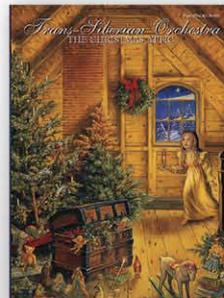
Speaking to more immediate "boots on the ground" action at the retail level, attendees at Media Day were treated to an early morning tour of the new Westlake Village store (no customers in the store yet! But, really, how many guitar players are out shopping at 10am on a Wednesday...). The newly implemented "G.O.L.D. (Grand Opening Look Daily) Standard" philosophy was clearly on display as Wayne Colwell, senior vice president – stores, guided visitors through the open-concept, clean, well-lit, "hands on" location.

continued on page 10

# HAL LEONARD CHRISTMAS SONGBOOKS

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continued from page 8

Also prominent at the Westlake location were area devoted to a larger realm in which GC has been actively ramping up its involvement – services. We're talking rentals, lessons, repairs, and used gear. Currently rentals are available in about 140 Guitar Center stores, in the last year the company estimates that their over-400 repair technicians performed in the neighborhood of 280,000 customer-owned fixes, and the

chain has around 1,000 instructors teaching 16,000 students. And the numbers are growing – fast.

The Westlake Village store was able to boast that 200 students enrolled in lessons following the *first weekend of operation*. If you're a retailer looking to distinguish yourself from big box competition via these types of services, consider yourself warned.

"The things that we're doing are not intentionally designed to hurt a mom & pop independent store," assured Webb. "That has never been and never will be part of our plan." Amkreutz added, "We are under similar types of competitive threats as smaller independents may be – the Amazons of the world, the Sweetwaters of the world that constantly innovate and add new pieces to their business."



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## SABIAN Announces Partnership with SLM

SABIAN has appointed St. Louis Music (SLM) as a partner in distribution in the United States, effective September 1.

"We started selling our products direct to retailers in the USA market last January and it has gone extremely well," comments SABIAN CEO Andy Zildjian. "After six months of creating better contact with our dealers, our communication with them made it very apparent that there are many dealers we are just not able to reach and service in a way that is most effective for them. SLM is the best in the industry at reaching a very broad and diverse group of dealers in the market and meeting the needs that have presented to us by our retail partners. We are confident this partnership will provide a greater level of our services to retailers all over the country."

"We are excited to add SABIAN as a major new product line in our rapidly growing percussion business," says Mark Ragin, president and CEO of St. Louis Music. "SLM will compliment the direct sales efforts of the SABIAN sales team in the USA by selling to the very broad base of SLM customers."

To learn more, contact St. Louis Music at (800) 727-4512 or email [info@stlouismusic.com](mailto:info@stlouismusic.com).

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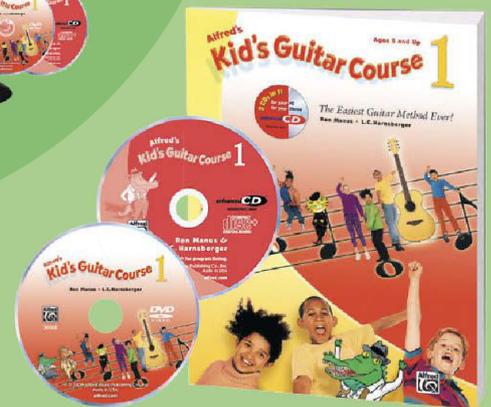


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## Hal Leonard Joins W3C Music Notation Group as Founding Member

Hal Leonard Corporation and its subsidiary Noteflight LLC are pleased to join in the founding of a new industry group focused on digital music notation.

This group will operate under the auspices of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), which oversees Web standards. The newly formed Music Notation Community Group will develop and maintain specifications for the encoding and formatting of notated music as used on Web, desktop, and mobile platforms.

The starting point for the group's work will be two closely related industry standards: MusicXML, which describes musical scores, and SMuFL, which specifies music fonts. The group will maintain and evolve these specifications to cover the changing ways in which the world works with digital music notation, both now and in the future. The formation of the Music Notation Community Group is an important step towards the future of sheet music and overall music publishing. Hal Leonard/Noteflight became a member of W3C to help lead music notation on the Web forward, and is proud to be one of the founding members of the Music Notation Community Group.

MusicXML is the industry standard for digital representation of musical notation today, and is supported by hundreds of applications across various platforms and operating systems. Created 15 years ago by Michael Good of MakeMusic, MusicXML has become an essential part of the music industry.

SMuFL is rapidly taking shape as an essential standard to describe digital fonts containing symbols used in conventional music

notation, making possible an environment in which the same fonts can be freely used across many different applications in a compatible fashion. Created by Steinberg in 2013, SMuFL has already been adopted by many vendors.

By transferring MusicXML's and SMuFL's governance to a W3C Community Group with the idea that they could ultimately become truly open standards, MakeMusic and Steinberg have taken a very significant step. This change ensures the quality, relevance and evolution of these standards, and guarantees their availability without patent or copyright concerns. It also opens up participation in the definition of these standards to the broadest possible audience.

The W3C Music Notation Community Group will be co-chaired by Michael Good, VP of research and development for MakeMusic and the original creator of the MusicXML specification; Daniel Spreadbury, product marketing manager for Steinberg and the original creator of the SMuFL specification; and Joe Berkovitz, president of Noteflight and co-chair of the W3C Audio Working Group.

Doug Schepers, Web standards specialist at the W3C, says, "We are excited that the MusicXML and SMuFL communities are coming together as a W3C Community Group. Music notation is an



Joe Berkovitz

*continued on next page*

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STANDS

continued from page 12

essential cultural artifact, and worthy of having its expression on the Web standardized and open to all. W3C is pleased that our community groups framework will help move these important technologies forward."

Larry Morton, president of Hal Leonard Corporation, comments, "The formation of this group is a crucial step for the future

of our industry, and I applaud our partners who made it possible. As a publisher of both print and digital music – and now a member of W3C – Hal Leonard is eager to contribute to and share the developments that will emerge from the founding of the Music Notation Community Group. I'm glad that Noteflight, leaders in music notation on the Web, will share their best practices and new ideas. This is truly a piv-

otal moment for music and musicians."

MakeMusic, Steinberg, and Hal Leonard together invite musicians, developers, publishers, scholars, educators and all others who are interested to join the W3C Music Notation Community Group. There is no charge to participate in the group. Visit [www.w3.org/community/music-notation](http://www.w3.org/community/music-notation) for more information about the W3C Music Notation Community Group.



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Photo by Scot Myers

## SLM Acquires Kiwi Wind Products

St. Louis Music (SLM) has purchased Kiwi Wind Products, effective July 31. Made in the USA, Kiwi has had a longstanding reputation in the industry as one of the best protective neck and mouthpiece pouches on the market.

"Having used them as a player and known them as a business partner for many years, we're really excited to bring Kiwi into our family of brands," says Craig Denny, vice president – Band & Orchestra at St. Louis Music. "It's a great fit for us because of the broad base of customers that we serve.

Kiwi Wind Products include two variations of Neck-Pak protective pouches, original and New York style, and mouthpiece pouches of varying sizes. Each pouch is made with a secure Velcro closure, and NeckPaks come in a variety of different fabrics.

Mark Ragin, CEO of St. Louis Music, also commented, "The team at Kiwi have done a fantastic job with their products and we really look forward to helping them expand and reach new markets."



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## Guitar Center, Gibson, Fender Cleared in Price-Fix Case

A ruling in the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court has cleared Guitar Center, Fender, and Gibson of price-fixing.

According to [www.courthousenews.com](http://www.courthousenews.com) The Ninth Circuit refused to revive a class action accusing Fender, Gibson and other guitar manufacturers of conspiring to fix prices.

Consumers flooded courts around the country with such claims after the Federal Trade Commission settled its investigation into music-products price-fixing in 2007.

Though NAMM also faced a cease-and-desist order as part of the consent decree, it never admitted any wrongdoing and did not even face a fine. A federal judge in San Diego eventually consolidated the ensuing consumer complaints, which took aim at five manufacturers, NAMM, and Guitar Center.

Joshua Ramsey and the other plaintiffs claimed that, between 2004 and 2009, the defendants conspired to implement and enforce MAP (minimum advertised price) policies which fixed the minimum price at which any retailer could advertise the manufacturers' guitars and guitar amplifiers – as part of a classic “hub-and-spoke” agreement designed to raise retail prices and restrain competition.

A three-judge panel with the Ninth Circuit found that the case had properly been dismissed for failure to state a claim.

A “hub-and-spoke” conspiracy involves both vertical agreements between manufacturers and retailers and horizontal agreements among competitors.

The role of the “hub” is typically filled by a dominant purchaser,

the “spokes” are competing manufacturers or distributors that enter into vertical agreements with the hub and the “rim” of the wheel consists of the horizontal agreements among the spokes.

Consumers painted Guitar Center as the hub, pressuring the manufacturer defendants (the spokes) to adopt the advertising policies, with the manufacturers' agreements to adopt the policies forming the rim.

Rather than indicating illegal action, the allegations of the “parallel conduct” might simply show that the defendants responded similarly to similar market pressures.

Judge Carlos Bea said, “In an interdependent market, companies base their actions in part on the anticipated reactions of their competitors and because of this mutual awareness, two firms may arrive at identical decisions independently.”

To support their allegations, the plaintiffs identified six “plus factors” such as the manufacturers' simultaneous adoption of the policies, and a rise in retail prices occurring during falling demand. Bea said, however, that these factors still indicated nothing more than similar reactions to similar pressures.

The policies were not adopted all at once, but rather over a period of several years, which Bea said “does not raise the spectre of collusion.”

Since the consumers alleged rising prices for all guitars, not just for those manufactured and sold by the defendants, Bea dismissed those claims as well.



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## RPMDA Board Plans 2016 Convention



Back row: David Jahnke, Carol Wilbur, Mike Watson, and Don Langlie; Front row: Christie Smith and Jenny VanPelt.

past president Carol Wilbur (Pender's Music), and members at large Mike Watson (Remenyi House of Music) and Jenny VanPelt (Lorenz Corporation).

The convention will offer session tracks for novice print music employees, buyers, and owners or managers with presentations by industry leaders and professional speakers in areas ranging from technology and marketing to inventory and training. 2016 also marks RPMDA's 40th anniversary, and the celebration promises to be a veritable who's who of the print music world.

This summer, the board of directors for the Retail Print Music Dealers Association (RPMDA) met to plan the organization's 2016 convention, which is scheduled for April 27-30, 2016 at the Chase Park Plaza Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri.

The RPMDA board includes president Christie Smith (Alfred Music), vice president-Program Don Langlie (Popplers Music), vice president-secretary/treasurer David Jahnke (Hal Leonard Corpora-



## Letters

Hi Ronnie,

How's it going at *MMR*? I liked your 'Ten Signs of Store Manager Possession!' Having dropped Gibson recently (along with many others) it made me smile! There's some interesting stuff in *MMR* Global and you have added a UK perspective that helps it stay relevant to our marketplace.

Thanks,  
Jon Evans  
Hollywood Music Shop UK  
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## Supplier Scene

### D'Addario Launches Players Circle

D'Addario has just launched Players Circle, the only customer rewards program in the musical instrument accessories sphere.

The online rewards program is the digital evolution of a concept Jim D'Addario, CEO of D'Addario & Company, first conceived in the 1990s. <http://playerscircle.daddario.com/> The process is simple: players sign up online, enter the serial numbers from their purchased packaging, and are rewarded with redeemable points. Other ways to earn points include getting others to sign up, and sharing content on social media. Points are redeemable for accessories and gear, including many different lines of D'Addario strings for electric, acoustic, classical, and bass guitar. This enables players to sample different styles of their choosing. Shipping and handling costs are included in the point redemption. D'Addario plans to launch similar rewards programs for their accessories, woodwinds, percussion, and orchestral brands in the future.

Upon signup, rewards program members are also automatically entered to win large-scale prizes, such as guitars, effect pedals, accessories, and digital exclusives. Players Circle is currently open to U.S.-residents only with plans to expand the program globally.



## Peavey at DJ Expo Opening Party & Booth

Peavey Electronics hosted a standout opening night party and booth artist appearance line-up at the 2015 DJ Expo in Atlantic City, N.J., from Aug. 10 – 13, boasting performances by some of the top DJ's and pioneers in hip hop music.



To continue with the excitement throughout the show, the Peavey booth featured back-to-back performances by renowned DJ's displaying the company's latest pro audio equipment. Performers included

DJ Cutlas; DJ Spike; DJ PonFetti; DJ Polo; DJ Marley Marl; DJ Dvayne; DJ Jimmy Goods; Keith Shocklee and DJ Journey; Mark Anthony; and DJ Selectra.

"It's great that we are recognized as a company that can serve these fantastic DJ's with gear they depend on night after night. Peavey is far beyond just rock 'n' roll," said Peavey COO, Courtland Gray.

"I have been a DJ since 1975 and have been using Peavey products for a very long time. To see how far Peavey has come, bringing their products to the next level, and seeing DJ's from around the world coming together to perform at their booth and party, is a testament to the supreme quality their products have to offer," said DJ Grand Wizzard Theodore.

## Hal Leonard to Distribute Cajón Brush Line

Hal Leonard Corporation is proud to announce a new worldwide distribution deal with Minneapolis-based Cajón Brush. Beginning this month, the company will stock these top-quality accessories.

Created by percussionist Paul Jennings, Cajón Brushes are designed and built specifically for the cajón. Thanks to Jennings' extensive research and development, these brushes give the instrument a rich, brushed sound while also allowing players to achieve warm low tones. One-inch in diameter, the natural wood handles give percussionists the right feel and the ability to play with the best technique.

Cajón Brush products feature: hardwood oak handles in both natural and dark colors; optimum bristle density for both high and low tones; a sliding O-ring on each brush to control the sound; and premium bristle materials to give the brushes a longer life. The brushes also work well with other drums and percussion instruments.

Jennings is the author of the Hal Leonard Cajón Method. This popular guide takes players through the basics of the instrument and its techniques, with dozens of exercises and more than 30 grooves from many genres: rock, Latin, blues, jazz, flamenco, funk, and others. More advanced topics cover how to change pitch with your foot, playing with brushes, and playing rolls with your fingers. The book features 45 accompanying online videos that demonstrate many of the rhythms and techniques in the book. The Hal Leonard Djembe Method by Jennings is also now in production. This book/online video pack will be available in fall.

## Ace to Distribute Yamaha B&O Accessories

Ace Products Group officially announces the addition of Yamaha Band and Orchestra accessories to their rapidly growing product lines and expanding distribution channels. The alliance marks a strategic milestone for Ace Products, as the Ace brand continues to gain market share industry-wide. Effective immediately, Ace will now offer Yamaha accessories for band and orchestra instruments, alongside their Kaces, Strukture, Reunion Blues, Pig Hog, Fender, and RockNRoller Multi-Cart® brands.

The rich history and prestige of the Yamaha® brand, united with the entrepreneurial passion of Ace Products creates an ideal match. "We are very particular about who we do business with," says vice president Dave Andrus, "Yamaha's dedication to superior quality, value, and enrichment through music fit perfectly with



our vision". Driving dealer success by delivering high profit, high quality accessories is at the heart of the Ace Products mission, and the addition of Yamaha® is the newest way they are helping music dealers thrive.

Ace Products Group is the premier international resource for music accessory manufacturing and distribution, delivering the most extensive selection of music accessories available. Offering everything from gig bags and instrument cases to cables, stands, connectors, adapters, and utility carts, the Ace Products mission is

to design and offer products of the highest possible quality at the most affordable prices.

Ace Products Group brands include: Strukture, Reunion Blues, Pig Hog Cables, Fender Accessories, Yamaha Accessories, and Rock-N-Roller Multi-Cart.

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## Roland Sponsors Guitar Center's 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Drum-Off Search

Roland Corporation U.S. is a proud sponsor of Guitar Center's 27th annual Drum-Off search for the next great drummer. Free and open to drummers across the country, entrants will compete for a chance to win a grand-prize package valued at over \$45,000 that includes cash, gear, endorsement deals, studio time, and a GC Buyer's Guide feature.



This year's gear prizing features products from a variety of manufacturers, including a Roland SPD-SX Sampling Pad, a PM-30 Personal Monitor Amplifier, BT-1 Bar Trigger Pad for both electronic and acoustic drums, and a grand

prize consisting of a Roland TD-30K V-Drums electronic drum kit valued at U.S. \$5,299 MSRP. Contestants will have a chance to play some of Roland's V-Drums products during the in-store preliminaries.

"We're always amazed and excited to witness the talent that comes out of each year's Drum-Off competition," notes Drew Armentrout, Roland Corporation U.S. product & artist relations manager, Drums and Percussion. "We are proud to be a part of the competition and the drumming community and we sincerely wish all the entrants the best of luck."

Drum-Off begins with store preliminary competitions at 251 Guitar Center locations. Contestants will be judged on a three-minute performance, and one winner from each store finals competition will be chosen to move up to the quarterfinals, followed by semifinals at five store locations. Five winners chosen at the semifinals will then convene at Club Nokia in Los Angeles, CA to compete in the finals for the grand prize on January 16, 2016 in front of a live audience and a panel of judges.

For more information, important competition dates, and to enter Guitar Center's Drum-Off competition, visit: [guitarcenter.com/drumoff](http://guitarcenter.com/drumoff)



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## DPA Microphones, Lectrosonics, and Sound Devices to Host Regional Sound Summit

Sound Summit Atlanta is taking place on Sunday, October 4, 2015 from 3 to 8 p.m. at the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) Local 479 Headquarters in Atlanta. A collaborative presentation from DPA Microphones, Lectrosonics, and Sound Devices, LLC, this is the third in a series of regional events throughout the U.S. All Sound Summit events serve as an informal industry thought leadership and mixing discussion featuring best practices for the audio community. With the help of local sound mixers Whit Norris and Chris Durfy, Sound Summit Atlanta will include a combination of short informative presentations, networking, and Q&A opportunities.

DPA's Global Sales Manager Bo Brinck will discuss polar patterns, frequency response, and optimum placement for lavalier and shotgun microphones. Brinck will use his company's d:screet™ 4061 and 4071 Miniature Microphones and d:dicate™ 4017B Shotgun Microphone to highlight these topics. "I am looking forward to meeting the area's sound mixers and other audio professionals who are eager to learn about all of the brands' new technologies and updated methods with which to improve their sound," says Brinck. "With the event taking place right at the IATSE, we're sure to have a very productive and interesting event."

Karl Winkler, Lectrosonics' vice president of Sales/Service, will

use his brand's L Series units, SSM "Super Slight" micro transmitter and SR Series receivers with Sound Devices' SuperSlot™ compatibility to explain gain structure, antenna optimization, and RF frequency coordination. "We're extremely excited to continue the Sound Summit series with our latest event in Atlanta," says Win-

*continued on 24*



## Mutec Mutes



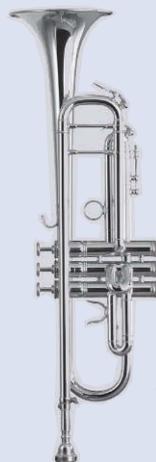
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## Mutec Mouthpieces

## DPA Microphones, Lectrosonics, and Sound Devices to Host Regional Sound Summit

continued from page 23

kler. "It will be great to be able to share ideas with professionals in the local community while also learning from them. We anticipate the Atlanta event to be very valuable and look forward to hosting future events in other large metropolitan areas in the coming year."

Jon Tatoes, co-founder and chief business development officer of Sound Devices, LLC, will be on hand to discuss multi-track audio recording, timecode synchronization, and file management for today's location sound mixer. He will demo Sound Devices' 688 Field Production Mixer with SL-6 SuperSlot™ accessory, as well as the rackmount 970 64-Track Dante and MAD1 Audio Recorder for his presentation. "The Sound Summits have proven very successful in reaching audio professionals in each city," says Tatoes. "I look forward to visiting the team at the local IATSE and speaking with Atlanta's sound mixers regarding the unique needs associated with working in the region. It's certain to be both fun and informative for everyone."

The IATSE Local 479 is located at 4220 International Parkway, Atlanta, Georgia 30354. To sign up for this free event, please register at <http://www.thesoundsummit.org/atlanta/>

## Stevie Wonder Extends 'Songs in the Key of Life' Tour

Stevie Wonder announced the final extension to his highly popular 'Songs In The Key Of Life' Tour, which will resume this fall throughout North America. Picking back up at the Bell Centre in Montreal, Quebec on September 30<sup>th</sup>, this tour will be making twenty stops throughout the U.S. and Canada, circling around to where the trek originally began, in November of 2014, for a tour-closing concert at Madison Square Garden in New York City, on November 24<sup>th</sup>. A full list of tour dates can be found online.



The Songs in the Key of Life Tour celebrates Stevie Wonder's eighteenth studio album, the 1976 release, *Songs in the Key of Life*, which hosts the classic songs, "Sir Duke," "I Wish," and "Isn't She Lovely", and was certified Diamond by the RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America) for sales of over 10 million units.

Pearl Percussion Artist, Fausto Cuevas, will once again turn to his Havana Series Congas and Bongos, Marc Quinones Signature Timbales, and plethora of Pearl Percussion bells, blocks, and toys for this upcoming run. More information on Fausto, including specs on his current tour setup, can be found on the Pearl website.

# Lee Oskar. QuickGuide

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# Chauvet Enlivens European Elvis Event

Elvis Presley has been gone for the best part of four decades, but his legend is very much still alive.

As one of the most successful artists of all time, the King of Rock and Roll, reluctant movie star, and performer extraordinaire has something of an untouchable legacy. Although Las Vegas, – which saw Elvis perform a whopping 635 times – is the place most synonymous with his exuberant and energetic shows, the city of Blackpool (fittingly, the so-called Las Vegas of Northern England), has been hosting one of Europe’s premier Elvis contests, which this year featured an appropriately glitzy lightshow featuring high-impact LED fixtures from Chauvet Professional.

The fourth annual Europe’s Tribute to Elvis, which took place in Blackpool’s iconic 19th century Empress Ballroom, gave aspiring Kings of Rock and Roll the chance to qualify for a trip to the Elvis Tribute Artist Contest finals in Memphis. Arranpaul Audio, which has handled lighting and audio for the event in the past, was tasked with creating the design for the 2015 edition of the contest. LD and Engineer Ollie Wilkinson called on a collection of Chauvet fixtures to create something of a fresh Elvis experience for the audience during the three-day event.

“As the event is becoming one of the most popular Elvis competitions in the world, we knew that we needed to step the game up this year, and of course, our Chauvet fixtures didn’t let us down,” said Wilkinson.

All in all, Wilkinson incorporated 16 Q-Wash 560Z-LED fixtures and eight Next NXT-1 moving LED panels from CHAUVET Professional, as well as three MotionOrbs, four Geyser RGB LED foggers and eight PiXPar 24 par-style fixtures from CHAUVET DJ into his show design.

“When you see Elvis tribute shows around the world, there’s usually a big upstage E.L.V.I.S sign in lights,” continued Wilkinson. “I didn’t want to go for that typical look, so we played about with the thought of using separate Elvis letters in gobos on the downstage truss. After some thought we had the idea to use our Chauvet NEXT NXT-1 fixtures to spell ELVIS across the truss, along with other supporting acts such as the legendary Suzi Quatro, who also graced the stage.”

While the NXT-1s enabled Wilkinson to create something a little different from what one would usually expect to find at an Elvis show, another tradition was at the forefront of his lighting considerations.

“It became obvious to me when designing the rig that the world of Elvis was very black and white when it came to color and contrast,” continued Wilkinson. “It’s rather difficult to keep the audience engaged with different temperatures of white, so I had to be very careful when washing the stage with primary colors and using gobos etc.” As a solution, Wilkinson resorted to using a lot of pastels in the design, using both the NXTs and the 560Zs. He

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The fourth annual Europe's Tribute to Elvis

continued: "I could go from a primary red to a lavender wash very easily just by adding an extra bit of white into my palette."

Wilkinson positioned eight CHAUVET Professional 560Z fixtures on a flown truss in the centre of the ballroom for a full band wash, as well as painting the extravagant 100-year-old chandelier clad ceiling with color. A further eight fixtures were positioned on the upstage truss to give a back wash, and also to wash the white wall at the back of the stage. Significantly, Wilkinson married the 560Zs with the three MotionOrbs, which adorned the back wall.

"As the whole event was being filmed, I placed the MotionOrbs against the white upstage wall to give a sense of color and depth to the stage on camera. This provided a good amount of eye candy while keeping intensity to a suitable level." He continued: "The MotionOrbs combined with the 560Zs really created a comple-

mentary look, and looked especially impacting on camera."

To add extra snippets of wash light at crucial moments during the set to illuminate various members of the band, Wilkinson added eight CHAUVET PiXPar 24s to the roster of lighting fixtures. "The Chauvet PiXPar 24 is my alternative wash fixture when power and dimming is limited. Although the output is stunning, for this show I didn't have to compromise all of my front wash. I could then still use some of the flown fixtures to light the cat walk and roof when needed."

Complementing the grandiose aura of Blackpool's Empress Ballroom, Wilkinson's final touch to the stage involved creating atmospheric effects with eight Chauvet Geyser RGBs positioned alongside the catwalk, which protruded from the front of the stage. The Geyser RGBs, which produce large volumes of water-based fog illuminated by colorful LED lighting, had the expected huge impact on the show.

"The Geysers never fail to impress," continued Wilkinson. "The Geysers are my favorite alternative to Pyro by far. Not only did they give the audience that 'wow' factor, they were a worthy accompaniment to the awards, presentations and performances that were scattered throughout the event."

While the King may no longer be around, with events such as Europe's tribute to Elvis keeping his spirit alive, it's little wonder that Elvis' popularity refuses to wane. "It was a fantastic production to be involved with." Concluded Wilkinson: "The Chauvet fixtures were essential to helping me recreate that electric atmosphere synonymous with Elvis performances."



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# Vandoren Launches Regional Artist Program

Vandoren is excited to introduce the new Vandoren Regional Artist program. Through the VRA program, a select group of highly regarded teachers and performers will provide complimentary clarinet and saxophone clinics geared toward teachers and students in their regions. By working closely with music programs in their areas, Vandoren Regional Artists will help to ensure that clarinet and saxophone students are reaching their full potential. Initial training sessions were held this summer in Chicago and Pittsburgh, with more to come as the VRA roster continues to grow in the coming months.

"The Vandoren Regional Artist program is a grassroots movement unlike anything we've had before," says Michael Skinner, President of DANSR, Inc. "Each VRA is essentially a Vandoren liaison, fully trained and equipped with both the knowledge and gear to help students and band directors succeed to the fullest. We're extremely proud of our VRA roster and are eager to see them in action."

All Vandoren Regional Artists are experienced educators able to customize clinics to suit the unique needs of teachers and students. VRA clinics are completely free of charge and can cover a wide variety of topics including music and instrument fundamentals, ensemble or section playing, jazz improvisation, reed and mouthpiece selection, and more. Vandoren mouthpieces, ligatures, and reed samples are available for all clinics so that both

teachers and students are able to personally experience the benefits of top-of-the-line, professional equipment.

Dansr relies heavily upon dealer recommendations for the selection of the Regional Artists. "It's very important that the local dealers are part of this program. We are always looking for 'win-win' situations, and like JUNO, this is a great example of how Dansr is working with the local dealer to keep sales in the community," remarks Gary Winder, Executive VP, Sales.

To find a Vandoren Regional Artist near you or to request a clinic, please visit [http://dansr.com/vandoren/regional\\_artists/](http://dansr.com/vandoren/regional_artists/). For more information on the Vandoren Regional Artist program, contact DANSR, Inc. at [information@dansr.com](mailto:information@dansr.com) or 888-707-4455.



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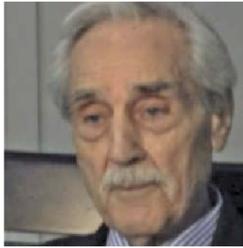
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## Trade Regrets

On August 1, NAMM's Dan Del Fiorentino got in touch with the following news:

**Ralph Zumpano** passed away on July 22 at the age of 92. He worked in the Kenosha, Wisconsin LeBlanc plant most of his professional career. Ralph married Vito Pascucci's sister and was alongside Vito from the very beginning of the opening of LeBlanc in the United States in 1947. Over his long career Ralph held many positions, becoming Vito's right-hand man, overseeing production within the factory and helping to establish new products. Ralph's friendship with Vito goes back to the years before World War II when Vito's brothers ran a music store, which is where Vito learned to repair musical instruments.



**Joe Hume**, founder of Hume Music in Kansas, passed away on August 6th. A veteran school band director prior to opening Hume Music, Joe was a vigorous supporter of school music programs throughout his life. Hume was an



original member of NASMD and also served as president of the organization.

On August 9th we received the following message from NAMM's Dan Del Fiorentino:

*It's with a heavy heart that I report **Bill Tarpley** passed away Saturday morning surrounded by his loving family.*

*Bill remembered the stories his father used to tell him about the early days of the family music retail store in west Texas. Times were hard during the era of the dust bowls and depression, but he credits his father's skills as both a businessman and salesman in the success of the store. After serving in the Korean War, Bill returned to Texas and worked in the store full time. He and his brother Buzz became co-owners and expanded the company to include several product lines with a continued focus on pianos and organs. In 1972 they moved from Pampa to Amarillo where Bill oversaw the construction of the first tilt building in the city, located on Highway 40. With pride he turned over ownership to his nephew and son, who continue to run the family business.*



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## ON THE MOVE

### Lowrey Organ Company

has announced that executive vice president **Seijiro Imamura** has been named president.



Imamura has many years of music products industry experience and has lead numerous achievements and innovations at Lowrey.

At a recent meeting of Lowrey dealers Imamura outlined several factors that point to a continuously improving Lowrey organization. "Lowrey is in a very unique and advantageous position to offer an even higher level of value and service to Lowrey dealers and their customers," states Imamura.

"We have taken the initiative over a relatively short time period and transitioned to a new production facility which is doing quite well," he explains. "We have also made a number of team adjustments that have improved performance in shipping and service. We have new product development team partners, have added to our artist staff and are building a new sales team."

"These efforts point to our ultimate goal of doubling our sales numbers over the next 36 months. By supporting our current dealers to make them stronger and creating new dealers here and overseas we are confident in our growth potential."

**Conn-Selmer, Inc.** has announced the addition of **Jeffrey Miller** to the company effective August 3 in the position of VP Operations reporting to John Stoner CEO/president. In the role of VP Operations, Miller will be responsible for overseeing/managing our global manufacturing, distribution, procurement/supply chain, and customer service teams to define and implement strategic and tactical elements to enhance our overall operations.

**Ashly Audio** has hired **Ed Czarnecki** as its applications engineer. Czarnecki will report to Scott Leslie, Ashly's executive vice president, and will wear many hats in his new position.



Among his duties, Czarnecki will work with consultants, integrators, and distributors to provide information and

training about Ashly products, both pre- and post-sale, as well as solutions to design challenges.

**Blackstar Amplification** has announced the addition of **Paul Stevens** to their team as the new senior design engineer.



Stevens has worked in MI for nearly a quarter of a century, previously employed as a designer for Peavey, Gibson and Trace Elliot, in addition to working as a consultant for brands including Orange, Hiwatt, Cornford, and Carlsbro.

**KMC Music** has announced the appointment of three new regional sales managers.

Based in the Baltimore, Maryland area, **Michael Stockdale** now assumes the position of district sales manager for the Mid-Atlantic Region.



**Ryan Morgan** brings an equally impressive resume to his new position as district sales manager for the West/Northwest Region, based out of Bend, Oregon.



Based in Orlando, Florida, **Mike Johnson** now assumes the position of district sales manager for the Southeast Region.



**Gruhn Guitars** recently announced the appointment of **Eric C. Newell** to president & general manager.



In addition to overall administration of day-to-day business and general staff management, Eric will focus on company growth and long-term development and will continue in his previous role as general manager.

Company owner and founder George Gruhn will now act as Chairman & CEO.

As part of its continued expansion, **Roland Corporation U.S.** has augmented its team with new appointments in sales, management, support and HR.

**Antonio Ferranti** has been hired as piano strategy manager. He comes with

a rich business background in sales and marketing, most notably as the recent VP of sales at Alfred Music.



**Quynh** (pronounced "Quinn") **Nguyen** has been appointed as senior human resources manager.



**Mike McAndrew** has been named district sales manager (DSM) for the Southwest U.S. territory. He assumes the region from **Trevor Root**, who has transferred to the Texas territory.



**Chris "Agz" Agazaryan** joins the product team as product manager, Roland/BOSS Accessories. Agz comes to Roland with over 20 years of musical retail experience in various roles at Guitar Center, working his way from the accessories counter in Sherman Oaks up through the corporate offices in Westlake Village.



**Dana Toma** has been promoted to the position of piano sales manager for the Western U.S.



**Louie Gomez** is the newest member of Roland's Telesales department. He comes to Roland and BOSS with more than 30 years of customer service experience, the majority of which was at AT&T.



**Carlos Garcia** has been promoted to full-time administrator in the Roland Corporation U.S. Distribution Center.



**Korg USA Inc.** welcomes **Jon Bingham** to their field sales team as the new sales representative for the Southwest territory (California/Nevada/Arizona/Hawaii).



**MMR GLOBAL**



by **Ronnie Dungan**

**Aria Commits to UK After MD Exit**

After the sudden departure of MD Matt Joule, and subsequent speculation about the future of the UK operation, Aria released a statement reiterating its commitment to the UK business.



**Matt Joule**

Joule left the firm in mid-August, after joining the company in 2012, taking over from Martin Hartwell who moved on to Rosetti. After the

departure of a number of key brands Joule was instrumental in initially steadying the ship and then re-establishing the Aria brand and the UK distribution operation, developing in-house brands such as its Mojo cases line and launching new lines such as the Aria 500 and 200 Series acoustics and Fiesta Classicals as well as Pono and Eddy Finn ukuleles.

It is understood he moved on for personal reasons and hopes to return to the industry shortly. His departure immediately cast doubt on the future of the Japanese firm's small UK operation, but the HQ sought to clarify its position with a statement.

International sales manager, Kazuyuki Miyamoto, said: "Considering the extremely difficult trading conditions we are all experiencing at the current time, the departure of Matt Joule will be very difficult to deal with.

"We would like to thank him for his endeavour and fortitude in re-shaping Aria's UK operation and setting it on a steady path. In the foreseeable future the senior direction will be handled by Aria headquarters in Japan while the UK business will continue with its existing highly motivated and experienced sales staff and representation."

**UK Dealers Grabbing Online Opportunity**

UK dealers are grasping the nettle of online innovation with leading chain Dawsons developing a new virtual store browser and Banbury indie, One Man Band, building its own video tuition site.

Dawsons Music has teamed up with technology provider GoinStore, to provide a new smart glasses virtual browsing service to online shoppers. Consumers using the online service will see a first-person view of products through smart glasses worn by in-store employees. The firm hopes it will improve its online conversion rate and counter the effect of shoppers coming in to stores to browse and then buying elsewhere online.

Customers chatting on Dawsons' online shop are not directed to a text-based support person, but are instead hooked up with an in-store specialist, who wears a pair of smart glasses, acting as their remote eyes and ears.

Shoppers can guide staff around by speaking directly to them through a two-way audio stream, and ask for recommendations as the tour goes on. The service is powered by GoinStore's Assignment Engine, an artificial intelligence package that analyses online data to pair shoppers with staff members based on the type of products they want to explore.

Dawsons managing director Mark Taylor, believes it affords the retailer a "much greater synergy between the web and stores."

He said, "Our staff are musicians first and foremost, which means the expertise you receive by visiting one of our stores is second to none. GoinStore allows our most valuable sales asset – our staff – to engage with customers far beyond the typical catchment areas of our stores and has unleashed their potential across the web."

Based in Warrington, Cheshire, Dawsons currently has 11 stores in the UK.

Meanwhile, Banbury-based dealer One Man Band has launched its own site dedicated to providing tips for Yamaha Tyros keyboard owners and has notched up 500,000 views on YouTube.

Owner David Cooper and manager, Chris Hammond launched the online channel called [www.tyrostipsters.co.uk](http://www.tyrostipsters.co.uk) as a way of demonstrating how to get the best out of the Yamaha keyboards and also helped broaden its sales across the UK.

Hammond said: "In our industry, a lot of people are quite negative about the Internet taking away sales, but it gives you a window for the whole world. We've gone from a radius of 25 miles around the shop, to selling all over the UK."

The store will deliver anywhere in the country from the Oxfordshire shop. The store also has two other sites with videos comparing brands, demonstrations and live question-and-answer sessions.



**Rodriguez Commits to Local Manufacturing**

Spanish classical guitar specialist Manuel Rodriguez III says he is bringing guitar production back from China to Spain. The eponymous boss told U.S. news network CNN that the majority of the firm's annual output of 15,000 guitars is produced in China, where they are assembled in one month and sold for around \$200 each.

In addition, 5,000 high-end guitars, which can sell for up to \$20,000 each are also made in Spain, crafted from a variety of woods such as African ebony, Canadian cedar and Indian rosewood. And now he plans to bring the production of its low-price guitars back from China to Spain.

"People will buy more of our instruments made in Spain than made in China," says Rodriguez. "In China the labour is going up, so it's going to be difficult to compete and I think that's our next challenge is to express and to show the Spanish guitar is back in Spain."



**Manuel Rodriguez**

# In the Hotseat with Jason How

Chairman of iconic British string brand Rotosound, all-around good egg, and venturer on the psychedelic sea of cosmic vibration (or something), Jason How is this issue's Hotseat visitor...

**Name:** Jason How

**Job Title:** Chairman, Rotosound

**What does that involve?** Something from every part of the business from machine building to marketing and on the road sales.

**The best thing about running Rotosound?** The total variety of the job and the satisfaction of having it all 99 percent in house and controllable.

**And the worst?** Well I think sales is the most frustrating bit in some respects, especially when the market is challenging.

**How do you stand out in the string market?** We push our manufacturing, heritage, and innovation when it comes to all the pioneering strings my father came up with. Keep our sales team pro-active and customer relations strong whether it be here in the UK or overseas, it's all important! Of course we do our fair share of marketing, social media, and advertising, too...

**I know you've produced some pretty good music yourself recently, anything new in the pipeline?** Oh, well I have a love hate relationship with my stuff as I am sure many budding musicians do. The first album (*The Tall English Sun*) and latest album (*Speedboat On A Magic Sea*) are up on iTunes. I also have a website, [www.jason-how.com](http://www.jason-how.com).

**Pick three Desert Island Discs...** Almost impossible as I love

loads of different stuff, but at this moment I could say: Julian Cope - *World Shut Your Mouth*; Television - *Marquee Moon*; The Dentists - *Some People Are On The Pitch They Think It's All Over, It Is Now*

**If you had a golden rule, what would it be?** Stick to a plan and focus your energy.

**What was the last thing you bought in a music store?** Some drum silencers pads or whatever they are called a couple of months back from Abbey Music in Tunbridge Wells (and I never asked for a discount!).

**Ever had a job outside the industry?** I was an instrument maker (navigational instruments) in a small company called Francis Barker when I left college, basically engineering and that was a great grounding after being at college before I came and worked for Rotosound. Then I spent a year at a company called Epps Specialist Cars where I was doing all kinds of mechanical work on a wide variety of high-end sports cars.

**Best advice you've ever been given?** Marry a genius then you can make it look like you are smart.

**Worst?** Shut down your manufacturing and buy it all in from China....

**What would you call your autobiography?** *God Loves a Trier.*



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# Vic Firth Remembered

By Christian Wissmuller

**E**verett Joseph “Vic” Firth hit the ground running and never let up speed. When I interviewed him for a feature in our sister publication, *School Band & Orchestra*, a few years back, he told me stories about playing gigs at age 12 or 13 and how, by age 16, he was a gainfully employed percussionist who formed and led his own 18-piece big band. With great humor, he relayed how, at age 21 – “some punk kid” – he became the youngest member of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and, a mere four years later, he was named the orchestra’s principal timpanist (a position he held for 46 years).

He was also a passionate advocate for music education, devoting much time and resources throughout the years. Additionally, Firth led the percussion department at his alma mater, the New England Conservatory of Music, for decades.

Vic Firth is known in the industry, of course, for the sticks that bear his name. In typical Vic fashion, the catalyst for what would become an internationally known and respected brand was his own rejection of anything less than the best: In the mid-’60s, he decided the drumsticks he had been using weren’t good enough, so he designed and built his own prototypes (which would become the SD1 and SD2 stick models).

The Vic Firth Company would grow over the years to become the world’s leading drumstick supplier, producing over 12 million sticks per year at the group’s factory in Maine. In December of 2010, the company merged with Zildjian, embarking on what has been, by all accounts, a successful partnership.

We all know Vic as a world-renowned timpanist who anchored the Boston Symphony Orchestra for 50 years. As former BSO conductor, Seiji Ozawa, said, “I believe Vic is the single greatest percussionist anywhere in the world.” Yet, as illustrious as Vic’s musical career was, I feel that over time Vic’s business career could come to overshadow his musical legacy. That’s how solid a business model he has created!

Having observed Vic as a business partner over the past five-to-six years, I believe Vic was absolutely destined to be an entrepreneur. If it hadn’t been the drumstick business, surely it would have been some other business opportunity which allowed him to articulate his creativity and passion.

Vic had *all* the characteristics of an entrepreneur. He was a confident risk-taker with the conviction to build something from nothing. And, with a mind that constantly needed to be challenged, he became a formidable competitor who over time became the undisputed leader in drumsticks.

But, even though one could say Vic was quite driven, he had



After his passing at the age of 85 on July 26<sup>th</sup> at his home in Boston, we reached out to a few of Vic Firth’s friends and colleagues in the industry, as well as some drummers who favor his sticks, and asked them to share their memories.

this very warm, personable side to him. He always made time for people. Every member of the Vic Firth team understood that Vic genuinely cared about them and their well-being. In return, his people felt a deep affection for Vic. I’m sure that Vic counted the admiration and affection of his people as one of his most coveted accomplishments in life.

**Craigie Zildjian**  
CEO

**The Avedis Zildjian Company, Inc.**



Craigie Zildjian, Vic Firth, and Debbie Zildjian

Words do little justice to describe the impact of Mr. Vic Firth. And I mean that personally and professionally. The outpouring of emotions we have experienced from the music performance, business, and education world has been staggering. While we are so saddened by the loss of our leader and personal friend, we are uplifted by the love shared for this icon. He was a great musician, educator and businessman



Vic Firth and Neil Larrivee

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*Vic firth*

Musician, visionary, entrepreneur, friend  
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– and yet that all paled in comparison to what a great person he was. His talent and wisdom was only superseded by his kindness. I have been fortunate enough to be with Vic for 29 years. How lucky I have been, to be along for the ride, with the greatest of all time!

**Neil Larrivee**  
**Director of Education & Product Development**  
**Vic Firth Company**

Vic was like old school Hollywood to me – he had that style and look!

Vic Firth signed me up when nobody else cared, that meant a lot to me and I've stayed loyal ever since.

One of my favorite times was in New York at a drum show – I sat in the balcony with Vic and Marco Soccoli and we had a ball! Vic told us some great stories from back in the day and playing with the Boston Symphony. They don't make many like him anymore. He will be missed.

**Charlie Benante**  
**Anthrax**

I learned many things from Vic Firth: Intensity, tenacity, diversity, humility. I wish I could have spent more time learning from

him. What he accomplished in his career is nothing short of astonishing – a testimony to his commitment to excellence. My favorite memory of Vic was sitting on a plane next to him right after NAMM. He knew exactly what I was up to with DCP and had read the articles about us in the trade magazines. I loved that even in his 80s, he was completely plugged in to the industry. Charles Moulton once told me, "There is no such thing as vacation to Vic." He wasn't joking. Thank you, Vic, for raising the bar and being such an inspiration.

**Shane Kinney**  
**Owner**  
**Drum Center of Portsmouth**  
**Portsmouth, New Hampshire**

Vic was an artist and a successful businessman – probably the only person I can think of who excelled in both realms so completely. He was also an incredibly important teacher, innovator, composer, and industry guiding light. A multiple-hat wearing gentleman exemplar. Also one of the funniest men I knew. And smartest.

I was once asked to give Vic a ride from the Anaheim trade show (NAMM) to a hotel located at Los Angeles International airport so he could catch his early flight back to Boston in the

morning without too much trouble. "No problem," I replied. So my wife and I meet Vic and get him and his bag loaded into the car, and Vic sits in the front passenger seat and my wife sits in the back seat, and all of a sudden Vic



Peter Erskine and Vic Firth

is on his really good behavior because my wife is in the car and I'm on my really good behavior because he is on his really good behavior and, besides, he's starting to remind me of my being with my professor and we're not music industry buddies gossiping or cursing the night away in some restaurant or bar, and it's like the most awkward one hour drive ever. Sorry, Vic. I got kind of awed in your presence all of a sudden.

Note to Vic: you were always incredibly kind to me, ever since we first met at Henry Adler's drum shop in New York when you showed up to show him some of your timpani mallets and I was in high school visiting Manhattan and my dad back in 1969 and I dropped into Henry Adler's shop... all of us there unannounced and enjoying Henry's full attention, which is more than I can say for the poor kid who was stuck on the practice pad in the back room for what seemed to be the longest time. THANK YOU, VIC.

**Peter Erskine**

Vic always seemed to be opened to exploring new ideas when it came to helping drummers design their signature drumsticks. He also took great care in making sure each pair of sticks was perfectly balanced for optimal playing response on the drum set.

Vic was always available to talk to you on the phone if you needed to. His contribution on helping me develop my stick sound is deeply appreciated every time I sit down to play music.

Thank you Vic for giving us the drumsticks that keep on giving.

**Jack DeJohnette**

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The CIRCLE

Acoustic Guitar Suppliers Discuss the Market

By Christian Wissmuller

THE GAME

While fans and retailers of electric guitar impatiently await the next “guitar hero” to revitalize that segment of the market, acoustic guitar sales continue to climb (see our dealer survey on page 50). Lower price points at the entry level, portability, and increased visibility via a number of big-name acts favoring acoustic six-strings are some of the factors that have established acoustics as winning product for a number of MI stores throughout the country.

MMR recently gathered five key players in the realm of acoustic guitars to get their take on trends effecting the industry, what products are flying off the shelves, and what they foresee for the coming months.

**For a while now, sales of electric guitars for many dealers have been (at best) flat, if not trending downwards while acoustic guitar sales are, generally speaking up. Why do you think that is?**

**Brian Piccolo:** We feel there are several reasons for this shift to acoustic guitars over electric. Part of it is the shift in current popular music. Acoustic guitars are being used more often on stages and studios than in recent years. Many artists from country to pop – even rock – are hitting the road on small venue

tours, connecting with audiences, and proving their skills with acoustic sets.

Many of the electric guitar players we have spoken to lately mentioned that they are adding more acoustic guitars to their collection. They are wanting to add something new to their already extensive collection of electric guitars.

Also, an acoustic guitar is self-contained, so it’s a lot easier to get into. Whether beginner or advanced, guitar players enjoy the ease and convenience picking up and playing an acoustic whenever the urge or inspiration strikes.

**Tom Bedell:** Our music is where and when we express our hearts... our love, our burdens, our dreams, and our stories. It is when we are the most honest in our expression and most real with who we are. The connection between the organic-ness of the world’s forests and our music is real. The music we create on our acoustics is our music – not produced or technically modified. It is us.

**Monte Montefusco:** The industry is enjoying an extraordinarily strong sales cycle where the acoustic guitar market has been delivering significant growth for years. The economic challenges that began in 2008 changed the way new guitarists started making music. The acoustic guitar embodies authenticity and comfort in times of uncertainty. Rather than aspiring



*Note From Causby*

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## NAMM Rocks!

I have spent my career helping members from many industries including independent car dealers, big-box retailers, insurance professionals and even rural water utility companies. I can certainly say that NAMM members know firsthand the value that NAMM membership provides in supporting their company and strengthening the music products industry. I can also say that my diverse association experience has taught me that NAMM members ROCK! That is why the staff at NAMM works hard to identify and deliver on what NAMM members want and need.

Belonging to NAMM gives you access to a world of benefits, both tangible and intangible. And while these benefits are tough to calculate, we use the term NAMM ROCKS to sum up the value of your membership: **Resources–Opportunities–Connections–Knowledge–Savings!**

Throughout the year, the membership team speaks to members from around the world, helping them understand these benefits, answering their questions and getting a better idea of what belonging to NAMM means to them. The trade shows are an ideal opportunity to talk in person about NAMM and member benefits—and of course, the shows are what many members point to as a reason for belonging—but there's so much more to it.

Do you know all the benefits of belonging? Let's walk through exactly how NAMM ROCKS!

### Resources

The online member directory helps you connect with other members throughout the year. Our members would not be where they are today without the generations before them that shaped this industry's history, and NAMM's Oral History Program hosts the largest collection of industry interviews from around the world. Members also have access to the annual Global Report with statistical records on retail music product sales from more than 20 countries.

### Opportunities

Member programs like the SupportMusic Coalition provide free marketing tools to help increase store traffic, broaden and strengthen your customer base, and encourage community involvement. You also have access to government relations committees like the Import/Export Task Force and NAMM strategic advocacy initiatives happening in Washington D.C., including the annual Fly-In. In addition, your company can be recognized through special events like the Top 100 Dealer Awards and the TEC Awards.

### Connections

The NAMM Show and Summer NAMM bring together industry professionals from around the world to see the latest musical products, network with peers, gain business-building insights and ideas, and connect with each other in smaller groups like the NAMM Young Professionals.

**“Being associated with NAMM has opened doors and opportunities that I may never have had. I have partnered with industry leaders and learned so many things.”**

– Arturo Lavalle, The Guitar Dude

### Knowledge

Education at the trade shows consists of NAMM U Breakfast and Idea Center Sessions on topics like technology, merchandising, finance, sales, marketing, lesson programs, as well as TEC Tracks sessions designed for pro audio and sound professionals. Plus, you can tap into this specialized information year-round through NAMM U Online, a full and varied library of videos, articles and interviews.

# NAMM® ROCKS

RESOURCES • OPPORTUNITIES • CONNECTIONS • KNOWLEDGE • SAVINGS

“NAMM is a great organization that supports its members and helps us make the most of great NAMM trade shows, business discounts and learning opportunities.”

– Sharon Duncle, Mike’s Music

## Savings

This past year NAMM members saved nearly \$2 million through NAMM Business Services. NAMM works with business providers to provide discounted costs for services and products like credit card processing, shipping, in-store financing, international payment services and business insurance.

Being a NAMM member means more than all the benefits. It means you belong to a community who shares your passion for this industry. Saving time, saving money and gaining support from fellow members—this is NAMM membership. It is a legacy that was built for you, by you and only succeeds with your continued support and involvement.

Take advantage of these benefits of membership—the more you do, the more you’ll see how NAMM ROCKS when it comes to serving your business! Visit [www.namm.org/membership/benefits](http://www.namm.org/membership/benefits) to learn more.

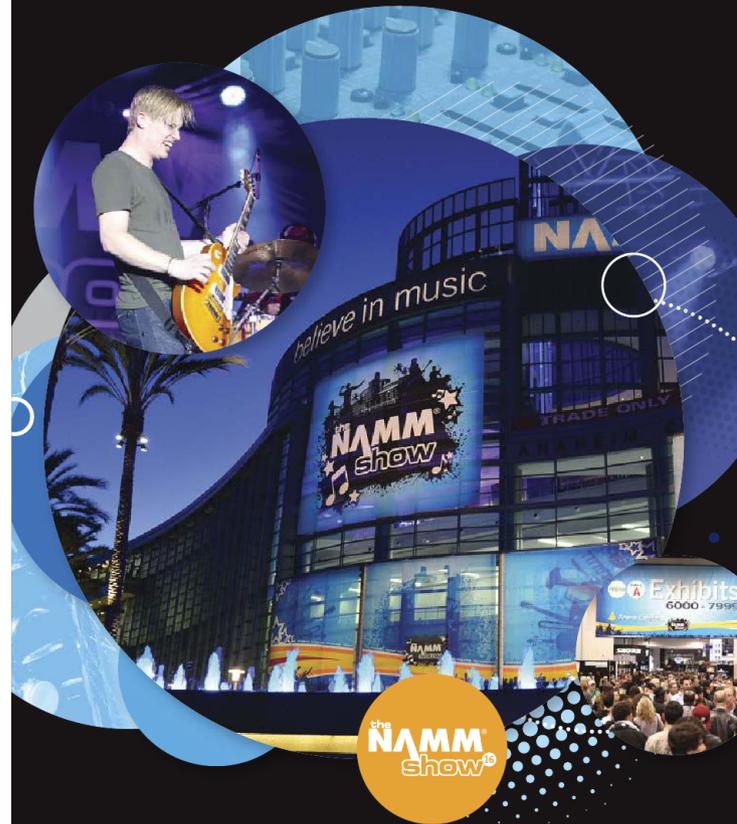
**Causby Challacombe, CAE**  
NAMM Director, Membership



## Member Incentive Program

It’s simple! Refer a member to join NAMM and if they do, NAMM will reward the effort with a discount on membership. Visit [www.namm.org/membership/mip](http://www.namm.org/membership/mip) for more information

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COMMUNITY

PROFITABILITY

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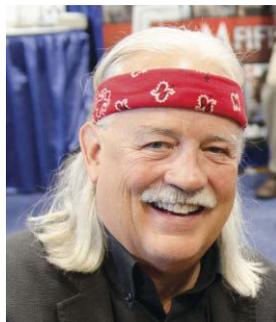
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## Roundtable: Acoustic Guitar Market

40 SEPTEMBER 2015 • mmmagazine.com



**Tom Bedell** – founder and CEO, Two Old Hippies



**Brian Piccolo** – L&G U.S. brand manager, director of guitar brands for Korg USA Inc.



**Monte Montefusco** – director of sales, Taylor-Listug, Inc.



**Tom Watters** – director of sales and product management, Takamine Guitars



**Brian Cleary** – founder, Faith Guitars



**Armando Vega** – marketing manager for guitars, Yamaha Corporation

**Henry Heller**

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to be the next electric guitar hero, players turned to a more organic approach. The rise of social media enabled musicians to share their music without the need of a full band and live venue. In addition, baby boomers are realigning their music making toolboxes. As they refine their musical tastes, they have the financial capacity to enhance their acoustic guitar collections.

**Tom Watters:** I think there are a variety of reasons for this. Acoustic guitars are a great instrument for “hanging out” with friends and family. They are portable and immediate. With so much music being recorded at home these days, an acoustic is ideally situated for the home creative process – maybe more so than an electric guitar through a half-stack. Acoustic guitars are beautiful works of art that add to the comfort and grace of a home. When you decide to perform live, it has never been easier than now to bring an instrument to the stage. With today’s preamps and pickups it is actually a joy to amplify an acoustic. They have come a long way in the last decade.

**Brian Cleary:** Ironically I think technology has played a big part here with YouTube, and similar, giving an audience to the acoustic player that they never had before. Somehow the video camera can create a very intimate experience that works so much better with someone

playing an acoustic rather than perhaps a band.

This new exposure has in turn created an appreciation for acoustic music, which venues now want to book because it’s current. It’s all together been a very exciting time for the acoustic musician and so it continues.

**Armando Vega:** My personal opinion is that the current musical climate is influencing the interest in acoustic guitars. Pop-country is at an all-time high. New folk and singer writers are still very popular. Finger style guitarists like Tommy Emmanuel and Andy McKee are bigger than ever. Then there is Rodrigo y Gabriella who are a global phenomenon, at this point. All of this in general, is inspiring aspiring musicians to pick up their acoustic guitars. I also believe that YouTube and other social outlets have created new avenues for musician’s to share their music with the world. The acoustic guitar is a great vehicle to work within that environment.

**For your own company, how are acoustic sales currently compared to this same time last year?**

**AV:** We are doing quite well in the acoustic market, and if all goes well by the end of the year... we will top what we achieved last year. Our sell through numbers are very healthy. That’s not to

say that this year doesn't have its challenges. That being said, the acoustic guitar market and Yamaha Guitars are in a good place, which makes overcoming those challenges a lot easier.

**MM:** Taylor sales have continued to outpace the acoustic category and demand for our instruments has kept our manufacturing team working overtime. Year to date, we're significantly ahead of our 2014 performance. We're fortunate to be sharing this success with our valued dealers and distribution partners.

**TB:** For the first half of 2015 we are 25 percent of last year in shipments. It is a good year so far.

**TW:** It's hard to say with the Takamine brand, as we have just been awarded distribution in March of this year, but we have been very encouraged by the rapid acceptance of the brand back into the market. Takamine's a great brand that has been handcrafting guitars for over half a century! We've created a lot of songs, and clearly a lot of great memories. We'll keep doing that for generations to come.

**BC:** Faith Guitars has enjoyed significant year on year growth over the last six years with manufacturing capacity being the biggest restriction. It's why we've taken so long getting into the U.S. market. We had to be sure we could fulfill a U.S. demand before marketing to such an important market. Through our new distribution agreement with Connolly Music we're very excited about Faith Guitars in America and what the next few years has in store for all of us.

**BP:** So far in 2015 we are seeing nice growth year over year and we are expecting this to continue for the rest 2015.

**What specific models are the hottest sellers for your brand at the moment?**

**TW:** We continue to have robust sales on the EF341SC, a Takamine icon, as well as our nylon string workhorse, the TC123SC. The handcrafted Japanese guitars in general have experienced a tremendous upswing as the market seeks high quality and honest value. We've been really excited by the response to our new TT Series of guitars that incorporate "Thermal Top" technology. These "thermal" spruce tops just sound terrific and bring added depth and maturity to the instrument's sound and feel.

**BP:** Our T100ASCEBLK slim line cutaway electric has been our best seller so far this year. The guitar offers an Auditorium slim body shape and its rich finish and detailed features give it a lot of personality. It is extremely comfortable to play and offers a warm rich tone for a slim body guitar at great street price.

**BC:** Demand for smaller and smaller body sizes, from Auditorium down to Parlor, seems to be now turning a corner with artists starting to explore what the larger body shapes have to offer once again. Many players are also becoming more sophisticated, buying with their ears, and perhaps not being so seduced by just "bling."

**AV:** For Yamaha, the top sellers are in the FG & FS Series, something that we've been doing proudly since 1966. This also includes the acoustic-electric version of that series with the FGX & FSX models. The unique thin-line APX500III & traveler size APXT2 are also very popular in the acoustic-electric category. In smaller short-scale guitars, the JR1 & JR2 have been constant champs in

## Takamine Guitars

For more than half a century now, Takamine has proudly dedicated itself to the art of fine guitar craftsmanship. Its longstanding devotion to innovation and continual improvement has placed it among the world's premier acoustic guitar makers, with truly fine instruments that are the first choice of performing guitarists worldwide.

To learn more about becoming a part of Takamine's great legacy, please contact us at 818-450-8265 or [Tom@espguitars.com](mailto:Tom@espguitars.com) to learn about the profitable dealer programs now being offered exclusively by The ESP Guitar Company.

[www.esptakamine.com](http://www.esptakamine.com)

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Breedlove Guitars' Oregon Series

the market place. And when it comes to acoustic guitar packages the GigMaker Standard and Deluxe models are both really solid movers.

**MM:** We introduced our new 600-series maple guitars at winter NAMM and are still filling backorders. The acceptance and demand for these instruments far exceeded all expectations. This indicates a healthy upper-end marketplace. Our feature laden 214ce-Deluxe model is set to surpass the iconic 214ce in sales volume. That tells us the mid-level guitar buyer is willing to invest more for higher-end attributes. The Taylor 150e is now the best-selling 12-string model, electric or acoustic, in the industry (source MISalesTrak - dollar sales).

**TB:** We market three brands: Weber Fine Acoustic Instruments, Breedlove Stringed Instruments, and Bedell Guitars. All have unique designs and purposes. I love the opportunity to delight a variety of musicians with instruments that sound, feel and look according to the particular musicians preferences. We are experiencing enthusiasm from our new Weber resonator instruments, our Breedlove Oregon Myrtle/Myrtle Limited Edition, Bedell Wildfire at the higher price points and the Breedlove Pursuit Ebony and Breedlove Discovery Sunburst at more affordable price points.

**Much has been made of the use of endangered tonewoods in the creation of guitars, with acoustics being perceived by many end-users as most reliant on traditionally favored materials to produce the best sounds. How do you see this issue affecting the design and manufacture of acoustics in the coming years? What is your company doing to address and respond to the challenges?**

**TB:** We never use clear-cut trees. Never. All of the tonewood used in our brands was individually salvaged or harvested to limit the impact on the surrounding ecology. Our pledge with Bedell Guitars is "SEED TO SONG." As much as possible we trace all of the tonewood in each Bedell back to the individual tree where it came from. We include a plant and animal certificate in every Bedell we ship including the biological name of all the tonewoods and their country of harvest. This chain of custody enables U.S. Customs and other regulating agencies to know the exact content in our instruments and that they abide by all CITES and other regulations.

An advertisement for Sadowsky MetroLine bass guitars. The image features a black electric bass guitar on the left and a close-up of the headstock on the right. The headstock is light-colored wood with four tuning pegs and the Sadowsky logo. The text is overlaid on a dark background.

**Sadowsky**<sup>®</sup> *your new premium bass line is waiting—the Sadowsky MetroLine!*  
**MetroLine**<sup>®</sup> *Sadowsky Quality, Performance and Integrity in a more affordable package...*

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“All of the tonewood used in our brands was individually salvaged or harvested to limit the impact on the surrounding ecology.”

– Tom Bedell, Two Old Hippies

We have launched a new collection of incredibly bold sounding guitars in our Home Grown Collection. The three series, Bedell Earthsong, Bedell Blackbird Vegan, and Bedell Wildfire are crafted from 100 percent woods that grew in America. They have zero impact on our tropical rain forests, yet play, sound, and feel like the finest guitars you have ever experienced.

**MM:** Wood sourcing and endangered tonewood usage is not a new subject at Taylor Guitars. Bob Taylor has been actively working in this area, leading the industry. As a company, Taylor takes its responsibility seriously in insuring the future of tonewood forestry. To do this, the company is an active participant in sourcing wood; from our work with GreenWood Global, a forestry cooperative in Copan, Honduras for mahogany, to our own work at Crelicam, our ebony mill in Cameroon, Taylor and our partner, Madinter Trade, are working to insure sustainable and ethical sourcing of tonewoods. In the US, we're working with Pacific Rim Tonewoods to propagate maple, and hopefully one day have a small forest of figured maple for use in musical instruments.

**AV:** Yamaha has established strict timber procurement and usage guidelines to promote sustainable use of our wood resources. The health of our planet is of the utmost importance, so Yamaha researches ways to use alternative woods and develop new materials. Yamaha's fundamental philosophy is aimed at preserving the global environment, and has enacted guidelines for the procurement and use of timber in products that allow us to contribute to a more harmonious relationship between society and nature. One of our top priorities is on procuring timber harvested from planted forests.

**TW:** Well, like most manufacturers, Takamine certainly relies on the classic wood combinations to create the intended traditional results, but Takamine always experiments with different woods to see what cool things can come from experimentation. Recently, they have been trying more wood from North America, such as myrtle for different tonal shades

and increased sustainability. We make some great guitars from bubinga. We've been working with ovankol as well, and we're really pleased with the results. With the "sameness" of traditional tonewood combinations, it's on the manufacturer to up their game in the production process... to look at every material; the glues, finish, saddles and nuts, and even tuning machines!

**BC:** Every manufacturer has a responsibility to source wood from only legitimate suppliers who, not only able to demonstrate all the correct documentation, but are truly working to manage the wood and trees.

An awareness of the importance of endangered wood also prompts makers to explore new ideas which can help to create a very vibrant offering in the market. We recently produced ten guitars with back and sides made from 5,000 year old bog oak. The tree was reclaimed from the bog, dried, and treated. There was a lot

of interest and excitement around these guitars and that oak tree had never been chopped down.

**What are your expectations for the coming months, both as it relates to the acoustic market, overall, as well as your own brand?**

**TW:** Judging from the increased business and increased curiosity from the consumers, the acoustic market is alive and well! At Takamine, we anticipate good growth as consumers re-establish their love affair with our guitars. We enjoy such tremendous brand loyalty with our vast artist community, and we know that there are plenty of new musicians waiting to have that first experience with our guitars. We are working hard to win them over.

**BP:** We are looking forward to the next few months. With summer behind us our best time of year is just right around the corner. With high-quality and affordable

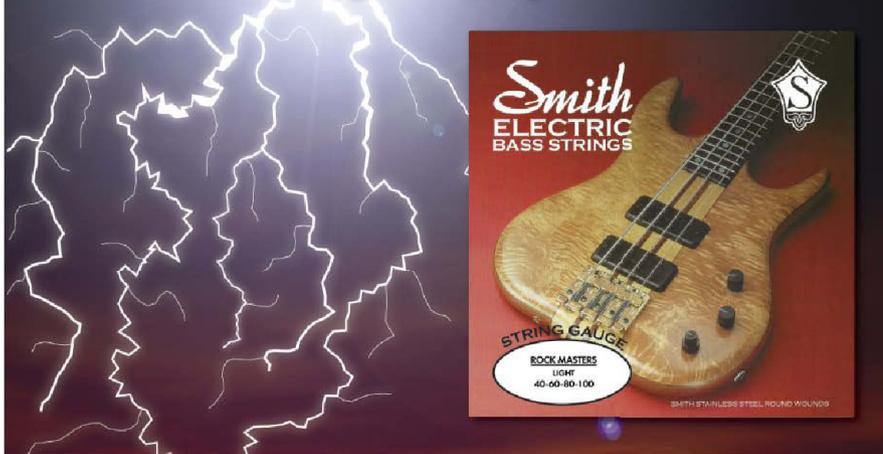
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## Roundtable: Acoustic Guitar Market

**44** SEPTEMBER 2015 • [mmrmagazine.com](http://mmrmagazine.com)

“Guitar players enjoy the ease and convenience picking up and playing an acoustic whenever the urge or inspiration strikes.”

– Brian Piccolo,  
Lâg Guitars

price points, Lâg guitars are a solid choice for just about any acoustic player

**AV:** We are anticipating another exciting and successful year, and gearing up for a strong holiday season. Then we kick off next year with a bang at Winter NAMM 2016, with lots of great surprises in store as well as celebrating our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of guitar innovation!

**BC:** As very new players in the U.S. market, everything for us is growth. We're delighted to be working with Connolly Music and have every confidence that they will both enjoy and replicate the success that Faith Guitars has had in Europe and Asia. We can see no sign of the demand for acoustic guitars tailing off and therefore remain very confident.

**TB:** We anticipate a robust 3rd and 4th quarter. Music is the voice of our times... and these are very fascinating times!

**MM:** We are incredibly positive about the future of the acoustic guitar marketplace. While sales in the domestic market continue to rise, there are exceptional opportunities outside of North America. Western culture permeates popular music and as the entry-level player of today seeks their next instrument we'll be there. Master designer Andy Powers will keep refining the tone of our guitars building on the superior playability we are known for. With our commitment to ebony from Cameroon, our new 600-series featuring North American maple, and exciting future wood sourcing endeavors, we have reinforced our position on responsible forestry to ensure great sounding guitars for generations to come. **MMR**

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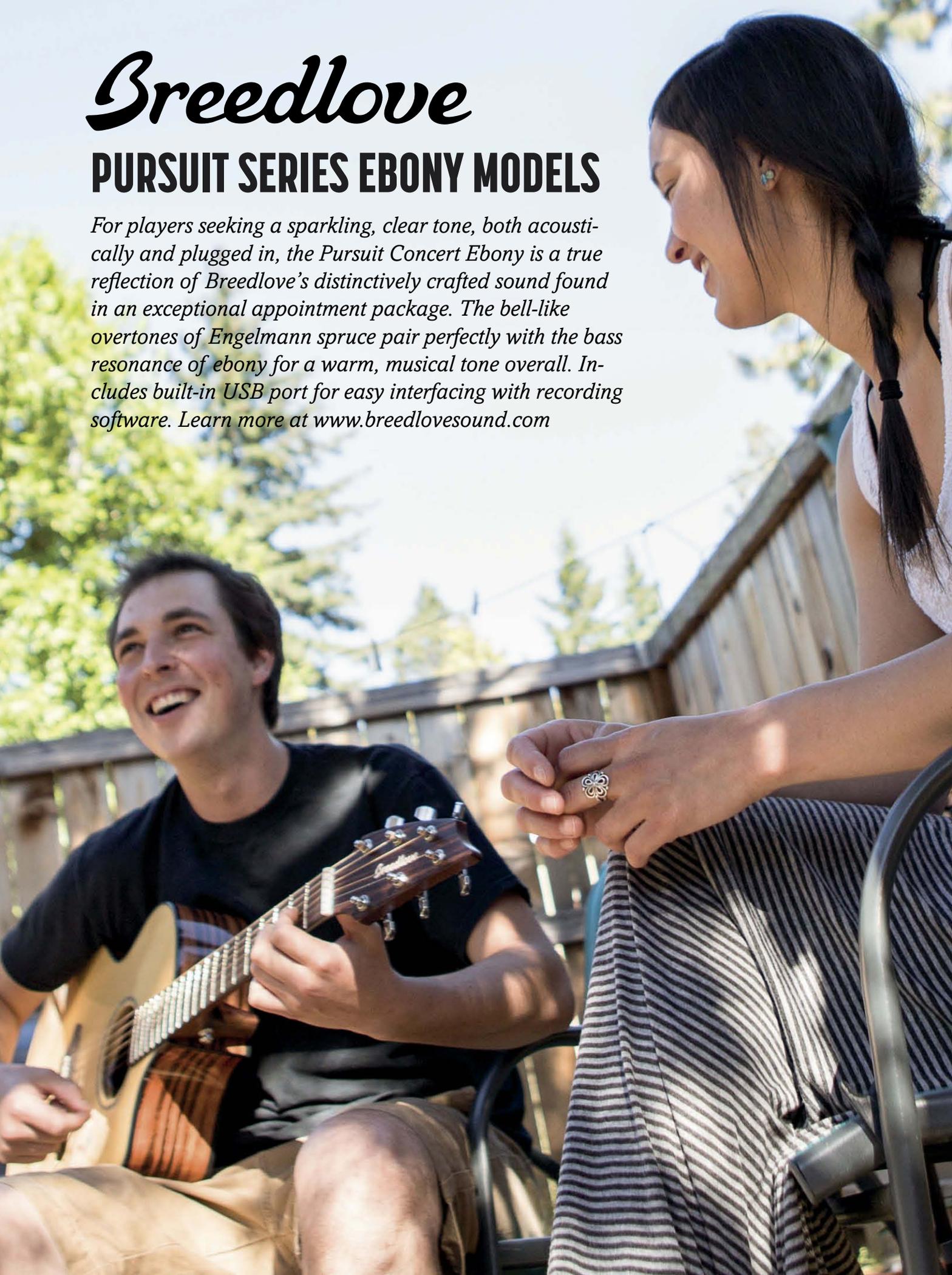


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## Spotlight on Acoustic Guitars

### Yamaha FS730S Acoustic Guitar

The FS730S adds a great sounding instrument to the best-selling Yamaha small body acoustic guitar lineup and features a solid Sitka Spruce top and die-cast tuners. The back and sides, fingerboard, and bridge are constructed of Rosewood. The new guitar projects like a dreadnought despite its smaller size, which is perfect for students, children, and people with petite hands. The FS730S has an MSRP: \$495.

[usa.yamaha.com](http://usa.yamaha.com)



with a hardshell case. You can be sure your Coffee House series is sustainably and legally harvested. It comes with its own Bedell Tonewood Certificate outlining its country of harvest for the woods used in the guitar. Full Specs include a \$2,990 MAP, solid Adirondack spruce top, solid East Indian rosewood back and sides, Honduran Mahogany neck, Ebony fretboard/bridge, Koa binding, Bone nut/saddle, 1 11/16" nut width, 25.5" scale length, Waverly tuners, K&K Pure Mini pickup, and "Espresso" burst gloss or "Aged" toner gloss options.

[bedellguitars.com](http://bedellguitars.com)



### Taylor Guitars Quilted Sapele, Flamed Mahogany, and Blackheart Sassafras Limited Edition Models

Taylor Guitars introduced a limited run of Grand Auditorium-shaped guitars featuring a trio of tonewoods. Back and side tonewood options include quilted sapele, flamed mahogany, or blackheart sassafras, paired with a premium Sitka spruce top. Each model features a dramatic, handcrafted Florentine cutaway



and a new appointment package to accent these hand-selected woods. Quilted sapele, a truly rare find, is flatsawn, highlighting the natural quilt of the wood and permitting for slightly more flexibility. Tonally, this translates into more projection and warmth. Flamed mahogany, noted for its visual appeal, offers players a naturally strong midrange response.

The Limiteds are enhanced by a rich appointment package featuring Indian rosewood binding and curly maple edge trim. A new "capstone" inlay of mother-of-pearl and rosewood graces the fretboard and rosette, and the guitar body is finished in high gloss. Inside, premium Adirondack CV bracing gives each guitar more sonic sparkle. The models come equipped with Taylor's award-winning Expression System 2 electronics, which debuted in 2014, and feature a revolutionary piezo pickup design that gives players a more authentic amplified acoustic tone. Each guitar comes in a deluxe hardshell case. The Limited Edition models will be available only at Taylor Guitars dealers starting in September.

[taylorguitars.com](http://taylorguitars.com)

### Låg OC66

The OC66 is the product of Låg's admiration for the attributes of classical guitar construction. Crafted from the classic combination of a Spruce top, Mahogany and sides, and a rosewood fingerboard, the OC66 yields clear, warm tones. Designed with the beginner in mind, the OC66 features remarkable playability to encourage growth and excitement. Also available with a cutaway and DirectLåg Plus electronics to suit the needs of modern players.

[usa.lagguitars.com](http://usa.lagguitars.com)



### Nils Concert, Maple Sunburst

A true luthier built guitar, designed to be a versatile and practical instrument. With an Adirondack Spruce top and red maple back/sides, this guitar produces a surprising amount of sound. The top is braced with a 90 degree xbrace situated just below the sound hole. This allows the soundboard to open up creating strong resonance and sustain, while still being tight enough to allow the top to hold its shape. Shown featuring a rubbed sunburst under high gloss nitrocellulose lacquer with an L.R. Baggs Element Active pickup system onboard. \$2,950.

[nilsguitarsandmandolins.com](http://nilsguitarsandmandolins.com)



### Bedell Coffee House Guitars

The Bedell Guitars Coffee House series of instruments are crafted to revive the spirit that inspired the incredible music of the counterculture era: Adirondack spruce tops from individually harvested trees, sustainably grown Indian rosewood backs and sides, and a handcrafted Koa binding. Available in parlor, orchestra, and dreadnought body shapes, Bedell now offers the Coffee House in a beautiful espresso burst as well as an aged toner natural top.

The workshop-installed K&K Pure Mini pickups in the Bedell Coffee House capture the fullness of sound and the vibe of the era authentically, without stage feedback. All Bedell Guitars come

### Lucero LC150 Series Classical Guitars

Lucero has introduced their new LC150 Series of classical guitars. These instruments combine beautiful, striped sapele mahogany back and sides with select, solid spruce tops to deliver unparalleled tone and projection. They also feature multi-ply real wood binding, three-ply rear marquetry strip, custom rosette, and gold hardware for a special touch of class and beauty. All LC150 Series guitars employ white ivoryoid Regal tuners and come with D'Addario ProArte nylon strings.

There are two models in the series. The LC150S is a standard classical guitar, while the LC150SCE is acoustic-electric cutaway

## Bags, Cases, and Stands

that provides unfettered access to the higher frets. The LC150SCE features Fishman's premium Sonicore Classical pickup and Clásica III onboard preamp system. The Clásica III offers an easy-to-read chromatic tuner with LED display and on/off button, and low-profile controls, including a volume knob, a phase button, and three bands of EQ.

At \$199.99 for the LC150S and \$269.99 for the LC150SCE, these instruments are great values, providing professional-class tone and feel, as well as the beauty of premium wood. They're in stock now at Guitar Center retail stores and are available for immediate shipment from Musician's Friend and [guitarcenter.com](http://guitarcenter.com). [lucerguitars.com](http://lucerguitars.com)



### Hamilton Stage PRO KB3500G

The Stage PRO KB3500G Super Guitar Stand has three legs and a hinged back support, which allows it to fold to a small size for transport and storage, easily fitting into most any gig bag. The back support cushion is a larger spherical shape and made from a soft rubber. This material is safe for all types of finishes and has an attractive look. The feet are made from the same thermoplastic rubber as the back cushion and are also spherically shaped. All metal parts of the stand are finished with a durable black powder coating. In function the back support arm and cushion rotate up for use, providing a higher support position than what is offered on other brands of compact folding stands. The three legs are made from steel tubing, which provides more stability and is lighter in weight than stands made from flat strips. Additionally, there are no knobs required for adjustment.



One stand does it all. The Super Guitar stand's folding cradle support will work with a wide variety of acoustic and electric guitars and basses. For the retailers, there are fewer products to stock. For the musician, there's no need to worry about having the right stand for the instrument. Provided in a self-merchandising display box and an MSRP of just \$26.99, the Super Guitar Stand from Hamilton is a great choice for the store, home, travel, and studio.

[hamiltonstands.com](http://hamiltonstands.com)

## Bags, Cases, and Stands

### Cooperstands Ecco-G, Pro-Tandem, and Pro-G

Fabricated from kiln dried African Sapele, Pro-G was designed to fit inside most guitar cases and to be used exclusively for solo performance in a protected environment, or for display and home use. This flexible stable stand is made from steel reinforced recycled ABS composite. It's available in black, red, blue, and glow in the dark.

Designed and produced by professional musicians, Cooperstand instrument stands provide secure support for acoustic, electric or bass guitar, ukulele, mandolin, and more.

[cooperstand.com](http://cooperstand.com)



### Gotham Stands

Gotham Stands patented design allows zero stress on the neck and securely cradles your guitar by the body. By placing your guitar in the stand, gravity feeds the arms of the stand inward to embrace the body of your guitar on a sturdy tripod base or modular-rail system. The "Gotham Grip" holds your guitar by the body with spring-embracing cushioned arms. This design fits most acoustic and electric style guitars. (Street price \$59; coming fall 2015).

[gothamstands.com](http://gothamstands.com)



## Accessories

### WD Music 12-String Bridge Rosewood

This 12-string Martin®-style guitar bridge is made from rosewood and comes with a non-compensated plastic saddle. It is specifically for steel string guitars and has a satin finish. The bridge is flat on the bottom and is not completely drilled through for bridge pins. Specs: length 6 1/8 in.; width at center 1 11/16 in.; thickness in middle 13/32 in.; e - e spacing 2 11/64 in.; saddle length 2 11/64 in.; saddle slot width 3/32 in.; saddle slot depth 3/16 in.

[wdmusic.com](http://wdmusic.com)



### Perri's 2-1/2" Suede Leather Guitar Strap

Made from 100% durable, high-quality suede leather, this strap looks and feels great. Fully adjustable to a length of 52". 2-1/2" wide. Choose from different colors to suit your personal taste.

[perrisleather.com](http://perrisleather.com)



Accessories

**Grover Ultra Capo**

Grover Musical Products has introduced the Ultra Capo. Designed to allow more room for the thumb on the back of the neck. Easy on... easy off... easy to position, the Ultra Capo also features a unique, non-glare matte finish for a soft, no-slip grip. Made of lightweight aluminum, The Ultra Capo is available in three matte finishes: black, red, and silver.



[grotr.com](http://grotr.com)

**Takamine TGC-1 High-End Acoustic Guitar Cable**

The TGC-1 guitar cable is specifically designed to transmit the natural warmth of your acoustic - electric guitar. By employing oxygen free copper wire of different dimensions, transmission loss is reduced to a minimum, providing the most accurate and natural imaging of your warm acoustic - electric signal. The silent, no-pop plug allows for perfect muting during on-stage guitar changes.



[takamine.com](http://takamine.com)

**Levy's MV17HD01**

2 1/2" hand dyed veg-tan leather guitar strap hand tooled with suede backing. Available in burnt olive, tan, and burgundy. Adjustable from 46" to 54". Available in extra long, which adds 12" to overall length.



[levysleathers.com](http://levysleathers.com)

**Aranjuez FluoroCarbon Strings**

These strings are brand new and made of a totally different and heavy polymer 1.6 sg compared to 1.3 sp for nylon. The polymer is tough so the strings are smaller diameter. The sound is loud, lively, bright, and crisp, which makes the instrument really become assertive. It's a bit brighter than nylon, due to the string being slightly smaller than it's nylon counterpart. Fluorocarbon is also favored because like nylon, it holds up well to humidity, and also is less susceptible to change in temperature.



[aranjuezstrings.com](http://aranjuezstrings.com)

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# Kumba YEAH! Acoustic Sales Continue to Set the Pace

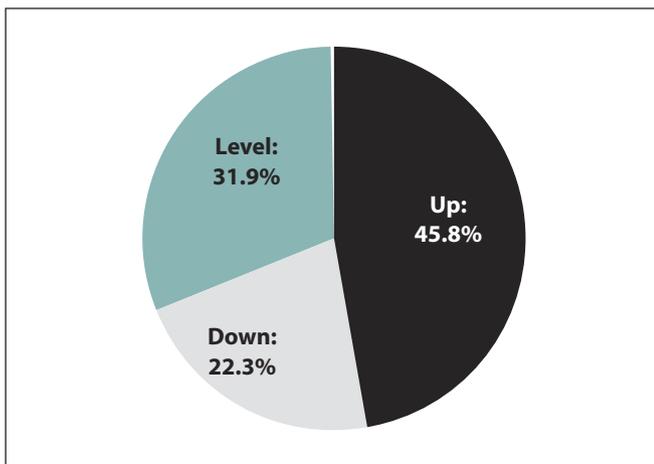
By Christian Wissmuller

With nearly half of the participants in our recent survey – sent out to over 400 MI retailers – reporting that acoustic guitar sales are “up,” and with an impressive 76.9 percent asserting that acoustic sales are either up or level when compared to this same time last year, it would seem safe to conclude that this particular market segment remains vibrant in 2015.

Not surprisingly, though, the assessment is not agreed upon by all, with some feeling the acoustic guitar “boom” is fading, while others feel Internet sales and big box competition are hurting all MI product categories, and still others worry that social media and other avenues of distraction will be the undoing of acoustic guitar (and other) sales.

However, on balance, the outlook for acoustics is looking pretty positive. Most feel that acoustics not only represent a relatively soft-sell “gateway drug” to purchasing an instrument, but also often lead to accessory sales and ultimately step-up guitar purchases, representing even larger profit margins. Even with a rebounding economy, the promise of self-generated entertainment and group participation – think singing simple three-chord folk and rock standards around the fireplace – clearly resonates with many end-users out there. **MMA**

Compared to this time in 2014, sales of acoustic guitars in your store are...



“Level is good as 2014 was strong. Everyone wants an acoustic – not so much with electrics.”

Gary Traversy  
Gary’s Guitars  
Portsmouth, New Hampshire

“40 years in the business and I have never seen it this sluggish. I think the market has been inundated by the proliferation of both big box and Internet musical supply stores. I hope I am wrong, but I do not see it getting much better until the flock is thinned.”

Louis Galper  
McCabe’s Guitar Shop  
Santa Monica, California

“It seems to me that the acoustic boon of the post recession period seems to have subsided.”

Donovan Bankhead  
Springfield Music  
Springfield, Missouri

“We are down about 11 percent from 2014.”

Kevin Hedley  
Uncle Ike’s Music  
Dubuque, Iowa

“We are about 10 percent ahead of last year.”

Ken Rattenbury  
Fret Mill Music Co.  
Roanoke, Virginia

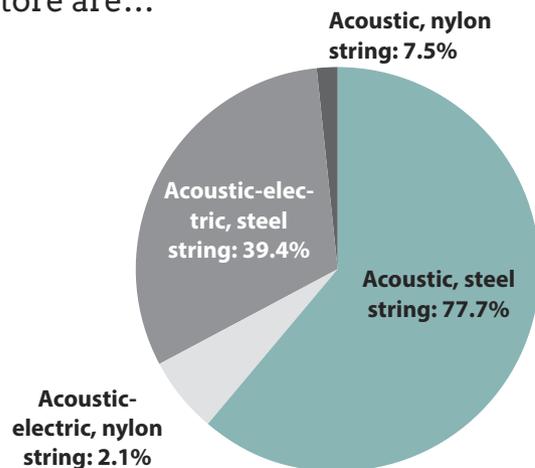
“A substantial increase [in sales], but at reduced profit margins.”

Kevin Walters  
Central Penn Music  
Palmyra, Pennsylvania

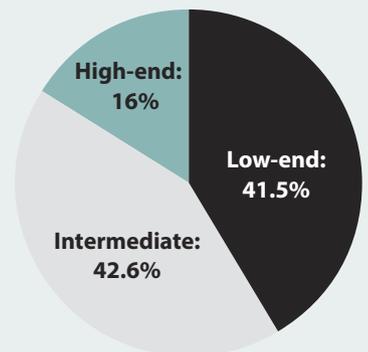
“Sales are up over 30 percent.”

Jim Dennis  
Music Loft of Carrboro  
Carrboro, North Carolina

The bulk of acoustic guitars sold in your store are...



With respect to acoustic guitars, what price points are doing best for your store?



“We have a lot of students and budget minded folks, so we try to find instruments in the lower price points that are of quality.”

Ted Parrish  
Parrish Music  
Viroqua, Wisconsin

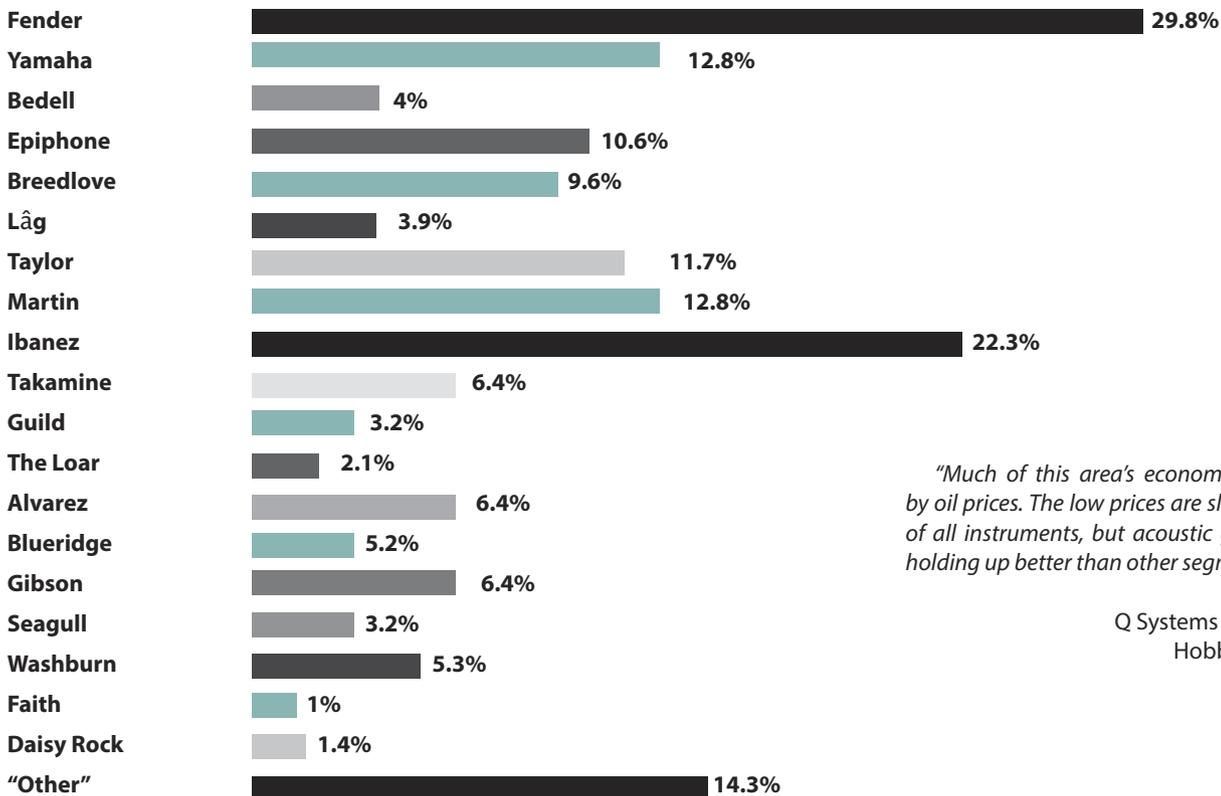
“This is a tough question to answer, as I feel we are doing well in all price points.”

Donovan Bankhead  
Springfield Music  
Springfield, Missouri

## Survey: The Acoustic Guitar Market

50 SEPTEMBER 2015 • mmmagazine.com

What brands of acoustic guitars are the strongest sellers for your operation in 2015?

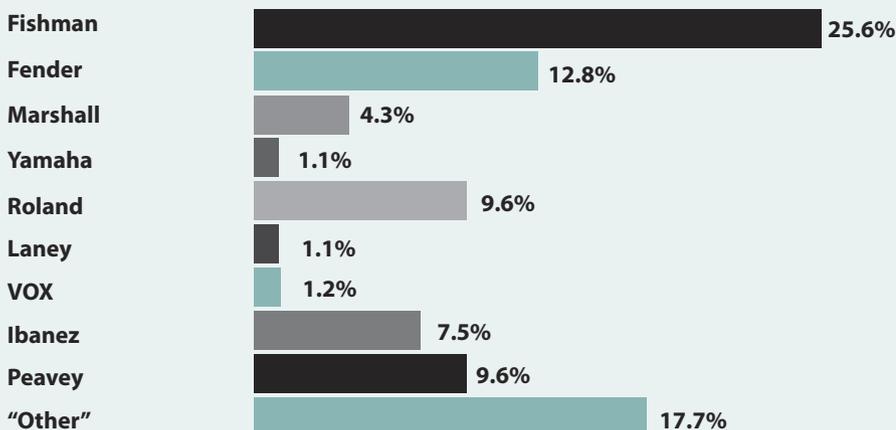


(Collings, Samick, Larrivée, and Cort were amongst the most common "other" responses in this category.)

*"Much of this area's economy is dominated by oil prices. The low prices are slowing our sales of all instruments, but acoustic guitar sales are holding up better than other segments."*

Don Williams  
Q Systems Music & Sound  
Hobbs, New Mexico

What acoustic-electric amps are selling strongest for you?



(*"None"* or *"N/A,"* Stagg, Washburn, Traynor, Laney, and Kustom were the most common "other" responses in this category.)

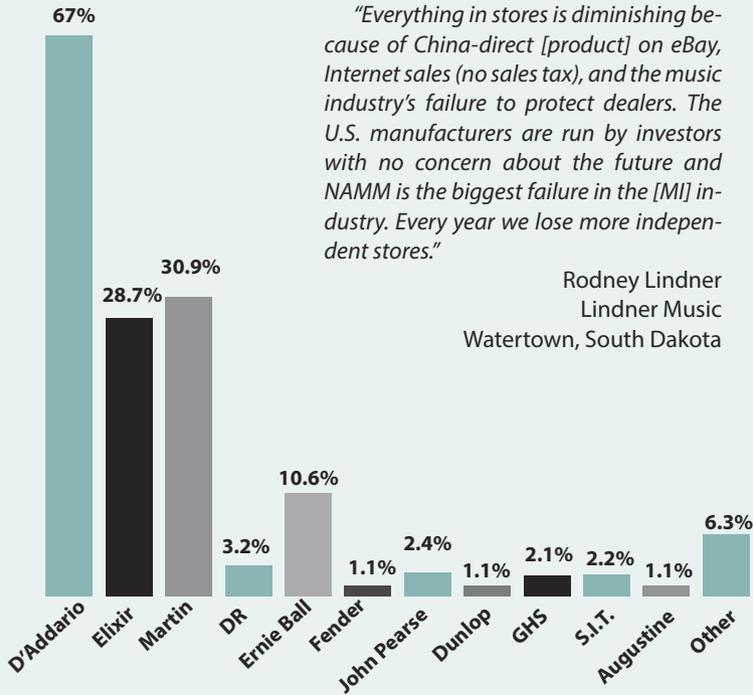
*"It looks like people are deciding they'd like to play an instrument before they buy it. The Internet doesn't have too much effect on acoustic guitar sales."*

Larry Gosch  
Encore Music Center  
Auburn, California

*"High-end acoustics ride the wave of interest in Americana. 'Torrefaction' is the biggest buzzword in acoustic circles these days."*

Greg Baum  
Sweetwater  
Fort Wayne, Indiana

**What brands of acoustic strings are doing best for your store?**

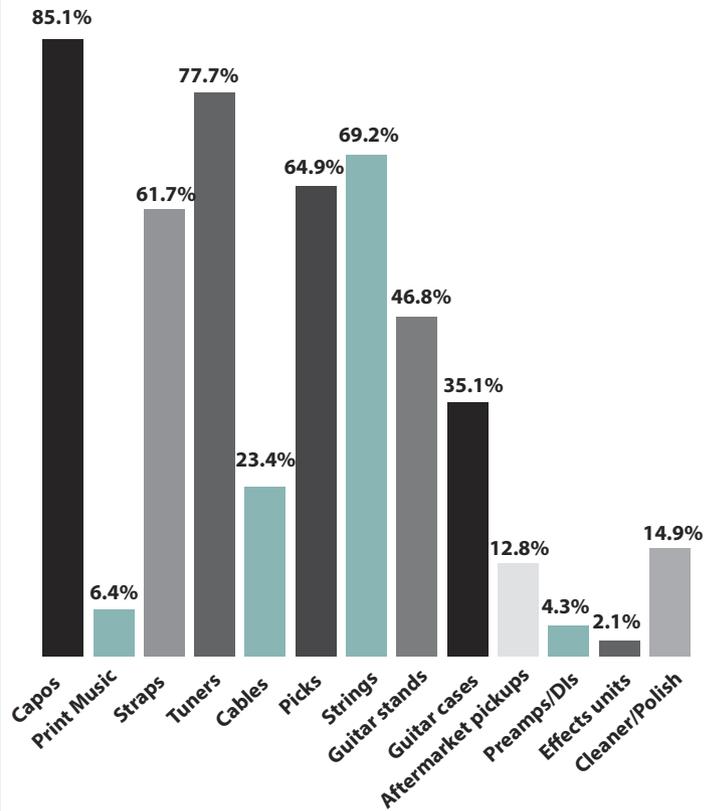


*"Everything in stores is diminishing because of China-direct [product] on eBay, Internet sales (no sales tax), and the music industry's failure to protect dealers. The U.S. manufacturers are run by investors with no concern about the future and NAMM is the biggest failure in the [MI] industry. Every year we lose more independent stores."*

Rodney Lindner  
Lindner Music  
Watertown, South Dakota

"Other" (Rotosound and Curt Mangan were the most common "other" brands mentioned.)

**What accessories or otherwise related sales are driven most by acoustic guitar sales?**



*"I expect acoustic guitar sales to be double that of our electric guitar sales from now until well into 2016."*

Douglas McKelvy  
Blue Mountain Guitar Center  
West Lebanon, New Hampshire

*"I see another strong year!!!"*

Jeff Burg  
Portman's Music Superstore  
Savannah, Georgia

*"An imperceptible but slow decline in the overall market as American society slowly moves away from self-generated music and deeper into the paralysis that is social media. The irony is that the industry saw this market trend back in 1976 or the prelude of those 17 years prior to Clapton going acoustic."*

Augustus M. Wanner  
Guitar Tex  
San Antonio, Texas

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# Ventura Guitars/Sound Ideas



## Champions Of The Common Mom & Pop MI Shop

By Jonathan Shepherd

**V**entura Guitars/Sound Ideas, out of Austin, Texas, aren't just about supporting mom and pop shops, they are one themselves. The company, which specializes in the manufacture and distribution of quality and affordable stringed instruments, was started in 2001 by Tom and Lily Oliphant, who, with a small staff and a 20,000 square-foot warehouse, still run the company the same way 15 years later. One might wonder how such a small operation is able to survive and even grow in an MI retail world saturated by e-commerce and big box chain stores. Tom and Lily's answer? They ignore it.

It's no secret that the independent music store is suffering – and how could it not be, when everything the consumer could want is just a few clicks and an overnight charge away? Almost everything, that is. Not Ventura/Sound Ideas products, however. Tom and his wife Lily have an almost revolutionary approach to the distribution of their line, in that they have taken great pains to have almost no Internet presence, and instead focus on the personal relationships that they have forged with the dealers who carry their products. Their website, [www.venturasoundideas.com](http://www.venturasoundideas.com), is designed specifically for their current and prospective dealers. By not making their product line available on the Internet or through national mass merchant chains, they are able to focus on establishing a network of dealers through word of mouth. It's so crazy that it just might work – and it has. Tom, who handles all of the marketing and product line development, also takes care of all the orders personally, as well as talking to almost all of the company's 400-plus dealers throughout the U.S. at least a few times every year. He also makes it a point to visit as many of them as he can. When's the last time the CEO of a multinational guitar manufacturing company walked into your shop to check on how things were going? Probably never, and it's this atten-



The Ventura V59 Natural Solid Sitka Spruce Top Cutaway Acoustic-Electric.

“ We decided to swim upstream rather, and specialize in doing business only with independent ‘mom and pop’ music stores. ”

– Tom Oliphant, Ventura Guitars/Sound Ideas



Jerry, Lily, and Tom Oliphant at the 2015 NAMM Show.

tion to the human aspect of the business that Tom attributes to Ventura's significant growth throughout the years. Lily, who was born and raised in Beijing, handles their relationships with their suppliers and friends in China, and both she and Tom travel there two to three times a year to oversee the manufacturing process.

Tom sums up the company's mission statement pretty succinctly: "From the beginning, our business model has been to take a contrarian approach to the market. We decided to swim upstream rather, and specialize in doing business only with independent 'mom and pop' music stores. We would establish a lower to moderately priced line of well-designed 'bread and butter' guitars for consumers with limited budgets coming into their shops. The product would have a lifetime guarantee allowing the consumers to buy this product with confidence, upon recommendation from the music store. Our customer would make a well-deserved fair profit as the product can't be shopped online or found in the national music chains, nor would he or she have competing independent dealers in areas nearby. Our suggested list prices are confidential, available only to the dealer, and are not advertised. We do not compete with our customers as we offer nothing for sale to the consumer, and by design our dealer website is our only Internet presence. We feel we have met a need for our customer, for at the time we started they were having difficulty competing with consumer mail order catalogs, and gravitating over the years to consumer online Internet web site selling, as well as the rapid expansion of the national music store chains".

From the website, he goes on to say, "The market dynamics just mentioned have been the guiding light in the design, development, and pricing of the Ventura product line, as well as the general approach we have taken to the marketplace. In terms of features, styling, and cosmetic appeal, Ventura musical products are significantly more than what is commonly available at similar price points. Additionally, the level of playability is beyond what is expected, and notable, as is the durability and consumer appeal of the product."

"We are not trying to be all things to all people in terms of the breadth of our product line", says Tom, "Instead, we feel that the more budget-minded consumers, who represent the bulk of business for our dealers, rely upon the owners and employees of the independent music store for guidance, and will trust their recommendations. We simply try to offer our dealers a competitively priced bread and butter string instrument product line that can't be shopped on mobile devices, or elsewhere, and that they can offer with confidence to their customers. It also allows them to make the fair profit they so much deserve and need to stay in business. This has worked for us for the past 15 years, and does seem to be greatly appreciated by our dealers. We certainly have no plans in the future to make any changes in our business model. Over the years dealers have become our friends, and we feel we offer them a viable alternative to compete in a very difficult retail environment". Ventura's entire line is geared toward the economical consumer, with price points

up to \$600 retail, but mostly in the \$100-\$300 range, and they offer a lifetime guarantee on every instrument they sell.

Can the Ventura approach be the salvation that the independent music store so desperately needs to stay afloat in the current market? Maybe so. Trying to compete with big box stores or Internet sales certainly isn't an easy option. Because Ventura is a true mom and pop company, they understand the needs of their customers, and as a result they don't demand buy-in requirements, minimum orders, annual re-up requirements, or applications. In Tom's words, "If I know you are a brick and mortar independent music store, then I know enough. It's really just that simple." **MIMR**

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# There is Always Room to Improve

## Ned Steinberger of NS Design

By Christian Wissmuller

**H**aving first made waves with the iconic Spector NS-1 bass (a collaboration with Stuart Spector) in the mid-'70s, and then introducing his revolutionary "headless" (no traditional headstock), graphite Steinberger electric guitars and basses in the late '70s, Ned Steinberger has remained a restless innovator who has continued to come up with groundbreaking design concepts.

At the helm of NS Design since 1990 (Gibson purchased Steinberger Sound in 1987 and retain the rights to the "Steinberger" brand name), he has introduced a number of high-end electric double basses, cellos, violas, and violins in the ensuing years. A couple years back, though, NS Design launched the Radius line of bass guitars with a head-spinning array of unique features: a maple di-radial body (the back and top have two different arches); the new Fusion neck (a carbon-fiber core embedded in a one-piece, bolt-on maple neck with adjustable trussrod; and a self-clamping tuning mechanism that allows the player to use any long-scale bass string.

With a hefty (though well deserved) price tag of just under \$3,000, though, the original CR Radius basses are certainly not in line with everyone's budget. The launch of the new WAV Series aims to address this, with price points closer to \$1,000.

We recently sat down with Ned Steinberger to talk about developing the Radius instruments, as well as other goings-on at NS Design...

**The initial focus of NS Design was on bowed instruments. The introduction of the Radius bass guitars a while back sort of signaled a return to more mainstream combo instruments. Can you talk about the Radius basses and what was the catalyst behind designing and releasing these instruments.**

**Ned Steinberger:** Well, this, it is kind of an interesting, slightly convoluted history in that about 20 years or so ago, I started to get serious about developing a tuner for a headless instrument that did not require any tools and did not require double ball end strings – so, essentially a self-clamping mechanism. I did finally develop that, originally for six-string guitar.

“I see the market growing, with the music world using harmonicas more and more.”

Anyway, I realized at a certain point that this tuner that I had developed for the guitar was going to be perfect for the violin because you know a violin is very sensitive to the amount of weight that it carries and the way it is carried. And so when I started to get really serious about electric violins I realized that with the guitars that I had done before, the only way to really get the balance I wanted was to have those tuning machines back on the body. And I surely didn't want to get into making double ball



Ned Steinberger with a Radius Bass

end violin stings because there are all kinds of different strings out there for violin. I knew I needed to be self-clamping and so this tuner that I originally conceived for the guitar, was modified and we patented the mechanism and for many, many years now that's just the fundamental part of our violins and violas. But what I came to realize is that this same mechanism would work extremely well for a bass guitar. The benefit of headless bass guitar runs deep because you got the long neck and heavy tuning machines on the end of it headstock. I originally came up with the headless [guitar] idea to make an instrument that would really balance beautifully instead of being heavy on the shoulder.

With the Radius, my idea was to take this great headless system and package it into something that is more comfortable for bass players today who've got certain expectation about the body size and a scale of a bass. So I really worked to bring the Radius bass into a form that would be more comfortable for a player to adjust to, both physically in terms of the way it plays and how it feels against the body. And visually how it looks and how it projects itself.

It has the body curved on the back to match the form of [a player's] midsection and it has that wedge shape to it, so it is thicker at the bottom than at the top – when it is held horizontally the body is thinner near a player's shoulders and thicker down towards you know a person's waist, so it tilts up a little bit allowing you can see the frets a bit. All those kinds of details were worked on very hard to make this bass as comfortable as a bass can be. And I do believe

we have been very successful in creating product that is beautifully balanced and just very comfortable to play.

We worked with Rob Turner at EMG to develop a really sweet sounding but powerful magnetic package for the instrument and we combine that with our own Polar Piezo System that I developed originally for the double bass.

#### How have the Radius basses been received thus far?

Well I think we have had a very good response to it. We are you know kind of again new to this game and so we still have a lot of work to do to get the product out there, but the response we get from people who have contact with the instrument is extremely positive. What we are doing right now is getting instruments that are more affordable, so we have the WAV Series Radius Instruments which you can get for \$1,200 bucks or something like that – much more affordable than the CR models that we started with. I think that is going to really be able to help us throw our net in a much wider area.

#### Are there any other new products introductions on the horizon that you would like to discuss?

Well there are some exciting things that I am working on that I can't really discuss, but in terms of things that are just about to break nothing really comes to mind. I mean these projects are never over – there is always room to improve upon a design. **MMR**



Amberburst NS Design  
WAV 4 Electric Violin



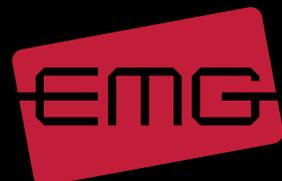
An NS Design WAV Bass  
Guitar in Metallic Cobalt

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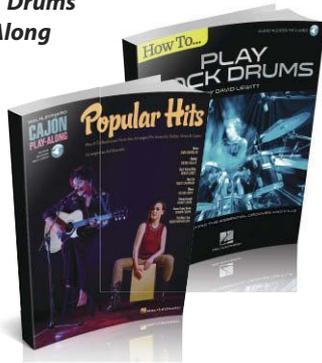
# HOLIDAY Buying Guide

**W**ith Summer NAMM disappearing farther and farther away in your rearview, it's time to look into stocking up on the products you might have missed out on earlier in the year. As retailers, you're in the midst of back to school season, but as any MI retailer knows, the time to gear up for the holidays is now. We've broken down some of this year's must have gift items into distinct pricing categories, making it easy for you to assure your shelves are stocked at every given price point.

## Under \$25

### Hal Leonard *How to Play Rock Drums and Popular Hits – Cajón Play-Along*

In rock music, the drums steer the ship. They're the foundation upon which the song's rhythmic frame is built. Therefore, in order for a band to sound solid, the drummer needs to be solid. In *How to Play Rock Drums* (HL00138541 / \$16.99), you'll learn all the necessary skills and tools needed to fill



this important role. Whether it's classic four-on-the-floor beats, funky rock, 12/8 beats, or just about anything else you're likely to encounter behind the kit, this book has you covered.

Designed for the beginning-to-intermediate player, this nuts-and-bolts method provides essential beats in numerous sub genres along with plenty of great ideas for fills – over 340 examples in all! With the included online audio access, you can hear every beat and fill demonstrated so you'll know exactly how they should sound. You'll even learn how to effectively count off a song in each style so you can get the ship sailing true from the start! So grab your sticks and prepare to start rocking!

Online audio is accessed at [www.halleonard.com/mylibrary](http://www.halleonard.com/mylibrary)

If you want to hone your skills accompanying guitar and vocals on the cajón, this is the book you need! Listen to the professionally-recorded demo tracks to hear how the cajón should sound, then play along with the separate backing tracks. The price of the book includes access to audio tracks for download or streaming.

### The Option Knob

The Oknob (MSRP: \$9.95) allows you to control your effects pedal by using your foot to adjust the sound while performing.

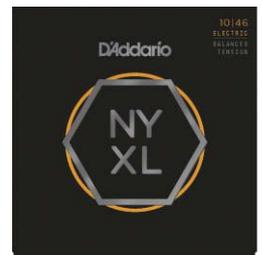


Simply pull off the factory knob and push on the Option Knob, then use your toes to tap the wings of the Oknob left and right to alter the effect. Choose any parameter you wish to have real-time control over and unlock the full potential of your pedal and live expression!

### D'Addario NYXL Line Extension

D'Addario announces nine new sets to their strongest guitar string line ever, the NYXL (\$20.55-\$23.40). These additions will

make 15 NYXL sets available. The newly-engineered, break-resistant, high-carbon steel core and plain steel alloy of NYXL strings delivers a whole new level of freedom, confidence, and power. NYXLs provide more strength, and up to 131 percent greater tuning stability when compared to traditional nickel wound sets. The reformulated nickel-plated steel alloy has greater magnetic properties, resulting in higher output and enhanced mid-range frequency response, modernizing the overall tone without losing that well-loved nickel-plated steel feel.



### Gig-A-Roo Mute & Stemware Holder

The Gig-A-Roo (MSRP: \$11.99) holds stemware and/or horn mutes and fits snugly on a standard mic stand. Use two or three to hold various mute sizes. Made of resilient spring steel and coated in protective PVC for grip and durability. Also fits on any vertical 1/2-inch tubing. The inside of the ring is 3 1/4 inches.



### AIM Gifts

Enjoy a cup of eggnog with AIM Gifts new Mason Jar Mug while looking at their new line of Acrylic Ornaments that say Happy Holiday to any music lover. AIM has 100's of music designed holiday ornaments and gifts, and 1,000's of music gift accessories that are sure to make your cash register RING!!



## Under \$100

### The Airturn PED

The Airturn PED is the perfect controller for Bluetooth smart ready-equipped Mac, PC, iPad, or Android tablet. Take control of music reading, scrolling lyrics or guitar tabs, teleprompting, slide presentations, instrument effects or media control, and more. Configurations are also available for assistive technologies and common desktop document or presentation applications.



**Backbone Guitar Resonance Enhancers**

Backbone Guitar Resonance Enhancers (MSRP: \$49-\$69) are direct bolt-on replacements for the stock neckplates of Tele and Strat style guitars, forming a resonant, mechanical link between the neck, body, bridge and strings. Machined from lightweight aircraft aluminum, attach Backbone in place of the neck-plate and connect the base to the string ferrules or tremolo claw. They fit any guitar using the industry standard dimensions for bolt-on necks.



**EMG ACS Soundhole System**

The ACS employs a unique internal preamp that's been tailored for the phase and frequency response of an acoustic guitar while still retaining a brilliant top-end favored in acoustic guitar tone. EMG's active design delivers the kind of response, output, and quiet performance needed in a soundhole pickup. Easy installation with EMG's exclusive Solerless Install system.



together only takes 15 minutes but it will help you understand and love the instrument. Features include: Adjustable-height bridge for low string action, enhanced playability and D'Addario strings.

**On-Stage KPK6500 Bundle**

All three bundles come equipped with On-Stage's most popular KS7190 X-Style Keyboard Stand and the classic KT7800 X-Style Keyboard Bench, as well as a choice of sustain pedals. The KPK6500 Series includes the following models: KPK6500: Includes the KS7190 Single-X Keyboard Stand and KT7800 X-Style Keyboard Bench. MSRP \$101.99; KPK6520: Includes the KS7190 Single-X Keyboard Stand and KT7800 X-Style Keyboard Bench, with the KSP20 Keyboard Sustain Pedal. MSRP \$121.99; KPK6550: Includes the KS7190 Single-X Keyboard Stand and KT7800 X-Style Keyboard Bench, with the KSP100 Keyboard Sustain Pedal. MSRP \$144.99.



**Henry Heller FlapStrap**

The Henry Heller FlapStrap (\$69) stows your capo, harmonica, slide, and other guitarist essentials. This smart strap is 3.5" wide and made from soft supple Amalfi leather with a smooth garment leather back. Adorned with a sewn on flap pocket containing a magnetic dial closure. It adjusts to 58" max length.



**Electric Loog Blue**

The Electric Loog (\$199) is fun, cute, and small, but it's not a toy: it's a real guitar, made out of real wood and equipped with a screaming lipstick-style pickup. We believe that when you build your own guitar, you develop a deep connection with it, and that is why we ship your Loog unassembled. Putting it



**Prentice Practice Pads**

The pad is constructed of MDF 8"x8"x4" with a 6" gum rubber playing surface embedded for a realist feel and rebound. The top and bottom legs, attached by hook and loop, create a sound chamber. The easy adjustable angle and setup anywhere make for playing comfort. Our newest models feature an 8mm cymbal stand attachment which offers more options for placement. (MSRP: \$59.99)



**Under \$250**

**LR Baggs Session DI**

The Session Acoustic DI (MAP: \$249) enhances your acoustic pickup. Features include: Analog Saturation, which enhances warmth and harmonic content; Compression/EQ, which smoothes out common problem frequencies; 48V phantom power, 9V battery or 9V DC powering options; A mute footswitch for 1/4" and XLR outputs; and a custom LR Baggs carrying case.



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## Under \$500

### Yamaha reface Series



Create your sound any place, any time with Yamaha reface Mobile Mini Keyboards (MSRP \$799). Featuring battery-operation and built-in speakers, reface goes from studio to stage to sofa with ease. Reface YC features five great organs while reface CP is an electric piano with six sounds and five effects. Analog physical modeling powers reface CS and reface DX are inspired by the iconic DX7.

### Blue Microphones Bluebird

Bluebird (MSRP \$299.99) is a Class A large-diaphragm condenser microphone for recording any sound source. With a proprietary hand-tuned capsule, transformerless design and discrete circuitry, Comes with S3 shock and custom pop filter.



### Audio Technica AT2020USBi Cardioid Condenser Microphone

Modeled after Audio-Technica's critically acclaimed AT2020 microphone, the AT2020USBi cardioid condenser (MSRP: \$359.00) is a high-resolution (24-bit/96 kHz) digital output mic that works with PC, Mac and iOS devices (USB and Lightning cables included). The mic's smooth extended frequency response makes it an ideal choice for podcasting, home studio recording, field recording and voiceover use. Includes an integrated gain control.



able buffered effects loop. Tube Status Indication (TSI™) circuit. Impedance switch for 16 or 8 ohm cabinets. Microphone Simulated Direct Interface (MSDI™) Output with XLR and ground lift switch. USB Output Speaker defeat switch. Headphone output Attenuator switch for 20 Watts, 5 Watts or 1 Watt output power. \$499.99 MAP.

## Under \$1,000

### JodyJazz DV Alto

The DV Alto Saxophone Mouthpiece (\$550) from JodyJazz Inc is their best-selling metal mouthpiece model and one of the most popular Alto sax mouthpieces in the world. The 'DV Alto' is handcrafted to exacting standards in the JodyJazz factory in Savannah, GA. Company founder Jody Espina applied the concept of the 'Golden Section Proportions' to create the patented secondary window design that eliminates the shrillness associated with other metal alto mouthpieces. Made from 24kt Gold Plated bell-brass, the 'DV Alto' is extraordinarily free-blowing delivering effortless power and projection with an unusually full tone.



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# Physical Modeling and the Physis Piano

Gary Girouard, director (North America) of Physis Pianos, describes the technology behind a Physis digital piano, the history of the instrument's creation, and what sets them apart from anything else on the market today.

By Paige Tutt

Italy is known for doing a great many things well – desserts, spaghetti, fine art, pizza, sports cars – but digital pianos don't exactly come to mind, at first. That's something that Physis Pianos is trying to change. Physis Pianos are 100 percent designed and manufactured in Italy, one of the things that distinguishes them from anything else on the market today. "There are three key elements which set Physis apart," explains Gary Girouard, director (North America) of Physis. "The first is the user interface – Physis uses a multi-touch glass panel with no buttons. Much like tablet computing, it's extremely visual and tactile. Secondly, each instrument is made with passion in Italy – From the powerful master controller to the elegant 'hybrid' style contemporary upright piano, the Physis piano lineup is 100 percent designed and produced in Italy. And lastly, the technology – physical modeling allows for full polyphony, full pedaling, unlimited sound models (patches), and unlimited expression. The platform allows you to create your own custom models and share with others."

Girouard indulged us with a "physical modeling for dummies" explanation of the technology behind each Physis instrument. "Uh-oh, you asked for it," Girouard begins. "Basically, physical modeling means a mathematical representation of real phenomena. For example the Principle of Inertia discovered by Galileo, which describes body movement, is a physical model. Nowadays physical models represent more and more complex situations. If you've used Google Maps (or self-driving cars), watched the latest Pixar movie, or even

depended on your local weather forecast, you've already enjoyed the benefits of physical modeling. These predictive models take into account a variety of characteristics, analyze them in real time using powerful computers, and create a real-life result. For example: Maps will take into account real-time traffic and alternate routes (and can now direct a self-driving car!); Pixar is able to make 'water' or 'light' look entirely realistic even though it's an animation; and the local weather relies on predictive models to help you decide if it's necessary to bring an umbrella to work. The Physis Piano is equipped with sophisticated modeling for each of the piano's components and is able, by means of extremely powerful computer processing, to calculate the corresponding mathematical algorithms in real time. The result is a realistic reproduction of how a piano (with varying physical characteristics) will respond as you play it. We've also included Electric ("Rhodes" style) Piano Model, "Wurlly" Piano Model, "Clavi" Piano Model, and "Mallet" Model – all of which use a similar process to recreate their respective sound/performance."

Others before Physis had tried physical modeling to no avail, notably Stanford and Yamaha had a go in the early '90s. Over time, computer processors became more powerful and Viscount, the maker of Physis, saw an opportunity to revisit the concept. "It was important to start with a 'simpler' instrument sound – and being a pipe-organ expert, Viscount started with a single speaking pipe," says Girouard. "It took almost seven years of research – with the assistance of three



“The Physis Piano is equipped with sophisticated modeling.. and is able to calculate the corresponding mathematical algorithms in real time.”

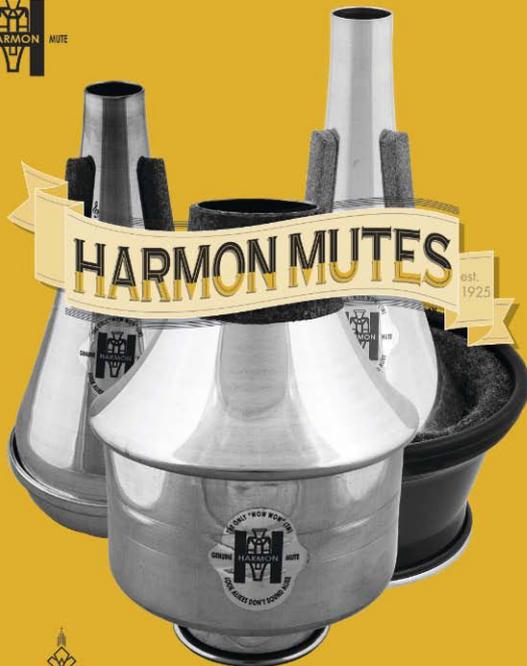
– Gary Girouard, North America Director

Italian universities – before Viscount introduced Physis technology in a pipe organ. Once Viscount achieved physical modeling of speaking pipes, it became a much more attainable goal to physically model an acoustic piano. Physis Piano was introduced in 2014.”

In 2015, Physis now produces a variety of instruments. The “K” series are a group of master keyboard controllers (with aftertouch), which feature 27 fully assignable real-time controllers, 256 indepen-

dent MIDI channels (8 zones), 4 USB host ports, 8 pedal inputs, and tons of programmable scenes. The “H” series are a group of stage and studio pianos. These are available in 73-key and 88-key versions with a variety of key-action and accessory configurations. The “V100” is a hybrid-style contemporary upright piano, which has a wooden-key action and “ivory touch” key tops. There’s a “slow close” key cover and the handcrafted cabinet is available in five colors: Sky Blue, Flame Red, Moon White, Black Sound, and Sunrise Gold. Viscount, Physis’ parent company, also produces a full line of Viscount church organs (30 models total), ‘Voice Systems’ sound reinforcement, ‘Galileo’ entry-level digital pianos, and OEM solutions for other instrument manufacturers.

As a pianist himself, Girouard finds the Physis to be more expressive than any other “digital” piano he’s seen on the market today. “The ability to add nuance and color while playing is unmatched,” he explains. “This is the result of complicated mathematical algorithms, which are reproducing (in real time) over 100 various physical elements found in an acoustic piano. It gets technical, but for me it all comes down to the “feel” - the ability to get emotion and expression is the most important element.” **MMR**



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## Three Reasons Every Business-Owner Needs A Right-Hand Man

Menzie Pittman explains why it's so imperative to have a great manager in today's changing MI landscape.

By Menzie Pittman, Contemporary Music Center

**W**ell, here we are in the fall season, and just when you have a good, young employee trained efficiently, they're off to college, and the training starts all over again. As an owner I'm sure you are involved in overseeing all training, but more than likely your manager is the key person and the first person with whom that new employee interacts. The new employee is possibly a totally different creature from your last employee and perhaps has a different personality or learning style, but that doesn't stop the onslaught of the "trampling rental elephants" (and trust me, you want to be trampled). So when one busy season follows another, and it's back to school instead of a busy summer season, there is one way to stay sane when you are the owner, and that is the quality of your right-hand man – the manager.

**Reason #1:** An owner can't be everywhere all the time, and there are many times when the quality of the person closest to you defines your reality. An environment of teamwork is created through respect.

Any owner worth his salt is consistently building relationships every minute of every day. This is what good owners do, which means the details and follow-ups to multiple interactions are likely to have more than one set of hands on them, so your right hand man will be the first to get the detail calls.

Do me a favor and read that sentence twice. You need respect from him/her and the way you get it is to give it first. Currently, in my world, my manager is the poster child for how to do the job right, and I do my best to show him personal regard and professional respect at every possible opportunity. A good suggestion would be to have your right-hand man introduced and recognized at any of your major events or simply on the showroom floor.

**Reason #2:** The biggest problems become smaller when handled by a great team.

When was the last time you went to work and there were no problems? How about never! That is just the reality of retail and service. When customers are frustrated or confused by your policies, it takes extra care to smooth out the wrinkles. It is your manager who inherits those problems first, and a great manager resolves those before those problems become yours to deal with. I find it more refreshing to share the joy of how a potentially big problem was headed off by my manager; I would much rather

**“Great managers, no matter what they manage, visualize possible outcomes and consider the impact of every detail.”**

laugh with him than experience stress because someone on our team didn't use the skill set to consider productive solutions to escalating problems.

**Reason #3:** The front man of "your band" is THE MANAGER.

Recently I had a horrendous back to school online experience: As a first time buyer you received a healthy fake "discount" for setting up your new account. The only problem was when you clicked through, the fake "discount" wasn't applied, and of course the truth of the infamous online reality is ... NO CONTACT PERSON.

You already know how this story goes, because it has happened to you, and you know how many steps must be taken

to redirect the outcome.

Enter the front man of your band, the manager...not just any manager, a great manager. Problems still occasionally happen, but the relationships he/she has put into place are immediately exercised. For example, the trust he has established with the manufacturers, the relationships he has with the customers, his rapport with his staff, and as simple as this sounds, the flow he has in his relationship with you, the owner, all factor into the successful solution to any situation.

Immediately a good manager knows how to access the "red" level of the problem, and in brick and mortar that can be as simple as a leak, or as complex as a child fainting and needing immediate medical assistance. A great manager anticipates those problems; he can foresee them before they happen, and that applies to online sales as well.

Great managers, no matter what they manage, visualize possible outcomes and consider the impact of every detail, and that's no easy task, I promise you.

A final thought:

The retail landscape is changing, and the service landscape is changing as well. Not a single person I know can completely wrap his or her head around where we are,

much less where we are going. While Joe Walsh reminds us on "Daryl's House" that we are in a strange new world, the app developers think this is the best time ever. However Joe makes one salient point, "There's no mojo" and "No one is testifying."

Joe hasn't met my manager, but if he ever did, he would say, "That guy... that guy has your back." **MMR**



*Menzie Pittman is the founder and owner of Contemporary Music Center. Since 1989, he remains CMC's only director of education. Contemporary Music Center has two locations in Virginia – one in Chantilly and one in Haymarket. CMC has won NAMM's Top 100 Award five consecutive years since 2011. Menzie is a frequent speaker at NAMM's Idea Center on music education and has been invited to speak at the Whitman School of Business, Syracuse University in N.Y. He serves on the steering committee for the Support-Music Coalition and also serves on the Hylton Center's Education Committee. Menzie was appointed to NAMM's Board of Directors and served from 2012-2015.*

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# What Women Want

(When they visit a retail musical instrument store, that is)

By Laura B. Whitmore

I don't profess to have insider knowledge of every woman's experience walking into a music store. But I can tell you my own point of view and that of many others I know.

As a professional in the musical instrument industry for pretty much my entire career, and somewhat of an expert in guitar-related gear, I still sometimes feel uncomfortable walking into a retail music store.

Why? Perhaps it's internal demons, or perhaps it's because I immediately feel like I have to prove myself knowledgeable to the salespeople there and therefore worthy of their attention.

Perhaps it's because I have a bit of distrust when it comes to salespeople and expect that they are going to steer me toward whatever: a) they have in stock; b) they get the highest margin or commission on, and perhaps then; c) something they themselves like and appreciate for whatever reason.

In trying to put this in perspective, I considered a recent purchase I made of a product I know nothing about. You see, my family and I moved to the Boston area recently, and although the winter was miserable for most things, it was great for skiing. After several rounds of renting my son's ski gear, I felt it was time to purchase... hopefully at a great end-of-season deal.

As my son and I walked around the ski shop, I immediately felt out of place. I literally knew absolutely nothing. We were directed to a salesperson who asked my son about his experience, likes, uses, and other questions like height and weight. Then he turned to me and asked about budget, whether my son had stopped growing, and other questions I was comfortable with.

He led us to a set of skis that really fit the bill. That salesperson made an overwhelming (and somewhat expensive) purchase seem like a no brainer. I felt respected and my son was ecstatic. The salesman went on to explain about what to do to have the skis set up, and other things that I as a mom should think about. I walked out feeling like I hadn't been taken advantage of and that my son was completely satisfied.

When I apply this experience to my own in music stores, well... let's just say it's a lackluster comparison.

People often ask me, how do we encourage more women to pick up an instrument, play more and, of course, purchase more music gear?

You want more women to walk into your store? Here's what women (and most humans) want when they shop for musical instruments.

Let me know you are there to help and then give me space. Women like to browse. They like to look at products and take them in with all their senses: look, smell, feel – everything except maybe not taste! Don't rush them. Make them feel at home but give them time to consider.

Make info easily available. I don't want to have to ask the salesperson every question I have. It would be easier for me to browse if there are tags or cards that explain the pertinent features of the product. I can even snap a phone photo of ones that interest me for future reference.

Give me something. I want to know that you are interested in helping me, but I hate the hard sell. I'm not terribly comfortable with negotiating, but I want to feel like I'm getting a good deal. If you throw in something, like a pick, a cable, a tuner, a book, even something small, I feel like I've reached my goal of getting a bargain. I love that.

**“When you assume that I am not the musician or that I am not knowledgeable, it is offensive.”**

Treat me with respect. Ask me questions in a tone that makes me feel like you actually are interested in my answers and you are not automatically assuming that I don't know anything. Don't make me feel stupid or defensive.

Don't assume. Yes, I may be shopping for my son or daughter or husband, but I may be just shopping for me. When you assume that I am not the musician or that I am not knowledgeable, it is offensive. This happens all the time!

No ogling. Don't look me up and down while you are talking to me. This is so uncomfortable. Eye contact is great. This also means you shouldn't have overly sexist art or language displayed or shared in your store or in your advertising outreach.

And speaking of. Have POPs, displays, ads and more that include female musicians in their artwork. I want to see people like me playing gear and being a part of the industry. This makes me feel like I belong. Oh, and make sure you have women's sizes in your T-shirt stock!

Have a female salesperson. I go to a female doctor because I feel like she can relate to me better than a man. The same thing goes for salespeople. I feel a sense of

relief when I am dealing with a female sales associate in a music store. She gets where I'm coming from. I immediately gravitate toward asking her my questions or seeking her advice.

Host events that are inclusive for women: a Mothers Day sale; a singer/songwriter night; a partnership event with a local Girls Rock Camp; a benefit for a women's support group; a "give back" week in which some of the proceeds go to my kids' school. Women notice when businesses support issues and causes that are important to them.

Don't be afraid to follow up with us. If I walk out of your store without purchasing, I'm okay with you checking in with me to see if I need further information before making my purchase. Or if you get something new in stock that you think would fit my needs, and you reach out to me, I think that's kind of awesome. So invite me to sign up for your mailing list, but ask more than my name and email, and keep track of what my interest areas might be. **MMR**



Laura B. Whitmore is the founder of the Women's International Music Network

([thewimn.com](http://thewimn.com)) and the She Rocks Awards ([sherocksawards.com](http://sherocksawards.com)). She owns and runs Mad Sun Marketing LLC, an agency focused on music and audio products. She's a singer/songwriter and the editor of Guitar World's Acoustic Nation.



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## A Winning Partnership Yorkville and The Jersey Surf

Yorkville Sound and The Jersey Surf World Class Drum Corps began a collaboration in 2012 that changed the entire design of the corps' field sound system – a partnership that still exists today.

By Paige Tutt

When you hear the words “Jersey Surf,” you’ll either think of catching waves off the Jersey Shore or the Jersey-based competitive drum and bugle corps. The Jersey Surf Drum and Bugle Corps – a New Jersey non-profit organization, dedicated to providing quality educational opportunities for young people in the performing arts – was founded in the winter of 1990 by a collection of school band directors who desired more performance opportunities for their students besides halftime shows during the football season. Two years later, in 1992, after an enthusiastic organizational meeting, the Surf had 102 members when they entered competition.

The Surf since has become a veritable institution in Jersey, with marching band members from a variety of high schools across many regions joining together to play in this competitive corps. The Surf is known for its great, booming sound, but when some of the venues required a little assistance to help the group project, it seemed a no-brainer to enlist the help of Canadian manufacturer, Yorkville Sound.

Steve Hendee, director of sales at Yorkville, says the partnership between The Surf and Yorkville started a few years back in 2012. “Yorkville Sound LTD is the Canadian distributor for MAPEX Drums,” Hendee explains. “In 2012, MAPEX helped put us in touch with Jersey Surf to offer them solutions for an on-field PA system for their summer programs. For the 2012 and 2013 seasons they used our Unity cabinet - U15P and LS801P subwoofer.”

For the Surf, two of the biggest challenges when considering the design for a drum corps field sound system are limited access to AC power and the fact that there’s minimal set up time – in most cases five minutes, and that’s including sound check. Yorkville met this challenge with a custom designed deep-cycle marine battery bank, which offered the group a self-contained AC power solution, providing 30 amperes for a minimum of three hours. This drastically re-



duces the set up time needed because it allows the sound system to be set up and line checked outside of the venue, then subsequently rolled onto the field while the system is already up and running.

Everything worked out so well with Yorkville’s redesign of the Surf’s sound reinforcement arsenal that the partnership continues on even to this day. The system consisting of two Yorkville Y15P’s and two LS801P’s was used for both the 2012 and 2013 seasons. In 2014, the decision was made to use a line array system, which enables the Surf to scale to individual venues, all while providing seamless coverage to the entire audience.

“For the 2014 season they were looking to upgrade their sound system and ‘step’ it up a notch or two,” Hendee continues. “Something a bit more scalable for the various venues they were using. For us the natural answer was our Paraline PSA1 full range loudspeaker system. The PSA1 full range loudspeaker system delivers the clarity and precision of a complex system in a compact, user-friendly format. This innovative cabinet design uses Yorkville Sound’s proven Paraline high frequency lens technology pioneered in our flagship VTC Elevation Series line array cabinets.”

So for the 2014 season they used five of the PSA1’s along with four of the matching subwoofers - PSA1S. These 2 x 12” powered subwoofers offer true 1400watts of unsurpassed Yorkville bass response. And here we are in the 2015 season, and once again they are employing our PSA1 and PSA2S cabinets.”

The Jersey Surf is celebrating 25 years of success this year. They celebrated with a special brunch at Cavanaugh’s River Deck in Philadelphia, PA. Friends and family of the Surf were invited to enjoy a special performance from the corps, a DJ, dancing, and a breakfast/lunch buffet. The corps then had their first “home” performance that following Saturday at the Eastern Classic in Allentown, Pennsylvania, as well as a standstill performance at the Camden Riversharks baseball game the night before. **MMA**



Yorkville Unity  
LS801P subwoofer



Yorkville Unity U15P



# Presidential Campaigns and the Arts – It's on US!



By Mary Luehrsen

**I** finally made it! I did something I've always wanted to do! I went to Iowa where presidential candidates were courting caucus-goers at the Iowa State Fair. Believe me, it did *not* disappoint.

On August 14<sup>th</sup>, NAMM supported and participated in the Iowa Arts Advocacy Caucus in Des Moines – an event developed by Americans for the Arts, the leading national arts and culture advocacy organization. The event included a full day of advocacy training that united arts, culture, and arts education leaders throughout the state. Plenary sessions, workshops, and presentations by presidential candidates (or their representatives) encouraged attendees to speak up for the arts during the caucus process to ensure that the creative and cultural sector, along with advocates for arts education in schools, have a voice in the presidential election. Our friends at Americans for the Arts are masters at creating fantastic tools that serve all of us (advocates!). They are also experts at educating folks about political processes and effective advocacy techniques. During the Iowa Arts Advocacy Caucus, I was reminded again that "It's on US" to bring the arts issue forward during presidential campaigns and speak up and act as advocates to all community leaders and elected officials. The current presidential campaign cycle is a great example of the need and our responsibility to represent what we care about – thriving, vibrant arts and cultural offerings in all communities with opportunities for every child to learn and grow with music and the arts in every school. It's on US as people working in the creative sector – music businesses, musicians, artists, music and arts education teachers, parents of students who are thriving with arts education opportunities – to voice our belief and concern that this issue must be included in national, regional and local policy and funding conversations and debates.

Honestly, this issue will be addressed only if WE bring it up! The tools provided by Americans for the Arts for this campaign cycle – [\[vote2016\]\(http://www.nammfoundation.org/get-involved\) and other advocacy tools offered by the NAMM Foundation and its SupportMusic Coalition \[www.nammfoundation.org/get-involved\]\(http://www.nammfoundation.org/get-involved\) support our roles as advocates, but we have to be willing to act. After the Iowa Arts Advocacy Caucus training, arts leaders in the state were ready and willing to ask targeted questions of the candidates. Some sample questions to ask candidates in person or via email or social media include:](http://www.artsactionfund.org/pages/arts-</a></p>
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**What is your position about the need for all children to have the arts as part of the curriculum?**

**Do you believe that every child should have an opportunity to learn in and through the arts?**

**What policies would you put in place and/or support to assure access to high quality music and arts education for all children?**

**What is your position on supporting the arts as part of thriving communities all across our nation?**

**In your view, what role do the arts play in America's international policy and diplomacy efforts?"**

Iowans are in a unique position to participate in the first caucus state that serves as a gauge for candidates' electability – beyond current polling. But those of us who are non-Iowans can be advocates on these is-



Leon Kuehner, executive director of the Iowa Alliance for Arts Education; Robert Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts; Mary Luehrsen, NAMM director of public affairs and government relations; Robin Walenta, vice chair of NAMM and president of West Music Co.; Rick Santorum, Presidential candidate and former Pennsylvania Senator; TJ Marcsisak, CEO of Nishna Valley Credit Union; Chris Kramer, deputy director of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs (Iowa Arts Council); Linda Langston, Linn County, IA supervisor; Paul Dennison, Iowa Arts Council Board/ KILJ Radio

issues by communicating with each campaign via email and social media platforms: most, if not all of the candidates have Twitter handles and/or Facebook pages. Reach out and ask your question! Wouldn't it be interesting to hear candidates talking about something we also care about? And this holds true for advocacy on the state and local levels.

Americans for the Arts has done an extraordinary job providing information about the candidates that is available to all of us on their website: [www.artsactionfund.org/pages/artsvote2016](http://www.artsactionfund.org/pages/artsvote2016). I urge all readers to review and track information on candidates' positions on the arts including statements and updates that will be provided right up to the general election. Note that candidates' profiles provide tons of useful information – including Twitter handles, Facebook pages, background info on voting and policy statements, and sample questions customized for each candidate. So get involved! Remember, it's on US! **MIMR**

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# New Products

## SwirlyGig SwirlyHook II



The SwirlyHook II headphone holder was designed to fit on 1-inch tubing (which is about the size of a quarter) and fits snugly, using only friction and gravity, on a standard music stand or drum hardware. The SwirlyHook is the perfect spot to put headphones, tambourines, cables and towels. The hook portion is about 2 1/2 inches long so it's plenty big to hold what needs holding! It's made out of sturdy and resilient steel then coated with a black PVC coating for grip, durability and protection. Try them on music stands, shelving, drum hardware, lighting stands or any 1-inch vertical tubing. MSRP \$11.99

[swirlygig.com](http://swirlygig.com)

## Grover Perfect Guitar Nut



Grover Musical Products has re-introduced the Perfect Guitar Nut for slide steel playing. Sold successfully for over 50 years under the Micro brand, the new Grover model is produced using a new, but exact reproduction die cast mold, which provides a much brighter, resonant sound than stamped steel versions. 1 7/8" total length - 1 5/8" Center E to Center E, the Grover Perfect Nut will fit almost all six string guitars.

[grotro.com](http://grotro.com)

## ACCESSORIES

### ISP Technologies Theta Pro DSP

ISP Technologies Theta Pro DSP is a complete floor-controlled guitar system with a fully programmable digital Theta preamp, Vintage preamp, Intelligent Speaker and studio quality effects processing. ISP takes a departure from the modeling processors and hands the guitar player the audio clay. For the pro player who wants their own sound, the Theta Pro DSP delivers. Theta Pro DSP is based on ISP's new hardware using a 32 bit floating point processor, the latest audio converters, and delivers over 124db dynamic range. Based on ISP's proprietary oversampled clipping algorithm, the Theta Pro is the only digital preamp that can offer massive amounts of usable gain without any aliasing or noise. Theta Pro allows preamp adjustment of tone, gain, saturation and "SAG" to provide the dynamic of tube amplifiers. The Theta Pro can also be plugged directly into a mixer to go either to FOH or for direct recording, and by engaging the Intelligent Speaker function, it will provide the same impact as playing through a classic guitar speaker with the dynamics and realism of that cabinet with a microphone placed in front of it.



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[spidercapo.com](http://spidercapo.com)

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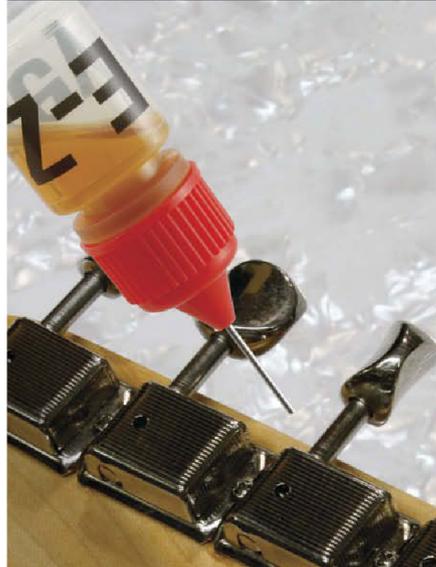
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By Dan Daley

The overheated fine-art world is supposedly cooling off, with prices coming down off the blistering highs of recent years. But you'd never know that after walking the floor at the Summer NAMM Show in Nashville, if you kept one eye open for the visual arts. Clever industrial design has always been an integral part of product form factor in MI – even synthesizer keyboards have found ways to make their utilitarian parameter controls look as pleasing to the left side of the brain as their functionality has been to the right hemisphere. Guitars, of course, have always led the way visually; thanks to their innate curvilinearity they've made the leap (though some might say jumped the shark) into everyday artistic iconography – the velvet Elvises of the art-music world. Even hulking guitar amps have found ways to look like successful graphics-arts projects, from Orange's evocations of *Yellow Submarine*-era fonts to the noir Art Deco of Trilliums.

But the product category that's taken the lead as the artistic trendsetter in MI has been the lowly stomp box, effects pedals that may be running out of sonic singularities but seem to be blazing new paths when it comes to their visuals. From the silvery, sinuous scrimshaw of ScreaminFX's Uverbias to Electro-Harmonix' playfully named yet respectful Ravish Sitar to the abstract icon placement of the H.B.E. Compressor Retro, there's art lessons in there somewhere.

The importance of form hasn't been lost on some. A U.K. brand consultancy, 625 South, posted an undated blog entry establishing a dichotomy between the corporately beautiful classic design of the Roland-made BOSS boxes from the 1990s, which they describe as "slick, professional... identically shaped and beautifully designed," ascribing to them the kind of characteristics we'd pin on any muscular industrial form, whether it be an automobile or an airplane, with Mad-Ave-ready words like "innovative, strong and reliable" that might have fallen right out of Don Draper's playbook. Oh the other hand, they posit the grittier designs of Electro-Harmonix, which they call "...absolutely everything that BOSS was not," adding, "From the design to the parent company; you can almost tell everything you need to know just by comparing the two logos," referencing

# Stomp the Band

Dressing Effects Pedals Creates an Aesthetic That's Market-Ready

BOSS' stiff, regimented graphics versus E-H's 1960s All-You-Need-Is-Love look.

Unfortunately, from there the blog post devolves into trite what-did-we-learn platitudes: Find your own path; be your own brand; love what you do. But it at least acknowledges the unexpected art that the stomp box has become the canvas for over the decades, like some graffiti-covered New



ScreaminFX's Uverbias

York City subway car from the 1970s. In fact, there are those buyers who lavish time, energy and creativity esthetically contouring manufacturer's pedals, adding their own touches to a box that, like the Lexington Ave. 6 local, does its best work down under foot.

In that way, the stomp box is becoming the gatefold LP cover that we've mourned the loss of since the arrival of the Compact Disc, a place to parse the visual elements even as we listen to the aural ones.

"The pedal market is now like the craft beer market – thousands of options, many based on the same types of circuits," Seth Wilk, owner of ScreaminFX told me. "Guitarists are sharing pictures of their pedal boards almost more often than their guitar," on social media, he's finding.

These artistic renderings also have a practical component. "For years, pedals have all looked the same but now visual impact is a game changer for sales," Wilk adds. "From a dealer's perspective, the pedals that look a little different are the ones that people want to take off the shelves to try out."

The stomp box has become a kind of gallery, and they've become collectibles, too with minimalist designs like a 1966 Dallas Rangemaster Treble Booster that can command low four figures to the neo-primitive rendering that makes up the visage of the 1960s Dallas-Arbiter Fuzz Face, which can tally as much as \$1,000 for an original. Dealers sometimes choose boutique products based on looks alone. You may not be able to judge what's inside a book by its cover, but sometimes it's just as rewarding to enjoy the cover for its own sake. **MMR**

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