

FOR PROGRESSIVE MUSIC RETAILERS

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MAY 2009 | MUSICINCMAG.COM

RETAIL FIRST AID



Four financial strategies to help music retailers survive the uncertain economy **{PAGE 46}**

+ PLUS:**Profiting From Music Lessons**

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Digital Print Music 2.0 **{PAGE 86}**

Gamber on Creating an Economic Safe Haven **{PAGE 40}**

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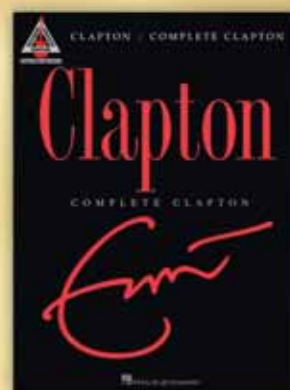
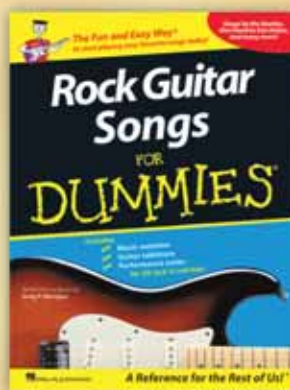
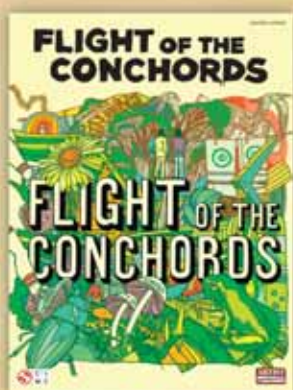
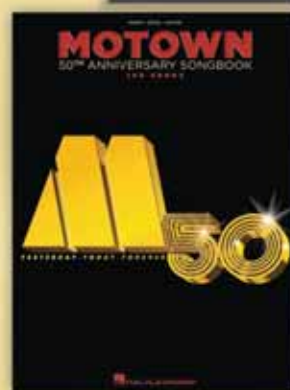
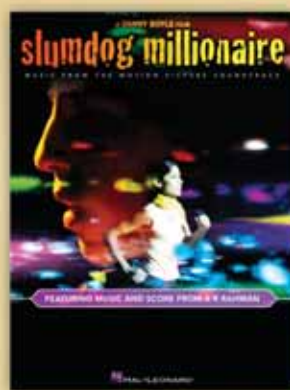
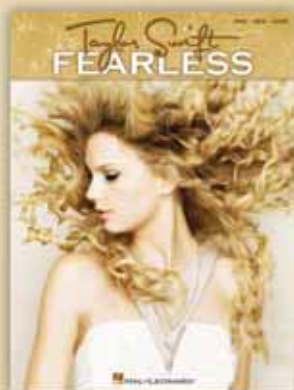
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Matt Frazier

A man with curly hair is playing a 12-string acoustic guitar. The guitar has a light-colored body with a dark pickguard and a headstock with the 'SIERRA' logo. He is wearing a white t-shirt and blue jeans. The background is dark and out of focus.

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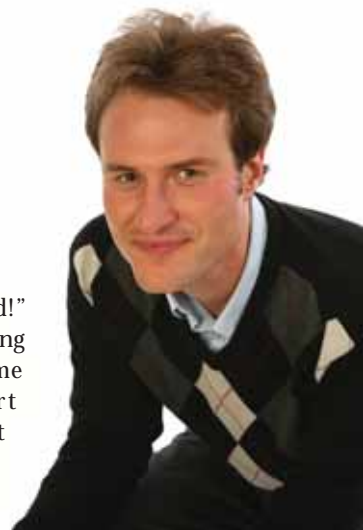
PERSPECTIVE

PERSPECTIVE | BY ZACH PHILLIPS

MAP IS GOOD, PERIOD

"Without MAP, we're dead!" Those words still ring in my ears. They came from Rusty Kephart two years ago. Kephart

— president of Kephart's Music Center, a respected indie music retailer based in Decorah, Iowa — was responding to the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) just-declared clampdown on NAMM and several music product companies for allegedly sharing competitive price information. And he was scared.



Turns out he had good reason to be. The FTC's ensuing investigation cost NAMM and several industry companies millions in legal fees. What a waste. Music retail has felt the economy's devastating crush. Dealers and suppliers alike need all the money and resources they can get to keep the music products industry running, much less expanding. I can only hope NAMM's recent settlement with the FTC (see page 30) will put this debacle behind us.

Luckily, MAP (minimum advertised price) policies have not been outlawed, despite scrutiny from the FTC. Still, you can bet MAP will never be discussed during public forums at NAMM shows or industry association meetings again. Among the many effects of the FTC investigation was an unspoken gag rule on MAP.

This is a shame. I realize MAP policies aren't perfect. Sometimes, they're not enforced, and many argue the prices are set too low to begin with. MAP certainly makes it tough to blow out those overstocked plaid guitars. But for now, MAP is the best recourse the industry has for leveling the retail playing field in an online world. It lets high-service retailers, who rely on larger profit margins than discount sellers, compete and focus on service — rather than struggle to make each sale at near cost. And ultimately, that's good for consumers.

Herein lies the greatest irony of the FTC's investigation. In an effort to save the music products industry from itself, the FTC indirectly threatened one of the industry's few safeguards for ensuring quality products for consumers: MAP. As Kephart said, take away MAP and many service-oriented retailers die. Take away service-oriented retailers, and low prices mean nothing. After all, what good are low prices if there's no one around to fix and service the instruments or teach people how to play them?

And while MAP is now taboo to talk about in public, rest assured: *Music Inc.* will continue to discuss and report on MAP policies. A free press is protected by the Constitution to write about the issues of the day.

At press time, the FTC had not officially called off its investigation. Here's hoping that by the time you read this it has found a more productive use of its time and, not least of all, taxpayer's hard-earned dollars. **MI**

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Co-Op Criteria

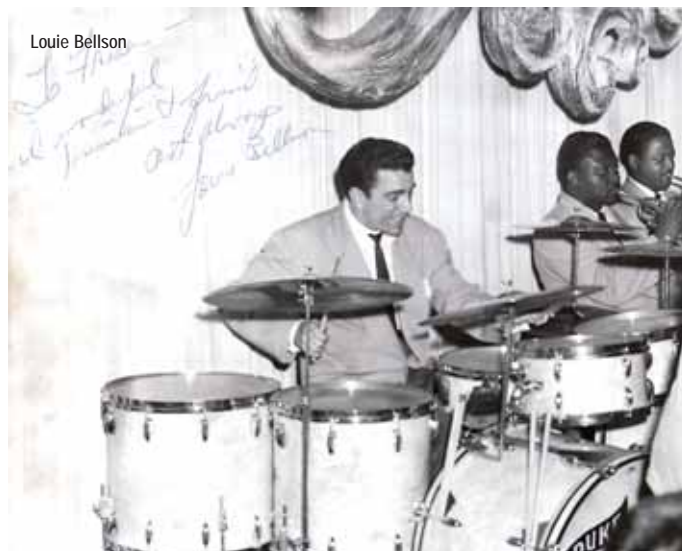
When Danny Rocks and Alan Friedman solicited me for their "25 Ways to Improve Your Business — NOW!" session to be presented during The NAMM Show in Anaheim, Calif., I sent along a promotion that worked for us last year. As I was writing it up, I thought, "Wouldn't it be nice if we could suggest some best ideas for the supply side of the industry?"

I remembered a conversation my colleague Paul Finke and I have had many times. There will be many suppliers and retailers that will debate the use of the word "best," so let's just call it a "new" idea.

We know it is an outside-of-the-box idea, but what better time to consider change than at the beginning of a new year in the midst of a wave of economic challenges?

We would like to see the supply side of the industry change the way it structures its discounts and spends its targeted co-op marketing dollars to include another criteria. Currently, everything seems to be based on volume. This can be discussed ad nauseam, but our company's size and my experience has not shown me anything to the contrary.

Our idea is that music retailers should be given significant consideration in the same areas of discounts and co-op marketing money based on the number of students they teach to make music. This would benefit everyone in the industry. The instruments sold would actually be played. What a novel idea. Teaching programs are not easy to administer, nor are they very profitable unless they are tied to musical instru-



*'Everyone at
Gretsch is
proud to have
been a part of
Louie Bellson's
history.'
— Fred Gretsch*

ment purchases. We need to level the playing field for the dealers that sow the seeds for the industry's future growth.

We have seen what the mass merchandising of portable keyboards has done to the acoustic piano market and even the high-end digital piano market. They were faltering long before the economic downturn. If our industry follows the same strategy with guitars and drums, why would we not expect the same results?

My father always said that most people do not learn from their own mistakes or the mistakes of others. Smart people learn from their own mistakes,

but the real genius is the one that learns from other people's mistakes. Short-term profit never trumps long-term growth. The next generation is not going to buy its 12th guitar if it does not learn to play the first one.

*Dan Herbert
Willis Music
Florence, Ky.*

Gretsch Honors Bellson

With the passing of Louie Bellson, drumming has lost a genuine innovator. Drummers around the world have lost a sweet and gentle man who was at once an icon and a comrade. And the Gretsch family has lost a cherished friend.

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Louie's vision a reality.

Everyone at Gretsch is proud to have been a part of Louie Bellson's history. We mourn his passing, and our hearts go out to Francine Bellson and the rest of Louie's family. But at the same time, we join drummers everywhere in celebrating Louie's greatness, as well as his unparalleled contribution to the art of drumming.

*Fred Gretsch
President
The Gretsch Co.*

Godin Remembers Buster Jones

It is with great regret and a sincere feeling of loss to friends, family and the musical community that we say goodbye to guitarist Buster Jones who passed away on Feb. 2. To some, he was known as "Machine Gun" or "Pistola" for his lightning-fast playing style, but to all those who were fortunate enough to have personally known him, he was simply the warm-hearted Buster.

We first met Buster at the Nashville NAMM show in 1994 and were blown away by his playing and Southern charm. By the January NAMM show in 1995, Buster had become a full member of the Godin family. Buster became a dear friend to all of us at Godin, and we will miss him immensely.

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Ninja92: how come?

Outl4w: my new Dixon Demon kit is coming in and gotta be home to get the delivery

Ninja92: WHAT?!

Outl4w: LOL yeah I got a REAL kit. its friggin sweet too.

Ninja92: OK screw it...we're coming to your place instead

Outl4w: ok, but you can leave the plastic guitars at home ROFL! 😂



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RETAIL



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MUSIC AUTHORITY | BY ZACH PHILLIPS

THE LESSONS AUTHORITY

Music Authority's retail sales have slipped 20–45 percent monthly since the economy took a nosedive last year. Melissa Loggins, co-owner of the Cumming, Ga., full-line dealership, is daunted by the downward trend — but only to a point. Her store's music lessons program skyrocketed from 377 to nearly 500 students during the past 14 months. And she expects it to keep growing.

"For us, right now, lessons are floating the business," she said.

Loggins called her lesson program "a profit center" in itself, a service that not only covers overhead but offsets underperforming segments, such as retail. Her challenge now is controlling that growth with limited resources.

"The downside is in better times I was able to take our extra money and improve studios," she said. "The upside is we're still here, and we'll make it through."

THE PRIVATE SCHOOL MODEL

Music Authority's success hasn't come by happenstance. When Loggins and her husband, Andrew, purchased the business four years ago, they decided to invest in creating a structured yet fun curriculum. Their first step: contacting



Melissa Loggins

Music Authority
is riding out
the recession
with a growing
education
division

teacher organizations, such as Music Teachers National Association, and creating a list of qualities that colleges sought

in freshmen music students.

"We took the model of a private school, and we tried to apply it to our music program," she said.

"Our kids come in for a 30-minute lesson, and they're going to have a book. It's not optional. They're going to learn how to read music, and I mean standard notation, not just tablature.

"[Students] also learn how to work with other kids. Because the other thing we ran across is we might have a really

great guitar player, but you throw him in with a piano player, and they can't communicate with each other."

Music Authority attracts world-class teachers, in part, by paying them \$25.50 an hour. The store keeps the remaining \$12.50. (Private lessons cost \$19 per half-hour if paid with cash or check and \$20 if paid with plastic.) One teacher even relocated from Buffalo, N.Y., to the Atlanta area to work there. All teachers are required to have post-secondary education in music — the equivalent of finishing sophomore year in college.

Right now, Loggins said she has a stack of teacher resumes an inch thick on her desk.

REFERRAL BUSINESS

Music Authority doesn't advertise. Loggins estimated 95 percent of her new lesson sign-ups come via referrals from existing students. Still, the company works hard to keep current students satisfied and enthusiastic about music. Every summer, it hosts rock camps, which Loggins called "a huge thing." This year, it's launching a girls-only rock camp. An in-house recording studio also gives students the opportunity to tape themselves. Students in upper-level classes are required to use the



Andrew Loggins

space to cut a full-length album.

Free monthly student jam nights generate tons of goodwill. All students are invited, everyone gets a chance to play, and all are encouraged to bring friends. Teachers are required to volunteer once a month to host a ses-

sion — part of the reason for their higher compensation.

Loggins cited the jam nights as one of the company's single most effective tools for generating lesson sign-ups. "It's two hours, and we book two instructors to sit with them. It's a safe

place. The parents are really comfortable with it. And the kids think we're the coolest people in the world because they get to hang out with their teacher for two hours and jam."

Music Authority has also started hosting student field trips. Last summer, it took students to Virginia to teach them about colonial music and visit the Gadow Guitars factory. And the trip resulted in an unexpected boon: local press. "The newspaper covered it," Loggins said. "It wasn't paid advertising. People were like, 'Wow. Your store does stuff like that?'"

RECESSION PAINS

When Loggins and her husband returned from a two-day vacation this past January, she found 152 hand-

written messages on her desk. She's currently the only person running the education department and needs more staff, even a person to help her two days a week. But she said she's reluctant to hire in a recession.

"There's a point where I can't take any more students," she said. "And I can't do marketing when all I'm doing is taking care of students."

In the meantime, Loggins, like many music retailers, will have to work harder and longer hours until consumer confidence picks up. Not that she's complaining.

"I'm tickled to death because we're here, we're doing well and we keep gaining students," she said. "I never expected this. I'm just happy we're here and able to survive." **MI**

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AUDIX DEALERS SAY WHAT?

"I love Audix because my net is so much better than the competition and the sound is superior. It's like shooting fish in a barrel; after all these years I still love to see the customer's faces when they hear the difference between the OM2 and the other guys."

Jim Pinkston Music, Gulfport, MS

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



"Audix has been our go-to mic for over 10 years now and they've definitely helped us grow our mic business. Not only are the products great, profitable, and trouble free but the company always gives us fast, friendly service."

Sticks n Strings, Tuscon, AZ

Pictured: Chip Schnarr, Dan Hartman, Brandon Neumaier, Kane Flint, Justin Bernard, Tony Bernard



"For years we have recommended Audix OM microphones for their unsurpassed performance, exceptional gain before feedback, and rock solid durability. All I have to do is let a client try one and they're sold!"

Stage Sound, Roanoke, VA

Pictured: Don Clifton, Paul Thompson, Jeff Moore, John Thompson, Doug Thurman



"For 20 years Audix has consistently provided us with great products, great service, and great margins. We love the stuff!"

Gelb Music, Redwood City, CA

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



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S & K MUSIC STUDIO | BY JENNY DOMINE

COMMUNITY OF ROCK

Snake and Karen Rock, co-owners of S & K Music Studio in Las Vegas, understand the meaning of financial crisis.

In December 2006, they had the last remaining storefront in an empty shopping center. They had legal troubles with the landlord and no money. So they held a rally for customers and employees to announce they were closing the studio. The crowd wouldn't hear of it.

"These people didn't want to see it go away," Snake said.

During the next eight months, with the help of volunteers and the support of MusiCares, a program that provides assistance to musicians with a financial or medical crisis, the Rocks moved a half mile down the road to a new, 4,000-square-foot retail space in a thriving shopping center. During the new store's renovation, friends and customers raised funds, worked construction, painted interiors, and donated furniture and computers.

"They even fed us," Snake said. "People literally gave us grocery money and gift cards."

The Rocks held their grand opening on Aug. 8, 2008. They are currently finishing an in-house recording studio.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

According to Snake and Karen, the source of this community support originated from their early days in 2002 when Snake taught lessons out of their home. Karen, with her business background, and Snake, a professional musician,

partnered with charities and businesses that resonated with their family-focused mission.

Snake once recorded an original song that was sold during a fundraiser for the Las Vegas police department. He and Karen have sent students into hospitals as strolling minstrels and sponsored pet-adoption fundraisers. And the Rocks' charitable efforts became a two-way street in their time of need.

These days, they continue to build a sense of community for students and their families by holding regularly scheduled events, such as open mic nights and student concerts. They also host a monthly rare rock movie night featuring concert footage of The Who, Led Zeppelin and The Rolling Stones, complete with popcorn and candy.

"Karen devised a screen that rolls down," Snake said. "We crank [the sound] through our P.A. system. It's really cool."

They've started renting out their waiting room to yoga and meditation classes and sell classified space to local businesses on their Web site and in their student newsletter, "Noteworthy." The newsletter keeps what Karen calls the "S & K Family" connected. It announces student-of-the-month awards, birthdays, workshops and event updates.

THE FAMILY THAT ROCKS

All the family-friendly activities, a comfy sitting area with couches and a café help balance S & K's other vibe as a pure rock 'n' roll shop with a hard-rockin' lesson program



Photo by Jautch Padilla

S & K voice instructor Frank DiMino (left) and owner Snake Rock

Creativity and community bring S & K Music Studio back from the brink

that offers guitar, bass, drum, piano and voice instruction. All the instructors have professional rock resumes with the looks and names to match.

"We walk a fine line with that," said Snake of the shop's rock atmosphere. "We are very careful to keep it a safe environment. Parents have to be comfortable for their kids to be taught by a guy named Snake."

All 12 of S & K's instructors are required to have Nevada state and FBI background checks.

"Sometimes it makes the difference between a sign-on or not," Snake said. "It

clinches it because [parents] know we're going to make sure their kids are safe."

Each instructor has a large lesson studio. These range in size from 7 by 7 feet to 10 by 7 feet to accommodate two drum kits. The rooms are decorated with the instructor's personal decor, showcasing their music careers.

Snake filled his teaching space with his collection of Beatles memorabilia.

"We don't want it to be the standard, sterile, 4- by 4-foot white room," Karen said.

"I went through that as a kid," said Snake, recalling his earliest guitar lessons. "This is not your traditional music lesson. We make it really fun."

CREATIVE COLLECTIONS

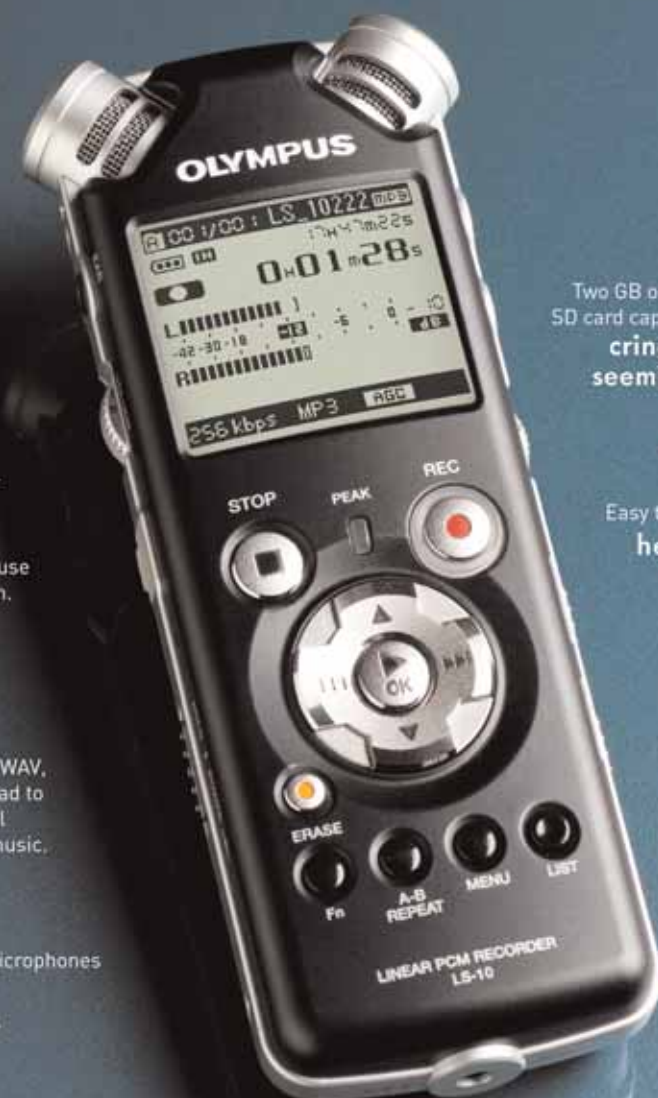
While listening to an Idea Center session at the recent NAMM convention, inspiration struck the Rocks on how to apply their creativity to collections.

Using the built-in camera on a donated laptop and the help of a former-student-turned-employee, Snake produced a fun, musical commercial. He plays The Beatles' "Blackbird," while his employee laments the challenges of collecting on past-due accounts. Snake suggests that she simply ask late customers to pay. The commercial was distributed via e-mail.

"There is never an easy way to go about [collections] at times of recession," Snake said. "At first, we had just a handful [of responses], but then they came in droves the week after that. Now we're using [commercials] to promote our events." **MI**

DESIGNED FOR MUSICIANS

BY ENGINEERS WHO WISH THEY WERE MUSICIANS.



If a singer's backstage request for **39 green M&Ms** isn't properly fulfilled, the tough aluminum case withstands the abuse from an epic temper tantrum.

For bands with **massive egos**, the choice to record in either WAV, MP3 or WMA formats may lead to heavy creative tension. Ideal circumstances for making music.

Sensitive condenser microphones pick up everything.
Even angst.

Two GB of on-board memory plus an SD card capture many spotlight-hogging, **cringe-inducing, seemingly endless solos.**

Easy to operate so **even heavymetal drummers** will quickly figure it out.

For musicians craving **instant gratification** — and have you ever known one that didn't — there are two stereo speakers.

OLYMPUS

The **Olympus LS-10** linear PCM recorder is full of features your customers will love. Call the Musical Distributors Group at 973-335-7888 or visit www.musicaldistributors.com to place an order.

getolympus.com/audio

AWARDS

Leenman Honored

Tracy Leenman (pictured, middle, with local band directors), CEO of music retail consulting firm Musical Innovations, received the South Carolina Music Educators Association's Friend of Music Business Award. It was given to her at the organization's In-Service Convention in Charleston, S.C., in February. The annual award recognizes a member of the business community who has shown exemplary support for local music education programs.



SALES

Beyond Forecasts

Music & Arts has reported that, despite the current recession, its top-line sales and earnings for 2008 exceeded company forecasts. It also recently recognized exceptional employees with its Peak Performer Award. Peak Performer finalists included Kelly Capobianco and Amanda Schoemer.

CLOSING

Jent's Shuts Down Amarillo Location

Jent's House of Music recently closed its Amarillo, Texas, store to cut overhead costs. Owner Karen Jent said the "last year has been a real struggle," according to a local Fox affiliate. On March 21, a benefit concert was held for the Lubbock, Texas-based company.

GEAR

API-Equipped

Dale Pro Audio in New York began carrying the API and Arsenal Audio by API products lines this past February.

"API represents one of the greatest values in the industry today and will form the cornerstone of our out-board sales," said Ken Patnaude, vice president of sales and marketing for Dale. "Put simply, our customers want gear that sounds fantastic, that will last a long, long time and that is priced fairly. All are so true of API products."



From left: Chuck Leavell, Jackson's Music's Charlotte Dryden, Sonny Emory and Jackson's Music's Doug Dryden



JACKSON'S MUSIC | EXPANSION

JACKSON'S OPENS IN BUFORD

Georgia-based Jackson's Music recently opened a new location in Buford. The store joins the company's existing locations in Riverdale and Douglasville, Ga., and Winston-Salem, N.C.

Founded in 1958, Jackson's Music is a full-line store. It carries band instruments, guitars, amps, live

sound equipment, drums, recording equipment and accessories. It also has a band rental business and offers music lessons and repairs.

Yamaha artists Sonny Emory and Chuck Leavell stopped by the Buford store to celebrate its grand opening. Jackson's Music has been a Yamaha dealer for 30 years.

QUINLAN & FABISH, BLESSING MUSIC | MERGER

Q&F, Blessing Unite

Quinlan & Fabish Music and Blessing Music finalized an agreement to unite their two school music dealerships in March.

Quinlan & Fabish is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year and operates four stores in the Chicago area, including Burr Ridge, Mount Prospect and Montgomery, Ill., as well as Valparaiso, Ind. Blessing's origins date back to 1915, and it has four stores. They're located in Elkhart, Fort Wayne and South Bend, Ind., as well as Stevensville, Mich.

Six years ago, Quinlan & Fabish merged with Paxton Music in Valparaiso to expand its presence in Indiana. John Shaffer, former Paxton owner, has now been named regional manager for the expanded Michigan and Indiana region. With the addition of six veteran school representatives from Blessing, the Quinlan & Fabish team has expanded to 20 total



From left: Blessing Music's Doug Mills, Quinlan & Fabish's George Quinlan Jr. and George Quinlan Sr., and Blessing Music's Yvonne Miller-Sells and Paul Milliman

reps covering schools in four states. Most of Blessing's key personnel will continue with the new operation.

"We are so fortunate to have strong and stable school music programs throughout our market areas," said George Quinlan Jr., president of Quinlan & Fabish.

"The culture of our companies is so similar, I'm positive this will be a great fit," said Paul Milliman, president of Blessing Music. "We are excited about the synergy when our strengths are combined."

ALL COUNTY MUSIC | EDUCATION

Music Lesson of a Lifetime

All County Music of Tamarac, Fla., hosted trombonist Tom “Bones” Malone this past holiday season to give customers an educational opportunity they couldn’t get anywhere else. Customers who purchased a Bach trumpet or trombone got a one-on-one lesson with Malone for an extra \$175. Malone plays trombone with the “Late Show With David Letterman” band.

All County branded the promotion “The Lesson of a Lifetime.” While at the dealership, Malone offered a master class to students at nearby Coral Springs High School.



Tom ‘Bones’ Malone (left) talks shop with All County’s Mark Adams after Malone’s master class

After the lessons, he posed for photos and signed autographs.

“The idea was for parents to

be able to give their child a gift that couldn’t be purchased anywhere else and for that musi-

cian to have lifelong memories of the event,” said All County President Fred Schiff. “You just can’t arrive at the ‘Late Show With David Letterman’ and say you want a private lesson with one of the world’s premier recording artists. So we thought out of the comfort zone and, with cooperation from Conn-Selmer, brought Tom in for this day of lessons. Tom had done clinic work with us before. He is great with the kids and understands the education piece. It’s a pleasure to host his events.”

All County’s service department also worked on Malone’s vintage Bach trombone.

Supercharge your Guitar
And take your **Guitar** to the next level.

Simply put, there is a lot of unused potential in your guitar tone and ultimately your guitar performance. The Resomax™ Harmonic Bridge System and Black TUSQ® XL nut in our Tune-o-Matic Supercharger Kit are specifically designed to unlock the hidden harmonics and tone in your guitar. Great tone is all about harmonics. Get improved tuning performance, reduced string breakage, and have every note dripping with tone. Kits for many other popular guitars available.

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Vintage Emperor® A reissue of the original 1960's Emperor® drumhead that contributed to some of the most memorable drum sounds in history! Two plies of 7.5-mil polyester films feature pronounced mid and low frequencies with controlled highs while maintaining the volume and resonance that's made Remo the #1 drumhead for over 50 years. Vintage Reinvented. Available Now!

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CLOSING

Mountain Closes

Mountain Music Shoppe of Shawnee, Kan., closed its doors permanently in January due to tax problems. According to a report in *The Shawnee*



Dispatch, Mountain Music Shoppe's owner Jim Curley (pictured) said his company's assets were seized because he was late paying certain taxes. The dealership had sold vintage and bluegrass instruments and housed The Parlor, a live music venue.

EVENTS



GC Demos

JamVox

Guitar Center locations in New York and Los Angeles invited musicians to demo

Vox Amplification's JamVox guitar amp modeling software on Feb. 28. Vox staff was on hand at both stores to answer questions.

LINES

Lowrey Adds Four

Lowrey added four music dealerships between January and February. They include Absolute Music in Fairborn and Miamisburg, Ohio; Crutcher Pianos in Chattanooga, Tenn.; Solich Piano in Boardman, Ohio; and Moore Music & Sons in Bend, Ore. According to a statement from Lowrey, the dealers were added as a result of the company's latest marketing campaign, "Think Big, Think Rich."

CLINICS



Gospel of Ritmüller

R. Kassman of Berkeley, Calif., hosted members of the Bay Area Piano Technicians Guild on

Jan. 30 to teach them about the Ritmüller piano line. The session, conducted by piano designer Lothar Thomma, featured a question-and-answer period for nearly one hour. Afterwards, attendees had dinner and listened to live piano music.



Outside Sides' new Wilkes-Barre store; inset: inside the new B&O (left) and piano departments



ROBERT M. SIDES FAMILY MUSIC CENTER | VENUES

SIDES RELOCATES WILKES-BARRE

Robert M. Sides Family Music Center has used the economic downturn to its advantage. The company moved its Wilkes-Barre, Pa., store to a larger location a half mile down the road in late February, with an official opening on Feb. 28. And according to Peter Sides, the company's COO, the timing worked in Sides Music's favor.

"Everyone just assumes that you're closing for good once you start packing up," he said. "However, our negotiations for the lease got much better as time went

on. Rents came down once the bad economic news started hitting in September to the tune of about 30 percent. Contractors and subs were eager to get the business and bid aggressively."

At 5,000 square feet, the new Wilkes-Barre location is 1,800 square feet larger than the previous store, with four times as much space for music lessons. Sides said the new spot is in a more commercial area, with a Wal-Mart and Wegmans, a regional supermarket, across the street.

FULL COMPASS | CONTEST

PRAISEWORTHY PRIZE

At the Worship Facilities Conference & Expo in Houston this past November, Full Compass' exhibit represented a full worship experience, featuring a stage with equipment from many of the company's vendors. In the spirit of the convention, attendees could register to take home the entire package — a contest titled "The BIG Giveaway." Chris Chapel of Graceview Baptist Church in Tomball, Texas, was the winner. His church received all \$60,000 worth of the equipment, which was donated by Full Compass' vendors.



A youth choir at Graceview Baptist Church

ALTO MUSIC | EXPANSION

Alto Music Expands N.Y. Audio Business

Alto Music is currently renovating its flagship Middletown, N.Y., store and relocating its Manhattan showroom. The moves were initiated to improve the com-

pany's pro audio business.

Alto will install a fully operational control and live room in its 30,000-square-foot Middletown location to let clients demo audio and record-

ing gear in a real-world environment. The room removes customers from the hustle and bustle of a typical shopping environment.

The company's new

Manhattan showroom will be located in Midtown. As with the Middletown store's audio department, the New York City showroom will feature a state-of-the-art studio.



CASSELL'S MUSIC | PROMOTION

Preschool 'Field Trips'

For the 18th year in a row, Cassell's Music of San Fernando, Calif., hosted six preschool field trips at its store in February. The events aimed to expose kids to the joys of making music, according to store owner Ed Intagliata. Preschoolers and their parents were invited.

Cassell's seeds its market by teaching preschoolers about music, gear

The two-hour field trips showcased more than 50 instruments in every category. This included rarer instruments, such as the shofar, conch shell and donkey jaw. Intagliata offered a tour of his store in the middle of the presentation and also pitched his lesson program multiple times.

"I am proactively seeding future business by hosting these field trips, and parents tell me that the field trip to Cassell's Music is by far the best outing of the year, beating out the fire station, airport and dairy farm," said Intagliata, who's known as "Mr. Ed" to the kids.

Give Your Students the Instrument They Deserve



Eldon by Antigua puts quality instruments into the hands of students at prices their families can afford. Isn't that what creating new music makers is all about?

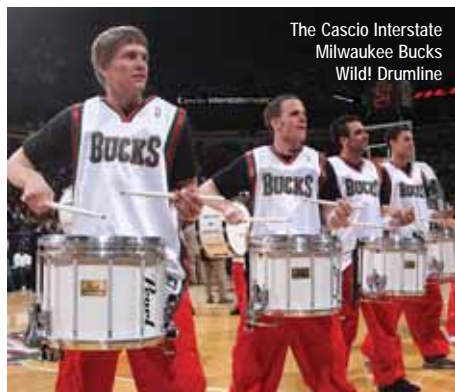


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The Cascio Interstate
Milwaukee Bucks
Wild! Drumline

CASCIO INTERSTATE MUSIC | PROMOTION

Basketball & Beats

Cascio Interstate Music of New Berlin, Wis., provided the entertainment at the Feb. 7 Milwaukee Bucks game against the Detroit Pistons. The Cascio Interstate Milwaukee Bucks Wild! Drumline performed during the first-quarter break.

The group was selected from an open audition advertised on the Bucks' Web site. The 21-member drumline included eight players on snare, three on tenor drum, five on bass drum and five on cymbals. Cascio outfitted the entire squad with Pearl instruments and gear. The partnership also included title sponsorship of the drumline, a drumline uniform presence, Bucks ticket and Web site activities, and collaborative projects between Cascio and the Bucks.

Cascio partners with the Milwaukee Bucks for courtside entertainment

"Cascio Interstate Music is proud to partner with the Milwaukee Bucks in an effort to provide another unique opportunity for Bucks fans to be entertained at select games," said Cascio Interstate Music CEO Michael Houser. "All of us at Cascio believe that this is an excellent chance to experience the excitement of a live, 21-member drumline and that this will help inspire and encourage fans of all ages to pick up any kind of musical instrument and play."



SUPPLIERCO-OPS

Dealer-supplier partnerships to boost visibility and generate sales

Bob Taylor;
right: Taylor's
Road Show
arsenal



TAYLOR HITS THE ROAD

Taylor Guitars' 2009 Road Show tour began stopping by dealers across the United States and abroad in late March. Multiple dates are scheduled in California and Oklahoma, and an East Coast tour will go through Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut. Now in its third year, the Taylor Guitars Road Show brings guitar enthusiasts together with Taylor clinicians and experts from the company's factory in El Cajon, Calif.

At each stop, the Road Show team shares insights on the company's guitar-making process and demonstrates how body shapes and woods affect tone. Players are invited to take part in the show's "Petting Zoo." This lets visitors pick up and play different models, as well as rare and custom models. Attendees also get a chance to win an opportunity to build their own custom guitars through Taylor's Build To Order program. Admission to each show is free. {taylorguitars.com}

Scott 'The Piano
Guy' Houston



THE PIANO GUY METHOD

Select piano and keyboard dealers can now offer the Play Piano In A Flash Class turnkey music lesson program from Scott Houston, a.k.a. "The Piano Guy." The Play In A Flash Class method focuses exclusively on the excitement and joy of playing the keyboard or piano in a non-classical setting. Participants watch the keyboard and the instructor's hands via an overhead camera, and they work through techniques and musical examples from the Play Piano In A Flash Class books.

Participating dealers have the exclusive right to use Houston's nationally-known brand, built with more than 10 years of Emmy Award-winning television programming and best-selling books. According to Houston, a dealer with only 100 students across the various levels of the six eight-week classes will bring close to \$50,000 to their bottom line using the method. {playpianoinaflash.com}



THEY KNOW WHAT THEY WANT...

So why stock anything else?

What other cymbal brand gets this sort of following year after year? From New Beat HiHats to K Custom Hybrids, Zildjian is the proven gold standard of cymbals. No other cymbal line truly defines your store or excites your customers as much. You know that your Zildjian stock will quickly turn time and time again. And for 2009, we have put together an aggressive schedule of promotions that you will not want to miss. Now more than ever, Zildjian is the *only serious choice*.



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NAMM[®] News

APRIL 2009

"We're Going After the Freeway..."

Tools to Help You Succeed in Challenging Times

LET NAMM BE A PART OF YOUR TEAM—CHECK OUT THE OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO HELP YOU SAVE MONEY AND MARKET YOUR BUSINESS LOCALLY

With a changing global economy and a future we can't predict, your association continues to look for ways that we can help you. NAMM is on your team, with each of our staff members invested in your success and working to identify ways to support and strengthen your business.

Note from Joe

One of Peter Drucker's famous sayings was "Leadership is a foul weather job." Boy, he wasn't kidding. As you lead your stores and businesses through these unprecedented challenges, it might seem that you are alone against the waves that keep pounding our economy. Wall Street, the mortgage crisis, falling consumer confidence, you name it—there seems to be a crisis at every turn.

Many people find strength from the fact that our industry has seen this and much more: World Wars, the Great Depression, the fall of entire instrument categories and the rise of new ones. Iconic brands have come and gone. There are many things we can learn from those who have been there. For 108 years, NAMM has worked side by side with our Members in the trenches and have been proud to serve them in good times and bad.

In studying these past challenges, we find there are no quick fixes, no easy answers. The path out of this mess will be dependent upon the hard work and determination of everyone. No one seems to know how long this downturn will last or how deep it will go. But it seems clear that those who survive will be positioned to take advantage of the inevitable opportunities that follow.

Your association has many tools to assist you in your efforts and stands ready to be a part of your team. Please call NAMM today to get a personalized analysis of how your association's programs, initiatives and cost-saving Member services can help save you money and get more customers.

And, as Drucker believed, leadership is definitely a foul weather job, but it need not be a lonely one. You have friends at NAMM ready to serve you, so please give us the opportunity to be a part of your team.

Joe Lamond
NAMM President/CEO



Programs to grow your market



NAMM offers a variety of market-building programs and initiatives that can help you reach a whole new market of consumers or increase your current customer base. From DCI and Vans Warped Tour to Sesame Street Music Works and more, we're reaching out to music makers of all ages and interests with the goal of bringing new customers through your door. Learn more at www.namm.org/initiatives.

Business services that can improve your bottom line



Because we are an association, NAMM is able to negotiate the kinds of rates most companies could never get on their own. If you haven't checked into

what you could be saving, we highly encourage you to do so as a way of reducing your company's operating costs. Your Membership provides you with access to discounts on shipping, special rates for worker's comp coverage and even discounts on credit card services. Have you evaluated your expenses? Maybe now is the time.

Building music makers out of those who think they can't



NAMM's consumer-facing *Wanna Play?* campaign shows the 82% of people who think they cannot play—but would like to—that they can! The *Wanna Play?* Lesson Locator sends aspiring musicians straight to your Web site.

Keeping music in the news

The *Wanna Play?* consumer campaign puts music making in the media spotlight on a daily basis. Your store can benefit from this effort by participating in *Wanna Play* Music Week, May 4–8, and promoting the contests and events associated with it, like the new *Wanna Play?* Film Contest. Learn more at www.namm.org/initiatives.



Music in your schools

If music education is being threatened in your community, we encourage you to use your voice. By supporting and encouraging school music programs, you not only help students grow their musical and academic potential, you grow your customer base. To join the Support Music Coalition or gain invaluable advocacy tools, visit www.supportmusic.com, or call us at 800-767-6266 to learn more.

Knowledge is power—arm yourself with ideas and inspiration

NAMM University was created to empower you with information on best business practices, while also providing solutions to the challenges you face every day. These free sessions at both the NAMM Show and Summer NAMM have never been more relevant as we face an uncertain future.

NAMM
University

Industry events that give you the competitive advantage

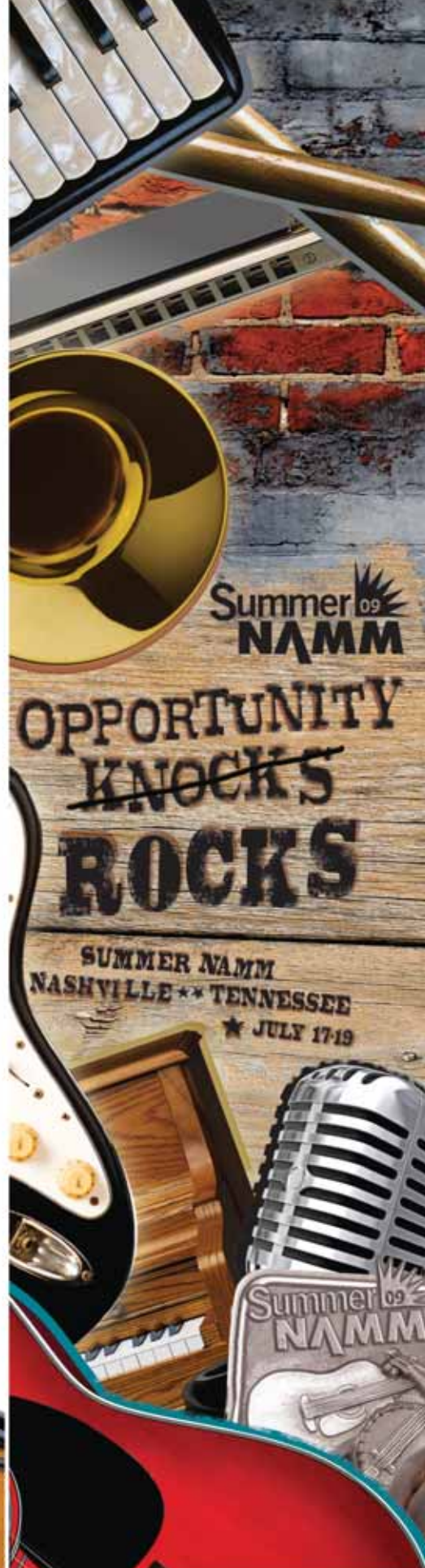


NAMM's trade shows not only offer a front row seat to the hottest trends and newest products, they leave you enlightened, motivated and empowered with new inventory and ideas. Visit www.namm.org/summer to learn more about 2009 Summer NAMM, July 17–19.

While the future is unknown, one thing is certain: NAMM is here for you and we will do everything in our power to support your success.

NAME NAMM News No. April 2009

NAMM News is published by NAMM. To keep up-to-date on the latest breaking industry news, sign up for our PLAYback Digital e-newsletter at playbackdigital@namm.org.



For more information, please visit
www.namm.org/summer



2009 IS SHAPING UP TO BE A GREAT YEAR.

INTRODUCING FIVE NEW PRODUCTS FROM VIC FIRTH



5A AND 5B SILVER BULLET

These revolutionary new American Classic® aluminum tipped sticks are the brightest yet, producing cymbal sounds that cut and carry with amazing brilliance and clarity. A sound color for every genre, whether you play jazz, metal or rock & roll.

5A AND 5B SOFT TOUCH

The Soft Touch models feature a dense felt head for a moderately articulate sound that is on the warmer side of a conventional wood tip. New musical possibilities emerge when exploring the colors these new Soft Touch sticks can produce!

5A AND 5B IN BLACK

For over 30 years, the American Classic® 5A and 5B have been the choice of countless drummers. Now, the most popular sticks in the world are available with a classic and distinctive black finish!

VIC GRIP STICKS

Vic Grip is a new anti-slip drumstick coating made from an eco-friendly, water based urethane. It provides a comfortable and slip resistant grip to the American Classic® 5A, 5B, 7A, 2B and ROCK, in both wood and nylon tip.

LITE STIX

Developed for the player who is looking for the ultimate in showmanship, Lite Stix dazzle crowds! Made from hickory in the design of the American Classic® Rock, Lite Stix maximize the drummer's visual effect without sacrificing the balance and feel of a standard stick! These sticks feature an LED light in the tip for 7 color settings including green, blue, red, violet, aqua, yellow and ice blue, as well as slow, medium and fast strobe effects! Each pair comes with a charger that plugs into any computer USB port, and a full charge provides a minimum of 4 hours of use.

VIC FIRTH
WHEN IT MATTERS, ASK FOR VIC
VICFIRTH.COM

- > **Fender**
Loses guitar trademark case
PAGE 30
- > **U.S. Band & Orchestra**
Changes name to St. Louis Music
PAGE 31
- > **Rock House Method**
Involves fans in DVD filming
PAGE 32
- > **NAMM**
Offers limited medical insurance
PAGE 33

SUPPLY

PRO-ACTIVE | BY ZACH PHILLIPS

INSTANT E-COMMERCE

The way Bill Walzak sees it, music retailers are missing a boatload of sales — sales that don't require inventory or staff. Three years ago, he launched Pro-Active to change that.

The Arlington Heights, Ill.-based company offers Web solutions designed to give dealers everything they need to get started with e-commerce, just short of calling to sign up.

"Our motto at the company is, 'If your mom can't operate this Web site, it needs to be redesigned to make it even easier,'" Walzak said. "It has to be. A dealer does not have time to become a master of the Internet."

Dealers have taken notice. Since Pro-Active's debut, the company has nabbed a "Best In Show" honor at the 2008 winter NAMM convention, brought on hundreds of new retail users and gotten recognition from The Alliance of Independent Music Merchants. At this past January's NAMM conference, Pro-Active also launched Showcase, a more inexpensive, simpler Web solution for the most techno-phobic dealers.

"I'm all about giving retailers an overwhelming number of tools to help them to pro-



Pro-Active
creates music
retail Web
sites that 'even
your mother
can operate'

mote their businesses effectively," Walzak said.

250,000-PLUS SKUS

In a way, Walzak has approached his business backwards. His first Web and

technology products were designed for distributors, not dealers. This created the platform and the means for future product launches.

"Anybody can build you a Web site," said David Hall, Pro-Active's national sales manager. "We stand out above the crowd because of our relationships with distributors."

Those relationships mean a dealer signed up with Pro-Active can get a Web site pre-loaded with hundreds of thousands of SKUs. Pro-Active offers feeds from six major industry wholesalers, including Hanser Music Group, M &

M Merchandisers, Dumont Music, Advantage Wholesale, Music One Select and Karaoke Solutions. (Dealers are simply required to be approved by those distributors to sell their feeds online.) And when customers make a purchase, the items can either be sent to the store for pick-up, drop-shipped from the distributor or shipped from the dealer's own stock.

Distributor product updates and price changes also get automatically updated on the music retailer's Web site throughout the day.

Walzak explained: "Imagine if somebody walked up to you and said, 'I'll give you \$5 million worth of inventory. I won't charge you for anything until you sell it. You don't even have to touch it, and I'll give you one of the most powerful tools out there to help you sell it.' What would you say?"

ONLINE MARKETING DEPARTMENT

Pro-Active offers two levels of dealer Web sites: Super Store and Showcase.

Super Store, which costs \$199 a month, is the company's flagship solution. And Walzak said he believes its built-in marketing tools are worth the price of admission alone.

"We're a sales and market-

ing-driven company," he said. "The difference, besides offering these great product feeds, is that we provide the sales and marketing tools to help the dealer — to help their Web business and their brick-and-mortar business. So it's bricks and clicks all the way through, each helping the other."

Super Store lets dealers create cata-

logs, fliers, newsletters and e-mail blasts by going to their site's back-end and checking off which items to include. Dealers can also create special fliers when vendors offer sales. And all products and prices can be edited easily.

"When Hanser or any of the vendors put something on sale, it automatically goes into an e-mail template with

the dealer's name, logo, address — everything," Walzak said. "The dealer can choose to take products out, or he can add other items, push a button and send it out as an e-mail to all of his customers."

Dealers can also add products not included in these distributors' feeds. Prices can be changed, and gross margins can be set by brand, category or individual item. Additionally, Super Store offers eBay uploads, an online instrument rental module, a language translator, a currency converter, and the means to offer contests and drawings.

THE 99-CENT WEB SITE

Showcase is a more limited solution but costs \$29.99 a month — or less than 99 cents a day, as Walzak put it. That buys a retailer 10 Web pages to publicize services, store location and staff bios. It also gives dealers one product feed from their choice of distributor. Dealers can opt to get additional distribution feeds for another \$29.99 a month.

"It's as many as 250,000 SKUs," Walzak said.

Showcase doesn't include marketing tools or let dealers add products that aren't included in a distributor's feed. Still, it gives users a tweakable Web site, where colors can be changed and text is easily modified.

"It is a closed system by design," Hall said. "Maybe a dealer has never sold on the Internet before, and they want to get their feet wet."

And as with Super Store, a Showcase Web site can double as an in-store kiosk. "Your customer will look at you in a different way," Walzak said. "They're saying, 'This store's a lot bigger than I thought it was. It has a lot more products to offer.'"

Pro-Active's Web solutions also give dealers one last feature: brutal honesty about inventory.

"The one I always hear is, 'Gee, I sold a pink guitar. Look, I just sold *another* pink guitar. Who would've thought? Maybe I need to stock pink guitars in-store,'" Walzak said. "There's so much information that a sharp dealer who's paying attention can benefit from when using a turnkey solution like this." **MI**

Is this what your cash flow feels like?

Everyone knows the feeling. You invest in product for back to school or for the holiday season and then hope to see a revenue stream before all the bills pile up. It's a vicious cycle.



At DANSR we understand and can provide a wide array of financing plans that can put your payments in your cash flow season. Of course, great financing plans wouldn't be much use to you if we didn't supply world-class products like Vandoren reeds and mouthpieces and Denis Wick mouthpieces and mutes. With great products and flexible, sensible ways to manage ordering and paying, DANSR can make sure every season is a cash flow season.

DANSR

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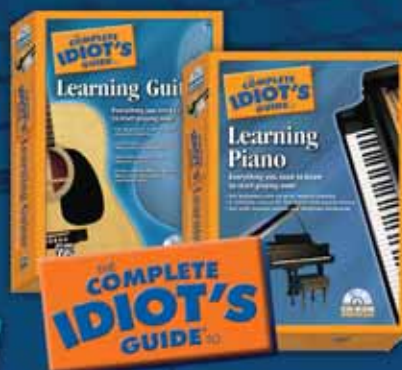
The Complete Idiot's Guide To...

Perfect for beginners of all ages! All lessons are in full-motion video and include high-quality digital audio sound!



Interactive features:

- Easy-to-follow, highly effective video instruction gets you started right away
- Digital audio-based files—no unrealistic MIDI sounds!
- Adjust tempo of audio files without changing the pitch
- Guitar tuner with visual demonstration makes tuning easy



Guitar:

- Features lessons on how to read standard music notation and TAB
- Includes over 60 popular songs covering rock, heavy metal, blues, country, jazz, and folk styles
- Teaches how to play chords, scales, and cool licks

Piano:

- Learn how to form the most important chords and scales
- Covers finger aerobics to make playing easier
- Teaches the art of playing with feeling and expression

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Morton Subotnick's Creating Music Series

Now children can experience music at the most basic level before ever picking up an instrument!



Features include:

- Interactive music activities facilitate experimenting with the fundamentals of pitch, rhythm, and the sounds of various instruments
- Loveable characters and the bright, kid-friendly visuals teach children what it means to play a high or low note, soft or loud, and fast or slow
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LEGAL

Guitar Hero Battle Ends

Activision, maker of the *Guitar Hero* video game, has won its case against Gibson. On Feb. 26, the District Court for the Central District of California ruled against Gibson, denying its patent infringement claims. The court's decision ruled that Gibson's patent only covers musical instruments, not game controllers, such as those featured in *Guitar Hero*. {gibson.com; activision.com}



DISTRIBUTION

Graph Tech Teams Up With Warwick

Graph Tech is now working exclusively with Warwick Music in Germany, Poland, Austria, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

"We are excited to enter this distribution agreement with Warwick to better serve our European customers," said Dave Dunwoodie, president of Graph Tech. "Warwick will be keeping the full Graph Tech catalog of parts stocked." {graphtech.com}

REAL WORLD

Chops Saved

Through the efforts of ChopSaver and retailer All County Music in Tamarac, Fla., every band member from the Florida A&M University's Marching 100 and the J.P. Taravella High School Marching Band received a tube of ChopSaver. This protected their lips while performing in the freezing temperatures during Barak Obama's Presidential Inaugural Parade in January. {chopsaver.com}



ARTIST APPROVED

Hamilton for Hamilton

Drumming legends Jeff Hamilton and Lewis Nash now use the KB225 and KB245 low-mass, lightweight cymbal stands from Hamilton Stands. Nash is currently on tour with The Blue Note 7, celebrating Blue Note Records' 70th anniversary, and Hamilton will be on a North American tour with Diana Krall this spring and summer. {hamiltonstands.com}

FTC headquarters in Washington, D.C.



FTC | LEGAL

FTC ENDS NAMM INVESTIGATION

On March 4, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and NAMM entered a consent agreement, ending the FTC's investigation of the music products trade association. The FTC had alleged that NAMM enabled and encouraged its members to share competitively sensitive price information at various meetings and pro-

grams between 2005 and 2007. Under the settlement, the FTC no longer makes such allegations.

According to a statement from NAMM, the agreement will not require any fundamental changes to NAMM's core activities or constitute admission of wrongdoing. {namm.org; ftc.gov}

FENDER | TRADEMARK

Strat Up for Grabs

Legally, the Strat, Tele and P Bass body shapes are up for grabs. That was the decision reached by the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board (TTAB) on March 25. The TTAB refused Fender's application to have its Stratocaster, Telecaster and Precision Bass body shapes trademarked.

Fender applied for the trademark in 2003, and 17 companies opposed it, including Tom Anderson Guitarworks, ESP, Indoor Storm, Triggs Guitars, JS Technologies, Lakland, Blade Guitars, Michael Tobias Design, Peavey Electronics, Sadowsky Guitars, Saga, Schecter Guitars, Spector, Tradition Guitars, Warmoth Guitars, WD Music Products and U.S. Music.

The TTAB heard final oral arguments from both Fender and the companies opposing the trademark application in November 2008.

"Fender Musical Instruments Corp.

Fender is denied trademark for Strat, Tele and P Bass shapes

is disappointed with the recent decision," read a statement from Fender. The statement added that Fender is evaluating its alternatives, which may include appealing the decision.

"My opinion is you cannot change history with threats and bluster," said Hartley Peavey, CEO and founder of Peavey Electronics.

"I'm just glad it's over," said Tom Anderson, founder of Tom Anderson Guitarworks. "To apply for a trademark 50 years after you've let everyone on the planet use it? It's absurd." {fender.com}

ST. LOUIS MUSIC | APPOINTMENT

ST. LOUIS MUSIC RETURNS

U.S. Band and Orchestra Supplies will do business as St. Louis Music as of April 1. The move follows the acquisition of St. Louis Music by U.S. Band and Orchestra Supplies, along with the divisions of SLM Marketplace, Knilling Stringed Instruments and Austin Guitars, in November 2008.

Stan Morgan, former employee of St. Louis Music, has been appointed president, effective April 1.

U.S. Band & Orchestra Supplies and St. Louis Music will both be located at the original St. Louis Music facility starting in April. Situated on Ferguson Avenue, St. Louis will be the headquarters for all departments. (usbandsupplies.com)

U.S. Band and Orchestra Supplies changes name, appoints new president

HAL LEONARD | CORPORATE

Hal's Deals & Donations

Hal Leonard actively pursued new business deals and outreach efforts in the first half of 2009. The print publisher donated its Essential Elements for Guitar beginning method book/CD series to the New Young Guitarists Program, a recently launched outreach program sponsored by Chicago's VanderCook College of Music.

The 15-week program offers free after-school guitar classes to fifth through eighth graders at the James R. Doolittle School in Chicago. Student recitals will take place at the end of May.



+ NEW DEALS

In March, Hal Leonard President Larry Morton and Stephen Sondheim's representative, John Breglio, negotiated a deal that grants Hal Leonard print rights to more than 10 Sondheim shows. Earlier this year, Hal Leonard also arranged distribution agreements with Nashville, Tenn.-based Arrangers' Publishing for the rights to its band music catalog and the newly formed Lauren Keiser Music Publishing, which acquired the assets and music copyrights of MMB Music in St. Louis. (halleonard.com)

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CONTEST

Take an LP Vacation

LP is offering a free, three-day, two-night getaway with the purchase of an LP conga. When customers buy any new LP conga totaling \$199 or more from an authorized U.S. dealer before Oct. 31, they will be eligible for a trip to one of 25 hotels in locales ranging from Palm Springs, Fla., to Lake Tahoe, Calif. Customers must send LP the proof-of-purchase and the redemption coupon (available online) in an envelope postmarked on or before Nov. 30. This promotion is only available in the United States.

{latinpercussion.com}



FINANCIAL

Euphonix's Record Sales

Euphonix has announced that its professional products division achieved its best annual revenues in more than 10 years in 2008.

The company has also signed a lease on a new corporate headquarters in Mountain View, Calif. {euphonix.com}

ENDOWMENT

Jupiter Establishes Trumpet Endowment

Jupiter and the National Trumpet Competition (NTC) have established The Jupiter Band Instruments Young Artists Endowment. It will aid the long-term development goals of the NTC and enable the NTC to better serve young artists by improving its Web site and prize infrastructure.

{jupitermusic.com}

PARTNERSHIP

Zildjian Goes Universal

Zildjian's Jerry Smith, Universal's Jim

Bickley, Zildjian's Craigie Zildjian, and Universal's Tom Shelley and Jerry Donigan (pic-



tured, from left) recently celebrated an agreement to make Zildjian products available through Universal Percussion. As an extension of Zildjian's distribution channel, Universal will be able to offer the cymbals at dealer-direct prices. {universalpercussion.com}

ROCK HOUSE | PROMOTION

Rock House Outreach

Three fans of Rock House from the New York and Connecticut area were invited to a Feb. 25 DVD shoot with Michael Paget of the band Bullet For My Valentine. Brothers Mike and Danny Graziano and their friend, Jake Levine, took part in a new Rock House program designed to reach out to the community and give aspiring musicians a behind-the-scenes look at how Rock House instructional products are made.

"Later in the day, I received a message on the Rock House Facebook page that the boys were



From left: Michael Paget with Mike and Danny Graziano and Jake Levine

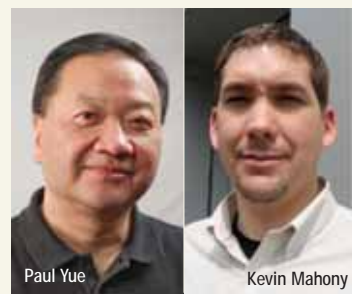
all in Mike's room practicing with the Rock House DVDs we gave them," said Joe Palombo, executive director of Rock House.

{rockhousemethod.com}

APPOINTMENTS**Loud Names Yue, Mahony**

Loud Technologies has appointed Paul Yue as director of procurement and Kevin Mahony as director of operations, Asia.

"Kevin and Paul bring more than 30 cumulative years of supply chain strategy, management and quality-control experience to Loud," said Jim Stewart, Loud's chief operating officer.



Paul Yue

Kevin Mahony

eMedia Music has appointed Craig McGlynn to the newly created position of vice president of sales and general manager.

Gepco recently named Rick Thompson, a 15-year Gepco veteran, as central regional sales manager.



>>> Jennifer Paquette

Hosa has appointed Jennifer Paquette to the position of general manager.

Harman

has appointed Eric Goh, Kit Roche and Raymond Tee to the Harman Pro Asia team, located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Numark recently expanded its European management team with the addition of Paul Wright as the vice president of sales and marketing for Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Shure has named Fred Sicko as sales manager for Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Shure has also appointed



>>> Fred Sicko

Vladimir Arezina to its legal services division. Arezina will serve as associate general counsel at the company's headquarters in Niles, Ill.

WEBNEWS

{fender.com}

Fender Opens Dealer Portal

Fender Musical Instruments Corp. (FMIC) has launched a new dealer business portal, FMIC Direct, designed to make it easier for dealers to do business with FMIC. The Web portal includes: an online product catalog for each brand; enhanced product specifications; advanced search functions by product, brand, category, color, part number and UPC number; secure functions to view inventory, invoicing, order status, purchasing history and credit history; and direct e-mail and phone contact options.

Currently being piloted with a small group of dealers, FMIC Direct is planned to launch to all of FMIC's U.S. and Canadian dealers.

DRUMMER DESTINATIONS

Suppliers produce progressive content for drummers

{ludwig-drums.com}

To celebrate its centennial year, Ludwig has revamped its Web site. In addition to detailed information on Ludwig's new anniversary products, the Web site features Ludwig TV, a portal for lessons, performances and interviews.



{usa.mapexdrums.com}

Mapex has added two new modules to its Web site. The new Black Panther snare drum and MPX snare drum sections feature Flash-based graphics and audio samples for each snare drum.

{rolandus.com/v-drumslessons}

Roland is offering a series of free online drumming videos, V-Drums Lessons, which will be hosted by Roland clinicians and artists. Visitors can view any of the lessons directly in a Web browser, subscribe to the free video podcast via iTunes or download individual lesson episodes directly to their computers.

{hudsonmusic.com/digital}

Hudson Digital lets users preview, purchase and download files. It features video lessons, play-along tracks and audio from drummers, including Tommy Igoe and David Garibaldi.

NAMM | INSURANCE

NAMM OFFERS MEDICAL HELP

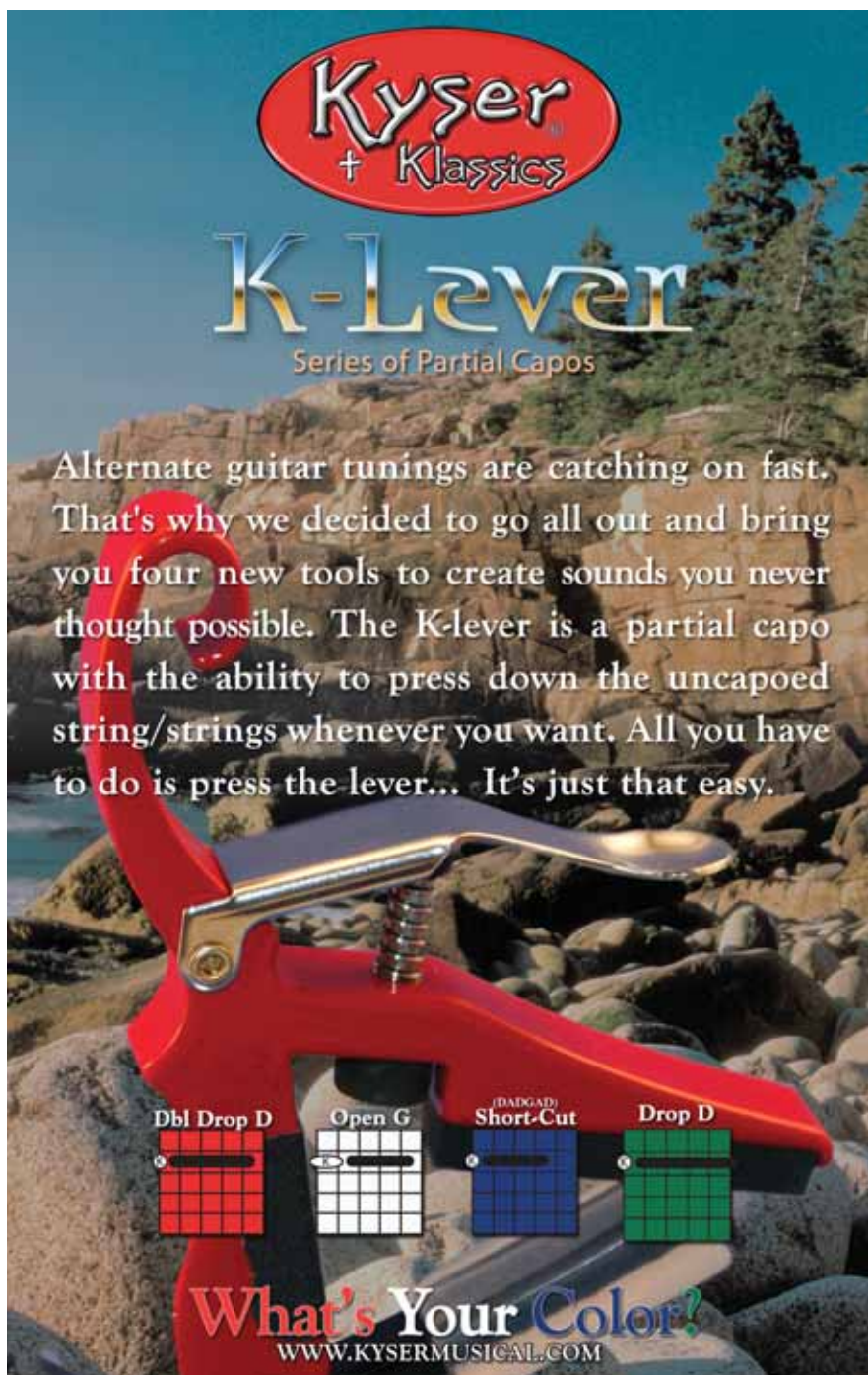
NAMM is now offering limited medical insurance plans for all members and their employees, starting at \$69.99 per month.

There are three plans that do not require medical underwriting and offer savings through tiered dental,

vision and prescription benefits.

"We wanted the limited medical program to be affordable and available without requiring a contribution by the employer," said NAMM President and CEO Joe Lamond.

{marshsbi.com/namm}



GHS becomes **GHS MUSIC PRODUCTS** with the launch of our USA distribution for **ROCKBAG** and **ROCKSTAND** products. Stop by Booth 4684 (Hall C) and check out these great additions to our product lines, along with our long established lines of **GHS STRINGS**, **ROCKTRON** and **D'ANGELICO STRINGS**! Come grow with us!

ghs strings

Stop by to meet some GHS and Rocktron endorsers and get an autograph.

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Stu Hamm:

Friday 2PM

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Friday 1PM

Saturday 1:30PM

J.D. Deservio,

(Black Label Society):

Saturday 12PM

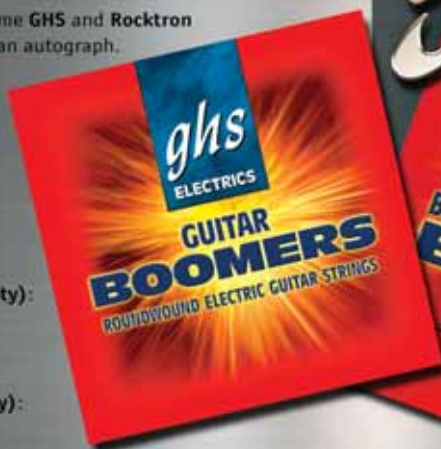
P-Nut (311):

Saturday 2:30PM

Marc Rizzo (Soulfly):

Saturday 4PM

ghs



ROCKTRON

TECHNOLOGY FOR GUITARISTS

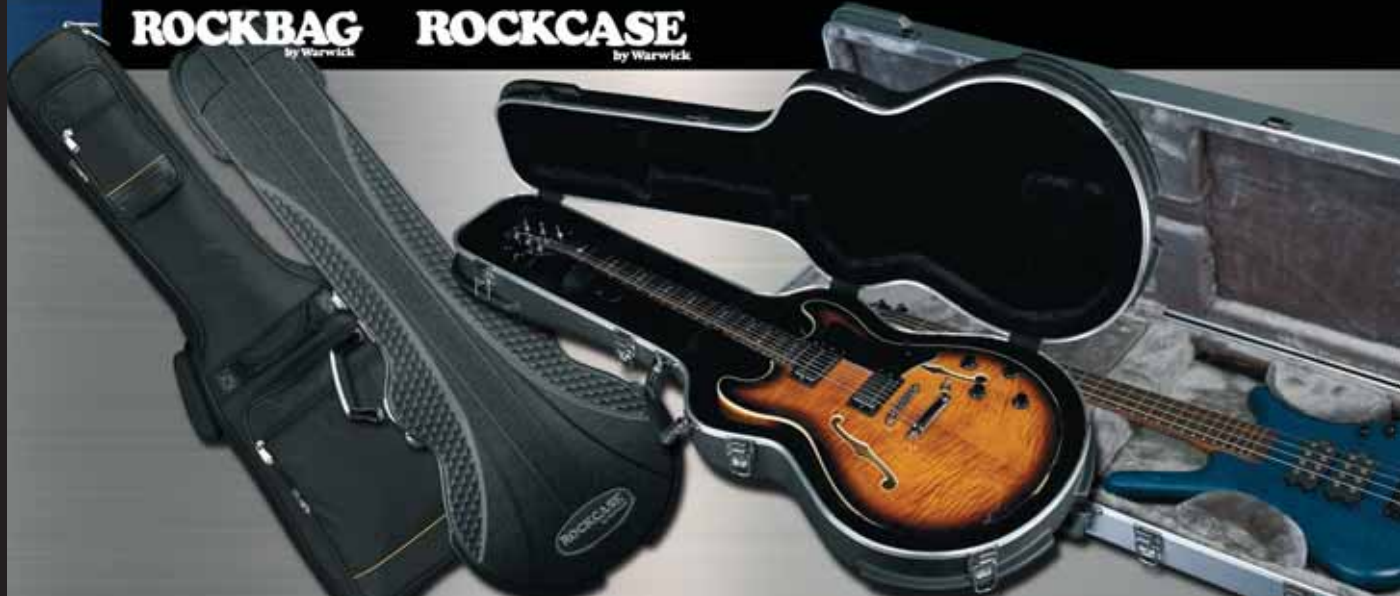


ROCKBAG

by Warwick

ROCKCASE

by Warwick



IDEAS

>>> **Inside IDEAS**

> The Customer Whisperer Page 36

> The Lesson Room Page 40

> Technology Page 42

> My Turn Page 44

INDEPENDENT RETAIL | BY TED ESCHLIMAN

RECLAIMING OUR ROLE

I want to go on record saying that the perceived state of the economy — dismal as it may have been in particular markets — was not our most serious hurdle in 2008. There's a much larger threat to the role of music stores that transcends the temporary up-and-down cycles of employment, prosperity and product category relevance.

During my personal Christmas shopping, it became more apparent than ever that the inventory we once claimed as exclusive to music stores has become ubiquitous. Next to the toothpaste at Walgreens, children's guitars. Next to the linens at Bed Bath & Beyond, starter electric guitar packs. We even have a local interstate truck stop selling vintage guitars. And, of course, there's Best Buy — it has kicked our hiney in portable keyboards for more than a decade.

Fewer and fewer people actually know what a music store is or does. This isn't breaking news. But like the frog that became soup by falling asleep in warming water on the stove, my shopping experience became a call to action.

Understand, the wrong solution is to disown customers that went the non-traditional



A music store's plan for staying relevant and vibrant in a chain-store world

route on their first instrument purchase. Can you blame someone for wanting the convenience of buying a starter guitar across the aisle from where they purchased their Christmas-present DVD player? Folks *is* busy today.

So my business partners and I recently decided to match up our business plan with our strategy to keep our store relevant in this changing cultural-

commercial climate. Our new mission: *To seek products and promote activities that will recapture our role as a catalyst for music exploration.* Let's break this statement down into its individual components.

Products. We are about gear — instruments, equipment and hardware — but we're also about the stuff that makes gear work and, more importantly, the services that perpetuate musical activities. Lessons, repairs and instructional material *en masse*, these are the ties that bind. Relevant accessories — children's chord books, capos and flute case covers — aren't going to be centrally convenient anywhere else but at a music store.

Promote activities. As my fellow *Music Inc.* columnist Pete Gamber says, "We have to go out to them. We can't wait for them to come to us." It's the workshops, celebrity gatherings, "meet the manufacturer's rep days" and instrument petting zoos that music stores do best. That's where our marketing and advertising budgets ought to be most deeply invested.

Recapture our role. If you've been in the business for more than 20 years, you think music starts in a music store.

Today, you're wrong. The widespread popularity of *Guitar Hero*, "American Idol," Esteban guitars and home shopping channels threaten to diminish us if we aren't diligent.

Catalyst for music. We remain the torchbearers for music activity. We have a passion for it. We certainly aren't in the industry for the money — unlike non-traditional MI channels, which are wired only for profit. Clearly, both personal and corporate enthusiasm for the arts need to be visible and contagious. It's this fuel that feeds the fire for the evangelism (and expansion) of the music lifestyle.

Exploration. We live in the information age. As the Internet matures, customers don't research, they Google. They aren't "told" anymore, they absorb. We don't sell and explain, we nurture and elucidate. In modern culture's rapid pace, we trade curriculum for discovery. We need to offer opportunities for our customers to find and explore music both inside and outside of our stores. It's time for reclamation. **MI**

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

THE CUSTOMER WHISPERER | BY GREG BILLINGS

Speaking Truth to Power

At Steinway Piano Gallery, we see our fair share of what used to be called the “carriage trade.” A glimpse at our database would reveal a few superstar athletes, radio and TV personalities, and Fortune 500 CEOs. Because successful people are often over-achievers, they tend to be musical, so every music store has wealthy clients and every town has its own local celebrities. Often we are overwhelmed — or overimpressed — by their statures, and sometimes, we fail to serve them as well as we could. Most of what I know about serving the rich and famous was learned the hard way. That is, by doing it wrong.

My grandfather used to say that 2 percent of people are wonderful, 2 percent are jerks and the remaining 96 percent are just plain folks. He made no allowance for income or notoriety. Like most of us, the rich and famous tend to be shy and don't want a fuss made over them. They can smell condescension a mile away and are outright offended by fawning.

APPROACHING THE POWERFUL

Several years ago, a retired NBA all-star came into our gallery to select a piano for his kids. I made a big deal about him and recited details of his play-off games. He was very polite, but I could tell that he wanted to run away. Fortunately, my son (who is much taller and cooler than I am) took control and rescued us all. Occasionally, celebrities want to talk about their accomplishments, but it's best to let them decide if and when.

My favorite example of how to serve a celebrity happened when I was a kid. Baseball legend “Hammerin’” Hank Aaron came into my dad's store to buy a piano. The salesman was a wonderful guy named Herb Muth. Herb was a musician and would have been in awe of Miles Davis but didn't know much about sports. The rest of the staff watched in amazement as Herb

innocently asked the slugger if “Aaron” was spelled with one A or two. Aaron, the man who broke Babe Ruth's home run record, wasn't offended by not being recognized. He was happy to receive fair treatment and get his kids started in piano lessons.

Self-made clients came up the hard way. They made their own fortunes and are usually a joy to work with. They respect and identify with small business people. They are impressed when you do a good job but have little tolerance for inefficiency or B.S. The best way to start with these people is to acknowledge who they are politely and get down to business.

Trust-fund kids who inherited their money and were raised in privilege are a different story. Taking control and using calm authority from the

beginning will prevent a nightmare situation where they dominate and try to take advantage of your goodwill. However they got their fortune or fame, it's best to start with something like: “I'm so pleased you chose to visit our store. Do you mind if I ask a few questions, so I can quickly direct you to an appropriate instrument?”

SMARTER THAN AVERAGE

Even the smallest town has local celebrities. They might include the hospital president, a university provost or an influential church pastor. Most of your affluent clients are probably professionals and business owners. Successful people are usually a little smarter than average people, and they often manage employees of their own. Sincerity, honesty and competence are paramount. Professional people can sense deception in an instant, but they are unlikely to argue about it. Also, they are usually busy people who won't be offended by directness. They'll probably respect it.

A common mistake we make in serving wealthy clients is assuming they should spend freely. Affluent people resent the idea that money has less value to them than it does to others or that they should spend it just because they have it.



How to serve
your most affluent
customers

Like the rest of us, they are concerned about being treated fairly. Because they are both intelligent and affluent, value and quality are more important to them than price — no matter what they say. Because they have huge demands on their time, they want a succinct presentation and convincing evidence. (This is often the case with physicians, who can be particularly skittish when it comes to spending decisions.)

A salesperson who's intimidated by a client's stature can level the playing field by discussing the benefits of music education

I was once deeply offended by a radio station salesman who said to me, "Come on, you've got the bucks. Just part with a few." A customer whisperer understands that the relative wealth of the customer and salesperson is of no consequence. Our job is to use our calm, assertive leadership to guide our clients gently through the decision-making process.

A salesperson who's a little intimidated by a client's stature can level the playing field by briefly discussing the benefits of music education and what the store is doing to encourage it in the community. The wealthy are often very interested in philanthropy.

Don't be shy about your community involvement, even if it's modest. This can be particularly effective with civic leaders.

SPEAKING TRUTH

There is no single method to serving wealthy or accomplished clients. Still, it's important to stand your ground, do your job and speak the truth. This often means resisting the temptation to tell people what they want to hear. If you speak truth to power, you will always gain respect.

Here are three true stories to illustrate

the point. (Names have been changed to protect the writer.)

Example 1:

As a manufacturer's rep in the early 1990s, at the peak of the college sale phenomenon, I often helped out as a back-up salesperson. Late one Sunday afternoon, exhausted and facing a two-hour drive home, I found myself with the last cus-

tomers of the day. My clients, Dr. Greenberg and his wife, were both prominent psychiatrists.

They had considered several grand pianos and were going back and forth between two, playing a short excerpt from Beethoven's "Appassionata" over and over. Finally, as the clock approached 6 p.m., with all the staff and my dealer watching, I asked the husband which one

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MOUTHPIECES FOR CLARINETS AND SAXOPHONES

he thought they should buy. “She really likes that one, but the other is less expensive, so I think we will get it,” he said.

In a moment of exasperation and frustration, I said, “Are you crazy? Why would you want to spend money to have an unhappy wife when you can have an unhappy wife for free? Doesn’t it make more sense to buy her the one she really likes?”

“Absolutely,” he said, and he bought the piano his wife wanted, even though it cost a little more.

That was almost 15 years ago, and I’ve been asking my clients, “Why would you want to spend money to have an unhappy wife?” ever since. It’s funny, but it’s also true. Over the years, variations on the theme have evolved.

Example 2:

Several years ago, the Wilsons purchased a digital grand piano from us. One day, Mrs. Wilson called to tell me that she was going to buy an inexpensive baby grand from a neighbor and wanted to know if the price was fair. I suggested that I had a much better piano for about the same price and would take her digital piano on trade. Dr. Wilson later called to say they would be coming in soon, but he wasn’t going to spend a dime more than \$5,000. They arrived later that afternoon.

After friendly hellos and refreshment (greeting) followed by a discussion of what Mrs. Wilson wanted in a new piano that she didn’t have in her current piano (qualification), the customer whisperer showed her the piano in question along with better and best options (presentation).

(Note: The fact that the Wilsons were well-known and

were coming in to see a specific product didn’t alter the process. It just changed the amount of time spent on each step.)

It turned out that Mrs. Wilson really preferred the best option, a \$50,000-plus Steinway. When I asked Dr. Wilson if he’d like to purchase the Steinway for her (closing), he said, “It’s all about the money.”

“It’s really all about having a happy wife,” the customer whisperer said as we walked back to my office.

“You’re right about that,” he said.

After considering an irresistible option (choice), we arranged to deliver their new Steinway.

This is speaking truth to power. It’s all about having a happy wife or well-educated kids or expressing the music within you. Quality matters, and price is of secondary importance. The customer whisperer is the helpful expert. He’s not afraid to look his clients in the eye and tell them what they really need.

Any husband making a purchase for his wife is more concerned with her happiness than he is with money. Parents selecting an instrument for their child are more concerned with the child’s development than they are with an instrument’s cost. When a client becomes focused on money, the customer whisperer stays focused on the client’s needs and desires. Sometimes, the customer whisperer has to take a strong position to serve customers properly and ensure both their satisfaction and his future referral business.

Maintaining integrity and speaking truth to power won’t always assure a sale, but it will preserve your self-respect, as we’ll see in this final story.

The customer whisperer is the helpful expert. He’s not afraid to look his clients in the eye and tell them what they really need.’

Example 3:

Every once in a while, we encounter a *nouveau riche* prospect with an attitude. It’s important to keep from buckling under the pressure of a customer who wants to push you around. Someone has to be in control. In order for a transaction to occur, it has to be the customer whisperer.

About a year ago, a TV personality with a syndicated faux courtroom show visited our store. Since I work in the late afternoon, I had never seen the show and didn’t know who she was. She refused to qualify, so the customer whisperer did what he always does when a customer refuses to qualify: excuses himself.

“Please, go ahead and browse while I return an important phone call in my office,” I said. “If you feel as though you need my assistance, I’ll be right over there.”

Predictably, she followed, asking questions all the way. She eventually revealed (under my heavy cross-examination) that the piano was for her home in New York. When I asked why she didn’t buy the piano at Steinway Hall New

York, she said, “They won’t give me a discount!”

“Well, I can’t give you a discount either,” I said. “This is how much a Steinway piano costs, and it’s worth every penny. Let me show you why.”

Of course, no sale was consummated because there was never going to be a sale. But the customer whisperer saved himself and the client time and trouble by taking the lead, following the process and determining that he could not meet her demands. She was treated the same as everyone else. If I had groveled and followed her around like a puppy, the only difference would have been a loss of self respect. I later read that she receives \$45 million per year in syndication fees. I don’t know if she ever got a piano, but she will be forever known in our gallery as “Judge Snooty.”

WHAT WE CAN CONTROL

Like everyone else, the rich and famous need to be guided through the decision-making process to select the right instrument and to decide with whom to do business. The customer whisperer uses calm, assertive leadership with wealthy clients the same way he uses it to benefit all his clients.

We never really know who is going to come through the front door of our stores, what their circumstances are or what kind of day they are having. Our customers are a variable we can’t control. However, we can control our performance. With celebrities and the wealthy, as with everyone else, we remain calm, stay focused and speak truth to power. **MI**

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

A close-up, low-angle shot of a Kurzweil PC3 digital piano. The image focuses on the upper left portion of the instrument, showing the control panel with various buttons and a large volume knob, and the beginning of the keyboard. The brand name 'KURZWEIL' is printed in large, white, sans-serif capital letters on the black panel. To its right, the 'PC3' model designation is written in a stylized, orange-gold script. The lighting is dramatic, with a strong highlight running diagonally across the piano's surface, emphasizing its sleek, modern design.

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PC3

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THE LESSON ROOM | BY PETE GAMBER

How to Be a Safe Haven

Have you noticed a drop in your music lesson sign-ups lately? Is your sales staff not bringing in the same number of new students as usual? Are your teachers worried, even panicked, about their lessons (and their incomes) dropping to disastrous lows? Do you feel helpless in your daily attempts to keep the bottom from falling out? If so, here are some tactics to help keep your employees, teachers and customers positive with all the negative economic chatter in the news.



Your store and music lesson program need to be a refuge from the economic headlines

COUNSEL STAFF

Focus staff on the positive events happening in your lesson program. Tell them about what teachers are doing, upcoming student events and any positive e-mails from customers. Have an open discussion about everything that is not doom and gloom for consumers. For instance, when I go to swamped shopping centers, I think, "What recession?" Come up with some examples near your store that you can point out. We are next to an independent diner where people drop around \$10 each, and it's always busy.

Remind your staff that lesson sign-ups are a numbers game — the more people employees talk to, the more lessons they get. Remind them that people don't always sign up right away and talking about lessons creates future sign-ups.

INVOLVE TEACHERS

Grab a cup of coffee with your teachers. Tell them what the store is doing to weather the economic storm. Let them know that you are going to schools, handing out fliers at their music events and talking to the scout troops.

Also, invite them to go with you to school guitar classes, jazz band rehearsals and related events that promote lessons. Ask teachers to get involved in student showcases and other performances. Keep current students excited, and create new students from event attendees. Ask your teachers for ideas, too. Getting them involved will create an atmosphere of "the store is out there hustling for me," as opposed to "the store isn't doing anything."

LEAD THE CHARGE

You need to raise the flag, sound the bugle and yell "charge!" This is not the time for paralysis by analysis. If you keep looking for the sky to fall, it will. (And your teachers will run before it does.)

Keep the students you have by holding student events, such as showcases, guitar jams and drum-off contests. Videotape your teachers for an MTV-vibe promotional loop to run in the store. It will help create new lesson sign-ups, and it's great for the teaching staff to see your efforts to get more students. Set up a music lesson info center with a video playing and lesson fliers and upcoming student events posted. Keep your store excited about music lessons.

CREATE CUSTOMER EXCITEMENT

Be warm and friendly to everyone that enters your store and everyone you talk to on the phone. Sounds simple, but it might not be happening in your store. For your students and parents, that 5 p.m. lesson time should be the event they look forward to each week. Have coffee in the waiting area with magazines for moms and dads. Have student-only string deals, or post this-week-in-rock factoids. Just make it fun.

None of us know what's going to happen next or how long the current economic trends are going to last — plan on it being bad and long. But make your lesson program a positive refuge, and survive the storm. **MI**

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



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TECHNOLOGY | BY GORDON O'HARA

Print Music Revisited

In the past, the mere mention of print music brought shivers to many piano, combo, and band and orchestra dealers. The endless SKUs, the threat of obsolete inventory, the expertise required to sell it and the low sales volume all, at first glance, make a case against carrying these lower-revenue products. But today, everyone is a print music client. High-end instrument buyers and renters, potential music lessons students, band step-up buyers, multiple-guitars owners, accomplished adult musicians, band directors, and choir directors — all can be marketed to regularly if you cater to their print music needs.

And did I mention the typical 25–40 percent margins?

LAUNCH A SITE, OUTSOURCE FULFILLMENT

Fortunately, technology and new business opportunities make it easier for non-print specialty dealers to sell print music without the pains of the past. One method is to launch a Web site with print products. “Good idea,” you’re thinking, “but who’ll maintain the data and fulfill the products?” More recently, companies have emerged that provide in-depth sheet music data at a store’s Web address. So that first hurdle is easily overcome.

This year, key distributors, publishers and local sheet music dealers have also improved their abilities to fulfill orders, pack them, add a store’s shipping label and send them directly to customers. The margin may be smaller, but you don’t have to order, stock, process, ship, pack and track shipments. And you still earn margins on each sale.

SHEET MUSIC ON-DEMAND

It’s 9 p.m. The wedding is tomorrow. Where will a musician get the latest hit that the couple just asked for? It could be your store. With a sheet music download service on your Web site, buyers can browse the latest titles, view them, purchase in real-time, set the instrumentation or notation, and

download scores directly to their printers. They’re happy, and you’re the hero.

There are two versions of sheet music download services. You can have a store-branded download Web site service, a system that lets you retain your store’s branding under your own domain name and provides content management tools to update your site. This way, you can cross-promote instruments, events and music books. The other is through affiliate programs, which redirect customers to a centralized site with the publisher’s branding, though this can be less attractive if you want to retain customers on your site.

DEALER ALLIANCES

Alliances between local print music-only dealers and instrument/lessons stores offer real profit potential. Each dealer sets up its displays at the other’s store. Each store installs a hotline to the other dealer for customer service.

Online, a cobranded Web site presents the remaining stock. Customers buy in-stock items or create special orders. Each store handles its fulfillment and service. Each store earns a percentage of sales from the other dealer’s sales. A piano dealer could launch a sheet music site with outsourced fulfillment and an alliance with a print dealer. Likewise, print stores can expand their reach with these alliances.

A COVER IS NOT ENOUGH

Many sheet music customers still want to leaf through every page of a book before they buy it. Publishers have invested in sound scores, writer videos and links to sample pages. The sheet music downloads have also helped to bridge that experience. The next step could be a presentation similar to how books are sold — with the full content of the book online, accompanied by a video explaining the book’s benefits. This would increase online sell-through. **MI**

Gordon O'Hara is a managing partner with Retail Up!, a retail Web solutions company. He can be contacted at info@retailup.com.



Technology makes it simple for non-print dealers to sell and profit from the category

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MY TURN | BY MATT FRAZIER

A Call for Partnership

When I joined my first rock band in high school, I'd already decided that the drummer was the most important member. (As a matter of pure coincidence, that happened to be me.) Eventually, I understood that the singer has more impact on audience response. But no matter how well the drummer, the singer or even the whole band performs, someone else also has tremendous influence over a group's success: the house sound engineer.

Bands and engineers share a delicate, symbiotic relationship. By reaching out to a few sound techs, I've learned that most want to achieve a good mix for the band, and if treated as partners, they'll give it their best. I find the relationship between MI dealers and vendors has a similar dynamic. Many of us actually have common goals — goals that can be better achieved with a little more partnership.

REPS IN THE AGE OF TRANSPARENCY

I'm sure some of you are already skeptical of my premise because you've been burned by too many reps. Fair enough. These cases, however, are the exception. Broad-based innovation, impressive upstart manufacturers and a transparent marketplace all make strong-arming dealers nearly impossible for vendors these days. If a rep for big-name brands becomes unpleasant, dealers can simply do business with someone else. I can't think of a single bullet-proof, must-have brand in the MI marketplace anymore.

It's also becoming clear that healthy partnerships foster long-lived, healthy careers and businesses. Retailers and reps are up against the same challenges — not enough end-users and too much competition. And, like sound engineers and bands, we can help make each other more successful, or we can work against each other.

As a sales rep, my most adversarial dealers essentially view our business together as transactional. In their view, it's as if every P.O. exists in a vacuum, and the goal is to get the best possible deal on each order regardless of how it might impact our long-term business relationship. The critical flaw in this approach is that a rep will eventually start to focus on other dealers who are easier and more enjoyable to work with.

THE TRANSACTION IS DEAD

At the same time, some sales reps view each transaction as an end in itself. This is equally as shortsighted, which is why many reps (most, I hope) no longer work this way. If I sell you a bunch of products that are

wrong for your business, I'll have to face you a month later when I walk into your store and see shelves packed with duds I unloaded on you. I don't benefit from that. My success is completely tied to the success of my dealers, and if they don't do well over the long-term, neither do I. On the other hand, when my dealers prosper, I succeed with them. If you work with reps who don't understand the long-term nature of being a business partner, you should move on to other reps.

The roots of vendor/dealer partnerships go deeper than dollars and cents. Like many of my dealers, I got into this line of work because I really like music. I care about the products I sell and the experiences musicians have with them. I want to do this for a while, so your latest P.O. is not the only one that matters to me. If you want to last in this business, too, then whatever order you're working on with whatever vendor shouldn't be the only one that matters to you, either. Vendors and retailers working together can make our businesses better and our jobs more enjoyable. We can even help keep musicians making music. And that's a common goal worth pursuing. **MI**

Matt Frazier is a regional sales manager for M-Audio/Digidesign. He lives near Seattle and can be reached at matt_frazier@m-audio.com.



'If you work with reps who don't understand the long-term nature of being a business partner, you should move on to other reps.'

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RETAIL FIRST AID

Stagnant foot traffic, non-existent sales, tight credit — sound familiar? **You're not alone.** Look to these four financial strategies to weather the economic storm

By Jeff Cagle

In December 2007, Liz Reisman moved Creative Music Center from the back of a small business complex to a more visible, 5,000-square-foot facility on the main drag in Monroe, Conn. Foot traffic increased immediately, but new customers kept commenting that they didn't know Creative Music Center sold musical instruments, despite its brand-new \$4,000 roadside sign. (The sign had the store's name in large print next to an even larger treble clef logo.)

"People would walk in and say, 'We thought you were just a music school,'" Reisman said. "They didn't know the breadth of what we did, and the sign didn't communicate that to them. At first, I refused to believe it. I mean, how could I spend that much money on a sign and have so many questions about what we did? But as the months went by, the questions kept coming. It was really very frustrating."

When the economy slowed last year, she sat down to plan how to weather the oncoming storm. Her plan included investing in a new sign with the hope of boosting store traffic and revenue.

"I did *not* want to replace that sign," she said. "I'd had it built in 2007 for a ton of money, and here it was 2008, and I'm [thinking of] replacing it. But the first sign was a mistake, and I had to suck it up, spend the money and replace it."

Creative Music Center's new sign features an acoustic guitar sticking out toward oncoming traffic, along with "sales, rentals, lessons and repairs" in bullet points under the store's name and logo. And according to Reisman, after the sign went up in December 2008, the questions stopped overnight.

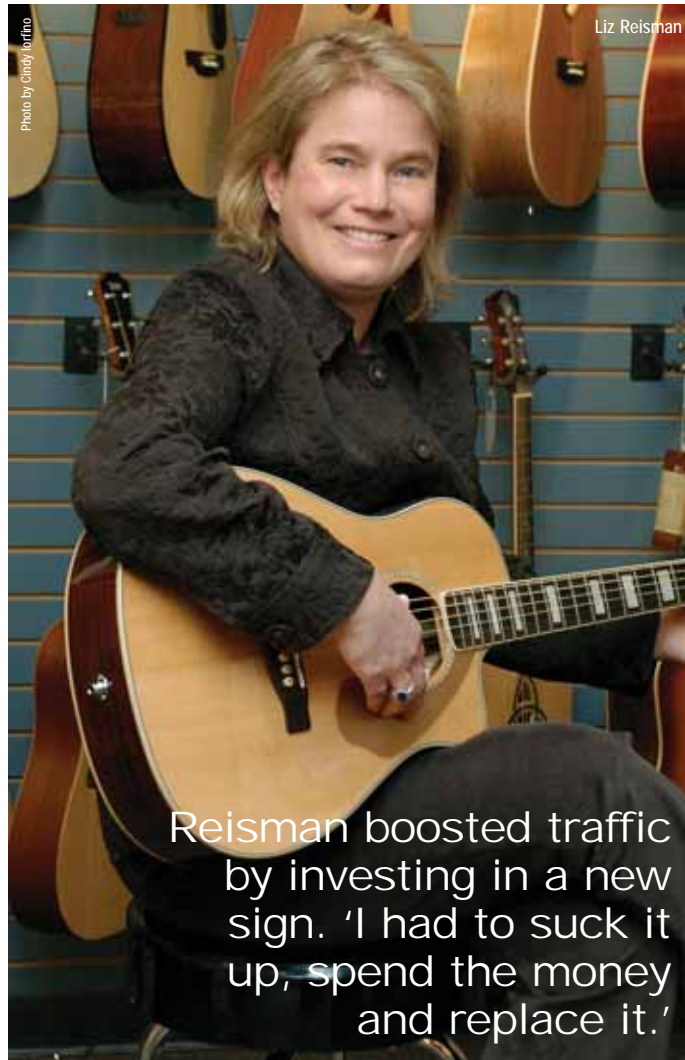
Foot traffic increased, and fretted instruments sales, in particular, skyrocketed in the coming months. (Reisman said overall gross fretted sales were up year-to-date 68 percent in January and 78 percent in February.) Reisman's sales boost will now help offset losses due to a more cautious clientele in the economic recession.

Planning for the future should be a continual process, especially in a down economy. But sometimes retailers just need a shot in the arm, a Band-Aid like Reisman's sign to get through a rough year. *Music Inc.* columnist and retail financial guru Alan Friedman, a founding partner of Friedman, Kannenberg & Co., nailed down four key strategies to help ensure the short- and long-term success of music dealerships.

➕ NO. 1: BORROW MONEY

Borrowing money can prove challenging in a rough economy. This is especially true for school music dealers with a significant rental pool, which can provide cash flow over a long period but in small increments. According to Friedman, two of the worst things a retailer can do when borrowing money are trying to pay for a rental pool out of cash flow or with short-term financing, and borrowing over a long period of time to fund operating costs.

"If you're going to borrow money, you want to make sure you're borrowing it wisely to



Reisman boosted traffic by investing in a new sign. 'I had to suck it up, spend the money and replace it.'

grow your business or to match cash flows," Friedman said. "You need to borrow on a long-term basis over three, four or five years, and advertise that debt."

"What you don't want to do over a long period of time is borrow money to fund operating losses. While that is the prudent thing to do for a year if you record a loss and are tight on cash and you need it to get through the rough year or to recover, you don't want to make a habit of doing that because then you're just throwing good money after bad. You ultimately want to fix the profitability of the business before you resort to operating money."

Ray Guntren, president of

Ray's Midbell Music in Sioux City, Iowa, said banks were initially unenthusiastic about loaning him money. His rent-to-own contract was creating a problem, and his balance sheet needed to be repositioned to state his store's rental assets correctly and subsequent depreciation. Guntren's accountant stepped in, explaining to the banker that depreciation was a non-cash expense. Since his rental assets were put on a contract with a three-year payout, Guntren requested funding those assets on a three-year payout, so rental income was flowing to match bank loan payments for the assets.

"Our next job was to always pay on time and communicate

any changes in the business climate that may have occurred," Guntren said. "Our banker suggested and we adopted a simple loan and pay-back plan. He established a line of credit at the beginning of the year, which positions us to buy right and take every early pay discount that we can. At the end of the year, after we have tapped all available funds, we then convert the line of credit to a three-year note, and the bank in turn establishes a new line of credit for us. We have done this effectively for the past eight or nine years."

➕ NO. 2: INVEST MONEY

Getting money from a bank might not be a viable option with the current credit crunch. Other options for borrowing money to invest can include money from savings accounts, retirement funds or home equity lines. But putting personal finances on the line can come at a great cost.

"If you're not running your business in a fiscally responsible manner and you're not generating revenue during a rough economy to keep your business afloat, investing money from a savings account or leveraging critical assets like a home could be the worst thing you could do if you fail," Friedman said. "You've got to make an assessment to whether the business is ultimately going to survive before you make that investment."

If banks aren't lending money and the risk of your personal financial security seems too great, outside investors are another option for raising capital. Jeff Taras, CEO of Music Matters in Roswell, Ga., went to outside investors when his plans to grow the dealership ran into the closing credit door.

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Tarae and his business partner looked to three areas for investors: their family and friends, customers who had previously expressed interest, and staff members.

Tarae said approaching outside investors requires a much more focused business plan than when dealing with a bank, which might only require profit-and-loss statements from the past few years before establishing a line of credit. As such, this provided him with an opportunity to sit down, review the past few years, and crystallize Music Matters' short- and long-term goals.

"Our business plan was comprised of a financial analysis, personnel [information], customer demographics and what makes us different," Tarae said. "The main [objective] for us was showing a stable business with potential growth opportunities, leading into why we're looking for this money."

Tarae said it took four to five meetings before his company found an investor. "There is money out there looking to be placed, and there are people who are willing to take some type of risk," he said. "But it really needs to be backed up with a stable business plan, preferably [from someone] who has a fair amount of operating experience. The combination of the stability of the business and the future plans for it allowed us to have some very productive conversations both with experienced investors and others who were looking to invest their own capital in small businesses."

➤ NO. 3 INCREASE REVENUE

Borrowing and investing money may be two short-term options in a rough economy, but neither add to a business' bottom line. Still,



Mike Schaner, general manager of PM Music in Aurora, Ill., said he has found that using long-term debt to finance long-term assets, such as a store's rental pool, can also increase cash flow and provide opportunities to increase revenues in other departments.

"We've been able to use that [increased cash flow] and invest it in other areas to increase top-line revenues in other departments," he said. "It freed things up for us to purchase step-up instruments that will sell faster, and we put some money into the additional lesson rooms we've built in the past year."

Raising revenue also lets retailers flex their business savvy and creativity. **Reisman, for example, challenged her sales staff to sell 50 guitars from the beginning of November until Dec. 31 of last year.**

"I was cautiously optimistic

Guntren has raised his rental rates \$1 per month to boost revenue

that we'd hit the number, but what drove it home was when my 13-year-old daughter created this huge drawing of a guitar in which each fret represented one guitar sold," Reisman said. "We hung the poster in the lunch room, and every time we sold a guitar, we colored in a fret. Pretty soon, the whole staff was [doing it], and everyone checked the sign to see our progress."

By the end date, Reisman's staff had sold 94 guitars. She credited the Hawthorne effect as the inspiration for the idea, paraphrasing it by saying whatever gets measured increases

10-fold, but whatever is measured and written down increases 100-fold.

Reisman also planned more events to increase traffic in her store. She mentioned that even if an event doesn't raise revenue by itself, the buzz often creates a sense of community and translates into additional sales. More recently, **she began hosting an event per month, then one or two each weekend in December. These included a visit from Santa, a fastest drummer contest with drummer Liberty DeVitto and a holiday community sing-along.**

"We hosted the events to generate buzz with our customers and buzz with the media," Reisman said, noting that her store received mentions in the calendar sections of local newspapers.

Guntren suggested raising prices as another way to increase revenue, but he cautioned only doing so in departments, such as rentals, where the increases can be made in small amounts. "We process quite a few rental payments each month," he said. **"An increase in monthly rental rates of \$1 per month can result in thousands of additional dollars added to your income statement."** The \$1-per-month additional charge is hardly noticeable to the consumer."

➤ NO. 4: DECREASE EXPENSES

Business owners can also use the tough times to re-evaluate expenses and see where they can trim.

Grant Billings, owner of the Steinway Piano Gallery in Madison, Wis., said that he implemented a system of "times 12" to cut costs. **He multiplies every monthly expense by 12 to think about the big number, then multiplies his potential savings by 12 to decide if it's**

worth cutting the cost with the inconvenience. This method helped him look into his telephone usage. He eliminated a line, dropped down to a simpler plan and saved more than \$600 annually.

Billings also took a closer look at his utilities. He removed track lights that weren't being used efficiently and replaced floodlights with spotlights of the same wattage, running them at about 85-percent power. He said it saved a bit on the store's electric bill but cautioned that cutting too deep into essential utilities can send the wrong message.

"The biggest mistake a retailer can make right now is letting their operations look shoddy," he said. "Dead light bulbs need to be replaced, scuffs

on walls need touching up. I was tempted to cut back on our cleaning service, but after thinking about it, I decided that cutting back on these expenses sends a message to customers and employees that you've given up. It has never been more important to make sure everything is neat, orderly, dusted and clean than it is right now."

In drastic situations, cutting expenses means a complete re-evaluation of a dealer's business model and downsizing or going back to its roots. This was the case with Sylvia Woods of Sylvia Woods Harp Center in La Crescenta, Calif.

Woods' Harp Center operated as a mail-order business for nearly 25 years before she opened her brick-and-mortar location in 1992. In the past

several years, she noticed profits shrinking and eventually drying up. She refocused on her core mail-order and online business. In doing so, she cut expenses by cutting back from seven to four harp lines, sharing office space with her four employees and downsizing the retail store from 4,000 square feet to 1,900 square feet. The latter slashed rent and utility costs by 60 percent.

"Fortunately, I have great employees who are committed to making this business work," Woods said. "In spite of all of this, employee morale is up, and my employees are happier than they have been in a long time. We're working to increase Internet sales with more frequent e-mail newsletters to our customers and improving our

Web site by adding how-to videos and music downloads.

"Our sales are lower than they were a year ago, and it is hard to tell how much of the drop is due to the economy or due to our downsizing. But what we can be sure of is that by cutting our expenses we're much more likely to be able to weather this recession and come through on the other side with a profitable business."

"Whether you've been in business for a year or 15 years, you can't be afraid to continue to reinvent the way you conduct business and adjust to the market conditions," Tarae said. "If you continue to approach your business around that philosophy, you'll be able to adapt and plan properly with what's currently going on." MI

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THE SOURCE

The 2009 edition of The Source is a music retail buyer's quintessential handbook. The following pages include the industry's most comprehensive list of manufacturers and distributors with the added benefit of suggestions for quick-turning products and strategies for buying smart in a tough economy.

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Sher Music's *The Jazz Singer's Guidebook: A Course In Jazz Harmony And Scat Singing For The Serious Vocalist* by David Berkman is a clear, step-by-step approach for singers who want to improve their grasp of jazz harmony and gain control of their singing. It has 142 pages, and a CD is included. MSRP: \$26. {shermusic.com}



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buy**smart**

TIME TO ACCESSORIZE

Essential accessory buying tips

EVALUATE EVERYTHING

Billy Cuthrell, Progressive Music Center; Raleigh, N.C.

We made a conscious effort, even before the economy really started to tank more than a year and a half ago, to start doing more accessory-based things. Because of the nature of our lessons, we'll have 75 guitar students on a daily basis. None of them are going to buy a guitar. They'll look, but I guarantee I'll sell seven or eight packs of strings. But instead of stocking 74 types of strings from four different manufacturers, we said, "What are we really selling the most of?" and cut the rest. So, not only have we cut back on the big-ticket items, but we've gone through the accessories and cut back. We go through everything, good times or bad, and ask, "What's selling and what's not?"

'Not only have we cut back on big-ticket items, but we've gone through the accessories and cut back.'

— Billy Cuthrell

TEST DRIVE

Tristann Rieck, Brass Bell; Milwaukee

You can never tell if something will sell with just one, especially with books and accessories, because it could have been a fluke. The perfect customer could walk in the door and you've sold the item, but it doesn't really tell you anything. But if you bring in two and two are sold within four hours or even within 24 hours, that's a better gauge that it's a hot item.

TAKE SMALL ORDERS

Liane Rockley, Rockley Music; Lakewood, Colo.

We buy smaller, targeted orders we can easily pay for. It's a lot easier to buy a week or two weeks worth of product. I like our orders to be \$1,000 or under for the most part. Obviously, for pianos and some guitars, you can't do that, but we have to space those out so it's manageable.

It's a little more planning and puts some wear on the staff because, instead of placing one big order at the beginning of the month, you have to keep coming back and placing smaller orders. It's a little more labor intensive, but then we can actually clear the bills. It's a lot easier to clear a \$1,000 check than a \$4,000 check.



smartbuys

Sierra Cedar Tops

Sierra Guitars has introduced three new Sierra cedar-top guitars: the Sequoia acoustic dreadnought, Sunrise Auditorium acoustic-electric (pictured) and Palisades classical acoustic-electric. Each model features a satin-finished solid cedar top with natural wood bindings and soundhole inlays. MSRP: \$679. {sierraguitars.net}



MJS Takes It Easy

MJS Music & Entertainment has introduced five new Easy Guitar And Easy Bass DVDs. Each DVD focuses on a single subject, such as scales, chords or music theory. Onscreen sheet music is displayed below the DVD instructor, giving the viewer the option of using chord and note charts, traditional music notation, or tablature. MSRP: \$12.95. {mjspublications.com}



Clear Listening

Audio-Technica's new ATH-M35 dynamic stereo monitor headphones include a foldable design and storage pouch, enhancing the headphones' durability and lifespan. The ATH-M35 employ a low-profile, closed-back design for clarity and superior isolation in high-volume listening situations. The headphones feature a neodymium magnet structure and have a 20-20,000 Hz frequency response. MSRP: \$139. {audio-technica.com}



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Sonic Skulls



Levy's Sonic-Art guitar straps have been perennial best sellers, and this year, the strap manufacturer has introduced more new designs. These are sublimation-printed on 2-inch

polyester webbing and come with polyester ends and triglide adjustment. Pictured is model MPS2 in three of the many new designs available. {levysleathers.com}

Micro Snare

The new LP Micro Snare



shell has been reduced to 3-by 6-inch pocket dimensions, yet it carries a big sound. A quick-release on-off lever engages snare wires in milliseconds. Fully drum key tunable, the Micro Snare quickly attaches to a variety of clamps and bar-type holders from 3/8 to 1/2 inches in diameter. {lpmusic.com}

Amped Acoustics

The new Godin Multiac Grand Concert Duet Ambiance is the next generation of the electro/acoustic nylon-string guitar. It's ideal for classical or flamenco players that require amplified sound.

It features a dual-source pre-amp with feedback control and an undersaddle transducer. It also has custom Fishman electronics that let the player select between four blendable sound imaging mic settings. The Ambiance's design unites a larger-chambered mahogany body with a solid-cedar top and a neck that joins the body at the 12th fret. MSRP: \$1,795. {godinguitars.com}



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Ron Kennebeck, Rieman Music; Urbandale, Iowa

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For the first time, we are using our software systems, Tri-Tech AIMsi, for automatic reordering, and that's helping us weed out some of the product we would tend to lump in on buys before.

[The program] suggests the orders according to sales at the different locations we have. If one of our outlying locations is doing well with a particular mouthpiece, it's making sure we're not running out of that mouthpiece there. We're relying on that more and more to help make smarter buying decisions. In the last six months, it has really proven itself. We have better cash flow and margins.

ADD VALUE

Billy Cuthrell, Progressive Music Center; Raleigh, N.C.

We are getting more selective, in-house, about what we want to stock, so a lot of our advertising is branded "hand-selected" or "hand-picked" or "value-picked." We might not have a guitar style in 50 different colors, but we've got guitars that we've hand-picked at The NAMM Show and we feel are a good value for the students. You tell customers, "It might cost \$250, but you don't have to spend another \$250 further down the road. This is a valued-picked guitar."

'We try to remember that we are in the retail business, not a museum.'
— Steve Kinchen

CREATIVE FINANCING

Steve Kinchen, Hall Piano; Metairie, La.

In our post-Katrina marketplace, we've had to be very careful managers of our inventory. You have to boil things down and anticipate what your clients are going to buy and make sure you have that inventory in stock. We try to remember that we are in the retail business, not a museum. We've had to be really light on our feet in terms of finding creative financing options for our clients. We've come up with an in-house financing program that allows us to give out convenient monthly payment terms at an acceptable interest rate.



Real Feel

Wyman Piano now distributes the Orla line of digital pianos, which includes the new Stage

Ensemble portable piano. The Stage Ensemble incorporates more than 350 orchestral sounds, including a stereo grand piano sound. The 88-note, hammer-action keyboard; the multi-layer sampling technology; and the new Touch Sensitivity control system ensure the quality and feel of a grand piano. A USB memory stick can record up to 16 tracks of musical data or play back commercially available standard MIDI files.

{wymanpiano.com}



Guitar Supercharger

Graph Tech Guitar Labs has improved guitar performance with its new Supercharger Kits. The

three acoustic kits include a TUSQ high-performance saddle and bridge pins. Electric kits are available for Tele and Strat (American, import or off-set) and for guitars equipped with 4-mm or 6-mm post Tune-O-Matic bridges. They include black TUSQ XL nuts and String Saver Original saddles. ResoMax Bridge color choices are available in chrome, nickel, gold and black nickel. MSRP: \$39.95-\$99.95.

{graphtech.com}



Compact Tuner

The Boss TU-12EX features a needle-type meter and LED tuning guide in a sleek, thin-line body and compact size. New features include a flat tuning function (up to six semitones lower), auto-off and Accu-Pitch, which helps musicians verify their tuning by sounding a beep when the correct tuning is reached.

{bossus.com}

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or cabinet without a mic stand. The CabGrabber will accommodate cabinets ranging from 8 to 14 inches in depth. The tubular arm is threaded to hold a standard microphone clip and can rotate 180 degrees. MSRP: \$79. {audixusa.com}



Vocal Toolbox

The Electro-Harmonix Voice Box is a vocal synthesis toolbox. It creates two- to four-part harmonies directly from vocals, in the same key as the accompanying instrument. Voice Box features nine programmable presets, professional-quality pitchshifting algorithms for realistic harmonies, natural glissando and a Gender Bender knob that creates male/female format modification. The unit is also a focused, 256-band articulate vocoder. See the Voice Box in action at youtube.com/ehx. {ehx.com}



Heavy Artillery

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ONLINE AID

How retailers use popular Web sites to find buyers and advice

NEW LIFE ONLINE

Todd Heid, Heid Music; Appleton, Wis.

I'm trying to get more aggressive with some of the older inventory and bring new life into it. We've been e-blasting more. And we've been categorizing who we want to target more. If I have a bunch of old drumheads and mallets that I want to get rid of for pennies on the dollar, I'm e-blasting it. We're going to start using Craigslist for heavy gear someone might want locally. It's within our own market and might be our own regular customers, but they're seeing something they might not have seen before.

It can be a little more maintenance, but at least you feel good about getting some things out of your store.

ASK A FACEBOOK FRIEND

Liane Rockley, Rockley Music; Lakewood, Colo.

[When considering a new product,] I talk to my dealer friends. A lot of us are now on Facebook together. I'll post a question on a retail friend's Facebook page and say, "Have you heard about so-and-so? We're thinking about this company." Sometimes, you can put a question under your status like, "Liane is wondering about these guitars." Then, someone will reply to that. It's like a NAMM-extended conversation with your business friends. I'm still new to Facebook, but I'm already using it as a tool. That's been a real fun thing, and it's quick.



Aloha Ukulele

Big Island Ukulele's Solid Curly Koa Tenor ukulele is made with real wood rope-style binding and custom-gearled tuners with hand-made koa buttons. MSRP: \$739.99.

{bigislandukulele.com}



Rezo Returns

Zildjian has introduced seven additional models within the A Custom Rezo series. The new 14- and 15-inch A Custom Rezo hi-hats, paper-thin 10- and 12-inch Rezo splashes, and 16- and 18-inch A Custom Rezo pang cymbals are anchored by the 21-inch A Custom Rezo ride. This medium-heavy ride cymbal has an unlathed but brilliant finish bell area that provides extra weight to establish a bright and cutting bell sound.

{zildjian.com}

Shred Machine

The SyrenXT is the second-generation Syren by Tregan Guitars. The new look of the SyrenXT features a two-tone paint job, Floyd Rose-licensed tremolo, Grover tuners, black hardware and a tapered back. A passive/active switch, along with the built-in, powered pre-amp, offers greater flexibility when playing. In passive mode, the alnico humbuckers give players smooth tones for strumming. The active mode adds more bite, enhancing the tone and harmonics, turning the XT into a shredding machine.

{treganguitars.com}



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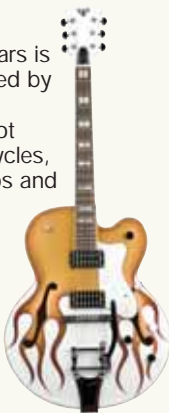


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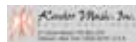
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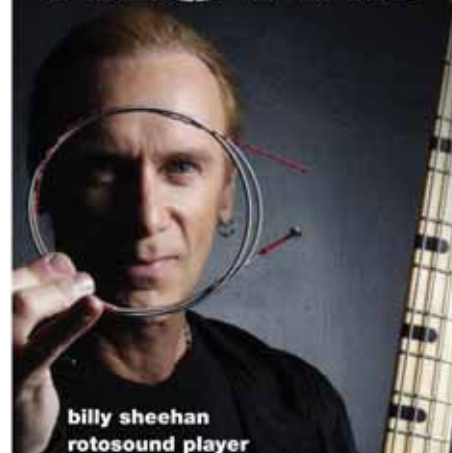
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Mike Henry, Hugo Helmer Music; Burlington, Wash.

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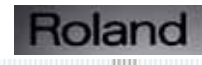
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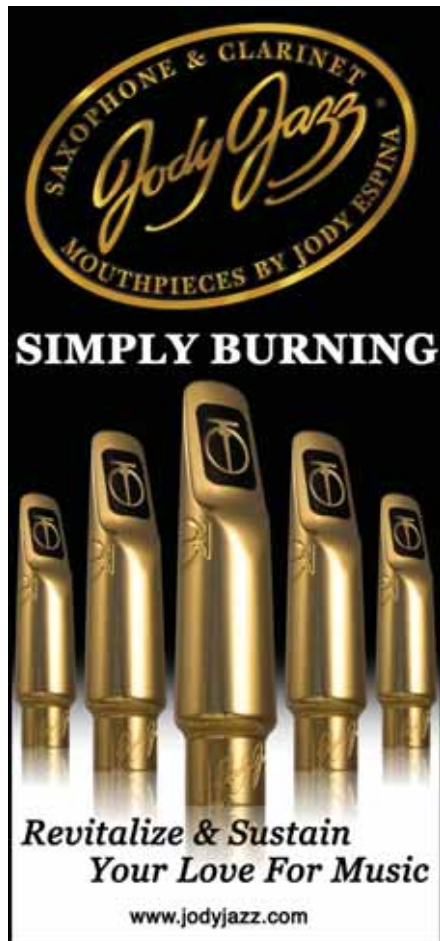
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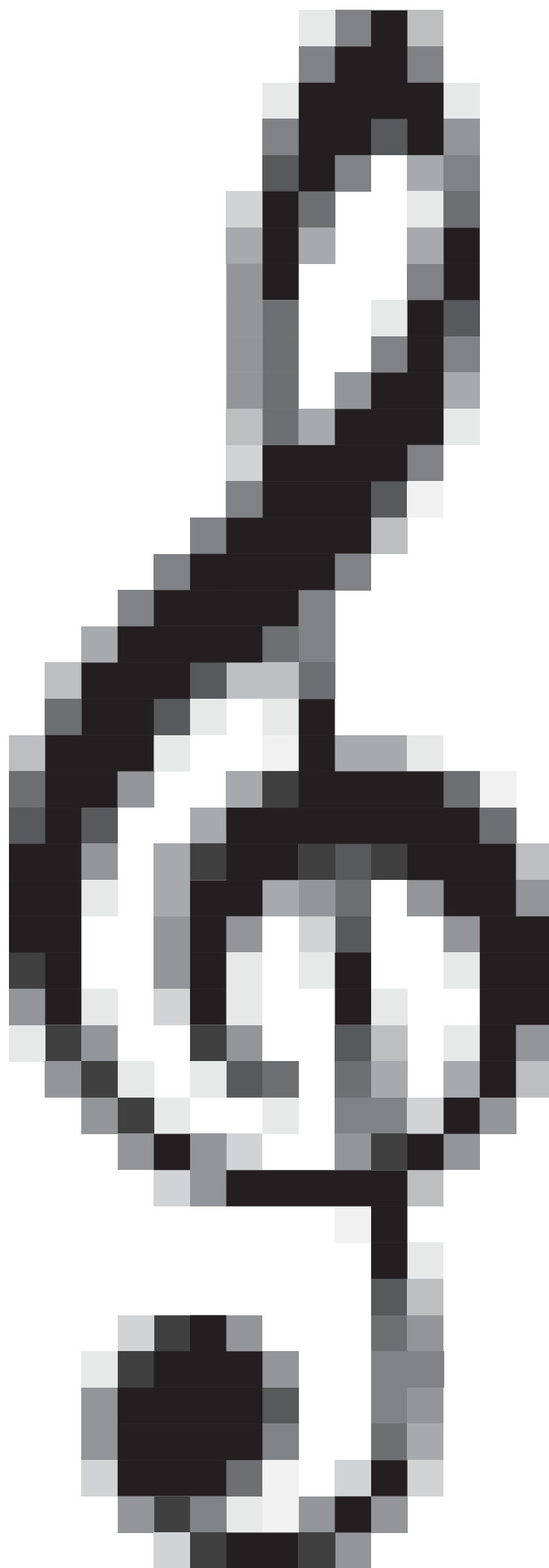
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Print in an On-Demand World

Digital sheet music offers lower inventory requirements and fast service, but some fear it could be a traffic killer

The trend toward digital distribution and on-demand sheet music printing gained increased momentum a year ago when Alfred Publishing rolled out its entry in the digital sheet music download derby. The company's TotalSheetMusic joined Hal Leonard's Sheet Music Direct, FreeHand Systems' FreeHandMusic and several other Web sites, such as Musicnotes.com, dedicated to delivering virtual copies of print music by the sheet — and in other configurations. Altogether, these services make hundreds of thousands of music titles available at the click of a mouse and whirl of a laser printer.



On the face of it, it's a boon for all involved. Music publishers have a new sales channel with little overhead. Retailers can reduce their inventories while being able to access current and obscure titles for customers, and customers are less likely to walk away disappointed when a store doesn't have a title in stock. These services even allow for transposing keys for each sheet, something print could never offer.

BENEFITS VS. DRAWBACKS

But not all retailers are finding it without a downside. "It's been a mixed blessing," said Richard Gore, president of Denton, Texas-based Pender's Music, which derives most of its revenues from print music products. "Instead of buying a complete collection, some customers are buying just the single song sheet. It's also making more people aware that they can go on the Internet and download sheet music themselves."

"You can use good paper and a laser printer, but it's never going to be the same quality as commercial printing," said Don Langlie, owner of Popplers Music in Grand Forks, N.D. "I wonder: Are we training a generation of musicians to accept a lower-quality product?"

But plenty of retailers sing the praises of on-demand sheet music sales. "The concept is awesome," said Dana Treidel, customer service director and sheet music buyer for Bethel Music Center in Bethel, Conn. Her store no longer stocks sheet music, and Treidel eliminated sheet display racks after remodeling.

"Sheet music is very trendy, so titles don't always last very long in terms of popularity, and it's very fragile — a minute is all

it takes for a 6-year-old to turn a sheet into garbage," she said.

Treidel said she likes the features offered on download sites. "Someone comes in and wants a particular piece of music, I can transpose it to whichever key they want and play a synthesized version of the arrangement right from the computer."

Tristann Rieck, owner of Brass Bell Music in Milwaukee, said sheet music and other print products make up only about 10 percent of her store's revenues. But she added that they drive larger profit centers, such as instrument rentals and lessons. "And we still sell collections — there's always someone who will want the Hendrix book," she said.

Rieck acknowledged that some customers will inevitably begin to download sheet music themselves, but she said the benefits of offering the service far outweigh the downsides. "There are some flaws to the concept, and some customers may not come back," she said. "But that's not a reason not to do this. Overall, it's been a very positive experience."

Treidel uses both Hal Leonard's Sheet Music Direct and Sheet Music Plus' online services. Rieck uses Hal Leonard's service and FreeHand's SheetMusicNow Web site.

Retailers can also turn hard copies of downloaded arrangements they sell into advertising and marketing tools by adding branded covers. Gore even purchased high-end laser printers that accept PDF files, paginate automatically and staple-stitch folios. The printers have been installed at his company's Denton, Dallas, Oklahoma City and Portland, Ore., retail locations.

"Making the end product look very good helps bring back



a level of quality that just printing a cover lacks," he said.

THE BUSINESS MODEL

There's plenty of potential for digital download systems to compete with retail — it's implicit in Internet-based business models. Most companies offering these services have extra features, either real or perceptual, reserved for retail partners. All let retailers add fees on top of the list price for the service. (The typical wholesaler discount is 33 percent, and retailers usually add an additional \$1 to a \$3.99 sheet for a profit of \$2.32 per sheet.)

Alfred's TotalSheetMusic service offers two levels of retailer affiliation. Dealers can link from their Web sites to totalsheetmusic.com and receive a sliding scale percentage from any sales they direct there. They can also opt for full integration with Alfred's site, which gives them a white label retailer-branded storefront transparently using MusicRain — the provider of TotalSheetMusic's digital engine.

Hal Leonard's service does the same and also differentiates retailers from consumers with the Digital Retailer Program. Still, consumers ultimately have the same level of access to Sheet Music Direct's 80,000-plus titles. The company is currently adding buy-now functionality to its site. This will let consumers choose products and

direct the purchase through any of dealers that have signed up for the program. Later this year, Hal Leonard also plans to let consumers choose their own preferred retailers.

FreeHand has two distinct portals to its main Web site, sheetmusicnow.com for retailers and freehandmusic.com for consumers. Chaim Rubinov, FreeHand's director of digital sheet music sales, said several differentiators are built into the retail portal's design. These include product branding with the dealer's name printed on the first page of each title sold; online access to accounting and purchase histories for running reports, checking credit balances and finding previously purchased titles; and free virtual and physical promotional P.O.P. materials for in-store displays, along with digital versions for retailers' Web sites. "We don't want our retailers to feel they are competing with the consumer portal," Rubinov said.

MARKET DYNAMICS

But content is the main differentiator between services. While there's some overlap of titles between Web sites, each service has a substantial amount of unique content, not surprising given that two of them, Alfred and Hal Leonard, are themselves print publishers.

And some of these on-demand services have been as collaborative as they are competitive. Up to this point, several of the services have cross-trade agreements in place. For instance, FreeHand's sites have offered many Hal Leonard titles for several years. FreeHand was also the online distribution engine for Alfred until the latter decided to launch its own service last May.

However, profit is not the sole motive for these sites, par-

ticularly for publishers. The sites provide a legitimate channel for sheet music, in the process blunting illegal sheet music copying.

But the Internet has accelerated sheet music piracy, so much so that some retailers wonder if it will do to them what MP3 files did to CD retailers. Gore said sheet music downloading has caused Pender's to depart from the guitar tablature sheet category.

"The guitar players who want the latest Maroon 5 sheet are going to download it themselves," he said, adding that he has already cancelled most new-issue tab books after watching their sales drop 25 percent a year for the last three years.

"There is a lot of concern out there on the part of the

dealer that they're going to get cut out," said Madeleine Crouch, executive director of the Retail Print Music Dealers Association in Dallas. "With publishers getting into making downloadable sheet music available, they have to weigh the relationship with their many retailers, who they also depend on to take their new issues. It's a complex issue that we'll have to work out hand in hand."

Sales trends suggest that there's time to do that. According to NAMM, print music has shown steady if not stellar growth from 2001 through 2007, the most recent statistics available, bringing in \$590 million in sales in 2007. Also, institutions, such as school bands and orchestras, have yet to abandon tradition-

ally produced sheet music.

Still, download service providers understand the need to keep their digital product offerings diverse beyond print. FreeHand's MusicPad Pro is a digital storage and playback unit that downloads and displays notation and allows user manipulation, such as transposition or changing clefs. The \$899 unit has more than 7,000 users globally, according to Rubinov. David Jahnke, Hal Leonard's vice president of national sales, noted play-along products — sheet music accompanied by software-enhanced CDs with sound-alike performances that buyers can play along with — could also have an online version in the future.

What on-demand sheet music availability means varies

according to the role it plays. For publishers, it's less a profit center and more a hedge against piracy — Jahnke said downloads account for less than 1 percent of Hal Leonard's revenues. For full-service retailers, it's a mixed bag, offering a value-added service and inventory relief but little in the way of significant profit and possibly germinating a do-it-yourself mentality among customers. For companies heavily invested in print, it runs the risk of devaluing a chunk of their business, even as it widens their portals to customers.

Like everything else in digital distribution's brave new universe, on-demand sheet music delivery is more than the sum of its parts. **MI**

— By Dan Daley

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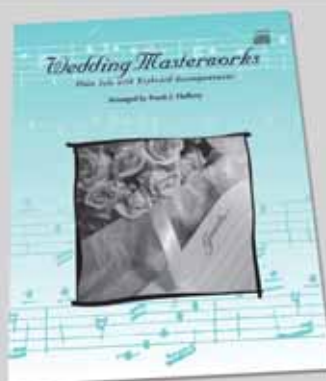
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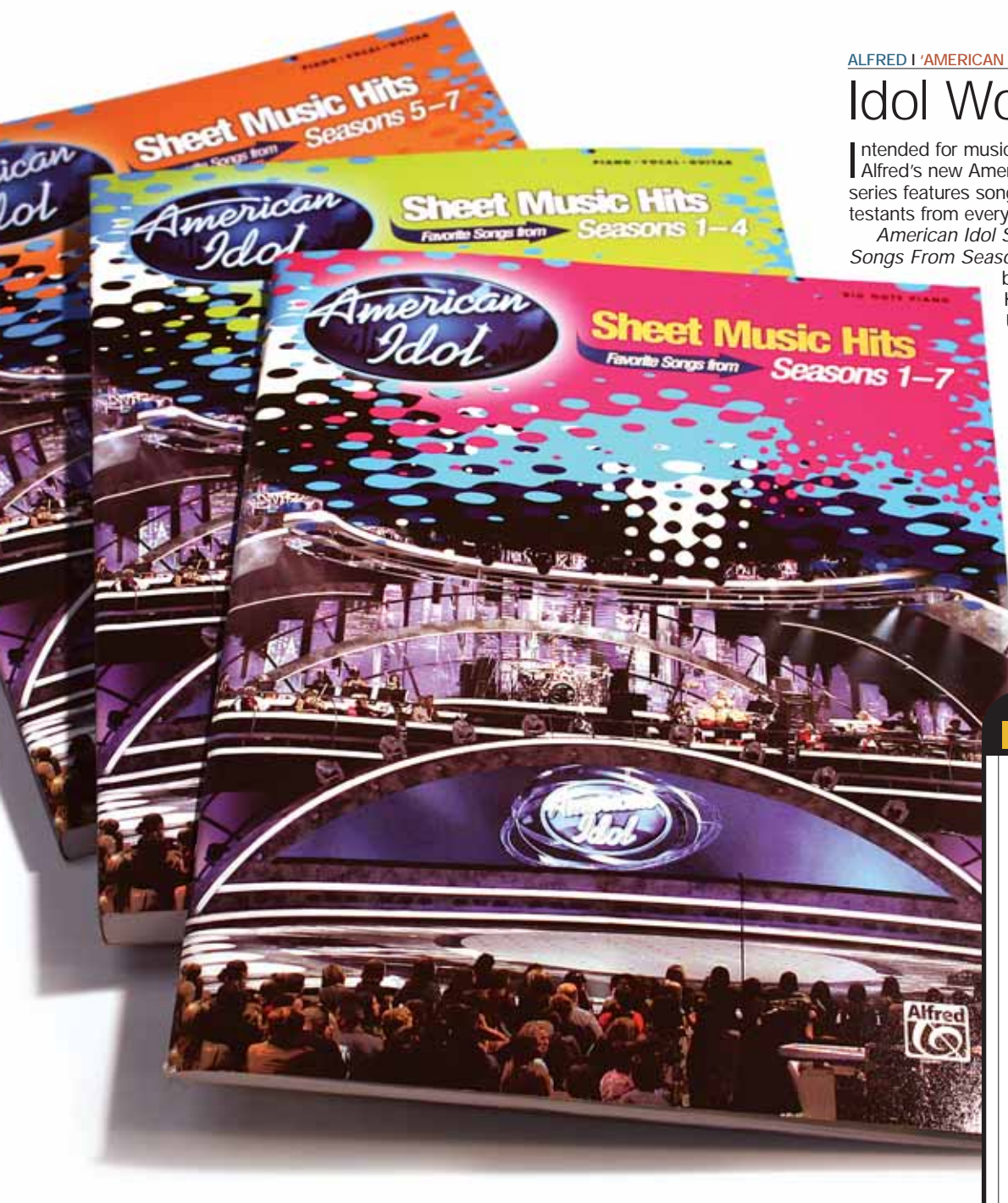
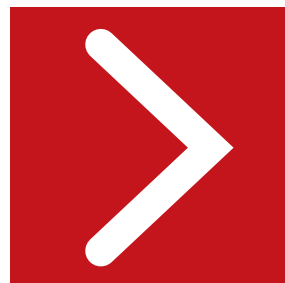
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{alfred.com}

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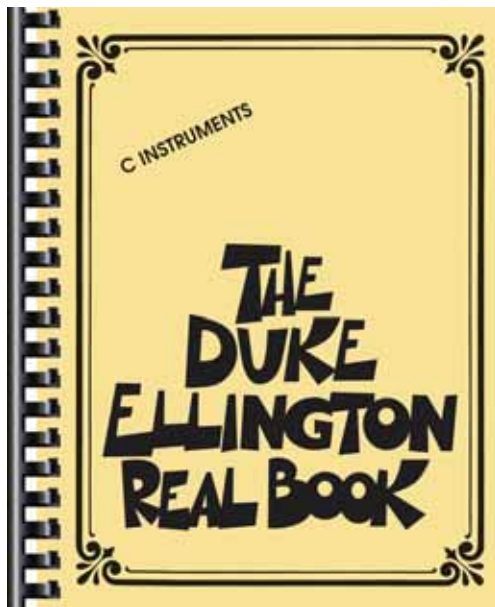
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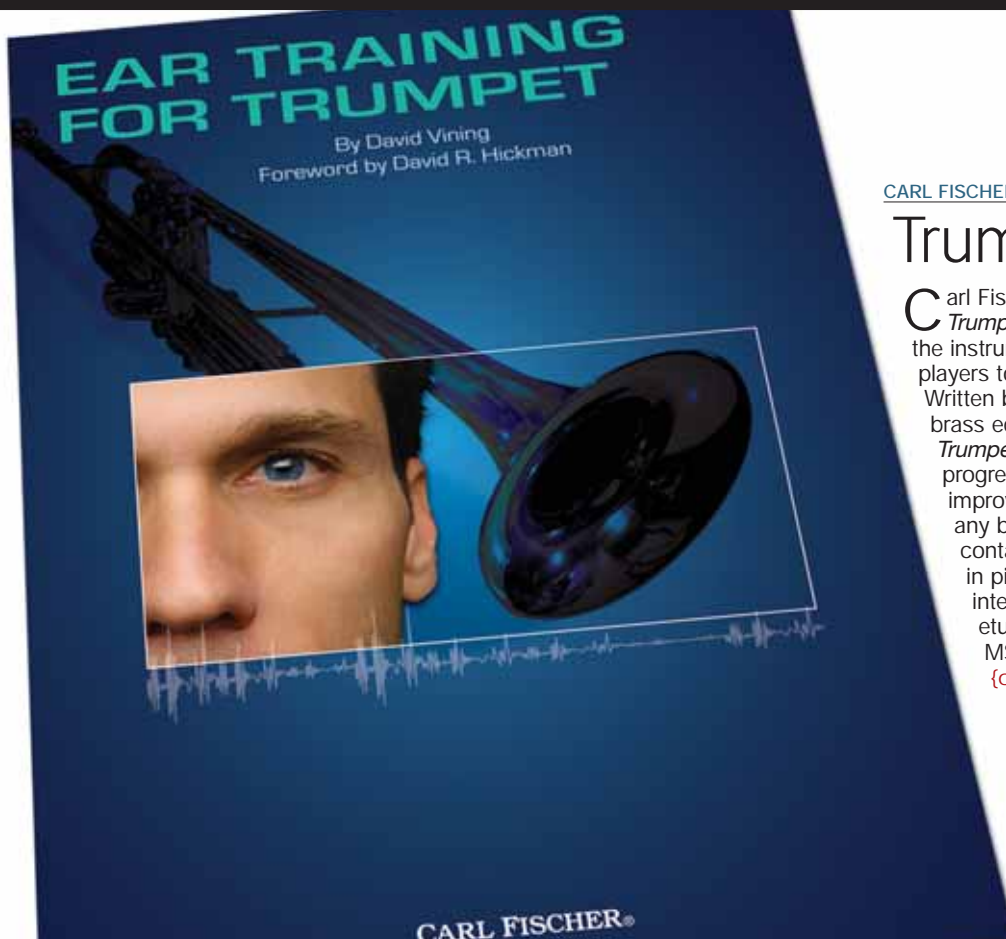
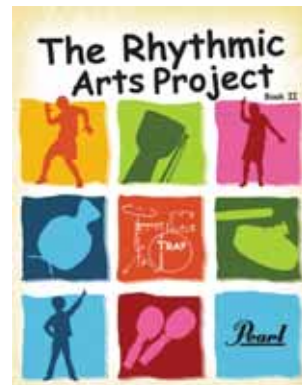


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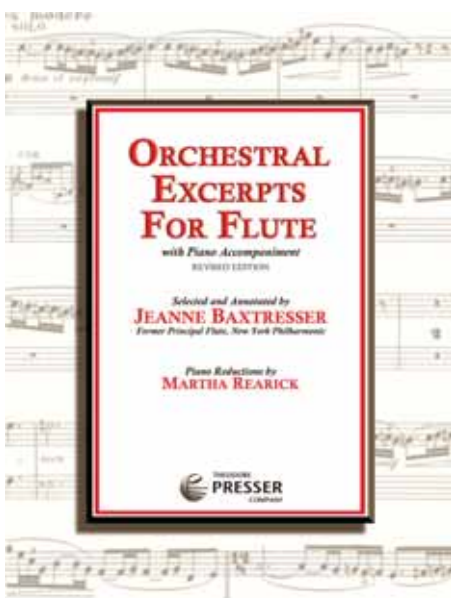
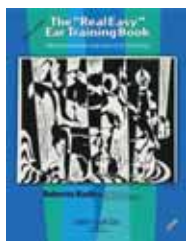
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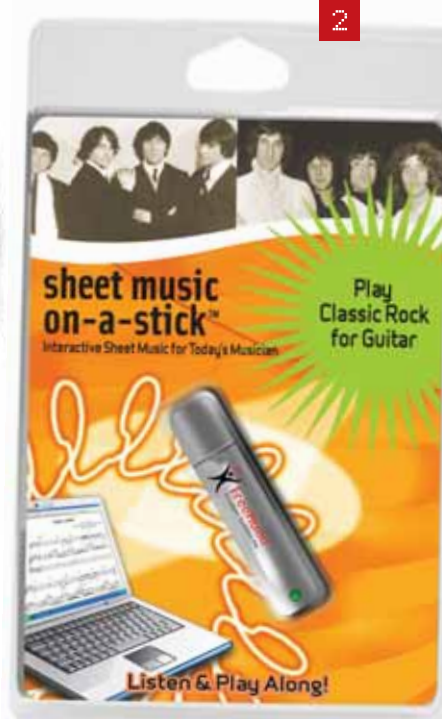
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3 MUSIC SALES GUITAR DECKS
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1 LACE HELIX LINE

Inspired by the launch of Lace's Helix bass in 2008, the new Helix guitar line features three distinct models defined by their finishes and pickups. All three models have Lace control knobs, CTS pots and Grover tuners. The HG01 (pictured) is equipped with three patented Lace Aluminotones — two single-coil versions for the neck and middle with a new Lowboy Aluminotone humbucker in the bridge. Gloss black is the standard color. MSRP: \$999.99. {lacemusic.com}

2 SPARROW GUITARS THE VON DRAT

The Von Drat guitar joins the Rat Rod and Twangmaster in Sparrow Guitars' Continental line. This surf guitar features Burns Tri-Sonic pickups, Grover tuners and a Wilkinson tremolo. It also boasts an alder body, maple neck and rosewood fingerboard. The Von Drat has 21 frets, a 12-inch radius and a 25.5-inch scale length with the volume, tone top-hat knobs and three-way selector switch located at the lower bout for versatility and playability. {sparrowguitars.com}

3 PARKER GUITARS FLY MOJO MIDI GUITAR

The Fly Mojo MIDI Guitar combines MIDI technology with a Roland GK-KIT-GT3 divided pickup kit. This allows for full integration with the Roland V-Guitar system, GR-20 guitar synthesizer or any Boss GK effect series pedals. The guitar features Seymour Duncan Jazz and JB pickups and a Fishman Piezo electronics system. The guitar is constructed from a carbon-glass epoxy fretboard fused to a single solid piece of mahogany. {parkerguitars.com}

4 EASTWOOD GUITARS AIRLINE '59

Eastwood Guitars' Airline '59 Custom 2P and 3P feature a rubber binding, which surrounds the entire body. Additional details include a striped pickguard, aluminum tone switch plate and NOS Valco knobs on all guitars. Both the '59 Custom 2P and 3P models are fitted with the high-output Airline vintage-voiced single-coil pickups. These models ship in a vintage form-fit Airline hardshell case with steel-plate logo. {eastwoodguitars.com}



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Peavey has expanded its Custom Shop to include custom-built amplifiers, such as the Sensation. This 20-watt amplifier is available as a head or combo and is based on three 12AX7 pre-amp tubes and two EL84 cathode-biased output tubes. Standard front-panel features include pre-gain, treble, middle, bass and post (master volume) controls with optional reverb. The rear panel consists of two speaker outputs with an impedance selector. Effects send and return jacks are included on models equipped with the effects loop option. The Sensation will be available in the second quarter. {peavey.com}

LR BAGGS | VENUE DI

Acoustic Tones

LR Baggs' Venue DI pedal can produce acoustic tones ideal for guitars in a live venue. The Venue DI is designed with 100-percent discrete circuitry and features a transformer couple DI for ground loop elimination. Additional features include a five-band EQ with tunable low- and high-mid bands, phase inversion, precision VU meter for accurate gain adjustment, DC input for use without battery, and a four-segment battery check gauge. MSRP: \$399. {lrbags.com}



EVENTIDE | PITCHFACTOR

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ORANGE AMPLIFIERS | LIMITED-EDITION WHITE FINISH

Orange Goes White

British amp manufacturer Orange has added a limited-edition 2009 white finish to its U.K.-built valve amps and cabs. The cabinets have black fittings with classic Orange front grill cloth, logo and crest. This finish was previously only available for special orders.

For 2009, Orange is offering the white finish for a limited time at the same price as existing Orange amps and heads. {orangeamps.com}



1 SHURE SM27 The SM27 is a rugged, large-diaphragm, side-address cardioid condenser mic. It has a 1-inch, thin Mylar diaphragm for transient response, low-frequency reproduction and a low self-noise (9.5 dB SPL) that provides fine detail when recording or during live performance. The SM27 also offers lower self-noise and improved dynamic range specifications over the KSM27 model that it replaces. It comes in new packaging and has a two-year limited warranty. MSRP: \$460. {shure.com}

2 SABINE SWM6000 SYSTEM The DTV-free SWM6000 Smart Spectrum wireless microphone system operates in the license-free 915 MHz ISM band that's free of WiFi interference. It offers digital companding along with a full channel strip of signal processing, including mic modeling, an FBX feedback extender, a compressor, a de-esser, effects presets and an RF scanner. The unit operates on rechargeable AA batteries and is compatible with third-party controllers. {sabine.com}

3 CAD U37 The U37 studio recording mic is one in a series of new CAD USB microphones designed for computer users, gamers, musicians and home recordists. It enables users to plug in and record studio-quality audio directly into Windows and Mac computers. This versatile vocal and instrument microphone can be used for creating podcasts over the Internet, audio for video and songs, and soundtracks. MSRP: \$79. {cadmics.com}

4 AVANT ELECTRONICS AVANTONE BV-1 The Avantone B-series BV-1 microphone has a retro, butter-cream finish with polished-nickel trim. It comes packaged in a tweed and alligator trim carrying case. Beyond looks, the BV-1 features a low-noise, hand-selected 6072A tube, as well as premium-grade capacitors and resistors. The 35 mm dual capsule assembly with a six-micron membrane offers sensitivity with an open texture. A custom, U.S.-made Cinemag output transformer provides rich yet linear output. {avantelectronics.com}

5 AUDIO-TECHNICA AT8022 The AT8022 X/Y stereo mic has a coincident capsule configuration that provides smaller housing and produces a stereo image with spatial impact and realism. It also features a compact, lightweight design for camera-mount use. The AT8022 has an 80 Hz high-pass filter for easily switching from a flat frequency response to a low-end roll off. It comes equipped with a professional stand clamp; windscreens; and soft, protective pouch. MSRP: \$499. {audio-technica.com}





QSC | CSM SERIES

Stage Presence

QSC's new CSM stage monitor series includes three models: the CSM10, CSM12 and CSM15. They feature high power output, transparent sound and reliability. User-adjustable pattern control of the high-frequency section facilitates changes in the vertical plane from asymmetrical coverage spanning a total of 100 degrees to a fully symmetrical 150 degrees.

{qscaudio.com}

> | Artist Approved



Hartke recently added Victor Wooten to its family of artist endorsees. Wooten used Hartke HyDrive cabinets and LH1000 amplifiers on his recent SMV world tour. Hartke is also planning a clinic tour with Wooten for its dealers and distributors. {samsontech.com}



RCF | ART 7 SERIES

RCF Expands ART

RCF's new ART series features cabinets designed to dampen vibrations, and the reflex tubes have been resized for improved efficiency.

All the loudspeaker models are equipped with 750-watt digital amplifiers — 250 for the compression driver and 500 for the woofer. A PFC power supply provides a full voltage supply from any plug available. The ART 715-A (pictured) is a speaker that gives extra punch in bass reproduction for live sound applications.

{rcfaudio.com}



MOOG MUSIC | ETHERWAVE PLUS

Wave Control

Moog Music's Etherwave Plus is a theremin that uses gestural playing techniques to control gear with the wave of a hand. It's also a stand-alone Control Voltage (CV) controller. The Etherwave Plus' CV control signals are proportional to the pitch and volume of the theremin's audio signal. It can be connected to the pitch and volume CV inputs of a Little Phatty or other analog synthesizer for a new way to interact with a synth. The unit has the features and tone of Moog's standard Etherwave theremin and comes housed in a naturally finished hardwood cabinet. {moogmusic.com}



D'ADDARIO | EVANS
CLEAR TENOR HEADS

Clear Headed

Evans' new Corps Clear tenor heads have a two-ply design with a 6.5 mil top ply and 10 mil bottom ply. This head delivers tone clarity and enables the drums to cut through the ensemble in clear and discernible pitches. The extra thickness makes the Corps Clear tenor heads more durable, which prolongs the life of the head and keeps them in tune longer. {evansdrumheads.com}



PEARL | ANARCHY CRASHER

Create Chaos

The Anarchy Crasher is the latest addition to the Pearl Anarchy family. It can be mounted off a standard 3/8-inch percussion post or any Pearl cymbal stand. The mounting bracket accepts the diameter of the Pearl Wing Loc, so drummers can stack the Crasher on top of a cymbal for quick accents. It yields a cutting white noise effect. MSRP: \$65. {pearldrum.com}

TYCOON | RETRO SERIES

Retro Groove

Tycoon Percussion's new Artist Retro models of congas and bongos are reminiscent of Cuban-style drums from the 1950s and '60s. This series is made from environmentally friendly, hand-selected Siam oak. The congas are 28-inches tall and available in 10-, 11-, 11 3/4-inch and 12 1/2-inch sizes. They come with high-quality, water buffalo heads and contrasting black, powder-coated hardware. {tycoonpercussion.com}





CONN-SELMER | LUDWIG EPIC SERIES

Epic Drums

Ludwig's Epic series features new, ultra-thin, six-ply shells that vibrate at a more even rate. The Epic series is available in five different configurations, four high-gloss lacquer finishes that are accented by the new classic keystone lug, 2.5 mm snare hoops and vintage bronze hardware. MSRP: \$1,270. {conn-selmer.com}



DIXON DRUMS | URBAN CAMO WRAP

Dixon Disguise

Dixon Drums has expanded its Demon series with an Urban Camo wrap finish. The Demon five-piece Urban Camo kit is constructed with seven-ply birch/mahogany shells featuring 45-degree bearing edges and 1.6 mm hoops. All toms and the snare include Evans G1 coated batter heads. The kit comes with an 18- by 22-inch bass drum, 8- by 10-inch tom, 9- by 12-inch tom, 14- by 14-inch floor tom and 5.5- by 14-inch snare drum. {kamanmusic.com}



SNARE SALES

Three must-have snares that bring proper pop to a drum kit.



1 BLACK SWAMP PERCUSSION
CRAVIOTTO SOLID SHELL The Craviotto Solid Shell series from Black Swamp Percussion is made with Craviotto's maple, ash, walnut or cherry solid shells in either 5.5- by 14-inch or 6.5- by 14-inch sizes. The series also features die-cast hoops and either the Multisonic or SoundArt strainers for maximum tonal and timbre possibilities. MSRP: \$1,372-\$1,713. {blackswamp.com}

2 GMS REVOLUTION SERIES The Revolution series snare drums have a thin coating of metal on maple drum shells. Drummers can choose from bronze, brass, copper, steel and nickel coatings on any surface of the shell. They can also mix and match different combinations of metal and wood. The snares' bearing edges are left uncoated for a warmer tone, while the metal coating amplifies attack, brightness, projection and bite. {gmsdrums.com}

3 MAPEX MPX LINE The MPX line includes eight new models available with steel, maple or birch shells. All MPX snare drums have low-mass lugs, flanged steel hoops, fully adjustable throw-offs and Remo drum heads. The MPX maple and birch lines come in 14- by 5.5-inch and 13- by 6-inch sizes. The MPX steel snares come in 14- by 5.5-inch, 13- by 5.5-inch and 10- by 5.5-inch sizes. MSRP: \$239.99 for all MPX snares. {mapexdrums.com}

GEAR >

PIANOS & KEYBOARDS



LINE 6 | POD STUDIO KB37

New POD Launch

Line 6 has started shipping the POD Studio KB37. This USB audio interface combines a 37-key MIDI controller and multiple inputs and outputs with a complete collection of pro audio software, including POD Farm. The KB37 has 24-bit, 96-kHz recording; 37 full-size, velocity-sensitive keys; and software-assignable MIDI controls. MSRP: \$419.99. {line6.com}

M-AUDIO | AXIOM PRO

All-in-One Control

M-Audio's new Axiom Pro 49 and Pro 61 give musicians a more responsive playing experience, with deep tactile control that imitates the feel of a real piano. Available in 49- and 61-key models, the Axiom Pro series offers easy software integration with DAWs, including Pro Tools, Cubase, Logic and Reason programs. The Axiom Pro lets users control a whole session directly from their keyboards. MSRP: Axiom Pro 49, \$599.95; Axiom Pro 61, \$699.95. {maudio.com}



PEARL RIVER | RITMÜLLER

Ritmüller Redesigned

Redesigned by European designer Lothar Thomma, Pearl River's Ritmüller pianos have been re-engineered and assembled using Louis Renner hammers; genuine ebony wood sharps; solid-spruce soundboards; Röslau strings; and solid-maple-capped, vertically laminated bridges. The GH148R2 grand piano measures 4 feet and 10 inches and weighs 778 pounds. {ritmullerusa.com}



ROLAND | VP-770

Pop Star

Roland's new VP-770 vocal and ensemble keyboard features vocal effects, quality ensemble sounds, an enhanced interface and on-board sounds to meet the needs of any music genre.

The VP-770 is also equipped with high-resolution vocoder modeling, which can generate vocal effects for dance music, pop, R&B and hip-hop genres without a separate vocoder or processor. A headset microphone is included to assure a strong signal path with the on-board microphone pre-amp. {rolandus.com}

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BAND & ORCHESTRA

YAMAHA | CARNEGIE HALL RECORDERS

Cobrand for a Cause

Yamaha Corp. of America's B&O Division has debuted cobranded student recorders in partnership with The Weill Institute at Carnegie Hall. The YRS-24BCH recorders feature a dark brown color embossed with the Carnegie Hall logo and include a cobranded lanyard. Proceeds from the recorder sales will help fund The Weill Music Institute. Additional proceeds will be used to provide music instruments to New York public schools. yamaha.com/band



BURKART FLUTES | RESONA 200

Resonant Quality

Burkart Flutes and Piccolos' Resona 200 flute falls into the step-up category for advanced students. Burkart's U.S.-made, sterling silver, hand-cut headjoint adds to the flute's tonal performance.

Responsive and resonant Straubinger pads give the instrument greater stability. All the keywork and touch pieces create the flute's professional, ergonomic feel and fit. Setup and final adjustments are made at Burkart's Boston-based workshop to ensure high quality. burkart.com



JUPITER | XO 1646
B-FLAT FLUGELHORN

Top Brass

Among its recently released brass models, Jupiter has added the 1646 Bb flugelhorn to the XO line of instruments. The XO flugelhorn gives professional musicians a competitive selection for their performance needs. The 1646 Bb flugelhorn features a 0.413-inch bore and a nickel silver, tunable leadpipe for a more focused and darker timbre. The 1646 has a 6-inch, hand-hammered, one-piece bell of silver-plated yellow or rose brass and a custom, wooden third valve trigger with mini-ball linkage. jupitermusic.com

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AMERICAN DJ | LED TRISPOT

Casting Colors

The new LED Trispot features American DJ's Tri-Color LED technology. It utilizes a tri-color, 3-watt LED source that contains three different 1-watt, color

LEDs. This three-in-one LED design allows for mixing colors inside each lamp, creating a full spectrum of color possibilities. The LED Trispot operates from DMX-512, master/slave and Sound Active modes. MSRP:

\$189.95.

{americandj.com}



STANTON DJ | T.92 USB TURNTABLE

Vinyl Archivist

Stanton DJ has launched the T.92 USB turntable. The unit has USB and S/PDIF outputs, so DJs and record collectors can archive their vinyl library onto a Mac or PC. The T.92 USB comes with music editing software, including Cakewalk Pyro Audio Creator and Audacity. These programs let users edit and clean up music files. MSRP: \$299. {stantondj.com}



GLOBAL TRUSS | LED TRUSS WARMER

Rainbow Rig

The TW-RGB9 Truss Warmer is the first lighting product from Global Truss. The unit is a color-changing LED designed to fit inside the company's square truss.

Powered by nine bright, 1-watt LEDs (three red, three, green and three blue), the Truss Warmer uses RGB color mixing to turn any rig into an uplifting effect at concerts, stage productions, nightclubs, DJ shows or any entertainment venue. It's also equipped with preprogrammed color macros and a built-in microphone for sound-active operation, letting it be used without a controller. Compact in size but extremely powerful, it has a triangular shape, which lets it be easily inserted into an F34 or F44 square truss. MSRP: \$358.95. {globaltruss.com}



CHAUVET | Q-SPOT 250 LED

Q-Spot Gets Greener

Chauvet continues its commitment to a greener DJ line with a new, LED-fitted version of the Q-Spot 250 LED yoke. It offers the advantages of dissipating little to no heat, which eliminates the need for duty cycles. The Q-Spot 250 LED moving head spot boasts the luminosity of a 250-watt discharge lamp. {chauvetlighting.com}



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CHAMPION IDEAS

Takeaways from NAMM 2009's 'Breakfast of Champions'

On Jan. 15, NAMM President and CEO Joe Lamond sat down with three retail "champions" during the NAMM University "Breakfast of Champions" session. Each guest had a music store with a unique evolution. Jason Tavaria's Dolphin Music in Liverpool, England, began as a Web site run from his college dorm room. Scott Silver's Chicago Music Exchange in Chicago grew out of his vintage guitar collection. Billy Cuthrell's Progressive Music Center in Raleigh, N.C., started as a music lessons studio before growing into a dealership.

Despite their differences, all three shared common insights. Here are some highlights of their discussion.

Community Builders

Jason: The way we built the community [online] was on trust. When we started, buying on the Internet was a new thing. People were nervous. If you buy a guitar, an amp or a speaker, and it's not right or it doesn't work, what happens then? Who's this faceless company that we've never seen?

I suppose what we've always done is over-excel on service. That's how we formed that trust. That's how we formed our community.

Billy: I'm owner-accessible. My office is behind the counter. Nobody works for me. They work with me. There's no way I could do this company or anything else by myself. It's a team effort.

Scott: I just wanted a place where, if you brought in your



Billy Cuthrell (left)
with NAMM's Joe
Lamond



Jason Tavaria



Scott Silver

wife, girlfriend or friend, they could relax and be comfortable. We keep the place beautifully clean. It's a place where people can just hang out and enjoy themselves.

Idea Generators

Jason: One of the things that we're looking to do is work with Facebook and how to play the ukulele. So, why not show [customers] how easy it is to play the ukulele with a YouTube video? If one of 100 people get this message on their Facebook [page], they'll say, "I'll do that." If one in 10 of those

people go on to buy a guitar, we'll start to increase the number of people out there learning.

Billy: I'll come in with 10 ideas. And my staff will go, "No, no, maybe, stupid, no, get out of here." The next week I'll come in with 10 more ideas. All it takes is one idea to hit.

I stole a lot of good ideas from Scott [Silver] for my new shop. Go to that store and see what you can learn. When I went to the design firm, I gave them a picture of Scott's store and said, "This is a great-looking shop. Don't copy it, but let's see if we can figure out a nice

layout." So, Scott, we appreciate the help.

Scott: I just want to interject: You can have the most beautiful store in the world, but if you don't have customer service and people to take care of your customers, you have nothing. If someone has a problem with a guitar, a pack of strings, anything, just take care of it.

Positive Forecasters

Jason: I'm really excited about the year ahead. We're in a great industry. People love making music. Even if times are booming, people don't go out and buy 100 guitars. So when times are bad, people will still buy their guitars. They still have their passion for it. And that's why 2009 is going to be a really great year. Just do what you do well. Don't try to overexpose yourselves.

Billy: We're going to end 2008 38-percent up. That's a good year. Raleigh, N.C., is a somewhat insulated area. Our housing market hasn't hit the gutter like other places. A lot of people still have their jobs. Try to explain to your 12-year-old what your portfolio did and how bad the markets did last year. They don't care. They just want to know, "Do I still get my guitar lesson on Monday?" Parents will do without to make sure their kids still have some normalcy in life.

Scott: I think the future is going to be great. But everyone's got to make changes. It can't be the same-old sit-behind-the-counter. You've got to get out there and talk to your customers. They will come back. **MI**

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GH-1 Ground Hound™ Ground Isolator

Allows connection of pedals with opposing grounds off a single Power-All® (not pictured)



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SOPHISTICATION MADE SIMPLE.

The H4n is our most sophisticated recorder. And with its simplified user interface, it's never been easier to make incredible recordings.

Custom-designed, X/Y stereo condenser mics record at either 90° or 120°. And our new, digitally controlled mic preamp renders audio so precise, you'll sound like you recorded in a world-class studio!

WHY 4 CHANNELS ARE BETTER THAN 2.

Proper miking is essential to making a great recording. The H4n is the only handheld that can record on four channels simultaneously using its onboard mics with your external mics. Then use its built-in mixer for perfectly balanced recordings that are richer than ever.

IT'S ABOUT THE MUSIC.

The H4n is also a user-friendly 4-track studio. Plug in a guitar or bass and use its amp models to inspire your creativity. Onboard studio effects, tuner and phrase trainer make the H4n very musician friendly. Even use it as a USB interface to record directly to your computer.

BRAINS WITH A BODY, TOO.

Record high-resolution audio at 24-bit/96kHz on SDHC media of up to 32GB. Time stamp and track marker functions give you greater control. You can even edit your recordings on the fly.

The H4n feels robust and its rubberized chassis reduces handling noise. A large LCD screen and onboard speaker take your experience to the next level.

FULLY LOADED.

Everything you need is included: a 1 GB SD card, windscreen, mic clip adapter, AC adapter, USB cable, protective case and Cubase LE recording software.

With the new H4n from Zoom, it's never been easier to make world-class recordings... no matter where you are in the world.



Zoom H4n Handy Recorder
World-class recordings for everyone.