

FOR PROGRESSIVE MUSIC RETAILERS

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JANUARY 2009 | MUSICINCMAG.COM

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On Follow-Up**

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**GET YOUR BUSINESS
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NOW**

Independent music retail Web strategies on the cheap **{PAGE 47}**



OMAR RODRIGUEZ-LOPEZ
THE MARS VOLTA

Photo: Todd Fisker

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JANUARY 2009 | VOL. 20, NO. 1

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES: \$50 one year (11 issues). \$90 two years (22 issues) to U.S.A. addresses. \$75 one year (11 issues), \$140 two years (22 issues) to Canada and other foreign countries. Air mail delivery at cost.

SINGLE COPY (and back issues, limited supply): \$9.95 to any address, surface mail. Air mail delivery at cost.

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OTHER MAHER PUBLICATIONS:

DownBeat, UpBeat Daily

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Please allow six weeks for your change to become effective. When notifying us of your new address, include your current MUSIC INC. label showing your old address. MUSIC INC. (ISSN 1050-1681)

Published monthly, except April. Printed in U.S.A. by Maher Publications Inc. 102 N. Haven, Elmhurst, IL 60126-2932. Periodical Postage Paid at Elmhurst, IL and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to MUSIC INC., 102 N. Haven, Elmhurst, IL 60126-2932. Printed in U.S.A.



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Photo by Steve Hough



Tony Leonard

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SKB Launches a New Era in Manufacturing Capabilities.

Delivery and installation of the colossal new SKB injection molding machine.



SKB's new *energy saving* Injection Molding System is one of the most impressive machines of its' kind currently in operation and among the largest in the United States. The initial case production run will require a *27,000 pound mold*. Delivered and installed at SKB's main factory in Orange, CA this past October, the new addition to the SKB equipment family weighed in at 225,000 pounds. The high efficiency and energy saving capabilities, improved repeatability due to the servo motor closed loop operation, quick response time and a much lower noise level in low speed applications will allow SKB to continue to develop innovative and cost effective new products for Music, Sports, Military and Industrial applications.

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PERSPECTIVE

PERSPECTIVE | BY ZACH PHILLIPS

LEARN TO WHISPER

Things had been quiet here at the *Music Inc.* offices during the first week of December. Then, the phones began to ring.

Word came of music retail stalwart Medley Music going out of business. This was followed by more retail bankruptcy news — both real and rumored. Dealers called to report mediocre, slow and even non-existent sales. And everyone had the same question: Had we heard from other retailers sharing their pain? To which we responded, “Unquestionably.”

If this sounds familiar, you're far from alone. Even successful, growing dealerships are feeling the pinch. And in the face of these economic woes, a mastery of sales fundamentals has never been more critical. That's where this magazine comes in.

On page 36, retailer, industry veteran and columnist Greg Billings delivers the final installment of his popular, yearlong sales training series, “The Customer Whisperer.” Judging from the phone calls we've gotten, it comes not a moment too soon.

“The Customer Whisperer” has proven to be a treasure trove of industry wisdom. Calling on his 40 years of industry experience, Billings has laid out each step in the sales process, covering everything from greeting a customer to closing a sale to this final article on following up with prospects. He offers an approach that's calm but assertive, psychological but easy to understand. Most of all, it works. Barely a week went by in 2008 that a retailer didn't e-mail asking if he or she could get extra copies of Billings' articles to share with employees.

For your convenience, we've posted “The Customer Whisperer” articles on our Web site, musicincmag.com. Navigate to the “Resources” page and download the entire series. Then, read and re-read the articles. Pass them out to your own employees. Review them at sales meetings. They're some of the best learning you and your staff are likely to get all year.

THE OTHER SALESPERSON

With all this talk of salesmanship, our January cover story, ironically, is devoted to the ultimate silent salesman, the Internet. In “Online Strategies for Indies,” we've profiled several independent music retailers with creative and relatively inexpensive Web strategies.

The reason for the story is simple. At last year's Summer NAMM show, dealer after dealer stopped us *Music Inc.* editors, desperate to know what other retailers were doing to harness the Internet. All of them said they needed to update their Web sites. All of them said they could take better advantage of the Web to increase sales, lower costs and promote their businesses. None of them had the foggiest idea where to start.

If this sounds familiar, flip to page 47 and take notes. **MI**



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Companies to Watch

NAMM's Best in Show Awards, 2008

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LETTERS

Wow Designs

The *Music Inc.* November 2008 issue arrived here in Vancouver, and the entire L&M team is absolutely thrilled and delighted with the coverage you gave us in your store design feature ("The 2008 *Music Inc.* Store Design Annual"). Wow! This is truly wonderful praise coming from such a highly respected industry trade resource as *Music Inc.* Thank you so very much for the great exposure. We sincerely appreciate it.

Bob Kohl
Long & McQuade
Vancouver, British Columbia

Thanks from Joe

I just wanted to send a quick note of thanks for the positive support of NAMM's Wanna Play? campaign in *Music Inc.* ("Campaigning for Music," November 2008)

[Pete Gamber] really made a great point to other dealers about the importance of getting involved, promoting their music lesson programs and attaching themselves with a campaign that we can all help to move forward.

Pete has such strong credibility with dealers, and this information coming from him will surely help the Wanna Play? campaign now and in the future.

Joe Lamond
President and CEO
NAMM

Future Voice

I am a senior music business student at Bradley University in Peoria, Ill. This past summer, I interned with Yamaha Corp. of America in Buena Park, Calif. I have attended NAMM twice and will be attending this winter NAMM show, as well.

My professor brought in some music business maga-



zines for us to look at the other day. As I was flipping through, the article [Pete Gamber] wrote regarding Wanna Play? ("Campaigning for Music," November 2008) caught my attention.

I knew it had to be about NAMM and really enjoyed the article. I am a big supporter of music advocacy, and I feel that music is my business.

Just thought I should drop a line and say thanks for writing that article. Through my college experience I have taken marketing, retailing, music business and professional selling courses. The simple marketing strategy of adding the Wanna Play? button to Web sites can make a world of difference.

Julie Hill
Peoria, Ill.

Best-Case Scenario Rebuttal

My fellow columnist, guitar-playing bandmate and good friend Alan Friedman made some great points in his article on Best Buy ("Best-Case Scenario," November 2008). I truly agree with Alan's comments about keeping your eye on your business to succeed. Unfortunately, I'm betting on Best Buy being successful versus Alan's betting against them.

Best Buy is not Mars Music. When I went to the dozen or so Mars locations, I thought, as a retailer, they were on Mars! Its music lessons approach, rental rates and product mix didn't make sense. Mars also had an overly ego-driven expansion plan. Best Buy, as a retailer, is not "on Mars."

They understand their targeted consumer base, which highly parallels the local independent music retailer. Best Buy has also been successful at redefining its business model over the years in a highly competitive consumer market.

I have carefully watched the initial Best Buy music stores in California over the last four years. By not using a musician ego as its driving force, Best Buy has been cautious and analytical in this new endeavor. Yes, they have a learning curve ahead of them, but don't we all? Best Buy's consumer base already trusts them for products, so why not for music gear?

The question isn't whether consumers will buy music gear from them. The question is whether there's more profit in an American Strat than a laptop.

Pete Gamber
Alta Loma Music
Rancho Cucamonga, Calif.

Correction: The Tale of Two Ts

It was a historic occasion for *Music Inc.* to honor Memphis Drum Shop owner Jim Pettit as the first drum speciality retailer to claim the Independent Retailer of the Year title in the December 2008 Retail Excellence Awards issue.

So, it is with much editorial pain that *Music Inc.* must report that Jim's name was misspelled as "Petit" throughout the issue. We regret the error.

EDITOR'S NOTE: MUSIC INC.

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James Neligan

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> **Stoughton Music Center**

Celebrates 20th anniversary

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> **Ponier Music**

Opens fourth location

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> **Five-Star Drum Shops**

Host The Big Beat, raise \$45K

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> **Sweetwater**

Raises funds for children's hospital

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RETAIL

ELECTION | BY ZACH PHILLIPS & JENNY DOMINE

THE OBAMA EFFECT?

In the weeks that followed the so-called longest presidential election in history, music product retailers expressed hopes that the election's end would restore some degree of consumer confidence and that President-elect Barack Obama would support music education.

"Presidential election cycles are rarely good for businesses no matter which party wins," said Peter Sides, president of Pennsylvania-based Robert M Sides Family Music Center.

"On [election] night, I heard our next president tell the world that he believes in us — that there's a lot of work to do but that things will get better," said Grant Billings, owner of Steinway Piano Gallery in Madison, Wis.

"Political certainty will bring some sense of stability to the financial markets," said Karen Kerrigan, president of the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Council, in an interview with *Inc.* magazine. "A rest from the severe market turbulence will likely ease consumer and investor anxiety to a certain extent. This is a welcome break for entrepreneurs." Still, Kerrigan cautioned that complete market confidence will not happen overnight.

President-elect
Barack Obama



What President-elect Obama could mean for music products retail, music education

SMALL BUSINESS, HEALTH CARE

During his campaign, Obama pledged to cut taxes for small businesses earning less than \$250,000 after expenses, while raising taxes on capital gains and dividend income among wealthier Americans. He also proposed exempting start-up and small businesses from paying capital

gains taxes and lowering the tax rate for the self-employed.

"I think Obama is well-educated and will support music education in schools because he understands the benefits," said Clint Strait of Strait Music in Austin, Texas. "I hope he doesn't raise taxes on small businesses or force all health care costs on employers. Being

a family business, we hope he doesn't do away with estate tax exemptions or raise tax rates."

To address health care costs, Obama's plan will not require small businesses to offer health insurance to employees. Instead, there will be incentives to provide health care. A small business health tax credit would provide a refundable credit of up to 50 percent on premiums paid by small businesses on behalf of their employees.

MUSIC ED SUPPORT

On Oct. 24, at the annual Council of the Great City Schools of Houston, Obama's spokesman Jonathan Schnur said the president-elect has made supporting music and arts education "a big priority."

"He is concerned that, as crucial as it is to raise math and reading and writing achievement, that a focus in the arts and music actually can be used as a lever to drive [those skills], as well as to drive a broader kind of creativity in learning, which is so critical to driving 21st century skills," Schnur said.

He added that Obama has called for a greater investment in the teaching profession. **M**

Originally published at musicincmag.com. Go to the Web site for more daily news, editorial exclusives and retail resources.

RETAIL BRIEFS

CONTESTS

M&A Names Top Garage Band

Music & Arts recently announced the winners of its third annual Teen Garage Band contest. Sam Ock from Ellicott City, Md., won the grand prize: a complete band outfit with gear from Ibanez, Tama and Yamaha. The second-place winner, The Mystics from Celebration, Fla., were awarded a \$500 Music & Arts gift certificate, and the third-place winner, The Rochambros from Rochelle, N.Y., won a \$250 gift certificate.

OUTREACH

Rocking for Angola

Gand Music & Sound of Northfield, Ill., recently teamed up with RISE International, an organization that helps rebuild communities in Angola, to raise money to construct an elementary school. Company co-owners Joan and Gary Gand helped coordinate and sponsor a \$50-per-ticket benefit concert featuring their rock band, Blue Truth. The event was held at Gabe's Backstage Lounge in Highwood, Ill., and grossed \$5,000 in ticket sales, raffle tickets and corporate sponsorships from local businesses.

APPOINTMENT

Fuller Joins Q&F

Quinlan & Fabish of Burr Ridge, Ill., has named Jim Fuller as manager of its Mount Prospect store. Fuller previously spent 16 years as district manager for Conn-Selmer, and prior to that, he was a manager for Brook Mays Music in Dallas for 12 years.

EMPLOYEES

Taking Gig Leave

Guitar Center's employee benefits now include gig leave, or taking time off work to tour, record and pursue other musical ambitions. It's part of the company's GAIN Program, an employee benefit designed to give GC employees an outlet for pursuing their music industry ambitions. Earlier this year, GC ran a promotion through which employees who were members of the GAIN Program could submit material to win a chance to open for alternative rockers Fishbone at a local stop on Fishbone's fall tour. Concerts featuring GAIN artists ran nationwide through Dec. 14.



Robert Tarchara

STOUGHTON MUSIC CENTER | ANNIVERSARY

20 YEARS OF ADAPTATION

Stoughton Music Center celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2008, but according to owner Robert Tarchara, it didn't come without serious foresight.

"I've stayed in business by adapting to the times," he said, citing Internet competition cutting into his once-burgeoning high-end guitar business and print music selection.

More recently, Tarchara opted to refocus his Stoughton, Mass.-based, full-line dealership on the student market, competing with a greater selection of entry-level gear, instrument rentals and a 300-student lesson program. His guitar selection, for instance, now hovers in the \$150-\$400 range. "We don't have anything over \$400," Tarchara said.

He has also cut his print music selection dramatically due to increased online print retailers. Tarchara said that three years ago he carried \$50,000 worth of print and devoted a full room to the product segment. He now carries a cherry-picked, \$5,000 selection, and he leases the print room to the business next door.

In terms of his day-to-day operations, Tarchara has made some changes that have produced surprising results.

"I changed my hours, so I don't open until 2:00 Monday through Thursday," he said. "So I eliminated 10 hours off the schedule for employee wages, electricity and heat. And my [sales] numbers did not change."

Tarchara, a jazz musician who has penned several music methods and instruction books, founded Stoughton Music Center to supplement his income as a gigging player. He moved into Stoughton Music's current store in 1993 after his lesson program began to grow. The current location is roughly 2,400 square feet.

"To survive in this business, you have to keep the atmosphere fun and positive," he said to the *Stoughton Journal*. "These days, kids have many activities — music is just one of them. For us, we just want to make the experience for them as pleasant as possible, and I think we do that. We have a great teaching staff, and we love what we do."

PONIER MUSIC | EXPANSION

Ponier Opens in Canton

With three stores in the hyper-competitive Atlanta market, Doug Ponier had no intention of rolling out a fourth location. That changed when his friends, couple Kevin and Kamilla Sanders, came to him about opening a music store.

"They didn't want the same struggles I had trying to get all the lines," said Ponier, who owns Marietta, Ga.-based Ponier Music. "But if they made their store a Ponier Music location, they could get all the lines I had, they'd be covered under warranty and they



wouldn't have to worry about big [manufacturer] buy-ins."

The Sanders found a roughly 2,000-square-foot storefront in the town of Canton, Ga. They'll serve as majority owners of the store,

and Ponier will stock it. The full-line location will carry combo instruments, offer band and orchestra rentals, and have a music lesson program. At press time, they were scheduled to open in mid-December.

"When [product] sells, I'll get cost plus half the profit, and then I'll get a little from their lessons and a little from their rentals," Ponier said.

The Canton store also received a boon from Dean Guitars. According to Ponier, the store's sign cost around \$800. Dean execs agreed to give Ponier \$800 worth of free goods in exchange for having one of its guitars featured on the sign.

"We've had the sign up now for two or three weeks, and [Kevin and Kamilla] say people drop by constantly," Ponier said. "So hopefully, it will be a good location for them."

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»» CLINICS



From left: Dennis Chambers, Damien Fahey, Kenny Aronoff, Jason Bittner and Paul Romanko

Chambers Returns to Daddy's

Santana drummer Dennis Chambers returned to Daddy's Junky Music in November after an eight-year hiatus for two sold-out clinics. Held at Daddy's

Portsmouth, N.H., and Boston locations, the clinics were co-sponsored by Pearl, Zildjian, Evans and Shure. Several celebs showed up to the events, including

Aerosmith's Joey Kramer, MTV TRL host Damien Fahey, drummer Mike Mangini, Shadows Fall's Jason Bittner and Paul Romanko, and drummer Kenny Aronoff.

+ SCHATZ PLAYS BOSS
Bill's Music in Catonsville, Md., recently hosted Roland and Boss rep Richard Schatz for a two-hour clinic on Boss gear. He reviewed the company's latest pedals and tuners with the Bill's sales staff.

+ LYNCH PACKS RIEMAN
Des Moines, Iowa-based Rieman Music recently brought in guitarist George Lynch for a clinic. The event, which drew roughly 170 people, was co-sponsored by Hal Leonard. Lynch demonstrated signature riffs from Dokken songs and previewed tunes

from his upcoming album. During the 90-minute clinic, he also answered audience questions about his gear and musical influences.

+ BITTNER TOURS RETAIL
Tama Drums and Hudson Music sent Shadows Fall drummer Jason Bittner on the road with the band's bassist, Paul Romanko, for a series of clinics in November. They stopped by eight stores, including three Guitar Center locations; three Sam Ash Music locations; Alto Music in Middletown, N.Y.; and Dave Phillips Music & Sound in Allentown, Pa.

FIVE-STAR DRUM SHOPS | EVENT

BIG BEAT RAISES \$45K

Drums thundered across North America on Nov. 2, 2008, for the launch of The Beat Beat. This one-day event gathered 1,286 drummers and nearly 4,000 spectators at nine participating Five-Star Drum Shops retailers. The highlight of the day was when all 1,286 drummers in the nine cities played the same groove at the same time. This feat was achieved through a video Internet connection. More than 7,000 pounds of food was collected, and \$45,500 was raised for charity, \$17,000 of which went to the Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation. Other beneficiaries included the Rotary Club, Cherish Our Children International and several food pantries.



The Big Beat in Seattle

Making Holiday Radio Majic

Fort Wayne, Ind.-based Sweetwater and radio station Majic 95.1 WAJI recently teamed up to release the third volume of *Majic Miracle Music*. This compilation CD features nationally recognized musicians and will be sold locally, with all proceeds

to benefit Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis. *Majic Miracle Music* is a project of Sweetwater Studio 95, a partnership launched in 2006 by Sweetwater and Majic 95.1 WAJI for recording live, acoustic versions of songs by bands visiting Fort Wayne.



Sweetwater's Chuck Surack (left) and Riley Hospital for Children's Cassie Yowell



Musical Innovations' Tracy Leenman (left) and Creative Music Center's Liz Reisman

Leenman Schools CMC

Industry veteran Tracy Leenman recently formed Musical Innovations, a promotional company specializing in music retail. Leenman previously served as director of sales and marketing for Greenville, S.C.-based Pecknel Music.

Late last year, Liz Reisman of Creative Music Center in Monroe, Conn., brought in Leenman to give her staff a three-day training intensive. It began with a detailed study of product specs followed by ideas for selling step-up instruments. Creative Music Center's staff also received an in-depth look at merchandising and display techniques.

"Every store could use this kind of training," Reisman said. "Tracy's knowledge and expertise were invaluable. From small things, such as how to better display my vast array of lyres to larger issues like how to move intermediate and pro horns out the door in these tough economic times, she proved to be a skilled communicator, as well as a hands-on performer."

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NAMM[®] News

JANUARY 2009

"We're Going After the Freeway..."**COME TOGETHER!**

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Note from Joe Ken

In a recent letter on the NAMM Web site, Joe talked about the economic challenges we face as an industry, and the need for all of us to prepare for what will undoubtedly be a different way of doing business in the coming year.

I believe that NAMM University is the perfect place to learn how to do just that.

NAMM U presents an opportunity that you can't find anywhere else. No one has all the answers, no matter how smart they are. No one can figure it all out alone, but we can figure it out together if we support each other and share our solutions. That is what NAMM U is all about.

We know you don't have time to read all the business books. You have a business to run. You need answers and you need them now.

We understand...

The program we have created for Anaheim is a crash course in what is working and what isn't, all from people who are facing the same challenges that you are on a daily basis and are ready to share the solutions that are working for them. Ideas and techniques you can use the minute you get home to strengthen your business.

We're going to tackle all the important issues: how to attract more customers, how to close more sales, how to put more money in your pocket, how to upgrade your Web site, how to improve your lesson program and above all, how to take advantage of your passion and turn it into business success.

Fifty-eight sessions over four days, each one focused on a real world situation and each one with a solution that works.

We must never forget that we are stronger as an industry than we are as individuals, and NAMM U is the perfect place for us all to come together to confront our challenges and share our solutions.

In this time of great economic upheaval, the smart thing to do is to learn from each other.

This is the time; this is the place. See you in Anaheim.

Ken Wilson
NAMM Director of Professional Development



In these challenging economic times, even the best business people can use some new tips and techniques for increasing their effectiveness and growing their sales.

Take charge of your future by taking advantage of NAMM University's FREE Breakfast Sessions and short, focused Idea Center Sessions. After all, one great idea could pay for your whole show. This year's courses are laser-focused to provide solutions to the challenges you currently face and assist you in making the best possible decisions for your business in the year ahead. We've assembled the best and most successful industry players to host a variety of NAMM University sessions, including:

NAMM U Breakfast Sessions

Join us each day for a complimentary breakfast (first come, first served) at 8 a.m., followed by an 8:30 a.m. panel discussion in the Hilton Anaheim's Pacific Ballrooms.

Thursday: Breakfast of Champions

NAMM President/CEO Joe Lamond will interview several champions of business in a series of up-close and personal discussions. Get a rare glimpse into their views on the future of our industry in today's rapidly changing business environment.

Friday: The BIG Issues—Trends and Tactics: The Next 12 Months

We'll explore some of the emerging trends set to influence the music products industry during the upcoming year and beyond. This is the information you need to succeed and thrive in this time of economic and social change.



Saturday: 25 Ideas to Improve Your Business—NOW!

In one hour, you'll get 25 ideas you can take home and start to implement Monday morning. These are not just theories; they're practical, dealer-tested ideas to improve your business.

Sunday: Best in Show—This Year's Hottest Products

You know as soon as you get home, someone always says, "Did you see the new...?" and you missed it. Don't let it happen to you. This rapid-fire, 60-minute snapshot highlights the products you need to see before leaving Anaheim.

NEW Six-Part Sales Course

NAMM U is featuring something different this year: a six-part sales course exploring the key components of the sales process. When all of the sessions are taken together, they provide a comprehensive overview of the skills needed for effective selling in a retail music store. The ideas you learn here may provide the keys to unlocking your future growth and success. Plan on attending the sessions Saturday, January 17, between 1 and 4 p.m. in the NAMM Idea Center. Make sure your sales staff doesn't miss these sessions.

NEW Eight-Part Web Track

These sessions are designed to help you learn to create or enhance your company's presence on the Internet. Fellow music retailers will share their experiences and you'll learn all the options for creating a site that works for you: where to get content for your site, how to promote it and ways to get customers to buy your products online. You'll also learn tips and tricks on how to design your Web site "on a dime." Sessions take place every half hour from 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. on Sunday, January 18, in the NAMM Idea Center.

Visit www.namm.org/thenammshow/nammu for a complete listing of NAMM U sessions.

Average Daily Temperature in Anaheim



Anaheim, California
January 15-18, 2009

www.namm.org

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NAME

NAMM News

January 2009



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she was."*

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Reports record piano sale
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SUPPLY

KORG USA | BY ZACH PHILLIPS

THE DEALER RESOURCE

Joe Castronovo has called on independent retailers to carry a larger complement of Korg product. In return, he's making some big promises.

Among them, dealers can expect more marketing support, more training opportunities and more company-wide communication from Korg USA — all to help move that inventory at retail.

"We need to put more focus on the independent retailers because they're the heart of this industry," said Castronovo, president of Korg USA, which distributes the Korg, Marshall and Vox brands. "They've got to be strong, and we, as manufacturers, have to support them."

If it sounds like manufacturer lip service, consider one of Castronovo's first initiatives when he took the company's reigns two years ago. In an effort to improve transparency and dealer relations, he ordered Korg USA's middle management — not just its sales force — to get in the field and communicate with retailers as much as possible.

"As a former [Vox] product manager, it's remarkable how many touch points we now have in our building with



Korg's Joe Castronovo (left) and Mike Bradley

Korg USA aims to take the sting off tough times by extending its marketing, sales resources to retailers

retailers large and small," said Mike Bradley, Korg USA's new director of marketing. "The end result is we're all better informed, and we're all speaking with one voice."

"We've been talking to our [retail] customers and being

quite frank," Castronovo said. "We're asking them, 'What can we do better? What do you need from us? OK, here's what we need from you.' It's amazing how easy those conversations are that you're always afraid to have."

THE RETAIL MARKETING TEAM

Ultimately, those conversations have led to increased retail marketing support.

"Essentially, we want retailers to feel that our marketing team is their marketing team," Bradley said. "Obviously, there are only a few retailers that can invest in a [marketing] team of our size and have our resources."

Korg USA recently appointed Rich Koestner, a 19-

year company veteran, to the position of marketing support manager. This puts an experienced specialist in place to help with retailer advertising co-ops and to oversee in-store merchandising efforts.

"Rich is very much re-focused on merchandising, point-of-purchase and retail support at all levels," Bradley said. "Going out, getting into stores, traveling with some of our district sales managers and really being that guy on the other end of the phone that dealers can contact or e-mail when they need something." A dealer, for instance, can now call or e-mail Koestner to get a Korg ad resized for their own promotional purposes. (All of Korg's ads are available to retailers.)

The company also recently restructured its artist relations division, in part to make Korg clinics more worthwhile — and lucrative — for dealers. The idea is to maximize a clinic's marketing and sales potential.

"Let's do some POP in-store and move some units for you," Bradley said. "Let's have our district sales manager on site. Let's have our artist staff on site to work the lines and support you and collect e-mails and data from people

while they wait.”

Bradley explained how Korg USA pitched in during a Joe Satriani clinic at Guitar Trader, a San Diego combo retailer.

“We had 300 people pass through the store, which sold a lot of product,” he said. “Clinics and in-stores are never one or the other — they always have to be sales and marketing.”

THE SAME MESSAGE EVERY TIME

“Consistency” is a big buzzword around Korg USA these days. The way Castronovo sees it, creating a consistent message in all of the company’s marketing collateral will improve a dealer’s chances of making a sale. He explained how this begins

with a customer’s first experience on Korg’s Web site and ends with the experience on the retail sales floor.

“When you get [to a music store], you’re going to see the same box, the same message,” Castronovo said.

Korg has taken several steps to ensure consistent messaging. The company recently launched a new Vox Web site that’s rich in video content, and it plans to relaunch Korg’s site soon. It redesigned Vox’s product packaging to make it multilingual and self-sell. And it’s in the process of rebranding Korg’s tuner packaging. While he couldn’t offer specifics, Bradley said the new packaging will “create a powerful area of real estate on a dealer’s wall.”

“Just on the packaging level, if a dealer merchandises our product together, it will create a huge, consistent impact in their store.”

He added that Korg USA will be showing new, scalable merchandising solutions for small and large stores alike at the upcoming winter NAMM show in January.

ON-DEMAND INFO

Low-cost and no-cost video Web portals, such as YouTube, have helped Korg USA and its brands multiply their online exposure. All of the company’s videos are posted on YouTube, in addition to Korg’s Web sites. A Vox podcast channel on iTunes also features what Bradley called “some of our best Vox

videos.” In some cases, Korg USA has uploaded new product videos months ahead of the release date, as in the case of Vox’s Joe Satriani effects pedal line, to generate retailer and customer interest.

Castronovo added that Korg USA is also embarking on an initiative to provide dealer training videos. These will give retail salespeople necessary product knowledge, unique selling points specific to each product and selling tips.

“Our focus hasn’t changed,” Castronovo said. “Our job, more than it’s ever been, is to make sure customers who go into the music store ask for Korg, Marshall and Vox. That helps the retailer. And we have the [resources] to drive that business.” **MI**

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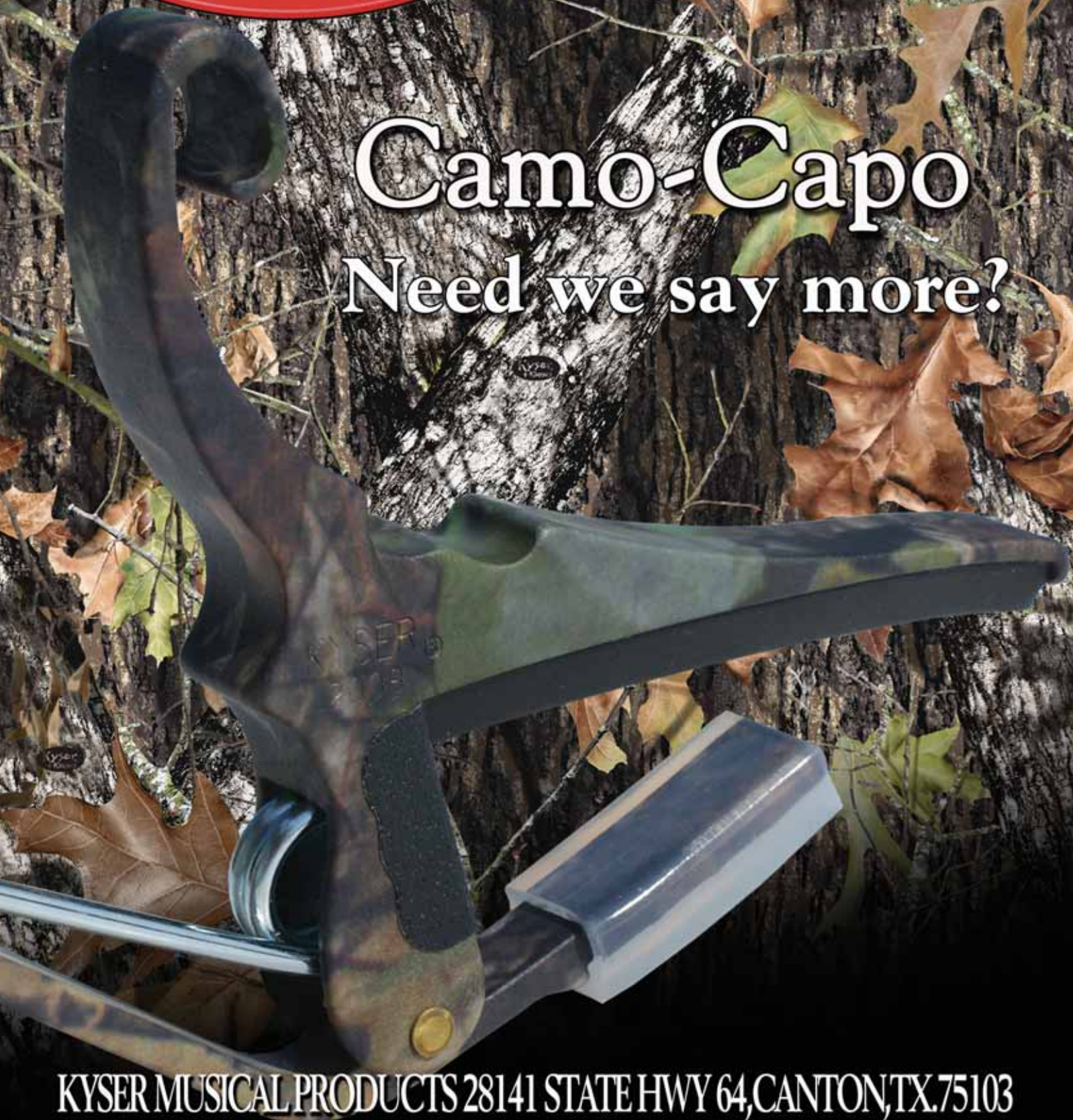
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ROLAND CORP. | BY FRANK ALKYER

KEYBOARD DEALERS VISIT ROLAND JAPAN

Roland Corp. Japan recently hosted top piano and keyboard retailers from the United States and Europe to deliver a message: Despite the economic crisis, Roland plans to keep a long-term focus on products and business.

Titled "The Road to Roland Value," the trip was the first time that Roland invited retailers to Japan to tour factories and its Lake Hamana Research and Development Center in Hamamatsu, Japan.

In late September and early October, dealers received a preview of products that will be introduced at The NAMM Show in January. They also heard insights from Roland's management team on the company's view of the future.

"Roland Value is a very important keyword for our future business," said Kaz Tanaka, president of Roland Corp. "Not simply making competitive product. We are trying to bring forth various value in products, such as software, content, user support, education and all of our activities. As a result, the total value of our products will be expanded."

During the three-day stay in Hamamatsu, retailers heard a variety of presentations, demonstrations and performances capped by the closing remarks of Ikutaro Kakehashi, Roland's founder and special consultant.

Kakehashi compared the challenges of manufacturing



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.

in Japan today to U.S. manufacturing in the 1970s, when Japan was becoming a dominant manufacturing force.

He also pointed to declining sales for most acoustic and digital keyboards, noting that innovation and content will be

the key to future keyboard sales. He said Roland has been able to avoid much of the downward sales trend by not investing in lower-end instruments. This has helped keep the company's price points from seriously dropping. **MI**

1. From left: M. Steinert & Sons' Paul Murphy, Roland's Katsuyoshi Dan and Family Music's James Mason; 2. Piano Gallery's Tom Miller; 3. Sides Music's Pete Sides; 4. From left: Roland's Rick Morales, Prosser Piano's Kerry Prosser, Piersee Piano's Jack Piersee and Roland's Kaz Tanaka; 5. Roland's Dennis Houlihan, Trombino Music's Bob and Norma Trombino, and Roland's Ikutaro Kakehashi; 6. Piano Solutions' Greg Durthaler with Roland's R&D crew



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**Academy Boards
Lennon Bus**

The Lennon Bus, a non-profit mobile audio and multimedia studio, will now host Digital Media Academy's instructors at industry events, schools and other venues. Audio and video recorded on the bus will be used in many of the Academy's classes, while Digital Media Academy and the Lennon Bus will jointly develop additional courses, such as Come Together: Music and Video Production, to be offered for the first time in Digital Media Academy's 2009 Teen Summer Camp program. lennonbus.org; digitalmediaacademy.org

EVENT

Saxophone Summit

The first annual Saxophone Summit was held Nov. 21–22, 2008, in Hollywood, Calif. It featured some of the world's top saxophone performers, who gave concerts and master classes. Exhibitors showed new saxophone products. The event was hosted by International Woodwind. Other sponsors included Rico Reeds, Bari Saxophone Mouthpieces and Accessories, JodyJazz, Theo Wanne Mouthpieces and the U.S. Army Marine Band. saxophonesummit.org

PARTNERSHIP

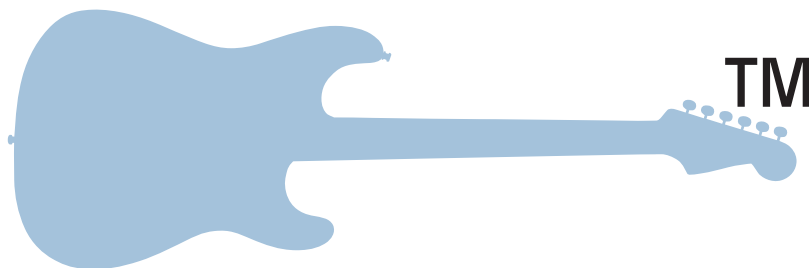
eMedia Gets Smart

Musitek and eMedia Music recently announced a partnership agreement for eMedia to distribute Musitek's SmartScore line of music scanning software. eMedia will also offer Musitek's critically acclaimed products along with its catalog of proprietary releases and distributed products, such as Finale, Band-in-a-Box, Guitar Pro and EarMaster. emediamusic.com; musitek.com

CONTEST

Roland Artist Jam

Roland is now offering a chance to win a HandSonic 10, autographed by percussionists Luis Conte, Richie Garcia and Brad Dutz. This contest will commemorate the release of an Artist Jam video installment featuring these three artists at the HandSonic Web page. Once all five video clips are viewed, an entry form will appear for a chance to win the autographed HandSonic 10 percussion instrument. The contest will be open through Jan. 31. rolandus.com



FENDER | LEGAL | BY ZACH PHILLIPS

FENDER TRADEMARK DISPUTE NEARS END

The battle over Fender's attempt to trademark its Stratocaster, Telecaster and Precision Bass body designs approached its final stretch on Nov. 6, 2008, when the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board (TTAB) heard oral arguments from Fender and companies opposing its trademark application. The TTAB could reach a decision in as early as March.

In 2003, Fender applied for trademarks on the body designs of the Strat, Tele and P Bass. Seventeen companies opposed the application, claiming the guitar and bass shapes are generic to the music industry. Eighteen companies originally opposed the filing, but one of them,

Musicorp, was purchased.

"[Our clients'] position is that these shapes are not solely associated with any one company," said Ron Bienstock of Bienstock & Michael, which represents the opposing companies. "These shapes are so ubiquitous in the industry that they're generic."

"[Fender] remains optimistic the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board will thoroughly review our extensive evidence of acquired distinctiveness for three of the most iconic guitar and bass body designs in history and will issue registrations for those designs," said Jason Padgitt, Fender's vice president of public relations and corporate communications.

<<< **TRIBUTE**

Thank you for your contributions to the music industry. You will be missed.

**James Cowan**

James Cowan, president of Neutrik USA, passed away on Nov. 5, 2008, after a battle with cancer. He was 52.

Cowan worked for Neutrik for 20 years, starting as general manager and later serving as vice president. He was named president in March 2000.

"Jim was a wonderful leader with just the right combination of business skills and personal qualities," said Werner Bachman, CEO of Neutrik AG. "But more than that, he was an industry icon and a genuinely caring person who touched everyone with his kindness."

Cowan was instrumental in Neutrik's donation efforts, offering the company's equipment to organizations and schools, such as Brookfield Academy, La Sierra University and Michigan State University. Cowan was also a member of the Professional Audio Manufacturers Alliance, an organization for senior executives leading the companies that manufacture professional audio products.



Ukrainian Naj



MIM | ACQUISITION

MIM MILESTONE

The new Musical Instrument Museum (MIM) recently acquired more than 2,000 instruments for its core collection and is on its way toward completing its 190,000-square-foot building in Phoenix.

Opening in spring 2010, the MIM will be exhibiting instruments from every country in the world, representing musical traditions from folk and popular to ritual and courtly.

{themim.org}

YAMAHA | MARKETING

Yamaha Realigns

Yamaha Corp. of America has announced a major realignment of the company's core marketing and sales structure, designed to increase corporate efficiency and provide greater customer service, while addressing a changing market.

The realignment will take effect April 1, 2009, but will not affect employment at Yamaha.

{yamaha.com}

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ENDORSEMENT

Harman Teams with Jones

Harman has formed a marketing relationship with musician, producer and humanitarian Quincy Jones. The partnership is intended to celebrate Jones' contributions to the music industry and the impact of Harman audio technologies in recording, broadcast and entertainment.

Jones will make a number of appearances at Harman-sponsored events and contribute to corporate and brand-level marketing activities. Jones has used a range of Harman products, including AKG mics, Crown amplifiers, Studer and Soundcraft mixing consoles, JBL speakers, and Lexicon signal processors.

{harman.com}

MILITARY

Auralex Deployed to Iraq

Approximately 40 members of the United States Army's 10th Mountain Division Band were deployed to Camp Victory, Iraq, earlier this year. Auralex Acoustics took on the challenge of assisting the band with occupation and acoustical renovation of its new rehearsal space.

"This project started with an e-mail requesting recommendations for acoustic treatment," said Chief Warrant Officer Three, William McCulloch, who's the commander and conductor of the division. "I received an immediate response from Auralex, at which point the company provided diagrams and suggestions for absorption and diffusion throughout the space."

{auralex.com}

CONTEST

Sennheiser's 'My Song'

Sennheiser's "My Song" contest will offer high school students the chance to enter to win a free 10-piece professional-grade Sennheiser evolution microphone kit and a spot in an upcoming Sennheiser ad.

The winners will also be featured on the Sennheiser artist Web site alongside professional artists, such as Red Jumpsuit Apparatus and Paramore.

To enter, visit sennheiserusa.com/MySong. Contestants must submit a direct link to the original song, which can be uploaded to sites like YouTube or MySpace along with the title of the song. The contest ends March 31.

{sennheiserusa.com}

APPOINTMENTS

L-Acoustics Appoints Frohn

L-Acoustics' worldwide headquarters in Marcoussis, France, has appointed Jochen Frohn to the international business development director position.

Frohn spent 14 years at Crest, where he served as director of sales and marketing for Crest Europe, Middle East, Africa and managing director of the company's German subsidiary.

Frohn will focus on building foundations for L-Acoustics Germany and coordinating sales across Europe. {l-acoustics.com}



L-Acoustics founder and CEO Christian Heil (left) with Jochen Frohn

BENEDETTO GUITARS | HONORS

BENEDETTO HONORED FOR TRADE ABROAD

Last November, Ken Stewart, commissioner of the Georgia Department of Economic Development, announced that Savannah, Ga.-based Benedetto Guitars won the second annual Georgia Featured Export Product Award. The award honors small and medium-sized Georgia businesses for their efforts to develop innovative products that find success in export markets.

2008 winner Benedetto Guitars is known for its design and craftsmanship of jazz guitars. Since 2006, Benedetto Guitars has grown from four employees to more than 20 full-time craftsmen and is producing and shipping more than 40 hand-made instruments per month. For the period ending in October 2008, sales revenues increased 98.8 percent over the same period in 2007.

{benedettoguitars.com}



Benedetto Guitars founder Bob Benedetto (left) and CEO Howard Paul



From left: Chauvet's Berenice Chauvet, Sunrise Deputy Mayor Roger Wishner and Chauvet's Albert Chauvet

CHAUVET | OPENINGS

CHAUVET'S HQ SPOTLIGHT

Chauvet's owners and employees broke ground on the company's new, 65,000-square-foot worldwide headquarters on Nov. 15, 2008, in Sunrise, Fla.

Sunrise Deputy Mayor Roger Wishner attended and congratulated Chauvet owners Albert and Berenice Chauvet.

Construction is expected to be completed in 2009. The facility will house the company's product development, marketing, sales support, service, quality control and shipping. chauvetlighting.com

LOUD TECHNOLOGIES | CORPORATE

Loud Restructures

Loud Technologies has announced a reorganization of its marketing, sales and engineering functions. Under the new organization, product strategy, development and marketing for the company's MI and pro businesses will be managed by separate product management teams, while marketing communications for all Loud brands will be consolidated and managed by a shared marketing support team. Loud will also move North American sales from its current captive sales force to a group of independent sales rep firms and consolidate its international sales force.

The restructuring generated a net reduction of 90 full-time positions at the end of 2008. loudtechinc.com

SUPPLY  

STEINWAY | PARTNERSHIP

A HISTORIC SALE

CCM, the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati (UC), recently received approval from the UC board of trustees to purchase 165 new pianos from Steinway & Sons — the largest unit purchase in Steinway's 155-year history. Upon delivery of the pianos, CCM will be designated an "all-Steinway school." CCM will

also be one of the largest repositories of Steinway pianos outside the company's Long Island City, N.Y.-based factory. The handcrafted instruments will serve to renew and replace the majority of CCM's current stock of 255 pianos, and will be moved into concert halls, rehearsal rooms and teaching studios. steinway.com

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DF 36 — a portable store within a store

- 27" wide x 65" tall x 18" deep — just 3.4 square feet!
- 36 compartments, 16 hooks and label holders
- Front and side panels for hanging additional product
- **FREE** with purchase of 36 dozen pairs and accessory package (less than \$3500 USD)

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- Uses only 42" diameter of floor space
- Can hold well over 1,000 pairs of sticks
- Includes 10 hooks and label holders
- Basic version is **FREE** with 42 dozen pairs and accessory package (less than \$4200 USD)
- Expanded version (pictured) is **FREE** with purchase of 54 dozen pairs and accessory package (less than \$5200 – the fixture alone is valued at \$3995 USD!)

All units come with both preprinted and blank labels.

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SHOWS

2008
PASIC
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Inside SHOWS

The 2008 PASIC featured the third highest attendance on record for a PASIC convention in Austin, Texas.

- More than 6,500 drummers and percussionists from around the world came to the show.
- It attracted 1,400 more drummers than last year's convention in Columbus, Ohio.
- Attendees enjoyed more than 130 clinics, concerts and master classes. The events covered everything from drum set to marching.

PASIC | BY JENNY DOMINE

CHANGING TECHNIQUE

Jim Catalano noted that only two things have changed at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention (PASIC) since he started coming in 1978: cell phones and better technical chops among young drummers.

"The techniques that I would have played in a piece for my masters recital in marimba are now played as an audition piece for an upcoming freshmen into college," said Catalano, Ludwig's director of sales and marketing for schools and concert percussion.

TEENS, TECHNOLOGY, TECHNIQUE

Catalano attributed the higher skill level in this next wave of musicians to their access to technology, the Internet and a willingness among drummers to share technique.

"When I was growing up, if you wanted to see a great percussionist, you had to stay up and watch 'The Ed Sullivan Show,'" Catalano said. "Now the kids of the last 20 years have videos, DVDs. They can study drummers."

This year's PASIC, held Nov. 5-8 at the Austin Convention

PASIC 2008 revealed how technology has helped create younger drummers with top chops

Center in Austin, Texas, featured clinics and contests that perpetuated this trend toward sharing technical know-how. Technology also played a greater role on the show floor. For instance, Roland and Alesis showed the V-Drum and Ion Drum Rocker, respectively, as featured wares at their booths.

Other technological tools geared toward young drummers included Toca's relaunched Web site, which provides instruc-

1. Mike Balter's Jeffrey Meegan; 2. Evans' Kurt Wilbur; 3. Beatnik's Rusty Membreno; 4. Alfred's Dave Black (left) and Rich Lackowski; 5. Bosphorous' Dave Brown; 6. Grover Percussion's Neil Grover; 7. From left: Zildjian's John Sorenson, Craigie Zildjian, Keith Aleo and Allen Kaylor; 8. Sabian's Robert Zildjian (left) and Robert Mason; 9. Pro-Mark's Pat Brown (left) and Bruce Salyers; 10. Hal Leonard's Luke Edstrom (left) and Marilyn Fleenor; 11. From left: EMD's Andrew Swift, Bert Wall and Garrett Barker





tional video clips; Hal Leonard's *Rock Band – Modern Rock Edition – Drum Play-Along Volume 19*, the companion to the popular music video game; and Alfred's *The Commandments Of Early Rhythm & Blues Drumming* book and CD pack.

ACCESSORY ADVANTAGE

Accessory exhibitors at this year's PASIC had a stand-out showing. As consumers tighten their budgets, these companies have stressed their essential role in retail.

Chuck Moulton, Vic Firth's in-store marketing and direct retailer accounts manager, said accessories are a retailer's life blood. "It's not an easy time to be selling drum kits, but guys still need sticks, they still need heads," Moulton said.

Tommy Robertson, owner of Tommy's Drum Shop in Austin, noted the critical role accessories play at his shop. "Sticks and drumheads always do well," he said. "The hardware and cymbals do excellent."

Jim Rockwell, director of marketing for Latin Percussion, has also noticed this trend. "We've seen a shift to our accessory items — our bells and blocks," he said.

"I don't sense any real concern about demand," said Brock Kaericher, president of

Remo, about accessory sales. "This year, with all the work we've done with world percussion in the general population and through medical use, we are not seeing a slowdown in that area."

New accessories highlighted at PASIC included: Vater's Mike Wengren 5B and 2B sticks finished in a black stain and with album artwork; Sabian's Vault Artisan Traditional Symphonic 17–20-inch hand cymbals; Gibraltar's lightweight shelf rack; and Regal Tip's Keith Carlock signature model sticks.

"This has been a record year," said Jerry Andreas, senior vice president of the music division for SKB. "We're expanding our factories right now. I think it's going to be tighter in the next few months, but the accessory business is not as susceptible to fluctuations."

RETAIL SUPPORT

That's not to say that drum kits did not have a significant presence at PASIC. Many suppliers have developed new products, promotions and prices to help retailers sell more easily in the current economy.

Sonor Drums plans to create value-added packs that will give end-users extra incentive to purchase kits like its new SSE, which has a street price of \$799.

Mapex will unveil its Meridian series at the upcoming NAMM Show in January. According to Joe Hibbs, Mapex's product development manager, the kits will have improved features with street prices of \$799 for the maple shells and \$999 for the birch shells. That's about \$200 less than current Mapex kits of the same quality.

1. From left: Chops Percussion's Derek Felix, Jeff Huffman and Tim Gee; 2. Hamilton Stands' Bill Carpenter; 3. Alesis' Autumn Pittman; 4. Meinl's Adam Anderson; 5. From left: Fork's Drum Closet's Joe Fant, Humes and Berg's Mike and Irwin Berg, and Fork's Gary Forkum, Jonah Hickson and Jamie Forkum; 6. From left: Jeff Ryder's Drum Shop's Monica Sheldon, Michael Hoffer, Kat Ryder and Kirk Scott; 7. Mapex's Joe Hibbs (right) and a PASIC attendee; 8. Vic Firth's Chuck Moulton (left) and Andrew Tamulynas; 9. From left: Steve Weiss Music's Joe Cochran, Steve Weiss, Chuck Nicholson, and Randy Rudolph; 10. From left: Yamaha's John Wittmann, Prudence Elliot, Roger Eaton and Robert Conaway; 11. Ludwig's Jim Catalano; 12. From left: Vater's Chas Cunningham, Dayne Marshall and Alan Vater; 13. From left: LP's Ray Enhoffer, Jim Rockwell and Angelo Arimborgo

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Pictured: David Devaney, Jim Pinkston (owner), Derek Fountain



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Corner Music, Nashville, TN

Pictured: Front- Larry Garris (owner), Ray Arsenault
Back- Andrew Petroff, Todd Austin, Ben Garris

"Audix Microphones are consistently our best selling and most profitable mics. Our customers are always thanking us for recommending Audix. We all know, the greatest key to success in retail is a satisfied customer!"

Ear Craft, Dover, NH

Pictured: Jim Hockenfull, Andy Verdi



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Gelb Music, Redwood City, CA

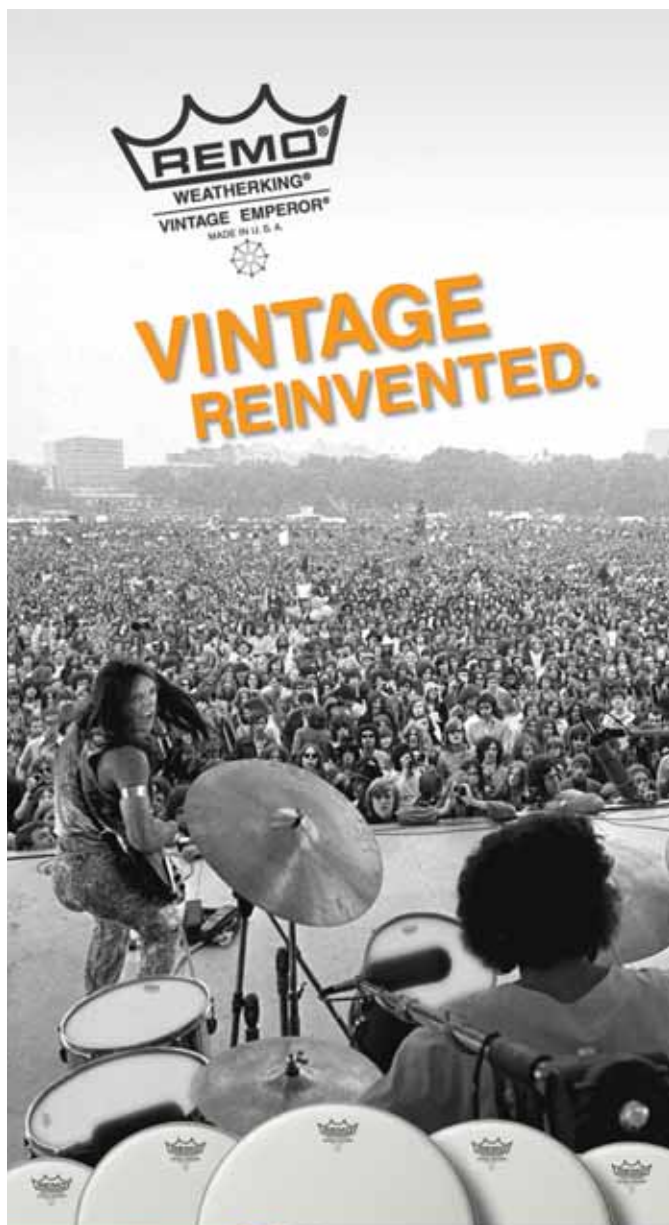
Pictured: David Vogel, Adam Jarvis, Kevin Jarvis (owner), Tommy LeMar, Don Frank

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"Everyone is going to be watching their dollars," Hibbs said. "And when they buy something, they're going to make sure they get the best value for the best price."

Ludwig's Centennial series is another economically priced drum set that will feature a price range of \$1,000-\$1,200.

Likewise, Pearl Drums presented the 100-percent birch shell Vision VBX kit between \$1,400-\$1,500. Also, the company recently opened a third distribution warehouse in Pennsylvania that has helped offset shipping costs for its retailers.

"Freight kills everyone in this industry," said Steve Armstrong, senior marketing manager for Pearl Drums. "Now we've got two-day ground distribution to any location in the lower 48 United States."

Pro-Mark and Zildjian each offered unique promotions with practical applications for retailers. Pro-Mark has taken its Anatomy of Feel color-coding system to a new level with eye-catching posters that feature its top endorsers dripping in the colors of their preferred

1. From left: Paiste's Wayne Wilburn, Tim Shahady and Andrew Shreve; 2. Premier's Colin Schofield; 3. Samson's Brian Dougherty; 4. From left: TapSpace's Robert McClure, Bryan Harmsen, Jim Casella and Kirk Gay; 5. Majestic's Chris Hanks; 6. Sibelius' Gabriel Cobas; 7. Tommy's Drum Shop's Tommy Robertson (left) and Leon Prause; 8. Remo Belli; 9. Toca's Victor Filonovich; 10. Pearl's Steve Armstrong

sticks. According to Pat Brown, Pro-Mark's director of sales and marketing, this color system will help retailers better manage their inventory.

"If a green label is with all the yellow labels, it obviously doesn't belong there," Brown said.

Zildjian's John Sorenson explained the company's Displays, New Products and Accessories (DNA) program, which started in 2008 and will continue in 2009. DNA is designed for drum shops to buy smaller, more controlled amounts of inventory.

"It allows the dealer to put together a program that is smart for them," Sorenson said. "As the economy started to get tough, dealers really appreciated that we weren't stuffing them with inventory."

PASIC 2009 will be held Nov. 11-14 in Indianapolis. **MI**

IDEAS

>>> **Inside IDEAS**

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> **The Lesson Room** Page 42

INDEPENDENT RETAIL | BY TED ESCHLIMAN

FIVE REASONS NOT TO BE ON THE INTERNET

K, so this title is ironic, especially coming from someone who has advocated the need for independent retailers to have an Internet presence. A good Web site created with the correct philosophy is an invaluable asset to your store. Still, certain myths have motivated some dealers' foray into cyberspace. These philosophical gaffes will at best prove a significant waste of time and at worst cost tons of money. So, here are some of the wrong reasons for setting up a Web site, and why:

I can increase my market's geographical base. It's a rough and wild retail frontier out there. It's not uncommon to find goods dumped at cost (or less) online. In this world of "always a cheaper price," the best thing you can do is sell to your locals and wire your Web site for families and friends that already have a peripheral relationship with you. Yes, there's a case for exploiting the Internet as a remote waste disposal, blowing obsolete items



Be aware of Internet myths before you start investing online. It will save you from costly mistakes

out at cost (and less) just to turn dead stock into liquid working capital, but this isn't a sustainable business model. Your Web site works best when it's an extension of your exist-

ing face, serving people the same way as your storefront.

With lower overhead, I can sell stuff cheaper. This misdirection is tangential to the previous myth — the idea that reduced overhead should automatically lower your selling price. It's a bad idea to be more expensive in person than on the Web. Pricing inconsistencies can make your business look crooked. The other big lie is if you sell at a loss, you make it up with increased volume. Big industry bankruptcies have exposed that fallacy.

I will spend less time talking to customers and more time selling. If you've ever had your hands in online auctions, you know this to be untrue. The time you spend e-mailing answers to annoying cyber tire-kicker questions is equivalent to that of face-to-face transactions, plus you lose the nuance of voice inflection and gestures. You also open yourself up to more knuckleheads and exponentially greater risk of fraud.

I can expand my inventory into new product niches. This is only true if you're estab-

lishing a business with a separate identity, and that should always be done with due caution. Product offerings, branding personalities, services that transcend your core business require more time, more expertise and, of course, more capital. Again, it's a big world out there. When you're competing nationally, let alone globally, you need to have your ducks in a row. Stay focused on what you do best with your personnel and current inventory mix, and let your Web site support that.

I can get better exposure in my local market much less expensively. This can be true, but only when done with heed. A healthy Web site can be less of an investment than television, radio or print advertising, but like a clean storefront, your Web site must be well-constructed and maintained regularly. This requires generous attention and expertise, and that means an investment of time and money. **MI**

Ted Eschliman is a 29-year veteran of music retail and co-owner of Dietze Music in Southeast Nebraska. Mel Bay recently published his book, *Getting Into Jazz Mandolin*.

THE CUSTOMER WHISPERER | BY GREG BILLINGS

The Art of Follow Up

Every once in a while, someone will leave your store without making a purchase. Maybe the client has to pick up kids at school. Maybe he wants to check the Internet for a lower price. Maybe you blew the close or mishandled the customer's objections, and he's headed for your competitor. Whatever the reason, the client's gone. What now?

The customer whisperer doesn't panic when he realizes he can't close a sale immediately. He'll use his calm, assertive leadership to guide prospects through the decision-making process, even after they've left his store. Many of his sales come from his disciplined follow-up protocol.

Only two things can prevent active follow up: not getting a name and phone number or e-mail address, or losing track of that information. But a customer whisperer always gets the client's name and number, and he has an organized system for keeping track of them.

Lazy sales associates often claim 60, 70 or 80 percent of their sales occur on the first visit, so there's no need to follow up. Even the worst sales associates close 100 percent of the people who actually buy something from them. However, since half of high-end sales occur after the customer's first visit, these sales associates could double their incomes if they cultivated the prospects who got away. These associates rarely hear from anyone who bought somewhere else. Good salespeople know some

customers — usually about 10 percent — buy elsewhere. They know because they follow up, and they learn how to better compete in the future. Those who don't make follow-up calls never find out about lost sales and never learn from the painful but useful lessons.

Anyone can implement a follow-up protocol that will increase sales with little or no cost. The

three essential elements of a successful follow-up system include *acquisition*, *organization* and *execution*.

ACQUISITION

Obviously, you can't follow up with someone if you don't know his or her name. If you don't get a client's name when you greet him, he is unlikely to give it to you as he's leaving. People love to hear their names, so get it early and use it often. Then, at the appropriate moment, say, "Bill, let me jot down

+ CUSTOMER WHISPERER:

A calm/assertive sales associate who gently turns prospects into customers.

your number, so we can stay in touch?" Once you are writing, it's easy to get an address and cell phone number if you just keep asking for more information. Don't forget to ask, "Would you prefer to be contacted by e-mail?"

Often, people ask for literature or a business card as a way to say goodbye. This customer whisperer never seems to be able to find literature at this delicate moment, but he always promptly mails a brochure if he has the prospect's address. He does the same with Web links. Use the presentation of your business card as an opportunity to get a customer's name and number. It's easy and natural when there's an exchange of information.

If your prospect is hesitant, give him a good reason to provide his contact information. Remind potential clients that you'll be mailing your next newsletter soon, or offer to send an e-mail link to a great article you've recently read. It's easier than you think to gather vital contact information if you make a reasonable effort.



Successful follow up is equal parts organization, persistence and a carefully crafted message

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ORGANIZATION

All the prospect names in the world are useless if you can't find them. There are many contact relationship management programs available for tracking prospects. Goldmine is my favorite, but Microsoft Outlook or even a free Gmail account offer everything needed to keep contact records organized.

Losing track of a prospect can be expensive. In 1996, I attempted to sell my house without a realtor. As my deadline approached, I finally listed the property with a real estate agent. The agent asked me if there were any prospects I wanted to "exclude." I only remembered one seriously interested party. After about 15 minutes rummaging through business cards with notes on the back and scraps of paper, I gave up and signed the form.

At 9:00 the next morning, my agent called to tell me she had an offer on the house. "But you haven't shown it to anyone," I said. "You just got the listing last night."

"You showed him the house a few weeks ago," she said.

Losing that name cost me \$18,000. I wish I could say that was the last name this customer whisperer ever lost.

My second example is more painful, if less expensive, than the first and ironically happened as I was writing this article. In our store, we operate under the Rule of 21. The Rule of 21 states that it's impossible to make 21 calls without something good happening. I've never seen it fail.

A piano store can be a lonely place in the summertime. To stir up business, I instructed everyone to make 21 calls. Being an employee whisperer, I set the pace and started dialing. After exhaust-

ing my call list and even working through the next two weeks' calls, I was having trouble getting to 21, and nothing good happened.

Finally, in a folder with some old notes, I found the name of a prospect I had met at a charity ball six months ago. Somehow, her contact info never made it into Goldmine. When she answered the phone, I reminded her who I was and asked if it was a good time to call.

"We were just thinking about you," she said. "We really wanted a baby grand player piano, and we just bought one last week."

Oh, the pain! The humiliation! If I had typed her name into my computer right after we met, I would have followed up and sold her a piano.

A few calls later, I made an appointment with someone who had been on my list for eight years, thus vindicating the Rule of 21. The next day, I got an e-mail reply from someone who had never answered the phone or replied to an e-mail before. Tiny steps lead to

big sales. The Rule of 21 rules!

Along with organizing vital data like names, addresses and phone numbers, it's important to note your impressions and use key words that will jog your memory later. Wouldn't it be great to search your prospect list for "white guitar" after taking a cream-colored Les Paul on trade and have three names of interested prospects pop up? It won't happen if you don't put the information into your system in the first place. You can't call to ask if little Sally is ready to start music lessons if you don't know her parents' names, how to reach them and that the kid's name is Sally. These calls will happen if you have the information, and your best chance of recording the information is immediately after you first meet your client. A customer whisperer is an information magnet, constantly acquiring, storing and updating client data.

An ancillary benefit of a disciplined follow-up system is a long list of pre-qualified, potential customers. We are

currently coming out of the most dramatic business downturn in a generation (or two). One difference between those who have survived and those who have failed is the size and quality of their prospect lists. It costs very little to call or e-mail a prospect, and there's plenty of time for follow up during soft business cycles.

The most effective direct-response campaigns are done with your own lists. Dealers still having success at college piano sales report making up to 4,000 phone calls prior to the events. They can only make the calls if they have the phone numbers. An e-mail blast to people who gave you their addresses and know who you are can be very rewarding. Distributing your newsletter via e-mail is virtually free.

EXECUTION

An organized prospect list is of little use until you pick up the phone, mail a card or click "send." Who to call, when to call and how often to call are important questions but not as

+ THE SALES PROCESS

The customer whisperer organizes the sales process into 10 stages. For those he has already discussed, we've given a brief explanation and the issue of *Music Inc.* they appeared in. Go to musicincmag.com to download these articles.

GREETING	QUALIFICATION	PRESENTATION	DEMONSTRATION	CHOICE	OBJECTIONS	CLOSING	ADD-ONS	REFERRALS	FOLLOW-UP
Creating ease and establishing control. (January 2008)	Getting permission to ask a few simple questions. (February 2008)	Establishing yourself as the caring expert customers need. (May 2008)	Using features and music to raise emotions. (June 2008)	Making decisions irresistibly easy. (July 2008)	Guiding clients through the process. (August 2008)	Helping customers pull the trigger. (September 2008)	Asking clients to consider more items as they check out. (October 2008)	Taking a few simple steps after the sale. (November 2008)	Acquiring client data, organizing it and using it at the right time.



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important as what to say when you call. In simpler times, we believed the only reason to call a prospect was to get them back in the store. Today, a nuanced approach is more effective, and a compelling message is imperative. There are so many communication channels now that our prospects are literally bombarded with information. The tone, timing and content of a message are critically important.

A customer whisperer invests copious effort into becoming a trustworthy, helpful expert during greeting, qualification and presentation. The tone of his follow-up message must reinforce rather than diminish his stature. He needs to craft his message carefully. "Hi, how ya doin', did you want to buy that trumpet before it's gone because some guy was lookin' at it?" was never a productive approach and won't work today.

The first follow-up call should be a thank you for visiting the store. Go on to find out if there were any questions that came up after the client left. This call can be made within hours and never more than 24 hours, even if you have to call from home on a Sunday afternoon. Start with, "Did I catch you at a convenient time? Do you have just a moment?" There are many reasons why someone might not want to talk right now, and the sooner you find out, the better. A handwritten, "thank you for visiting" note or an e-message should also be sent before you leave work each day.

You will be amazed by the things you'll discover when you call. Every once in a while, you'll find out the prospect went directly to your competitor and made a purchase. As painful as this is, it's a powerful lesson. If you don't make the

call, you don't learn the lesson.

The customer whisperer finds it useful to plant a follow-up seed as a prospect is leaving the store. An "I'll e-mail the manufacturer and find out if they make it in pink and get back to you," or "I'll check to see if it's available at the warehouse and give you a call," puts you in an enviable position. Before your client has even made a purchase, you have made a commitment to him. With your first follow-up call, you keep your promise and demonstrate competence and efficiency.

TELEPHONE

When you dial the phone these days, you are more likely to get voicemail than a live person. Here are two hard and fast rules about voicemail:

1. Always leave a message.
2. Never leave a second message.

That's right: You have to leave a message because everyone has caller ID. And once you've left a message, you cannot call again for a week. There's a thin line between vigilant follow up and stalking. The customer whisperer treads that line with diligence and discretion. How do you feel about people who don't leave a message or people who leave several messages? The good news is every caller ID flash or pleasant voicemail makes a more powerful impression than a billboard or TV ad — and it's free!

Keep your message brief. "Hi, this is Sherman from The Piccolo Hut at 555-5555. No need to call back. I just wanted to let you know this important and relevant piece of information. If you need to reach me, I'm at 555-5555."

It's important to keep messages short and have the phone number at both ends. Listening

'If you're having trouble reaching prospects, you are seven times more likely to reach them between 9 and 10 in the morning.'

to a long message a second time to get to the number at the end is irritating. Potential clients are only going to call back if they want to, so why not take the pressure off by not imposing a demand for a reply? (Remember to note the time and what you said for future reference.)

Properly timing your calls is easy with a little forethought. People use caller ID to screen calls, and people have lifestyle habits, so it's important to keep accurate notes on when you called and the result. If there's no answer at 11 a.m. on a weekday, you are better off not calling again at 11 a.m. on a weekday.

Here are a few specifics to keep in mind:

- Soccer moms are pretty busy from after-school hours until bedtime, and they usually put their babies down for a nap after lunch.
- Older people get up and go to bed early and tend to eat lunch at noon.
- Working people are trying to clear their desks at 11:30 and 4:30 and may resent interruption.
- Nobody wants a phone call during dinner.

If you're having trouble reaching prospects, you are

seven times more likely to reach them between 9 and 10 in the morning. If you establish a habit of making calls before your store opens, your calls will get made. (Does this routine sound familiar: get coffee, greet coworkers, open mail and answer e-mail before making the first call ... at 11:30?) Calling early only one day a week can have a dramatic effect on your sales total. Trust the customer whisperer: Time on the phone between 9 and 10 a.m. is golden.

E-MAIL

There are people who prefer to communicate with e-mail. God bless 'em. E-mail is the most efficient way to communicate with prospects. E-mail gives you the opportunity to present your case fully without interruption, and people are in the habit of clicking "reply."

Here are some e-mail follow-up tips:

- Be polite and neat. Too many correspondents suspend manners, grammar and punctuation in e-mail.
- Keep it short.
- Always try to include a Web link.
- Never send an attachment unless it's a picture you took specifically for them. People are afraid of attachments with good reason.
- If you must send a picture, make sure it's a low-resolution picture.
- Provide a reason for a reply.
- Keep responding, and keep the dialogue alive by asking questions.

REASONS TO FOLLOW UP

The biggest challenge of follow up, once you have established a follow-up habit, is coming up with a good reason to call or write. This is your opportunity to get creative.

Information, product updates and new arrivals will only get you so far. The customer whisperer makes a point of calling for reasons unrelated to sales. The best reason to call is to extend an invitation.

The most important reason to host events is to give salespeople a reason to call prospects and invite them. Don't rely on snail mail. In fact, follow up on mail! A phone call after your client has received an invitation makes both more powerful.

An event gives you the opportunity to say, "I just wanted to invite you to the recital we are having at the store Thursday night at 7 p.m. The artist is terrific, and you'll have a chance to meet him and get a picture and autograph. Would you like me to reserve seats for you and a friend?" After a few of these calls, the customer whisper becomes the guy who's always making an invitation rather than the guy who's always trying to sell something. A prospect who comes to an event after a personal invitation becomes a friend.

Here's a short list of reasons to call:

1. Guess what just came in (new product, trade-in, rental return)?
2. We finally got that guitar set up (or piano tuned). You have to come in and play it.
3. I read this article and thought about you. Would you like me to send you a copy?
4. One of your favorite artists is playing in town this weekend. I thought you'd want to know.
5. I wanted to invite you and your friend to an event here at our store.
6. We're getting ready to mail the next newsletter, and I wanted to make sure your address is correct or find out if you'd prefer to receive it via e-mail.

Each contact should provide a reason for the client to act.

HOW OFTEN?

The most common question presumptive customer whisperers ask is, "How often can I call without becoming a stalker or an aggravation?" Obviously, it depends on the relationship you have developed with the prospect. Use common sense, and follow these general guidelines.

1. First call: Later that day or first thing the next morning.
2. Thank-you note or e-mail: Before leaving work.
3. Second call: 72 hours or the day

your note arrives.

4. Next e-mail or phone call: Once a week for three weeks. (An unanswered e-mail can be resent a week later.)

5. Call after every mass mailing to make sure the customer got it.

6. Call or write anytime you have something important to say.

Every so often, someone will blow you off, ask you to stop calling or scream at you. This is a good thing. It tells you that you're making enough calls.

There is no way to know what's happening at the other end of the line. Your prospect might have been asleep, gotten bad news, had a fight with one of the kids or hit his thumb with a hammer. Often, you can call a surly prospect a few weeks later, and he'll be happy to hear from you. If a prospect really has lost interest, we need to know, so we can spend our time with prospects who are interested.

If a prospect has purchased elsewhere, we can remind him about our excellent service department and call back in a few months to find out if he's interested in trading up. People who buy musical instruments tend to do so repeatedly. Other stores' customers are as likely to buy from you in the future as your own customers are if you're the one who's staying in touch. Wouldn't you love to have a copy of your competitors' mailing lists? Then hold on to the names of people you know are on it!

Last Christmas, this customer whisperer sold two \$70,000 Steinway grands to people who had chosen to do business with the seller of a well-known Japanese brand a few years ago. I could have gotten mad or hurt and written them off. Instead, I remained calm and kept them in the follow-up system. One responded to my direct-mail piece, and the other was referred by a teacher. It paid off.

A key element to a successful sales career is disciplined follow up. The keys to follow up are the acquisition and management of data and persistence in execution. So put down this magazine and pick up the phone. Make 25 calls today. Send out five notes and 10 e-mails. The customer whisperer promises something good will happen. **MI**

Greg Billings whispers to customers at the Steinway Piano Gallery in Bonita Springs, Fla. He welcomes questions and comments at greg@steinwaynaples.com.

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THE LESSON ROOM | PETE GAMBER

Relational Marketing

I recently pulled into my Corona, Calif., store's parking lot and saw a sign on the lawn that read: "Music Day Care Camp – Affordable Rates." The sign also included contact info. I thought, "What's up with this? The nerve! Somebody's using our foot traffic to build his business." I was steaming. I went to the Web site listed on the sign. As I checked it out, I realized my store and this company's performing arts center concept only had a 15-percent conflict of competition. In fact, our lesson programs were totally different.

The "Music Day Care Camp" sign got me thinking. This company needed my customers to know about its services, but its customers needed to know about ours, too. We offer a lot of stuff this place didn't have, such as drum set, electric guitar and horn lessons. I'll bet the kids who go to this day care have siblings who might want my music lessons. Where does the day care refer its customers to for other kinds of lessons? Where does it refer customers to for print music books and instruments, as well as gear rentals and repairs?

SMALL BUSINESSES UNITE

The economy is going to be tough in 2009, not just for music stores but for almost every small business. That includes independents that teach karate, dance, drama, ice skating, gymnastics, math tutoring and other youth-related services. All of these businesses will be dealing with the economy's "can't afford" from parents and face enrollment drops.

Creative advertising and promotions are key to attracting new students and customers, but with sales and revenue decreases, how much money will be leftover to do this? I realized I needed to have my lesson info in that day care center, and its info should be in my business, instead of on a lawn sign.

for music lessons. Even though all of these small businesses are targeting the same customer type, we, as individual entrepreneurs, don't know how to reach all of these customers in our community.

I'm going to drive to every activity-related business in my area and introduce them to my music store and lesson program. I want to create an independent business network that will let small companies help each other. My customers will know about them, and their customers will know about our music lessons. It's a win-win, low-cost promotion.

Every month, or more, I intend to follow up with these businesses, get their updated fliers and give them more of mine.

I know it's old school, but relational marketing can generate more referrals than e-mails trying to get through spam filters. These businesses know people in the schools, churches, grocery stores and youth soccer teams, and if someone needs music lessons, they will mention you.

We don't offer hula dance lessons, and the hula dance studios don't teach rock guitar, but we can help each other survive the economic storms ahead. Aloha 2009! **MI**

Pete Gamber is the owner of Alta Loma Music in Rancho Cucamonga, Calif. He welcomes questions and comments at pete@altalomamusic.com.



Increase your lesson program's visibility by networking with other local, activity-based businesses

MY RELATIONAL MARKETING RESOLUTION

I am going to develop a Kid's Activity Info Center in my store with a sheet music rack filled with community activity fliers. I'll put a business' flier in my store if it displays my flier in its store. This promotion costs us very little — just the time and money of quick-printed fliers and leg work.

I plan to target all those kid-activity businesses, such as dance and karate studios. These places attract parents that are willing to invest in their child's enrichment activities. They are the types of parents that might be looking

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Harness the best in quality and process for your business in 2008. Because sales matter.

QUALITY

- Our focus is on creating top-quality cymbals and sounds that matter most to today's drummers and percussionists
- SABIAN is consistently rated highly in dealer and customer perception research for product quality, consistency and sound
- SABIAN is committed to highly skilled handwork and craftsmanship

Price & Distribution

- As SABIAN's distribution partner, KAMAN Music Corporation shares the same high standards in quality and service as SABIAN
- Orders in by 4 p.m. ship the same day so you'll get what you need when you need it
- KAMAN is committed to Operational Excellence

KAMAN
music corporation

2-YEAR WARRANTY

- To better reflect our top quality position, a new 2-Year Warranty Program now applies to all SABIAN lines – B8 through Vault, effective January 1, 2008
- Our after-purchase support (warranty fulfillment, returns, replacements) scores highly in dealer perception research, reflecting our commitment to ensuring 100% customer satisfaction

Sound & Selection

- SABIAN provides access to a full range of the most innovative and relevant selection of cymbals and sounds
- SABIAN offers a variety of display options
- SABIAN has launched a NEW simplified series positioning structure for easier cymbal selection and sales:

**Modern, Vintage, Creative and
Bronze Beginnings**

 **2008 SUPPLIER
EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

Thank you for choosing SABIAN as the 2008 Supplier Excellence award winner in the category of Marketing: Ad Campaigns

The New Pro-Series Gig Bags from Levy's



CPS20
for acoustic
guitar.



CPS7
for electric
guitar.



CPS8
for electric
bass guitar.



Retroreflective
strip.

Multi-layered
tri-tone
polyester shell.
Weather
resistant.

Rubberized,
skid-resistant band.



Headstock pocket
for strings, batteries,
set list...



Main pocket with removable
valuables sleeve.



Ideal for laptops, sheet music,
and books.



Lower bout pouch
for mini-recorders
and pedals.

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Fixed padded shoulder straps with stabilizer strap and quick-adjust ladder-lock buckles.



Shoulder strap hide-away sleeve.



Rubberized string and bridge shields.



One inch foam padding covered with tear-resistant polyester lining.



Waterproof polyester rain-cape with elasticized binding. Affixed to interior of pouch.



Rain-cape pouch.

High-density foam strap pin suspension shock absorbers.



See the complete Levy's 2009 product line at
NAMM booth #4658.

Your guitar is worth it.

Traynor

No Compromise


Hand built in North America for the player that refuses to compromise, the Traynor YGM-3 vintage re-issue recaptures the exacting tone, warmth, feel and responsiveness of one of the great vintage tube guitar amplifiers of all time.

Built using truly hand-wired point-to-point circuitry throughout, the Traynor YGM-3 uses high grade braided wire for all connections – no printed circuit boards or surface mount components here. High quality electronic components, a superior Jensen P12Q Alnico speaker, true amplitude bias tremolo, and premium hand selected & tested tubes are all key to capturing the purest tone, vintage warmth and unrivaled charm of the early '70s original.



- Point-To-Point Hand-Wired Circuitry • Connections Made Using High Grade Braided Wire
- Canadian Made Hammond Paper Bobbin Power & Output Transformers (Built To The Specifications of the Original components)
- Jensen P12Q Alnico Magnet Speaker • Illinois Metalized Polypropylene Capacitors
- Switchcraft Jacks & JJ Supply Caps • Hand Selected Electro Harmonix 12AX7 Preamp Tubes
- JJ EL84 Output Tubes • Vintage Amplitude Bias Tremolo Circuit • Accutronics™ Long Spring Reverb Tank
- Custom Vintage Grill Cloth (Sourced from the Original Supplier) • Solid Plywood Cabinet & Steel Box Chassis
- Hand Made in Canada

VISIT WWW.TRAYNORAMPS.COM FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE YGM-3 OR ANY TRAYNOR PRODUCT.
DISTRIBUTED IN NORTH AMERICA BY YORKVILLE SOUND



By Jeff Cagle, Zach Phillips and Jenny Domine

ONLINE STRATEGIES FOR INDIES

If you have a Web site enriched with dynamic HTML, the latest Flash applications and on-demand video content, more power to you. But if you're still wondering how to get started online, you're not alone.

Speaking for the majority of independent music retailers, Chris Trombley of John Keal Music said, "That's one of the issues with a Web site. It always takes a back seat." In the following pages, we've profiled several indies who've made the online plunge — and done so on the cheap. Some have simple but effective online billboard-style sites with info about products and services to draw customers into their stores. Others boast full-fledged Internet businesses with shopping carts to rival Musician's Friend.

If you've let the Internet take a back seat for too long, flip the page. Learn how to maximize your online potential from the following retailers.



THE HITS GENERATOR

OKLAHOMA VINTAGE GUITAR

oklahomavintageguitar.com

EL RENO, OKLA.

WEB SITE COST: One full-time employee and less than \$200 a month in hosting fees

WEB STAFF: Bobby Boyles, company president, and his son

FEATURES: E-commerce and company information

SPIN-OFFS: YouTube videos

YouTube may be the ultimate office time-waster — a place to watch cats fall out of trees and fame seekers attempt super stardom. But for Bobby Boyles, president of Oklahoma Vintage Guitar, YouTube is a free advertising tool, a place that helps him sell guitars beyond his home base of El Reno, Okla.

It sounds like a lot of work:

shooting and editing video to upload on the popular Web portal. Boyles, however, started out with little more than a point-and-shoot digital camera switched to video mode. He mounted it on a tripod, and his wife played director (i.e. pressed the record button). Boyles would then talk about an instrument, play a few chords, and ask viewers to either leave a comment or call if they had

questions. His videos have since gotten tens of thousands of hits.

“It adds several more dimensions to advertising with video and sound,” Boyles said. “It’s not just a little picture of a guitar. It puts a person behind the guitar, and people hear and see me play it. When they ask questions, they know I’ve been sitting behind it and know what it feels like, what it sounds like and looks like.”

“YouTube is becoming a place for people to advertise things. Even though it’s not an e-commerce site, it’s a place to get your products out. It’s one thing to have 10,000 people a day come to your Web site, but it’s a whole different thing to have 10,000 people view a specific product video. It’s amazing how many people see it

and how much stuff we sell because people are watching these videos.”

FULL-TIME WORK

Boyles acknowledged that the Web has become more user-friendly since the dot-com boom in the 1990s. He’d first looked into building a site then, but companies were asking tens of thousands of dollars in start-up fees.

He ended up building Oklahoma Vintage Guitar’s Web site in-house and maintains it along with his college-age son, who helps with networking, programming and coding. According to Boyles, it costs less than \$200 a month in hosting fees, but site maintenance remains a full-time job.

“Every time a new item

comes in the door, you've got to have pictures made of it, and you have to get it uploaded and ready to go," he said. "It's a full-time job to be on the Internet, but the Web site gets 40,000 visitors a week with potentially millions [able to] see products in my store. I'm on a busy main street in a downtown area, and I might do well to have 400 or 500 people walk through in that same time."

WATCH OUT BIG-BOXES

With the Internet changing the way consumers find businesses and shop for products, Boyles urged every mom-and-pop retailer to build up a Web presence. He said it's an easy way to compete with big-box retailers since it costs less than a dollar to place a guitar ad on eBay.

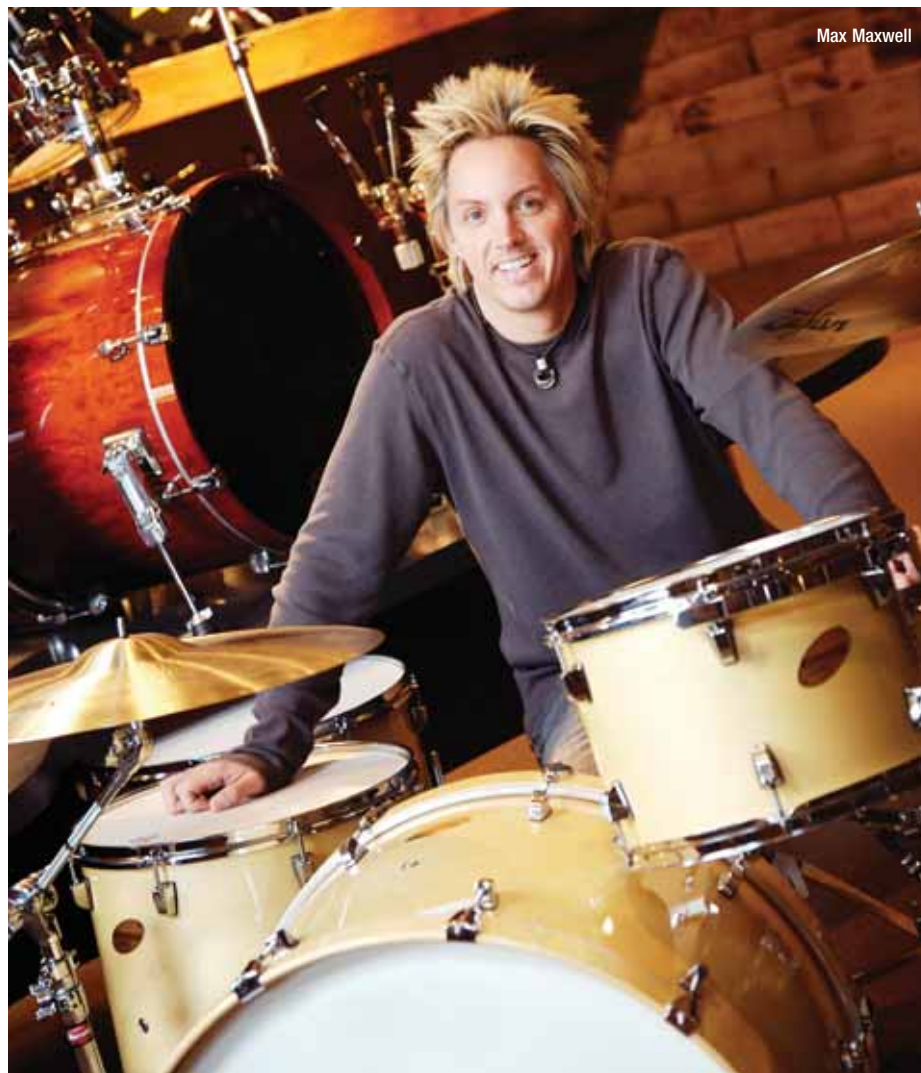
"I don't want to stay away from things that big-box retail-

**Bobby Boyles
has boosted
site traffic,
sales by
posting simple
product demo
videos on
YouTube**

ers are promoting — I want to have those things," Boyles said. "That's what people are going to want. I've taken advantage of what these big-box boys are doing.

"Your Web site is a place where millions of people can look at you. That is where the world sees you. We're family-owned and operated, and we ship all over the world every day." **MI**

— Jeff Cagle, photo by Mary Brooks



Max Maxwell

CUSTOMER AS WEB DESIGNER

Mom's Music's has won local awards in Louisville, Ky., for its Web site. Not bad for a project that cost the company a couple of drumsticks and heads.

Featuring an organized, rootsy design that complements the company's image, the site was created by a long-time Mom's customer who works at Kentucky-based digital advertising agency LeapFrog Interactive.

"He put together a model, and it blew us away," said Max Maxwell, Mom's co-owner.

The designer barter his skills in exchange for drumming gear. "We traded out all the costs of the site, and we still trade out all updates," Maxwell said.

The site does not currently feature e-

**Mom's Music built
its Web site by
cutting the ultimate
barter deal**

commerce. It uses eBay for online sales, but plans are in the works for a shopping cart, along with video and audio advertising. "We're looking to emulate the customer service we offer in the store on the site — creating long-time, loyal customers," Maxwell said. **MI**

— Jenny Domine, photo by Jessie Kriech-Higdon

REVELING IN ONLINE RENTALS

JOHN KEAL MUSIC

johnkealmusic.com

ALBANY, N.Y.

COST: \$2,200 to add an online rental feature and some e-commerce, plus less than \$300 a month in hosting fees

WEB STAFF: Chris Trombley, company president, and a front-office employee

FEATURES: Online rentals, e-commerce for small goods and company information

RIEMAN MUSIC

riemanmusic.com

DES MOINES, IOWA

COST: Less than \$5,000, plus the roughly \$200 monthly TriTech fees

WEB STAFF: A Web manager who doubles as the company's advertising coordinator

FEATURES: Online rentals, e-commerce, company information and an event calendar



Chris
Trombley

John Keal Music has a spartan Web presence. As a school music retailer, it doesn't need a full-blown e-commerce vehicle and pages of podcasts. Still, Chris Trombley, president of the Albany, N.Y.-based dealership, has initiated two Web updates that will make the mostly informational site better equipped to serve its student and parent customers.

Trombley recently hired Intellisites, an Albany-based Web design firm, to add an online instrument rental feature and a shopping cart to John Keal Music's Web site. The \$2,200 job is the most he has ever invested directly into

the Internet. (The site was created 12 years ago by one of the company's road reps.) But Trombley said he views it as an advertising expense that will keep paying off.

"I looked at the cost of hiring these guys next to other types of advertising," Trombley said, regarding his partnership with Intellisites. "And it seemed really reasonable when I got that perspective on it."

Online rentals should prove convenient for time-starved parents and will also free up staff from simple order-taking. "My goal for the Web site is it should support what our store does," Trombley said. "Our store is really a school service store."

By adding the feature after the 2008 school rental season, he bought himself six months to iron out kinks before the next rental blitz.

"We don't do a lot of rentals in the middle of the year," he said. "As a handful of people do rentals online, that will be a good way to find out what's wrong with [the feature], as opposed to having a couple hundred people do it in the heart of our rental season."

THE TRITECH MODEL

Des Moines, Iowa-based Rieman Music boasts a more extensive Web site than John Keal Music. Being a full-line dealership, Rieman's site accommodates a larger customer base by offering e-commerce in nearly every product category. But Ron Kennebeck, the company's operations manager, called online instrument rentals "the most successful part" of the site.

Unlike John Keal Music, Rieman added an online rental feature in early August, right in time to snag some back-to-

school accounts. "We were just testing it," Kennebeck said. "We thought, 'If we get 20-30 rentals out of this, it'll help us dust off any problems [with the feature]. We got 80! We look for that to only grow. Our customers are *really* satisfied with it.'"

The framework for Rieman's Web site came from music retail software provider, TriTech, and its active-e program. According to Kennebeck, the site cost less than \$5,000, plus the company's roughly \$200-\$300 monthly TriTech fee. He acknowledged that he's not satisfied with certain aspects of the site's e-commerce vehicle, and Rieman's in the middle of overhauling it. That said, online rentals will play a major part in the site's future.

"Just put a ton of product up on a Web site, and you're lost among the thousands of Web retailers," Kennebeck said. "But we found that people did find our Web site when they had a reason to go there, when we would walk them through the online instrument rentals." **MI**

— Zach Phillips

SPECIALIZED CONTENT

RICHMOND MUSIC CENTER

richmondmusic.com

RICHMOND, VA.

WEB SITE COST: Less than \$4,500

WEB STAFF: Chris Stanley, company president, and outside Web firm Jgm3 Web Design

FEATURES: Closeout specials, company information, an event calendar and, of course, the '56 Fender Stratocaster

SPIN-OFFS: Guitar forum postings

Chris Stanley of Richmond Music Center did what any vintage guitar lover would do when he got his hands on a 1956 Fender Stratocaster: he bragged. And his bragging included placing the axe front and center on his store's Web site and on a couple of guitar message boards. Afterwards, he sat back to watch his 3,000 weekly hits balloon into 46,000 in only six hours.

According to Stanley, the Strat has since translated into a 1,000-hit average increase per week since gracing the Richmond, Va.-based retailer's Web site. "I look at that guitar as a piece of advertising," he said.

MORE CONTENT, MORE TRAFFIC

With the help of Web master John McNiel of Jgm3 Web Design, Stanley said he hopes to build on the Strat's success by posting other exotic, coveted guitars from his inventory. He said that putting specialized items on a Web site and promoting them in different channels can be an effective way to drive traffic and, ultimately, increase sales. Plus, the exposure doesn't hurt a retailer's search engine position.

"The more content you have on your site, the better your chances are of getting picked up by the spiders on Google and other search engines," Stanley said. "Put more content on your site, and you'll get more people in the store. If you have the ability to reach out as opposed to just sitting there with your bait in the water, you'll get a lot more out of it."

McNiel previously served as manager of

Richmond Music before Stanley took over as president. They stayed in touch as McNiel launched his Web design business, and the two now work closely together.

Stanley credited McNiel for the idea of promoting the Strat on guitar forums. McNiel handles the bulk of the programming and coding for the site but has built programs to let Stanley update sections that require constant attention, including a "picks of the week" area, which is where the idea for the '56 Strat was born.

GOODBYE 'YELLOW PAGES'

Stanley's exponential increase in traffic after such a relatively small amount of work has him rethinking Richmond Music's marketing strategy.

"I did a local poll asking customers, employees and family what means of advertising they were using to find busi-

nesses, and all of them said they're going to the Internet," he said. "If someone wants a guitar in Richmond, all they have to do is go to Google and type 'guitar' and 'richmond, virginia.'"

"I'm paying astronomical prices in the *Yellow Pages*, which I've just kind of grown accustomed to, but now I'm rethinking it. If I drop that cost down even just a little bit, I've got a fair amount of money I can put into Web design."

Stanley conceded that he'll eventually sell the vintage Strat, but he'll continue to let it draw attention for a few more months before rotating in another guitar.

"We're not necessarily going to feature a \$199 guitar on the Web site [in the future] because you can find a \$199 guitar anywhere," he said. "We're trying to drive the higher-end and rare stuff." **MI**

— Jeff Cagle

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Tim "Izo" Grindgroff
Black Eyed Peas, Fergie

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reverendguitars.com



From left: J.C. Murphy, Dick Reinlie and Tony Leonard

TOTAL INTEGRATION

PLAYGROUND MUSIC CENTER

playground-music.biz; playgroundmusiccenter.com
FORT WALTON BEACH, FLA.

WEB SITE COST: One full-time employee and TriTech fees

WEB STAFF: J.C. Murphy, Web master and e-commerce manager

FEATURES: E-commerce, company information and Q&A forum

SPIN-OFFS: Three eBay stores

Three years ago, Tony Leonard, president of Fort Walton Beach, Fla.-based Playground Music Center, decided to upgrade his store's Web site from a simple billboard to a fully functional e-commerce venture. He hired Web developer and musician J.C. Murphy as Web master and e-commerce manager, and six months later, Leonard was selling instruments on the Internet.

CUSTOMER PLAYGROUND

Murphy's salary proved to be the biggest cost of running the robust Web site, but

Playground's general manager Dick Reinlie said the benefits have far outweighed the costs.

"We brought J.C. in originally to be our IT/Web guy, and we quickly realized those are two different jobs, and the Web is a full-time job if you're going to continue to change and evolve it and keep it live," Reinlie said. "The advantage of having a full-time person is to be able to constantly add and change products, pictures and pricing."

Murphy's expertise has helped Playground Music Center take full advantage of its TriTech point-of-sale system. The system has been integrated

into the Web site via TriTech's active-e program. Customers are now able to pay bills, view accounts and reprint invoices online. And if customers have a question, Playground has multiple ways of answering it, including Google's free instant messaging service, which Murphy integrated into the site.

"Instead of sending me an e-mail or taking the time to fill out the various contact forms we have, customers are now able to get instant answers on the spot when I'm monitoring the chat line," Reinlie said.

"The idea is to give the best customer service online as we would in-store," Leonard added. "That includes product knowledge matched with the proper customer."

Matching product knowledge with the proper customer led to the creation of three separate eBay stores. Segmenting the stores into band and orchestral, guitars, and drums lets depart-

ment managers better lend their expertise. This way, eBay shoppers can ask specific questions about advertised products.

COST-CUTTING

Leonard said moving onto the Web has also made for more efficient marketing and cut down significantly on certain costs. Playground Music has added press releases to its blog as opposed to doing e-mail blasts. It also e-mails monthly statements to customers instead of sending printed copies through snail mail.

"In December, we started a promotion to forego mailers that would have been about 4,000-5,000 pieces, which eliminated the cost of postage and printing by just using e-mail," Leonard said. "Our *Yellow Pages* advertising is going from a significant number to almost zero. It's another place to save and throw into the Internet." **MI**

— Jeff Cagle, photo by Steve Hough

PLAYGROUND-MUSIC.BIZ

WEBWALK-THROUGH



+ HOME PAGE

As with megasites like Musician's Friend, Playground Music Center's home page has an extensive left-hand menu; a search engine; and the latest arrivals, news and deals galore grouped in the middle.



+ OVERSTOCK DEALS

Clearance and overstock deals are featured as users scroll down the home page. A link in the menu also leads users to a section with more specials.



+ GIFT IDEAS

A Great Gifts button at the top of the home page directs users to a section where they can browse music-themed gift items, including novelty instruments, kids' toys, clothing, mugs and knickknacks.



+ DEEPER NICHES

The Teach Yourself to Play! section organizes teach-yourself books and DVDs in one easy-to-find place. It's an effective way to reach a broader audience with a niche product category (print music).



+ LESSON PROMOTIONS

The company's music lessons page includes an online lesson request form plus links for its different educational programs, including Playground Rock, Playground Strings and the New Horizons music program.



+ TELEPHONE OR SKYPE

The Live Help & Self-Service section offers multiple ways to contact the company. These include chatting and video messaging with applications such as Skype.

ROAD TESTED

billy sheehan
rotosound player

85 66
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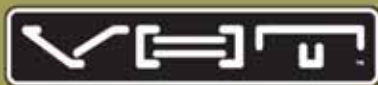
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THE GUIDE

WINTER NAMM 2009



THE NAMM SHOW 2009 | BY JENNY DOMINE

HANGIN' TOUGH

Downtimes are nothing new for veteran NAMM-goers. And NAMM CEO Joe Lamond doesn't underestimate the resilience of the organization's members.

"NAMM members are tough," Lamond said. "They've got guts and determination — they are survivors. So while we can't ignore the economy, it won't define us."

In the face of grim headlines,

NAMM has reported better-than-expected pre-registration numbers, Hall E expansion and a six-session Idea Center presentation on the sales process.

"Many people tell us that the NAMM Show is a must-attend event every year because it helps them position their businesses for success in the coming year," said Scott Robertson, NAMM's director of marketing and communications.

A few important changes

have been made to NAMM's floor plan. Make note: Badge registration has moved to level two (to make room in Hall E), and level three, traditionally pianos central, will now house Fender and Gibson rooms, as well.

A new format has also been implemented in Saturday's Idea Center schedule. Veteran combo retailer George Hines of George's Music has crafted a sales training program that will

be broken out into six sessions, hosted back-to-back from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Music retailers can attend individual sessions or the entire three-hour course.

"We realize that the one thing that everyone needs to do in light of the current economic challenges is to strengthen their operations," said Ken Wilson, NAMM's director of professional development. "That is something that no one can do alone." **MI**



NAMM-goers listen to live music at NAMM

2009 NAMM SHOW EVENTS

THURSDAY, JANUARY 15

BREAKFAST SESSION

8 A.M.

Breakfast of Champions

Moderator: Joe Lamond, NAMM president and CEO, and guests Hilton Anaheim Hotel, Pacific Ballrooms

Joe Lamond welcomes champions of business for a series of up-close-and-personal discussions. Listen in on these industry leaders, and get a glimpse into their views on the future of our industry in this rapidly changing business environment.

(Free breakfast served 8–8:30 a.m.)

10:30 A.M.

Want to Add Video to Your Web Site? Here's How!

Jen Lowe and the team from BoomBoom Percussion demon-

strate how to update a static Web site and make pages come alive with video and slide shows. Learn about the free software tools you can use for video editing and how to extend a Web site out to social networks.

11:30 A.M.

The Key to Buying Music Product Inventory

Industry CPA Alan Friedman and several of his music retail clients discuss the secret for making smart inventory buys.

NOON – SPECIAL DOUBLE SESSION

How to Create Simple and Effective Advertising and Promotion

Larry Mersereau discusses how to maximize return from investments in advertising and promotions.

1 P.M.

Get 'Em While They're Hot: Future Drum Markets

The Percussion Marketing Council explores the future of the drum and percussion market with a panel of industry leaders, celebrities and educators.

1:30 P.M.

Live Sound Advanced: What You Need to Know to Thrive

Peavey's Kent Morris explains the ins and outs of pro-level live sound to command respect and close the big sales.

2 P.M.

How to Keep Your Music Students Motivated

Jeff Gastineau, owner of Creative Ej, demonstrates how to make student motivation the key princi-

ple of a lesson program.

2:30 P.M.

Five Reasons Customers Should Do Business with You: Don't Just Advertise Products and Price

Industry veteran Joe Bredau shows how to discover your competitive advantage and give customers five compelling reasons to shop at your store.

3 P.M.

How Can I Energize My Employees?

Turn your store into a beehive of excitement and activity. Gayle Beacock offers strategies for energizing and motivating your staff.

3:30 P.M.

Five Ways to Use Local Talent for Attracting Customers and Driving Sales

John and Jeanne Stiernberg offer five tips for using local artist relations and events to attract more customers, increase sales and set your store apart.

4 P.M.

How to Create a Music Lesson Culture and Team at Your Store

Pete Gamber shows how to develop a music lesson culture and a music lesson team at your store that will produce unbelievable results.

4:30 P.M.

Your Lesson Rooms: Your Best Place to Market to Your Students

Listen to Gamber's ideas about how to sell more gear and services to the students in your music lesson program.

5 P.M.

Beyond Music Lessons: Take Your Music Lessons to the Next Level

Join Gamber and industry panelists and learn how to energize and expand your music lesson program.



The 'Ask the Experts' Session

FRIDAY, JANUARY 16

BREAKFAST SESSION

8 A.M.

The BIG Issues: Trends and Tactics: The Next 12 Months

Bill Hinely and panel
Hilton Anaheim Hotel, Pacific Ballrooms

Bill Hinely and a panel of experts explore some of the emerging trends that will influence the music products industry during the upcoming year and beyond.

(Free breakfast served 8–8:30 a.m.)

10:30 A.M.

Looking for Customers?

Connect with Them on YouTube, MySpace and Other Social Networks

Kurt Witt from Yamaha Corp. of America shows how innovative music retailers are tapping into online social networks and growing their businesses. Learn what works and why.

11 A.M.

How to Create Customer Traffic Without Creating Cost

Bob Popyk discusses easy, low-cost ways to get more store traffic each day by using initiative, cleverness and creativity to give your sales an immediate boost.

11:30 A.M.

How to Sell to Customers Only Looking for Price

Bob Popyk offers some simple

ways to close a high percentage of those customers who are searching for the best deal, tell you they're "shopping around" and walk out of your store without buying.

NOON – SPECIAL DOUBLE SESSION

Design Your Retail Store on a Dime

Join Danny Rocks and his panel of music dealers and store designers as they show how to remodel a store on a dime.

1 P.M. – SPECIAL DOUBLE SESSION

How to Sell Without Being a JERK!

This session (based on John Klymshyn's third book) provides reliable selling conversation techniques in an interactive, fast-moving and funny format.

2 P.M. – SPECIAL DOUBLE SESSION

Selling Yourself to the Bank

When it comes down to it, banks have two objectives: make money by lending you money and make sure they've minimized their risk. Join industry accountants Alan Friedman and Daniel Jobe to learn how to win over your banker with a sure-fire presentation.

3 P.M.

How to Take Your Lessons, Programs and Camps to the Next Level

Donna Hall, president of the New York School of Music, teaches how to start and develop summer rock camp programs. This

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live for the music



The world of music is coming to Frankfurt am Main again in 2009. Visit the Musikmesse show from 1–4 April to expand your product lines at the most important industry forum of the year. Musikmesse reflects the complete depth and breadth of the music industry and all international distribution channels, bringing you into direct contact with existing and potential business partners. Plus, there are professional product presentations from famous musicians to enjoy at this top insider event. Musikmesse is the leading international trade fair for musical instruments, music software, computer hardware, sheet music and accessories.

Tel. 770.984.8016
info@usa.messefrankfurt.com
www.musikmesse.com

includes how to market your program and organize your space.

3:30 P.M.

Music Industry Legislation and Regulation: Are You Up to Speed?

Mary Luehrsen and other experts discuss two recent regulation changes: new requirements for wood imports, both pre-manufacturer and commercial products; and white space frequency regulation that impacts wireless microphones/receivers.

**Roundtable information sharing for industry professionals will continue from 4-5 p.m. in the Green Room of the Hilton on the aforementioned topics.*

4 P.M.

How to Promote Clinics and Get Maximum Results

Columnist and consultant Ravi teaches how to promote effectively, capitalize on an inspired audience and get the maximum return on investment. Clinics are an opportunity to beat the competition and nurture customers.

4:30 P.M. – SPECIAL DOUBLE SESSION

I Heard It – I Tried It – It Worked! Best Ideas from the OMEGA Sharing Group

Kevin Cranley and his panel of OMEGA members share practical ideas that have worked in their stores. See it, adapt it, implement it and document it, so you can use it again.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 17

8 A.M.

Breakfast Session

25 Ideas to Improve Your Business – NOW!

Alan Friedman, Danny Rocks and panel present 25 practical, dealer-tested ideas to improve business. (Free breakfast served 8-8:30 a.m.)

10:30 A.M.

This Old Web Site: Why Your Site Needs a Makeover!

NAMM's Joe Lamond



Amy Stewart of Stewart Design points out what's wrong with a model Web site and gives specific suggestions for improving old sites.

11 A.M.

You Can Profit from Home-School Programs – Here's How

Gayle Beacock shares her store's success story of capturing a profitable slice of the home-school market.

11:30 A.M.

Hot Tips (from Purchasing Affordable Health Care to Using Store Signage to Boost Sales)

Moderated by Danny Rocks, a Mercer Health & Benefits representative will explain major and limited medical plans to health savings accounts options. A GE Money rep will discuss how dealers can make consumers aware of their payment options.

NOON – SPECIAL DOUBLE SESSION Ask the Experts

Join *Music Inc.* Editor Zach Phillips and a panel of *Music Inc.* columnists for answers to your finance, sales, marketing, merchandising and staffing questions. These specialists will take audience questions during the second half of this one-hour session.

PARTICIPATIVE SELLING FOR MUSIC RETAILERS: A COMPLETE SALES COURSE IN SIX PARTS

The following six sessions explore key components of the sales process and provide an overview of the skills needed for effective selling in a retail music store.

1 P.M.

Participative Selling for Music Retailers, Part 1: Why Have a Sales Training Program?

George Hines covers the three Ps of selling, physical needs vs. emotional needs and the art of participative selling.

1:30 P.M.

Participative Selling for Music Retailers, Part 2: Greeting the Customer and Building Rapport

Kevin Cranley covers the 10-second rule and the two-minute rule; greetings that work and greetings that don't; the customer as best friend; and the power of rapport.

2 P.M.

Participative Selling for Music Retailers, Part 3: Establishing Purpose and Qualifying Needs

Kevin Cranley discusses the topics: why is my customer here, general questions and then specific ones, and the budget question.

2:30 P.M.

Participative Selling for Music Retailers, Part 4: Presenting Products and Creating an Irresistible Choice

Greg Billings shows how to make presentations dynamic, relevant and effective.

3 P.M.

Participative Selling for Music Retailers, Part 5: Processing Objections and Closing the Sale

Greg Billings shows how to process customer objections and make the closing a mere formality.

3:30 P.M.

Participative Selling for Music Retailers, Part 6: Seeking Referrals and the Sale After the Sale

George Hines shows how to seek customer referrals, so you can make the sale after the sale.

4 P.M.

The Key to Managing Music Product Inventory

Industry CPA Alan Friedman presents his one-page solution to managing your entire inventory.

4:30 P.M.

25 Ways to Lift Sales with Store Design and Merchandising Secrets

Chris Miller, president of Pacific Store Designs, shares his latest store design secrets and proven merchandising techniques.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 18

8 A.M.

Best in Show: This Year's Hottest Products

Moderator: Frank Alkyer, *Music Inc.* publisher, and panel Hilton Anaheim Hotel, Pacific Ballrooms

Join *Music Inc.* publisher Frank Alkyer and his panel of retail buyers, media and gearheads as they dig in to find the best products, ideas and trends at NAMM.

(Free breakfast served 8-8:30 a.m.)

10:30 A.M.

I Need a Web Site: Should I Build It Myself or Buy a Pre-Built Model?

Two retailers share their Web site stories. One built a Web site, and the other turned to a service provider. Find out what they've learned.

11 A.M.

I Have a Web Site, Now What Do I Do With It?

Jen Lowe and Danny Rocks show how to create a weekly checklist for maintaining a successful Web site once it's created.

11:30 A.M.

Point-of-Sale Solutions

Industry accountants Alan Friedman and Daniel Jobe discuss how to choose the right accounting software when your business

requires applications, such as point-of-sale, inventory control, e-commerce, online rentals and business-to-business communications.

12 P.M.

Design Your Web Site on a Dime

Join Danny Rocks and his panel of music dealers and Web site designers as they demonstrate how to keep a Web site fresh on a dime.

1 P.M.

Looking for Content to Add to Your Web Site? Look to Your Suppliers for Help!

Kurt Witt of Yamaha and his panel discuss collaborating with your suppliers to add content to your Web site at little to no charge.

1:30 P.M.

Size Does Not Equate to Success — in E-Commerce

Gene Joly and Bobby Boyles share their different approaches to e-commerce.

2 P.M.

Electrify Your Music Lesson Studio

Jeff Gastineau demonstrates how to incorporate recordings and other technology effectively into your teaching studio programs.

2:30 P.M.

SupportMusic.com: Keep Music Education Strong in Your Community

Mary Luehrsen and others discuss how to strengthen your role in keeping music education strong in your community.

3 P.M.

High-Tech Music Learning: Discover New Tools for the

Music Room

Join NAMM's Sandy Jordan for a panel discussion about how music and technology create a bridge to engage student learning.

3:30 P.M.

Far-Out Strings: Go Beyond the Traditional School Orchestra Program

Learn more about new methods that are invigorating school orchestra programs.

4 P.M.

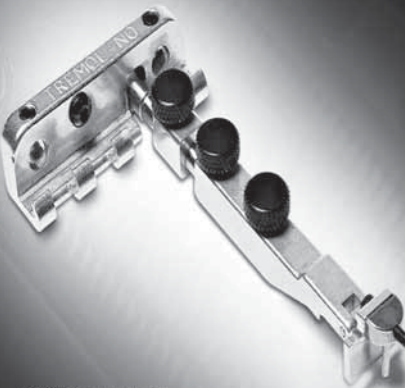
Expand Music Learning for More Students Through School Guitar and Percussion Programs

NAMM's Eric Ebel and industry panelists discuss how music teachers are expanding the target audience in school music programs and offering non-traditional music-making opportunities.

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WHAT to SEE

KHS United

Jupiter, Mapex and Majestic will share booth space at the 2009 NAMM Show to unite their full product line. The alliance between Jupiter, Mapex and Majestic will include a larger, co-branded booth and an adjoining office complex for the brands and their parent company, KHS. **{world.khsmusic.com}**

Hohner Hangs Ten

Hohner's flagship product for the NAMM Show is the Bob Dylan Harmonica series. The company has also launched several new POP display programs designed to make Hohner products easier to merchandise in a retail environment. These include a new "Hang Ten" Uke POP display for Lanikai koa and spalted mango ukuleles. **{hohnerusa.com}**



Tone Gear Cleans Up

Tone Gear's The String Cleaner now has new pricing. The String Cleaner's design allows for 360 degrees of cleaning reach. The micro fibers followed by porous cloth scrapes and removes dirt, oil and debris from guitar strings, while the cloth absorbs them. It's designed with fret ramps, so there's no lateral pressure to the frets. MSRP: \$12.99. **{thestringcleaner.com}**

Hal on FastTrack

Hal Leonard's hour-long FastTrack DVDs take the same fun approach to learning as its lesson books. Each DVD — guitar, bass, drums and keyboard — is filmed in high-definition with on-screen music and full-band examples. The last section of all the DVDs features the same three full-length songs, so players and their friends can form a band and jam together. MSRP: \$7.99. **{hallenard.com}**



2box AB.....	2430
3BDIO	1835
3L International	5825
65 Amps	3392
A & S Case Company Inc.....	6288
A Brown Soun Inc.	1280
A+D Gitarrentechnologie GmbH	1361
Ableton	6314
ABM Beteiligungsgesellschaft MBH	1449
Absara Audio LLC.....	1245

ACCESS BAGS AND CASES

* BOOTH 4697 *

ACCESSBAGSANDCASES.COM

Access Music GmbH	6900
Accord Studio D.O.O.	3523
AccuGroove	1279
Accutronics	4382
Ace Karaoke Corporation	7518
Ace Musical Instrument Co.	3492
Ace Products Enterprises, Inc.....	5968
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Acoustic Energy North America	1744
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Acoustica Inc.	6224
ADA Amplification	1470
Adam Audio USA	7119
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Adams Musical Instruments.....	2638, 2648
A-Designs	6290
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AER - USA.....	1558
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AHEAD Drumsticks.....	3464
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Akai Professional.....	6400
AKG Acoustics	7800
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Alctron Electronics Co., Ltd	1745
Alesis LLC	6400

ALFRED PUBLISHING

* BOOTH 4822 *

ALFRED.COM

ALGAM S.A.S/Alienor.....	3200
Alhambra USA.....	1630
Manufacturas Alhambra, S.L.	1630
Alien Apparatus Company, Inc.	4398
Allegro Acceptance.....	472
Allen & Heath, Ltd.....	6474
Allen Organ Company LLC.....	428
Alleva-Coppolo Bases and Guitars	1655
Allied Lutherie Inc	1613

ALLPARTS

* BOOTH 5882 *

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Editions Alphonse Leduc	3200
AlterMedia Inc	1020
The Alternative Guitar Company	1464
ALTO	6555
Alvarez	5676
AMA Verlag	3220
Amati USA Inc.....	4610
America Longxing Inc.	3000
America Sejung Corp.	210D
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American DJ	7623
American Music & Sound	5700, 5776, 6474
American Recorder Technologies, Inc.	1748
American String Teachers Association.....	2004
American Way Marketing LLC	4301
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Ampeg	5676
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Anderson Group International, LLC	1307

Tom Anderson Guitarworks	1526
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Andy Del Instruments	1220
ANFREE Sax	2929
Angels Musical Instruments, Inc.	4015
Ansr Audio Inc.	1853
Anthem Musical Instruments, Inc.	2905
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Antigua Winds	4514
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Arturia	6310
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Asher Guitars & Lap Steels	1454
Ashly Audio, Inc.	5776
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ATN International.....	3200
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Aubert Lutherie	3200
Audio Ease	6508
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WHAT to SEE

Colorado's Logical Choice

Colorado Case will be debuting a new line of flute and guitar cases under the Case Logic brand. These products blend the organization and functionality of Case Logic with the product design experience of Colorado Case. The result is a line of cases that offer a truly new perspective on instrument storage and transport. **{coloradocase.com}**



SKB Shocks Racks

SKB has expanded its Shock-Rack case line of products with two new 4U shock rack models. The 24-inch deep 3SKB-R904U24 Shock-Rack model expands the 24-inch series to seven different sizes while the 30-inch deep model 3SKB-R904U30 expands the 30-inch line to four different models. Designed by SKB's industrial division R&D department for military and industrial applications, these cases exceed performance specifications of typical MI professional and touring market products. **{skb.com}**



M&M's Golden Vines

M&M Merchandisers' Gold series dreadnought acoustic guitar with vine inlay is the new addition to its Kona guitar line. The guitar is accentuated by hand-selected wood tones, including a solid spruce top and Indian rosewood back and sides. The guitar body and headstock are bound in abalone along with rosette. Gold die-cast tuners tie the look together. The real focus of the guitar, however, is the abalone tree of life vine inlay that winds up the fingerboard. **{mmwholesale.com}**



Audio-Technica U.S., Inc.	6740	Behringer	6756	Blüthner USA	3120
Auralex Acoustics	6794	Beijing Hsinghai Piano Group Limited	382	Bly Musical Instruments Co., Ltd.	1177
Aurorae Inc.	7524	Beijing Lanyao Huihao Musical	1476	Bogazici Zil San ve Tic Ltd. Sti	3564
Automated Processes Inc (API)	6409	Beijing Sunrise Musical Instrument	2805	Bogner Amplification.....	5821
Automation Engineers.....	2723	Beijing Xiyangyang Instrument Cases	2810	Bohemia Piano America Inc.	444
AUX	1761	Beijing Yiyuan Musical Instruments	3524	Bolt & Co.....	1662
Avalon Design	6955	Belcat Co., Ltd.	3283	BooHeung Precision Machinery	1438
Avant Electronics	6985	Benavente Guitars	4178	BOSS U.S.....	2672
Aviom, Inc.....	7802	Bench World	369	Boulder Creek Guitars	1412
AV-Leader Corporation	1869	Benchmark Media Systems, Inc.	1676	Bourgeois Guitars	1411
Avlex Corporation	6810	Bends Instrumentos Musicais Ltda	3231	Bourns Inc.	1548
Axewraps.....	1808	Bergamot Brass Works.....	1127	John Bowen Synth Design	1121
Axis Percussion, Inc.....	3478	Berklee Press	5301	Brady Drum Company	3379
AXL Musical Instruments	5476	Berndt Woods	1041	Brancher	3200
AXON Technologies	6913	Best Media LLC	6296	Brazen Guitars	1237
B & C Speakers	4786	beyerdynamic	6500	Bread & Roses	2004
B.C. Rich.....	4884, 4885	Beyond (Tianjin) Musical Instrument	2449	Breedlove Guitar Company	1812
B-52 Professional	5952	BG Franck Bichon	3200, 4305	Breezy Ridge Instruments, Ltd.	6230
Babicz Guitars USA	5397	BGE	3100	BridgeCo	1801
Bad Cat Amplifier Co. Inc.	1461	Bhargava & Co.....	2816	Bridgecraft USA Inc	1426
Baden Guitars	1226	BI Technologies.....	1571	Brown's Guitar Factory Corp.....	3383
Dino Baffetti Di Baffetti G & C.	4819	Berkley Integrated Audio Software	6424	Brubaker Guitars.....	5973
Bag End Loudspeakers	4146	Big Bang Distribution	3464	BSS Audio.....	7800
Musical's Bags, SL	3412	Big Bends LLC	1523	BSWA Technology Co. Ltd.....	1769
Baldwin Piano	303	Big City Music.....	6735	BSX bass Inc.....	5973
Bam France.....	3200	Big Dipper Stage Lighting	7709	Buckaroo Cymbals	4831
Barcus-Berry	5420	Big Fish Audio.....	6510	Budda Amplification	5282
Bari Woodwind Supplies, LLC	3515	Big Idea Guys	1584	Buddy Rich Drum Company	3070
Bartolini Pickups & Electronics.....	5864	Big Island Acoustic Koa	1508	Buffet Crampon.....	3200
Basix Percussion.....	4468	BigHeart Slide Company	4176	Buffet Crampon USA, Inc.	4300
Bass Drum O's	3464	Bigsby	3540	Bulk Molding Compounds, Inc.	2882
Bass Dynamics	5598	Bill Lawrence Guitar Design Co	2898	Bulletproof Instruments	1149
Bass Player	5808	Gerard Billaudot Editeur.....	3200	Burkart-Phelan, Inc.	3329
Basslines	4358	Black Diamond Strings	3513	Burning Amplification, LLC.....	1152
Bassoon Equipment	5894	Black Swamp Percussion.....	2465	Burriss Amps & Effects Pedals.....	5899
Bay Woodwind Products/Mouthpieces	3014	Blackbird Guitars	1404	C and C Custom Drums.....	2777
Bazhou Basix Musical Instrument	4468	Blackheart	5676	C.B.I. Professional Wiring Systems	4268
B-Band, Inc.	4799	Blackwood Carbon Fiber Drumsticks	2358	Cable Up	1634
BBE Sound, Inc.	4690	E. K. Blessing Co., Inc.	3700	CAD Professional Microphones	6226
Beard Guitars	1711	Blocki Flute Method LLC	2806	Cadeson Musical Co., Ltd	2746
Bechstein America, LLC.....	209A	BLOWIT Fans	2972	CAE	7002
Becker Stringed Instruments	5720	Blue Book On Line	5400	Confederation of European Music Ind.	3120
Bee Basses LLC	1484	Blue Microphones	6220	Cakewalk	6800
Beechler Mouthpieces	4410	Julius Blüthner Pianofortefabrik GmbH	3120	J.D. Calato Mfg. Co., Inc.	3439

Take It Easy

TASCAM begins its 30th year of home recording with the **DP-004 Digital Pocketstudio**. Featuring TASCAM's famously easy-to-use interface, this battery-powered 4-track recorder is perfect for musicians, students and songwriters. But it's not just for demos - CD-quality digital recording and a pair of built-in mics allow you to record anywhere you feel comfortable.

See how simple recording can be by getting your hands on the DP-004 Digital Pocketstudio at your TASCAM dealer.

TASCAM

For more information, visit
tascam.com/dp004

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WHAT to SEE

Daisy Rocks The Bangles

The Bangles will appear at the Daisy Rock booth on Friday, Jan. 16 at 1 p.m.

{dasiyrocks.com}



Dakota Craftsmanship

Sax Dakota offers the finest alto and tenor saxophones, straight and standard, available in the market today. They feature innovative engineering, custom-crafted materials, sharp action and aesthetic beauty, and can be positioned as a fine pro saxophone.

{pjlmusic.com}

Hosa's Folding Mic

Hosa Technology has introduced the Da-Cappo DA07 Dual Folding Ear Micro Microphone. Featuring an advanced capsule that delivers superior audio quality and an adjustable, comfortable, dual-folding earpiece design, the new DA07 is an ideal choice for today's on-stage and on-air talent. (hosatech.com)

RapcoHorizon Gives T.I.P.s

RapcoHorizon will be offering retailers T.I.P.s (Technique for Improving Profit). These T.I.P.s will be scheduled throughout the NAMM Show at booth 4558. New MiniPacks and POP cable displays are designed to catch customers' attention with their silkscreen and powdercoat finish. First-time MiniPack buyers will also receive a free \$25 iTunes gift card. (rapcohorizon.com)

The Roland Process

The new Roland VB-99 offers a wide range of COSM bass and amplifier models, polyphonic effects, new string modeling technology, and dual independent signal paths for blending sounds. Its smaller format is ideal for both tabletop recording and on-stage use.

{rolandus.com}

Calicchio Musical Instruments Inc.	4311
Calzone Case Company	4849
Cannonball Musical Instruments	4426
CANOPUS Co., Ltd	2964
Captain Beyond	2265
Caraya	1264
Carbosticks	2358
Carl Fischer LLC	5412
Carruthers Guitars.....	1396
Carter Steel Guitars	5820
Carvin Corp.	4490

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Cedar Creek Custom Case Shoppe	4450
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Celestion	4674
Central Music Co.....	6012
Century Guitars.....	1421
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CharterOak Acoustic Devices	1861
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Coalition for Music Education in Canada 2004	
CodaBow International	3500
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Cora & Peter Kuo, Inc.	3165
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Core One Creative, Inc	5499
Cort USA	4468

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CSFI.....	3200
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DAE HUAN ENTERPRISE CO., LTD.	1784
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Factory Co. Ltd.	2971
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Danelectro	4790
Dangerous Music	6916
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DAS Audio of America	6878
Dave Smith Instruments	6948
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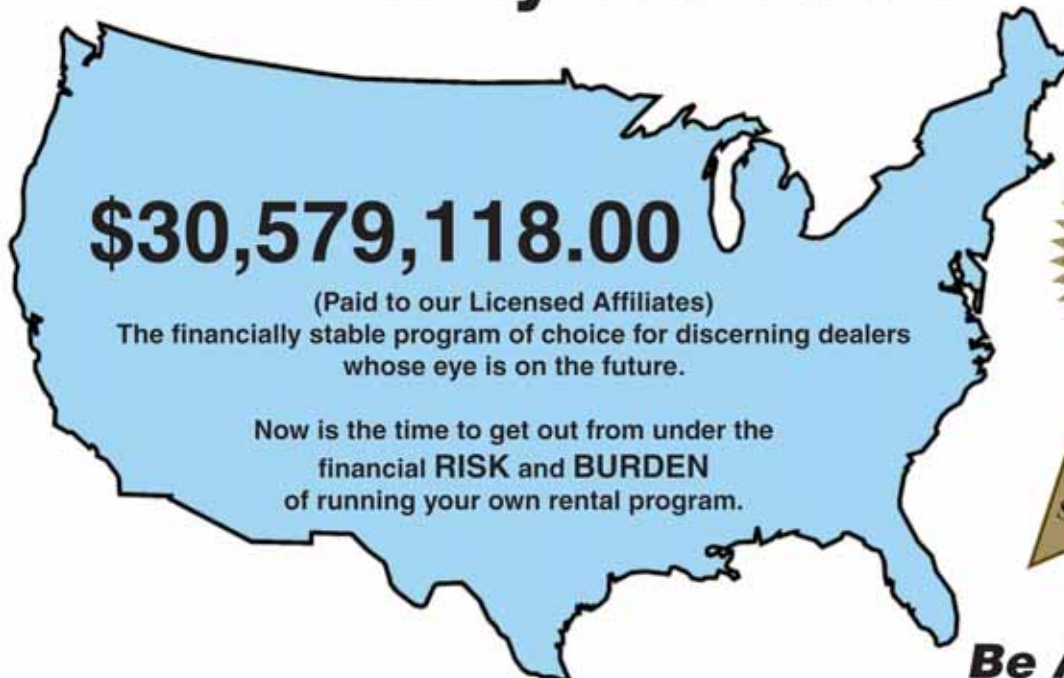
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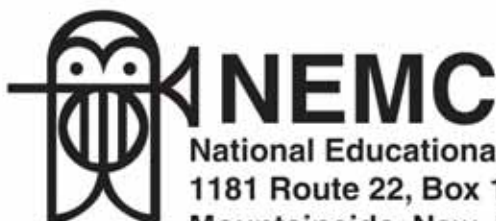
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- ♪ A **No Fee** Licensed Affiliate Rental Program.
- ♪ Rental agreements that are customized to the specific laws of the Affiliate's state.
- ♪ State **licensing** and/or **registration** of the Affiliate's rental program at NEMC's expense.
- ♪ Only one quality level of name brand instruments in **New** and **Like-New** condition **only**.
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- ♪ **The Platinum Plan Plus - to increase commission percentage.**
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Plus:

- ♪ Each Affiliate is able to create a Custom, Competitive, and Profitable price schedule for the Affiliate's individual marketplace. NEMC does not post rental prices on the Internet.
- ♪ Business is promoted **into the Affiliate's retail store**, not onto the Internet. NEMC does not compete against its own Affiliates by renting 'On-Line'.
- ♪ An Affiliate's territory is protected. NEMC will not set up its own retail stores in an Affiliate's territory.

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FRANKLIN STRAP

* BOOTH 6976 *

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WHAT to SEE

LPD Feels the Difference

LPD Music will feature several unique guitar lines at NAMM, including its retro Italia line; Paracho Elite handmade Latin instruments; Darling Divas glamour line of color-coordinated guitars with matching accessories; and Sparrow guitars, which were inspired by the days of hot rods, pinballs, tattoos and good old rock 'n' roll.

{lpdmusic.com}

Sonaré's Sparkle

Sonaré Winds, a division of Verne Q. Powell Flutes, will debut three new 700 series flutes and two new intermediate-level trumpets. The gold-plated flutes will come in three unique models. The 500 and 600 series trumpets will offer the unique features of the Sonaré pro-level horns with a Cliff Blackburn-designed lead-pipe and Sonaré's MicroLok adjustable valve guide.

{sonarewinds.com}

Godlyke Releases

Maxon

Godlyke's Maxon AD999 Pro Analog Delay is the newest member of Maxon's Vintage series. The AD999 Pro uses four custom-made Maxon MC4107D bucket brigade ICs with 900 milliseconds of available delay time. Delay repeats are then filtered using Maxon's proprietary RMS level sensor and companding noise-reduction circuitry to provide a pristine, low-noise analog delay tone. {maxonfx.com}



Lennon Bus Is Back

Liyana, a group of musicians with physical disabilities from Zimbabwe, will be performing on the John Lennon Educational Tour Bus stage during the NAMM Show at 6 p.m. on Jan. 15, with additional performances on Jan. 16 and Jan. 17 at noon, and Jan. 18 at 10 a.m.

{lennonbus.org}

GARD.....	5815	Goodall Guitars, Inc.	1715	Guy's Publishing Group, LLC	1700
Garritan	6820	W.L. Gore & Associates, Inc.	5000	G-vox.....	6628
Gary Kramer Guitar.....	4699	Gotoh.....	4140	GWW Group	1430
Gatchell Violins Co.....	2904	C.A. Götz Jr. GmbH	3501	Gypsy Guitar Corporation.....	1346
Gator Cases, Inc.	5100	Graph Tech Guitars Labs	5920	H & F Technologies, Inc.....	6390
GCI Technologies	6966	Greasy Groove Inc.	2996	H.E.A.R.....	2005
GE Commercial Distribution Finance	400	Greatmind Instrument Manufacturing	2929	Hagstrom.....	5700
GE Money	150	Green Monster Music	1407	Hahn Guitars	1236
Gem Sound	7111	Greg Bennett Co.	4250	Hailun Distribution LLC	209B
Gemini Sound Products	6966	Gretsch Co.	3540	Haken Audio	1803
Gemstone Musical Instruments	3512	Gretsch Drums	5720		
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GEWA GmbH	3220	Guangzhou Jisheng Musical Inst.	2992		
GForce Software Ltd	6700	Guangzhou Lang Qing Development.....	1575		
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GHS STRINGS	4684	Guangzhou Sunwell Stage Equipment	7415		
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gig-fx inc	1129	Prudencio Saez By Guisama	1600		
Gigliotti & Sons Inc	3395	Guisama, SL	1600		
GigSkinz	4458	Guistar Picks LLC	1342		
Heinrich Gill GmbH	2914	Guitar Bra's LLC	1512		
GlassTones LLC	1342	Guitar Edge	4318		
Glider Capo	4250	The Guitar Folks	3499		
Global Truss	7515	Guitar Jones	1564		
Global Wood Source.....	5391	Guitar Kickstand	4198		
Globe Plastics	2882	Spanish Guitar Master Craftsman ..	1600, 3412		
GMS Drum Co.	3050	Guitar Player	5808		
GNI Music	1340	GuitarGuard, llc	4855		
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Godlyke, Inc.	1580	Guitarras Antonio Aparicio	1306		
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Gold Tone, Inc.	1415	Guitars in the Classroom	2004		
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Gon Bops Percussion	2454, 2654	Gulf Musical Instruments (USA) Co.	2809		
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HAL LEONARD

* BOOTH 4618 *

Print music leader Hal Leonard will showcase new titles and bestsellers at its booth, including play-alongs and Real Books; *Guitar Hero*, *Rock Band* and *High School Musical* books; the Hal Leonard Guitar Method; and hundreds of more titles.

HALLEONARD.COM

Halifax & Co Pvt Ltd	1662
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Halo Guitars	4598
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Hamilton Metalcraft.....	4166

HAMILTON STANDS

* BOOTH 4011 *

HAMILTONSTANDS.COM

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HOHNER

* BOOTH 3240 *

Hohner will highlight new products, including its Blues Bender harmonicas, hand-signed Bob Dylan harmonica collection, Bob Dylan signature harmonicas, 50th Anniversary melodicas, reproductions of the Harmonette and Harponette harmonicas, new acoustic/electric guitars, 500 series acoustic guitars, Sonor SSE Rock kits, four-piece Indy kits, custom SQ2 Tattoo kits, Flaco Jimenez Signature accordions, Atlantic accordion reissues and POP displays.

HOHNERUSA.COM

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HOSA TECHNOLOGY

* BOOTH 5590 *

In addition to Hosa-brand cables and adaptors, check out the latest Da-Cappo Micro microphones, Zaolla Silverline custom cables, DeoxIT connectivity-enhancing treatments and Lizard Spit instrument-care products. Look to Hosa for your connectivity solutions.

HOSATECH.COM

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Hoshino USA, Inc.....4634
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HUGHES & KETTNER

* BOOTH 6555 *

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WHAT to SEE

Ritter's Fashion Hits

Martin Ritter has launched a new boutique collection of gig bags called Madarozzo. The Madarozzo series of boutique drum and percussion bags is made for ideal gear protection. The compact range is available in a choice of colors and price points for stick bags, cymbal bags and drum bags. The bags also feature 600D water repellent polyester, soft nylon lining, comfortable handles, and various accessory pockets and pouches. **{madarozzo.us}**

Music Link's Jubilee

Recording King from The Music Link continues the revival of the 1930s look and sound with the Recording King Century Jubilee series. These guitars have a vintage two-tone tobacco sunburst finish and Recording King Crown peghead. They're made with solid sitka spruce tops with choices of solid rosewood, solid mahogany, or solid maple back and sides. All guitars except for the RDJ/ROJ-16 are finished with hand-rubbed, nitrocellulose lacquer. MSRP: \$599.99. **{recordingking.com}**



Reverend Signs Anderson

At NAMM, Reverend will continue its dealer-friendly program, featuring exclusive territories, protected pricing and gig-ready electric guitars in the midrange market. Guitars are designed by award-winning luthier Joe Naylor and setup at the company's U.S. facility. New guitars for 2009 include the Pete Anderson Signature. Anderson will stop by on Friday and Saturday at 2 p.m. for booth appearances. **{reverendguitars.com}**

Intelli Co., Ltd.	1368	JodyJazz Inc.	2924
IntelliStage	4458	Joemeek	6890
International DJ Expo	5400	John Hornby Skewes & Co. Ltd.	1310
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JUPITER

*** BOOTH 4808 ***

JUPITERMUSIC.COM

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K.H.S. Musical Instrument Co., Ltd.	5010
Kahler	5727
Kala Brand Music Co.....	1336
Kamaka Hawaii, Inc.	1510

KAMAN MUSIC

*** BOOTH 5720 ***

Kaman Music will be displaying all of its brands with a few surprises for 2009. Check out the new Ovation iDea guitar, Takamine LTD 2009, Hamer Talladega Pro, Genz Benz Shenandoah Compaq 300, Gretsch USA Classic Bop kits, Gibraltar's new Electronics Mounting Station and Toca Freestyle djembes with Extended Rim. Celebrate LP's 45th anniversary with new, commemorative products and a special party.

KAMANMUSIC.COM

Kanstul Musical Instruments	4510
Karura Case Company	1517

KAWAI AMERICA

*** BOOTH 207AB ***

KAWAIUS.COM

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KYSER MUSICAL PRODUCTS

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Larrivee Guitars USA Inc	5561
Latch Lake Products Inc.	1552
Latin Percussion	5720
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Lectrosnics, Inc.....	6899
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Leem Products Co., Ltd.	1825
Legere Reeds Ltd.	3016
Lehle Switchers.....	5569

Lemoine/M.A.R.C.A	3200
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LEVY'S LEATHERS LIMITED

* BOOTH 4658 *

Inspired by the 2008 spring fashion shows, Levy's will be introducing almost 100 new guitar strap models. The company will be expanding on last year's successful themes: fashionable and affordable.

LEVYSLEATHERS.COM

Michael Lewis Instruments.....	1613
Lexicon	7800
Line 6	212B
Lipe Guitars USA	1371
Little Kids Rock.....	2004
Little Labs	6254
Little Lyon Musical Instruments	5244
Littlite	7002
LM Products	4283

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Longo Custom Drums	2873
Looperlative Audio Products	1657
Loriente Guitars.....	5300
Los Cabos Drumsticks	2369
Loud Technologies Inc.....	5676
Louis Electric Amplifier Co	1234
The Low End.....	4178
Lowrey	405

LPD MUSIC

* BOOTH 4758 *

LPD Music, established in 1963, is a full-line distributor of musical instruments, accessories and pro audio equipment with high profitability for its dealers. Brands highlighted include Paracho Elite Guitars, Italia Guitars, Darling Divas and Sparrow Guitars.

LPDMUSIC.COM

LR Baggs Corp.	5254
---------------------	------

Luan Yu Musical Instruments	3431
Ludwig Drum Co.....	4224
Luna Guitars	4272
Luthier Music Corp	1529
Lynx Studio Technology Inc.	6527
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M&M MERCHANDISERS

* BOOTH 1648 *

MMWHOLESALE.COM

M & N Highland Outfitter	1662
Mackie	5676

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* BOOTH 1805 *

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WHAT to SEE

Levy's New Gig

Levy's new Pro series gig bag, the CPS20, features a neck-stabilizing system and strap pin suspension shock absorbers that result in the best protection possible in a gig bag. It also features a rain cape and multiple pockets that will be appreciated by gigging musicians and songwriters alike. The gig bag is available for electric guitar and bass. **{levysleathers.com}**



Wyman Upgrades Grands

Wyman Pianos will be displaying the latest version of its popular Wyman Model WG145 HPE-S 4-foot, 9-inch grand piano at the NAMM Show. Product upgrades include an all-new beveled lid design, an all-new plate color and premium plate finish, oversized spaded legs with double-width solid brass casters, and other cosmetic enhancements to improve value to the consumer. These product upgrades are now available on all other Wyman grand piano models and finishes, as well. **{wymanpiano.com}**



Eastwood's Radical Vintage

Pictured in Taffy White, the Gemini is Eastwood's Radical Vintage Remakes' newest model. A tribute to the 1966 Wurlitzer Gemini, it features a tremolo and an adjustable roller bridge. The dual NY mini-humbucker pickups have individual volume controls along with rhythm/solo switches, providing eight different tone options. This model is scheduled for distribution in April 2009. **{eastwoodguitars.com}**

MacPherson Guitarworks	1126	Medina Artigas S.A.	4853	Moridaira USA, Inc	1720
macProVideo.com.....	6912	Meinl USA	3454	Morley	4382
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THE MUSIC LINK

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<div style="background-color: #f0f0f0; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>NEMC</p> <p>* BOOTH 4221 *</p> <p>With 50-plus years of experience, NEMC will offer retailers its turn-key band and orchestra instrument rental program. Call Gene. 800-526-4593, ext 240. 1181 Route 22, Mountainside, NJ 07092.</p> <p>NEMC.COM</p> </div>		New Sensor Corp.5396	On2 Marketing Inc.2358
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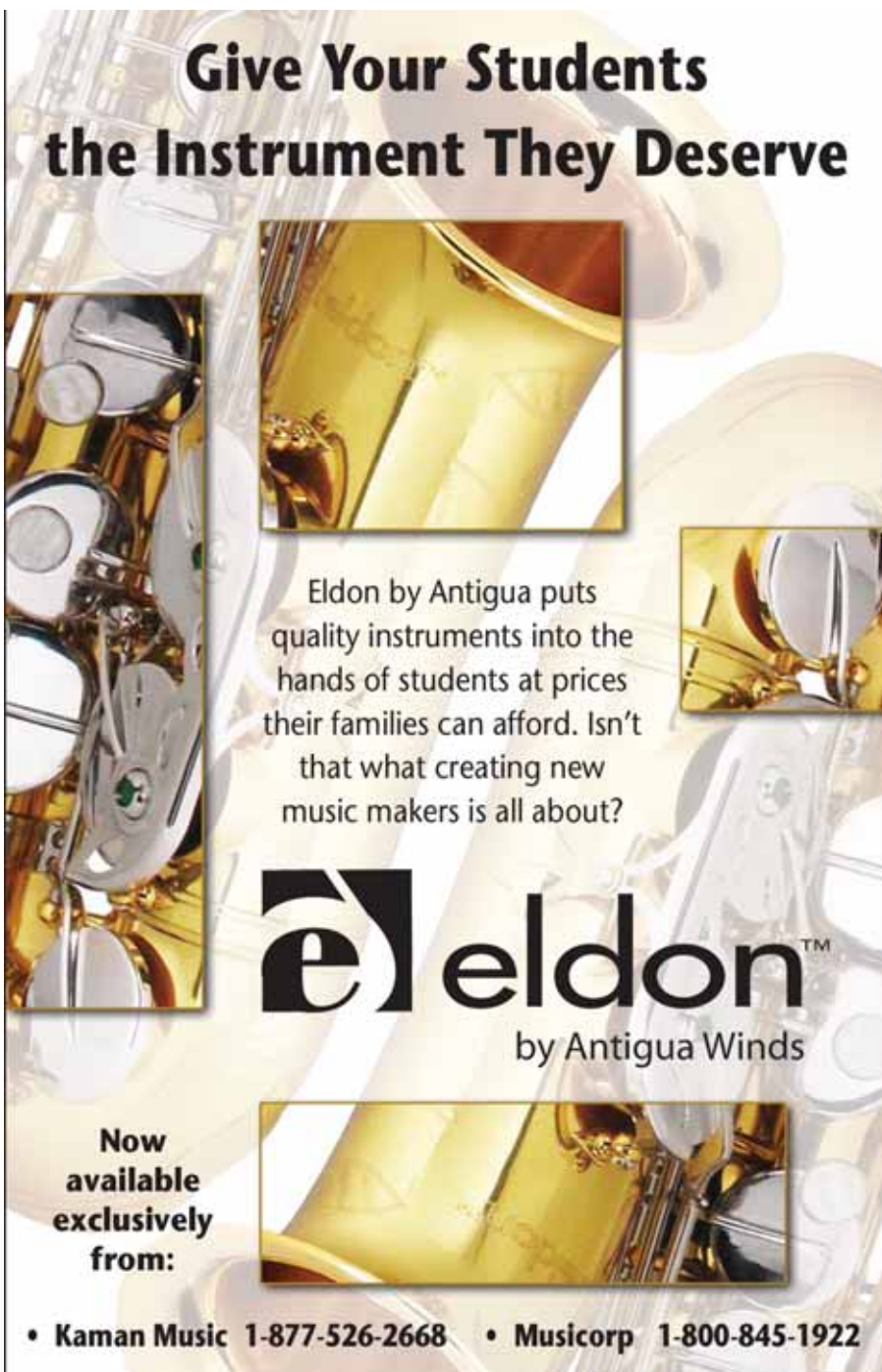
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AUDIO, RECORDING & DJ 2009

INSIDE:

+ MARKET TRENDS PAGE 84

Drum libraries give users the advantage of legendary drum sounds in a hardware-free format. Learn about the major players and positioning the products at retail.

+ NEW ENGLAND DJ & AUDIO SUPPLY PAGE 88

The West Hartford, Conn., retailer expands its operation while other local indie music shops shrink or disappear.

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The audio supplier rolls out electronic drum products aimed at everyone from pros to the gaming crowd.

+ NEW AUDIO, RECORDING & DJ GEAR PAGE 92

The latest from Digidesign, Samson, American DJ and more.



AUDIO, RECORDING & DJ 2009

THE

by Dan Daley

VIRTUAL DRUMMER

Virtual drums are a growing category. The challenge for MI dealers is positioning them in a retail environment

CHANGES in the drum

and percussion universe tend to evolve slowly compared to other MI products. The sea change of the modern era was the ascendancy of drum machines in the 1980s, followed by D.I.Y. sampling systems that created vast archives of drum sounds.

The next round of change has been to take the fabricated and make it real again, yet still leave hardware out of the equation. Some new products offer drum sounds recorded in legendary acoustical spaces, while others give users access to the legendary drummers themselves. (It's fitting, since many of their careers became limited

once drum machines began making drummers out of anyone with quantization to give them a free pass, no matter how tempo-challenged they might be.) And the massive pool of sampled drum and percussion sounds is still growing. It all makes for an interesting mix of products at music retail that are still finding their way, in terms of store positioning and marketing.

"This next generation of virtual drum technologies and products is pretty insane," said Shane Koss, manager of Alto Music's pro audio satellite store in Manhattan. "The samples sound very good and there are tons of them. It's not unusual now to see 50-GB and

60-GB worth of sounds in these packages. But it's the way the interfaces have evolved that I think is driving sales. In a Pro Tools environment, the graphics' look is as important as the sound itself, and products like Native Instruments' Battery look great."

AMAZING SPACE

The products are diverse and, in some cases, remarkable. The gold standard might be the Ocean Way Drums packages, assembled by Grammy-winning record producer and engineer Allen Sides, owner of Ocean Way Studios in Los Angeles. Sides went back to dozens of drummers he had worked with over the years

and brought their kits into the famous Studio B at Ocean Way. There, he recorded them using classic techniques and vintage microphones, each drum on its own track, with separate tracks for various ambiences and powered by Native Instruments' Kontakt Player, which supports RTAS, VS and Audio Units formats.

The result is hardly a mass-market retail product. The Gold package is 40 GB of 24-bit, 48-kHz audiophile samples on six dual-layer DVDs that retails for about \$1,000. The Platinum edition puts a super-high-resolution (24-bit, 96-kHz) version of the data onto an 80-GB, 10,000-rpm hard drive for \$1,995. Still, Sides said he sold about 500 packages in the first few months of availability, and he expected that to increase tenfold within two years. (Seventy percent were sold through Guitar Center, Sam Ash and several other retail outlets, the rest through Ocean Way's own dedicated Web site.)

"The dealers are positioning it in both the drum and percussion and the pro audio and computer music departments of stores, so it reaches a wider audience," Sides said. He added, in language a Mercedes or Porsche dealer would understand, "And there is a large and growing base of home studio users out there that look at this as an investment rather than as a simple product purchase. You are in essence hiring me to record drums at Ocean Way for your sessions."

Another next-generation virtual drum product also uses an association with a famous recording studio. The drum sounds for FXpansion's BFD were recorded at London's Air Studios, owned by Beatles producer Sir George Martin. The

BFD product lists between \$200–\$500 and offers up to 55 GB of drums and percussion instruments in huge numbers. They can be flexibly edited, routed, processed and sub-mixed within the box.

Other products offer ever-larger data sizes at lower costs. Battery from Native Instruments has more than 100 pro drum kits and is compatible with most third-party drum sample libraries. It has a cell matrix with up to 128 sample cells that let users color code or select multiple cells for various configurations. It retails for \$229.

Digidesign's \$299 Strike plug-in, designed to work in the company's Pro Tools platform, lets users select a custom virtual drum kit of up to 12 instruments per kit, determine virtual microphone choice and placement, and manipulate the electronic drummer's intensity, tempo, dynamics, feel and so on. Like other virtual drum products that emphasize high-resolution samples, Strike weighs in at a hefty 20 GB of sound and control data. Digidesign keeps it manageable using a proprietary lossless codec to store it all in 5 GB of storage space.

RETAIL POSITIONING

Alto's Koss said the products sell well when they're positioned correctly. Alto merchandises virtual drums with other software applications, and Koss said the approximately 20-percent margins on the products help make up for declining unit prices. Some dealers shy away from software-based products altogether, citing concerns about piracy cutting into sales, but Koss said many of the new virtual drums come wrapped in their own players rather than

+ DRUM LIBRARIES



FXpansion's BFD 2.0 virtual drum library features 55 GB of rare, vintage, boutique and classic drum sounds recorded at London's Air Lyndhurst studios. MSRP: \$499.99.

Native Instruments' Battery 12-GB sample library includes more than 100 drum kits with more than 23,000 individual samples. MSRP: \$229.



Ocean Way Drums' Platinum edition boasts 24-bit, 96-kHz sampled drums recorded by Grammy-winning record producer and engineer Allen Sides. They come on an 80-GB hard drive. MSRP: \$1,995.

as a collection of raw samples.

"You can put an iLok [a security dongle that stores passwords] on the player, and that protects the content," he said.

Still, Koss has been challenged by data sizes approaching 100 GB, which can lead to long download times, and the graphic user interfaces, which are complex propositions to all but the most adept home recordists and musicians. Alto solves the first issue with a free data transfer service that loads the drum sounds into the user's hard drive via FireWire. The second isn't so neatly addressed: Koss finds that virtual drum product purchasers come back for assistance at a fairly high rate, eating into margins by tying up sales staff.

Dusty DiMercurio, marketing manager for personal studio products at Digidesign, said the company takes pains to develop easier GUI and quick-start capabilities. Digi also has its regional marketing specialists make the rounds at retail outlets. They provide brochures and update demo sessions devised by Digi engineers that are actually sales and marketing tutorials running as screen savers. "Anything that we can do to help the retailer get the idea across, we'll try to do," he said.

Michael Barberich, product manager for Hicksville, N.Y.-based music retail chain Sam Ash Music, said that these software-based drums are a sample library subset and thus best positioned in the computer and pro audio department.

"They're a subcategory of plug-ins and the customer for these products comes in looking for them, rather than encountering them the first time in the store," he said. "They tend to be computer-savvy buyers. In fact, drummers are the smallest group of buyers for these products — we sell most of them to keyboard players and home recordists."

VIRTUAL DRUM DRAWBACKS

Not every retailer finds software-based drums viable as a product category. Gary Gand, owner of Northfield, Ill.-based Gand Music & Sound, said the appeal is mainly to younger customers who grew up in a software-oriented world. That might look good on the surface, but he pointed out that software-based items are vulnerable to theft and sharing on the Internet.

'Drummers are the smallest group of buyers for these products — we sell most of them to keyboard players and home recordists.'

— Michael Barberich, Sam Ash

"We've been through this with a number of software products that come on CDs and DVDs," he said. "They just get pirated. You sell one, and pirated copies of that take away any additional sales."

Billy Cuthrell, owner of Progressive Music Center in Raleigh, N.C., added that the appeal of software drums might be regional. "I know that Guitar Center and

other stores in major cities seem to do well with them, but it's never caught on here," he said. "We teach a class in recording, and we've touched on those products, but it's never been a huge topic."

Drums are, ironically, perhaps the instrument most deeply drawn into the digital abyss. Guitars have resisted departing their analog space, and while synthesized sound has pretty much left the module for the hard drive, it's still accessed by keyboards. With drum samples played by noted musicians and recorded in amazing acoustical spaces by talented audio engineers, the drum may be the most virtual of all instruments now. That, Koss and other retailers argue, is why this generation of virtual drums is best placed in computer and pro audio departments and why they'll become even more ubiquitous going forward.

"They can be complex technology products to use," Koss said. "It's a good example of how digital is transforming everything." **MI**



NEW ENGLAND DJ & AUDIO SUPPLY | BY JENNY DOMINE

BRANCHING OUT

David Henry, owner of New England DJ & Audio Supply in West Hartford, Conn., has watched independent music retail decline during his 10 years in business. But where other indies saw the writing on the wall, Henry saw opportunity. He continues to run a growing full-line store by picking up business his competition left behind.

PRO AUDIO TO MI TRANSITION

For four or five years, we were side-by-side with Melody Music,” Henry said, referring to a former local music retailer. “They decided to close up shop. We took over both spaces and the remaining inventory, added some lines, and started to go at it a little bit at a time.”

New England DJ & Audio Supply remains primarily an outlet for professional audio installations and DJ gear, but it also carries guitars, drums, and band and orchestra instruments.

“We started in pro audio and DJ gear at the time that big DJ surge was going on,” Henry said. “So it was a no-brainer.”

According to Henry, Hartford has a thriving market for Jamaican music, and DJ culture has become an integral part of that demographic. His company also provides audio services to several churches and schools.

However, its transition into combo retail in 2000 proved more challenging than the initial audio business start-up in 1998. “We got into [MI] when everyone else was trying to fig-



David Henry

David Henry saw growth opportunity in other indies closing shop

ure out a way to sell or get out of it,” Henry said. “So a lot of people thought I was nuts.”

After taking on the new product lines initially, Henry noticed sales slide, but through developing a stable lesson program and a little luck building his status as the go-to place for B&O rentals, he has begun reaping the rewards of diversification.

RETAIL ON THE MOVE

New England DJ & Audio Supply has been enjoying a larger location for more than

a year. The new space features more room for the company’s expanded selection, a larger parking lot, greater visibility from the road, more storage and three music lesson studios.

Foot traffic has yet to return to its old levels, but Henry said he hasn’t lost a single customer from the old location and has drawn in some new ones. “Having been in business 10 years, I never would have expected that,” Henry said.

New England DJ & Audio Supply hasn’t been the only local retailer on the move. Last March, La Salle Music & Sound scaled back to a single location in East Hartford, and a month later, retail chain Music & Arts Center moved into La Salle’s former West Hartford home. The appearance of the chain could have spelled bad news for Henry’s

B&O department, but he ended up doubling his B&O business in the shake-up.

Henry also gained a veteran drumming instructor that left Music & Arts in the moving process. He said he prefers hiring veteran music teachers because they tend to stay at his company longer.

“We haven’t jumped [into lessons] head first because it’s new to us,” Henry said. “We want to bring students in, but we don’t want to bring them in and have them angry when teachers leave.”

“We’ve made a deliberate effort to start very slowly to make sure we get the right teachers.”

AUDIO OUTLOOK

The new additions to Henry’s business have not diminished his focus on his foundation: the pro audio and DJ market.

“Pro audio is still active,” Henry said. “But the hype has slowed down.”

According to Henry, professional DJing for weddings and dances remains a relatively strong business. “The average cost for a wedding DJ has gone to \$1,000-plus. There is always work, but I’m starting to notice more and more people saying they don’t have as many bookings this year. People get tired [of DJs] and look for bands, maybe a sax player or a piano player. It’s a cycle.”

With new products and a growing lesson program, New England DJ & Audio Supply is prepared to adapt to whatever that cycle may bring. **MI**

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ALESIS | BY ANDREW GREINER

CONVENIENT DRUMMING

Once upon a time, drummers had it rough. They had to buy a ton of expensive equipment, lug it to practice and gigs, and find room to store everything. They had to beg for the right microphone setup during recording sessions. And they had to jump through hoops to secure practice time without driving neighbors and family crazy.

Those days are quickly fading due to advances Alesis has made in electronic drum products. The company's latest gear makes supplying a back-beat as easy as plug-and-play.

THE REAL DRUM FEEL

Alesis debuted its latest contributions to digital drums during a press conference held on Oct. 10 at S.I.R. Entertainment Services in New York. The new digital gear — which includes Surge cymbals, the DM5 Pro and the USB Pro kits, and the entry-level Ion Drum Rocker kit — is designed to make drumming easier for everyone from entry-level players to polished professionals.

"Alesis is an emerging powerhouse in electronic percussion," said Jim Norman, the company's product manager. "Since the 1980s, Alesis has been developing electronic drum modules, owing in large part to our expertise in high-quality audio processing and sound design."

For drummers making the switch to a digital set, the company's new Surge cymbals feel like the real thing. They're

Alesis DM5 Pro drum kit



Alesis further blurs the line between electronic, acoustic drums with new gear

made from a brass alloy and fitted with triggers and dampeners. The ride produces multiple sounds when plugged into a kit — one for the bell and one for the splash. It all adds up to a realistic playing experience.

"The Alesis name has always stood for audio innovation with a matchless value-to-price ratio," Norman said. "From our real-head drum pads to our alloy Surge cymbals, our drum kits marry the

feel of playing acoustic percussion instruments with the sonic flexibility of electronic sound generation."

The Surge cymbals work with two different Alesis drum products: the DM5 Pro and the USB Pro.

The DM5 Pro kit, Alesis' improvement on its decade-old DM5 module, uses the same repertoire of sounds as the original but adds pro-drum sound and comfortable playability via real drumheads and the Surge cymbals. Drummers can practice on this realistic-feeling set quietly by plugging in headphones.

The DM5 Pro kit with Surge cymbals is also ideal for recording or live gigs because it plugs straight into a soundboard — no more guessing about the right mic setup.

The USB Pro drum kit enables home recording with a drum set controller that plugs into a PC, Mac or sound module. It doesn't have the same

range of sounds as the DM5 Pro, but it will work through an existing drum machine.

The dual-zone, acoustic-feeling drum pads work with any MIDI software. The 8-inch drumheads on the USB Pro and the DM5 Pro are tunable with a standard drum key for adjustable tension and feel. All of the heads on the USB Pro kit offer dual-zone sounds — unlike the DM5 Pro, which only offers this feature on its Surge cymbals.

DRUM HEROES

The DM5 Pro and the USB Pro kits represent a new era of accessible drums. However, another key advancement for Alesis is its entry-level equipment.

Alesis' sister company, Ion, has released the Drum Rocker, an electronic kit that's compatible with the *Rock Band* video game.

The Drum Rocker is an aftermarket add-on to the popular game and draws on Alesis' knowledge of electronic percussion and video game appeal. Unlike other games that only simulate the experience of playing with a few buttons, the Drum Rocker kit is the real deal, featuring pads, pedals and cymbals. It lists for \$299.

Once users have mastered the game, the Drum Rocker set plugs into the DM5 Pro. The game add-on is fully compatible with the Pro kit's module.

With all the new advancements from Alesis and Ion, the era of roughing it for drummers is ending. Now picking up percussion is as simple as beating a drum. **MI**

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SAMSON | G-TRACK

Mic and Mixer

Samson's new G-Track is a USB condenser microphone with a built-in audio interface and mixer. This allows for simultaneous recording of vocals along with guitar, bass or keyboard, while also providing no latency monitoring through an on-board headphone output. The G-Track lets users switch the interface to record vocals only or instruments only or a mix of both. The device includes a heavy-duty mic stand. MSRP: \$149. samsontech.com



SM PRO AUDIO | V-MACHINE VST PLAYER

Plug and Go

SM Pro Audio has begun shipping its V-Machine VST player in the United States. The V-Machine is a compact VST/VSTi hardware playback module designed to take plug-ins on the road or into the studio, so they can be accessed without a computer. Multiple plug-ins can be loaded into bank/preset memories for immediate access and combined into chains, splits and layers. Full external MIDI controller support lets users access available loaded plug-in parameter controls. MSRP: \$599. smproaudio.com



JBL | EON300 SERIES

The Next Eon

JBL's new EON300 series of portable P.A. speakers reach an even broader range of users. The EON315 15-inch, two-way loudspeaker system offers 280/560 watts (continuous/ burst) total power and weighs 35 pounds. It features a 15-inch woofer and a 1-inch exit compression driver with a neodymium motor. The EON305 is a 15-inch, passive two-way loudspeaker featuring 250/500/1000 watts (continuous/program/peak) power handling. jbl.com



> | VirtualStudio



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1 AUDIOFILE WAVE EDITOR 1.4

Audiofile Engineering's new Wave Editor 1.4 is the latest update to its audio editing application for Mac OS X. Wave Editor 1.4 adds native support for VST effect plug-ins and expanded DDP export functionality. MSRP: \$79. audiofile-engineering.com

2 SONY ACID PRO 7

Sony Creative Software's ACID Pro 7 is the company's latest digital audio workstation software. New features include an audio and MIDI mixing console, MIDI track freeze, real-time rendering, and input busses to give greater control over routing input signals. MSRP: \$399.95. sonycreativesoftware.com

3 PROPELLERHEAD MELOPHOBIA MACHINE

Propellerhead's new Melophobia Machine ReFill for Reason Version 4 lets Reason users tap into production-ready loops, samples and instruments from music producer Pascal Gabriel. It's designed so recordists can add material from actual Pascal productions. MSRP: \$49. propellerheads.se

4 SSL DUENDE VOCALSTRIP

Vocalstrip is Solid State Logic's latest addition to its Duende collection, a suite of DSP powered plug-ins. Vocalstrip combines powerful EQ and dynamics sections with essential vocal processors to bring power, character and clarity to vocal tracks from a single interface. solid-state-logic.com

5 M-AUDIO M-TRON PRO

M-Audio's recently released M-Tron Pro is a virtual instrument from software producer GForce. The software delivers hundreds of sounds, providing access to the distinctive tones popularized by artists, such as The Beatles and Led Zeppelin. Its sound library features more than 200 remastered tape banks, 45 new tape banks and more than 700 patches. MSRP: \$199.95. m-audio.com

6 FOCUSRITE LIQUID MIX HD

Liquid Mix HD for Pro Tools is Focusrite's new addition to its Liquid Mix range, which offers classic EQ and compressor emulations. Each instance of the Liquid Mix HD plug-in provides one compressor and one EQ emulation, selectable from a pool of vintage and modern classics. Forty compressors and 20 EQs are available out of the box. focusrite.com

7 WAVES SILVER

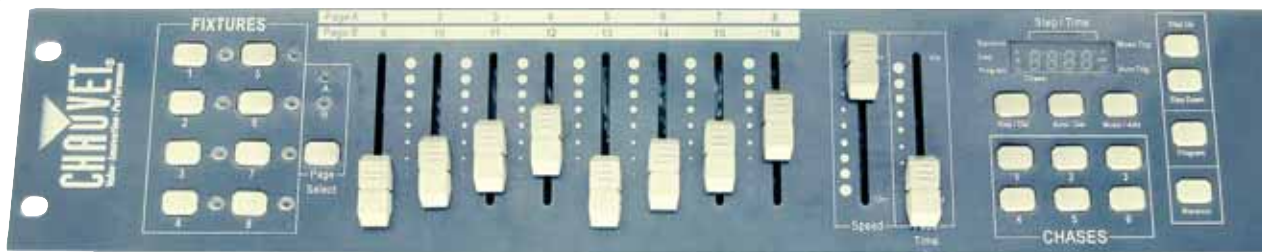
Waves' recently released Silver plug-in bundle gathers 16 of the company's most popular plug-ins in one package. Designed specifically with personal production studios in mind, Silver includes all 10 plug-ins from the Waves Native Power Pack, with six additional Native essentials. MSRP: \$900. waves.com

CHAUVET | OBEY SERIES

Power to Lead

Chauvet Lighting's recently released Obey series

of rack-mountable controllers is designed for mobile DJs and small- to mid-size clubs. The Obey 10 is a compact unit capable of controlling up to eight 16-channel fixtures and can store six sets of chases containing 999 scenes each. **{chauvetlighting.com}**



AMERICAN DJ | ACCU UFO

From Outer Space

American DJ's new Accu UFO intelligent moving head is a rotating disc that emits multi-color beams from its lenses. It's equipped with 32 8-mm red, green, blue and white LEDs that consume less energy with a 50,000-hour lamp life. MSRP: \$1,199.95. **{americandj.com}**



NUMARK | NS7 CONTROLLER

Itch Scratcher

Numark created the new NS7 with Serato to be the hardware controller for Serato's Itch software. The NS7 features two 7-inch, motorized, adjustable-torque turntable platter controls complete with slipmats and 45 rpm adapters. Scratch Live users can add NS7 to their existing Scratch Live software or upgrade to the included Serato Itch program. **{numark.com}**

DENON | DN-C620 1U CD PLAYER

Versatile Player

Denon Professional's new DN-C620 is a versatile CD player housed in a compact, one-rackspace enclosure. Compatible with standard audio data file formats, the DN-C620 offers 20 hours of MP3 audio playback and features intuitive, front-panel control for customizable program playlists and output of ID3 or CD-TEXT title, artist and album information. MSRP: \$549.99. **{denondj.com}**





PIONEER | HDJ-2000

Clear Audio

HDJ-2000 headphones are the latest addition to Pioneer's professional DJ headphone series. The tightly closed stereo headphones are designed to produce clear, high-quality sound and feature lightweight construction for comfort during extended periods of use. MSRP: \$450.

{pioneer-usa.com}

AUDIO-TECHNICA | ATH-ES7

Hi-Res 'Phones

Audio-Technica's ATH-ES7 stainless steel headphones are designed with 42-mm drivers with high-efficiency neodymium magnet systems and copper-clad aluminum wire voice coils for clear, high-resolution audio quality. Available in black or white, they fold flat for easy storage. MSRP: \$169.99.

{audio-technica.com}





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DVX D15: Active 15"/1.4" two-way multifunctional speaker cabinet

DVX DM28: Active 2x8"/1" stage monitor

DVX DM12: Active 12"/1.4" stage monitor

DVX DM15: Active 15"/1.4" stage monitor

DVA - Digital Vertical Array

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DVA S10: Active 18" Subwoofer

DVA S20: Active 2 x 18" neodymium woofer

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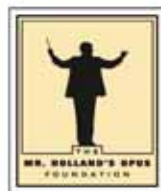
Dear

M.H.O.F., Thank you, not only for donating our instruments to us, but also for giving children like me the opportunity to learn music and develop a talent that we will keep our whole life. You give us something that will define us, make ourselves special, without you I would probably never have learned to play guitar. So
Thank you again

Sincerely yours Joseph Posey



That's why.



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(Like, for instance, the above letter.)

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GEAR



STONEBRIDGE | ANTOINE DUFOUR

Finely Aged

Stonebridge Guitars' new Antoine Dufour signature guitar is a hand-made acoustic grand auditorium model. It features a cedar top that has been vintage-aged through an organic process. The end result is a transformation of the wood's properties, making it comparable to wood that has had 80 years of natural curing — enhancing both the instrument's tone and rich color. The back and sides feature solid Indian rosewood, and its neck is carved from Honduran mahogany with a bound ebony fingerboard at a 1-3/4-inch width at the nut.

stonebridgeguitars.com

> Inside GEAR

> Guitars, Amps & Accessories

Daisy Rock goes wild with Wildwood Artist Deluxe series

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> Drums & Percussion

DW teams up with Daniel de los Reyes for Practice Pro pad

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> Pianos & Keyboards

Kawai expresses realistic sounds with the ES6 portable digital piano

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> Band & Orchestra

Stageline stands out by offering wooden desktop stand

[PAGE 106](#)

> Print & Multimedia

Hudson packages teachings of drummer Jeff Salem

[PAGE 108](#)



EXCETYLENE PRO AUDIO |
VINTAGE SERIES CABLES

Pro-Made

Excetylene Pro Audio's new Vintage series of guitar cables is made for professional musicians. The cables are heavy-duty and custom manufactured in the United States. The Vintage series features an extra-large diameter and heavy PVC jacket covered with durable nylon over-braid for greater shielding and flexibility. The cables have American-made switchcraft connectors with a bi-level strain relief and are available in a variety of vintage patterns. Each cable is hand-made and individually tested.

{excetylene.com}

DAISY ROCK | WILDWOOD ARTIST DELUXE

Wild Things

Daisy Rock Guitars has introduced its first solid-top series of acoustic-electric guitars, the Wildwood Artist Deluxe series.

Constructed from a mahogany body with a solid spruce top, the new Wildwood Artist Deluxe guitars are available in Atomic Pink, Royal Purple Burst and Sunset Burst finishes. The 22-fret, 25 1/4-inch scale, set-in slim mahogany neck is easier for smaller hands to play. Custom chrome tuners and D'Addario EXP 11 strings ensure stable tuning. MSRP: \$679. {daisyrock.com}



BEHRINGER | VM1

Time Traveler

Behringer adds to its line of effects pedals with the new VM1 Vintage Time Machine. The VM1 delivers 550 milliseconds of true analog delay, producing the sound of tape echo machines popular in the 1970s. Flexible sound-shaping controls, including effect mix, feedback, delay time and switchable chorus/vibrato with variable depth, dial in a variety of classic sounds. MSRP: \$99.99. {behringer.com}



C.F. MARTIN & CO | FX FLEXIBLE CORE STRINGS

Silky Strings

C.F. Martin & Co. has added the MFX130 Custom Silk and Phosphor strings to its Martin FX Flexible Core acoustic string product line. Designed for comfort and playability, the MFX130 Custom Silk and Phosphor is built on round-core wire wrapped with a silk-nylon and finished with phosphor bronze wrap. The MFX130 strings are gauged to provide balanced volume and warm tones for accompaniment on stage or in the studio. {martinstrings.com}



GET'M GET'M WEAR |
CASANOVA GUITAR STRAPS

Italian Adventurer

Get'm Get'm Wear has introduced the Casanova line of guitar straps. Using quality fabrics, these five new straps are a combination of velvet with a classic floral design. Available in beige, black, bordeaux, brown, purple and teal, the Casanova line offers a sleek, universal look for jazz, country and rockers alike. Get'm Get'm Wear guitar straps are made in the United States, and a part of the company's proceeds goes to animal rescue.

{getmgetm.com}



CORE ONE | BULLET CABLE

Lucky Cables

For musicians who customize their rigs, Core One's new Bullet Cable connector and bulk cable line offers an easy-to-use, solderless system that creates signal integrity to match a musician's rock 'n' roll aesthetic.

The latest series of cables features 15 connector designs; six printed-graphic, sound-engineered cables sold in bulk; and classic black cables sold in lengths of up to 200 feet. MSRP: \$24.99–\$49.99.

{coreoneproduct.com}

G&L | SEMI-HOLLOW MODELS

Hollowed Out

G&L's three new semi-hollow models all feature swamp ash bodies, hard rock maple necks with rosewood or maple fingerboards, G&L dual fulcrum vibratos with chrome-plated brass saddles, and chrome hardware. The Legacy Semi-Hollow (pictured) sports three G&L vintage-style Alnico V single-coil pickups. All models include a hardshell case. {glguitars.com}



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SIERRA GUITARS |
CEDAR TOP MODELS

Sierra's New Day

Sierra Guitars' three new Sierra cedar-top guitar models each feature a satin-finished solid cedar top with natural wood bindings and soundhole inlays.

The Sunrise Auditorium acoustic-electric (pictured) is sized for playability and produces warm, balanced tones. It comes with

Barcus-Berry Realm III electronics with built-in tuners. MSRP: \$679.

{sierraguitars.net}



ROLLINS | CUTTER

Cutting Through

Rollins Guitar's new Cutter model is for advanced-beginner or intermediate players. A double cutaway electric, it features custom-wound dual humbucker pickups, a 24-fret set maple neck with rosewood fingerboard and a spring tremolo system. Other features include chrome die-cast precision tuning machines, an adjustable truss rod, a three-way pickup selector, and volume and tone controls. {rollinsguitar.com}



HIGHLAND GUITAR | TITAN GUITAR

Titan Unleashed

Highland Guitar's Titan Guitar is the new flagship model in the company's Electric Jazz Guitar series. The Highland Titan is crafted in a high-gloss, vintage fireburst finish over a quilted maple top, back and sides. It includes a custom wooden pickguard, rosewood volume and tone control knobs, and a rosewood floating tailpiece cover.

{highlandguitarcompany.com}



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SAVAGE AUDIO | SCHATTEN 19

Savage Simplicity

Savage Audio has released its Schatten 19 guitar amplifier. This all-tube, class A amplifier was inspired by The Shadows' guitarist Hank Marvin. The Schatten offers 19 watts of all-tube power from two EL84 tubes powered by a 6CA4 rectifier. With three knobs, players can easily shape volume and tone. This provides quick access to new tones. savageamps.com

AXL | FAULTLINE SERIES

Amplified Quake

AXL has released the Faultline series of bass amplifier heads and cabinets, offering a full range of tones from classic tube-style warmth to punchy modern brightness. Both the 400W (pictured) and 300W RMS heads feature a vintage/modern tone switch to replicate modern, brighter tones and darker, vintage ones. The 400W head includes separate gain and room balance controls that enable players to tailor their sounds to the sizes of rooms where they're playing.

Accompanying the heads is the Faultline 412 cabinet, which features 4- by 12-inch Alphonse speakers.

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DRUM WORKSHOP | PRACTICE PRO PAD

Conga Practice

Drummer and percussionist Daniel de los Reyes has teamed up with Drum Workshop to design the versatile Daniel de los Reyes Practice Pro pad.

Part of DW's Smart Practice Signature series, the Daniel de los Reyes pad is a portable conga workstation designed for easy transport. It gives musicians the ability to take their practice anywhere, from the park to backstage.

{dwdrums.com}



LUDWIG | COREY MILLER SIGNATURE KIT

Signature Ink

Ludwig's new, special-edition Corey Miller Signature Element drum kits feature designs by the renowned tattoo artist and drummer. Miller's signature use of black and gray custom graphics have been set against a background of pre-aged White Marine Pearloid wrap. The kit is finished in black electroplated hardware. The production kit is also the first from Ludwig to feature a 22- by 22-inch bass drum.

{ludwig-drums.com}



PRO-MARK | TS8 VEGA TENOR

Blue Devils

Pro-Mark's new System Blue TS8 was designed by Concord Blue Devils tenor Sean Vega to have the feel of a snare stick and sound of a tenor mallet. MSRP: \$17.95.

{promark.com}





VIC FIRTH | AMERICAN CLASSIC 5A, 5B

Paint It Black

Vic Firth's American Classic 5A and 5B sticks are now available with a specially formulated black finish. The tips have a clear finish to keep heads and cymbals clean. MSRP: \$14.50. vicfirth.com



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MAJESTIC | M8650H

Stage Presence

Majestic's new M8650H five-octave professional marimba is the flagship model of the company's concert mallet series. It features Honduran rosewood bars with a padauk wood frame and tunable low-end resonators. The new concert leg system has hand cranks mounted higher for easy height adjustment. jupitermusic.com



YAMAHA | BERLIN SYMPHONIC SNARES

Berlin's Snare

Yamaha's new Berlin Symphonic series concert snares were designed with Franz Schindlbeck of the Berlin Philharmonic. The BSM-1450 is available in a 14- by 5-inch size and the BSM-1465 in a 14- by 6.5-inch size. MSRP: BSM-1450, \$1,122; BSM-1465, \$1,146. yamaha.com

GROVER | T2/HS HYBRID

Hybrid Bells

Grover Pro's new T2/HS model hybrid tambourine now has resonant German silver jingles and a row of Grover's new heat-treated silver jingles. This combination results in a tambourine that's resonant and dry, as well as articulate and sensitive. It also features dual-width jingle slots, a double-mounted white skin head, a staggered-jingle slot configuration, a captive pin system and hand-hammered jingles.

groverpro.com



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PIANOS & KEYBOARDS



KAWAI | ES6

Portable Grand

Kawai's new ES6 portable digital piano uses the latest version of Harmonic Imaging sound technology to produce a realistic and expressive concert grand piano sound. Now featuring 88-note piano sampling, the ES6 offers more than 30 other sounds and lets users combine any two together in a dual or split mode. The ES6 also features 100 accompaniment styles. kawaius.com

YAMAHA | CLP300 SERIES

Learn on Demand



Yamaha has launched the Clavinova CLP300 digital piano series. The CLPS306 (pictured) and CLPS308 include a LAN port for connecting to the Internet, allowing for radio piano streaming. The LAN connection gives users access to Yamaha's Exercise On Demand program, a collection of learning exercises for keyboard, and player's guides to compositions by Czerny, Beyer, Bach and more. MSRP: starts at \$1,795.

yamaha.com



QRS | FATS WALLER PIANOMATION

Fats on Keys

QRS has released the *Ain't Misbehavin' And Other Fats Waller Hits* Pianomation CD, featuring piano selections played by Fats Waller himself and other artists. The tunes are derived from the archives of Waller's original performances recorded on player piano rolls, which were then converted into player piano CDs that convey his full range of expression. The release of the CD coincides with the 30th anniversary of the Broadway musical, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, and the show's revival last fall. qrsmusic.com

ROLAND | JUNO STAGE SYNTHESIZER

Streaming Juno

Roland has created its new Juno Stage series synthesizer especially for streaming a player's live performances. The 76-key synth incorporates stage-friendly features, such as simple split and layer functions, separate reverb and EQ knobs, an intuitive top panel, and a favorite function selection. MSRP: \$1,599. rolandus.com





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STAGELINE | WOODEN DESK STANDS

Stand Out

Stageline has expanded its offerings to include desktop wooden music stands. The desktop version of the wooden desk stand features European craftsmanship and comes in



a variety of size and finish options. The 14- by 10-inch DS10BK and the larger, 20- by 13-inch DS15BK are available in black or cherry finishes. MSRP: DS10BK, \$109; DS15BK, \$125.

{stageline
stands.com}



KEITH MCMILLEN | STRINGPORT

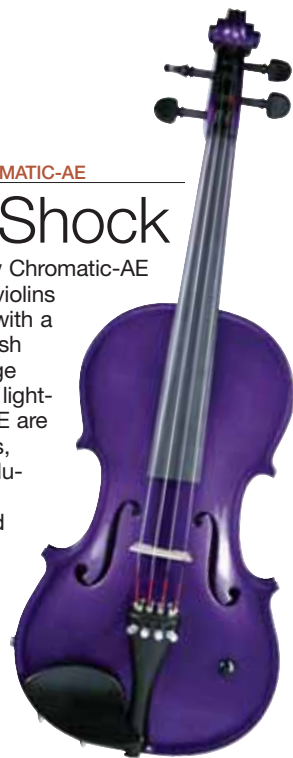
String Theory

Keith McMillen Instruments has introduced the StringPort, a polyphonic string-to-USB 2.0 converter coupled with a software suite. StringPort avoids the limitations of MIDI technology for stringed instruments by bringing each string's actual sound into the computer as an audio signal. Included software then extracts a string's sonic properties with low latency and high resolution. The resulting data is used to control software synthesis with intimacy and expressivity. MSRP: \$499. {keithmcmillen.com}

BARCUS-BERRY | CHROMATIC-AE

Electric Shock

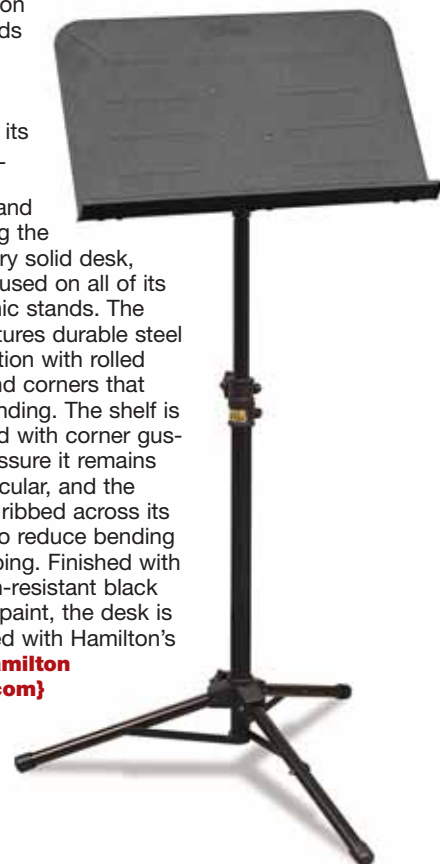
Barcus-Berry's new Chromatic-AE electric-acoustic violins have been designed with a metallic iridescent finish that appears to change colors under different lighting. The Chromatic-AE are traditional-style violins, fully carved from graduated select seasoned Carpathian maple and spruce wood with ebony fittings. They come in amethyst (pictured), emerald and copper color finishes. {barcusberry.com}



HAMILTON | KB990BL

Major Reinforcements

Hamilton Stands recently made improvements to its KB990BL portable music stand by adding the proprietary solid desk, which is used on all of its symphonic stands. The desk features durable steel construction with rolled edges and corners that resist bending. The shelf is reinforced with corner gussets to assure it remains perpendicular, and the platen is ribbed across its surface to reduce bending and warping. Finished with a scratch-resistant black textured paint, the desk is embossed with Hamilton's logo. {hamiltonstands.com}



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WAVES | '21ST CENTURY GUITARIST'

Enter the 21st Century

Waves Audio and Sound.org have released a new OpenMix interactive DVD and eBook, *21st Century Guitarist: Playing & Recording Guitar With Waves GTR*. The DVD provides a guide to GTR Solo, Waves' collection of modeled virtual amps, cabs and effects. Music expert Craig Anderton discusses creating a virtual effects rack and choosing the perfect mic and cabinet. wavesgtr.com

HUDSON MUSIC | 'MESSIN' WID DA BULL'

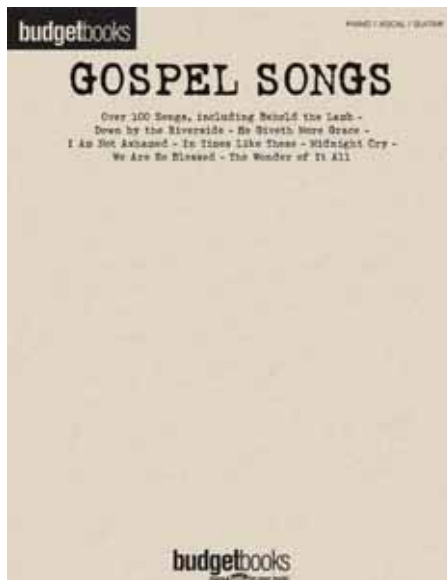
Messin' Around

Messin' Wid Da Bull is the second book and play-along CD in Hudson Music's Turn It Up & Lay It Down series. The play-along package features 13 original compositions and professionally recorded tracks — minus drums — that pay homage to 1970s bands, such as Tower of Power; Earth, Wind & Fire; and Average White Band. Drummer Jeff Salem presents easy, intermediate and advanced suggestions on funk-style grooves, fills and setting up horn figures. The book also has access codes to

Hudson's Web site where players can hear Salem demonstrate grooves and fills from the book. MSRP:

\$24.95. hudsonmusic.com

hudsonmusic.com



HAL LEONARD | BUDGET BOOKS SERIES

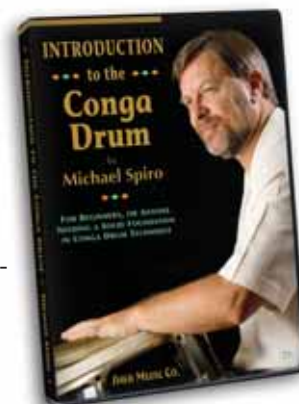
Fits the Budget

Hal Leonard first released its Budget Books series at NAMM in 2002. This year, the series is back. This collection of 20 songbooks is priced to help retailers and players weather the tough economic times. Each book in the collection averages 350 pages and features a best-of selection of songs from each genre. Some of the key titles include *Jazz Standards*, *Love Songs*, *Christmas Songs* and *Gospel Songs* (pictured). A select number of Budget Books are also available in easy piano editions. MSRP: \$12.95. halleonard.com

SHER MUSIC | 'INTRODUCTION TO THE CONGA DRUM'

Do That Conga

Sher Music's new instructional DVD, *Introduction To The Conga Drum*, provides a solid foundation in conga drum technique. Hosted by Michael Spiro, the DVD explains step-by-step how to execute the six fundamental strokes on the conga drum. The second part of the DVD provides students with exercises to combine these basic sounds into usable patterns and shows how the fundamentals are used in important Afro-Cuban rhythms. MSRP: \$25. shermusic.com



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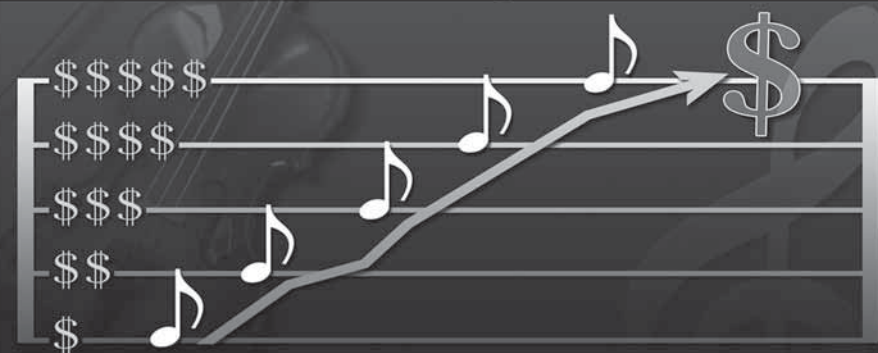
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>>>

Eddie Hancock

Alpha Music
Virginia Beach, Va.

Business was brisk. It was on track with last year, which I think is a victory in itself. We ended up with about the same numbers we did last year, so I'm very happy about that.

We do have an online flier, and our e-commerce site was promoting certain things here and there. We didn't experience [Cyber Monday], but we anticipated that because our online site is relatively young. I think we are bringing a great site to market. We have a lot of great SKUs and great presentation, but in-store [traffic] was where it was at.

On the local level, with just store reputation alone, we had excellent crowds. We attributed a lot of our traffic to our 900-plus students. We also had a special students-only sale and a lot of things going on to create the right environment that's conducive to sales.

After our big weekend, things have cooled down, and traffic is lighter than last year, but the people are coming in and buying — not a lot of tire-kickers. But it's a challenge to come up with all types of [holiday] promotions and events. We take the old throw-a-ton-of-stuff-against-a-wall-and-see-what-sticks mentality to generate that business.

It's a challenging time, but we are extremely proactive, very optimistic, but very cautious in planning. The rules change. It's a dynamic business, it changes everyday. If you're not changing, you're dying.

>>>

David Zimet

Hickey's Music Center
Ithaca, N.Y.

I've never experienced a Black Friday in our store. The bulk of the Black Friday shoppers go to the mall. Business is up a little bit, but we've never worried about Black Friday.

Internet business was up a little bit on Monday. We've all felt the pinch from the economy. We're just trying to have a good mix of stuff for people at different price points.

We're in a college town, so our local economy is not as devastated as some other places. But there are definitely people that are hurting.



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Carl Hix

Hix Bros. Music
Aurora, Ill.

Did you experience a **Black Friday** or a **Cyber Monday**?

I guess we did have a Black Friday. It's funny:

Other than retailers, people didn't use that term until recently. If I'm not mistaken, Black Friday refers to the point in a year where retailers are operating in the black. It's strange to me because it has always been used in the industry or as a retailer's term. Now, people are coming in and saying, "Do you have any Black Friday sales?"

We didn't promote [that weekend] as a Black Friday, but people were coming in and checking out our sales. We had extra discounts on items

and gave away sticks with drum set [purchases].

Most customers were in looking for the sales and the bargains. We are right near a mall, so people see our building as they come out of the mall. That definitely helps.

Sometimes that weekend we have had lines. This year, nobody was here right at 6 a.m. because we were in the middle of a snowstorm, but within five or 10 minutes, the store was full.

We did a student-only sale for a couple hours in the evening on the Sunday after Thanksgiving. We had sent out a Santa's list

with our students, which they could fill out and give to their parents. The parents come in with this list and say, "Where do I get this?" So for a couple of hours after we had already closed, we reopened the doors and [the parents] came in. We served them punch and cookies. They got a little extra discount if they came in that day.

When we do this, people will be coming in later in the week saying, "I couldn't make it that weekend because of family commitments. Can I still get a good deal?" We try to help them out.

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