

FOR PROGRESSIVE MUSIC RETAILERS

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JULY 2009 | MUSICINCMAG.COM

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Aaron Soriero  
of Music Matters



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Photo by Mike Moreland

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Cover photo by Mike Moreland

# 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



*Jim Pinkston Music*

*Sticks n Strings*



"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

*Sound Stage*



"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

*Gelb Music*



"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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# PERSPECTIVE

PERSPECTIVE | BY ZACH PHILLIPS

## A VIDEO'S WORTH 1,000 HITS

Picture this. A store owner sits fingerpicking "Blackbird" on an acoustic guitar. A teenage employee approaches him, bemoaning the fact that she can't get certain customers to pay on time. He finally looks up and says, "Why don't you just ask them?"



This is the 30-second video snippet that S & K Music Studio of Las Vegas e-mails to late-payers. It's offbeat, friendly and attention-grabbing. It's also more efficient and cheaper than endless phone calls. And it makes for great PR during a recession — positioning S & K as everyday folks with the same economic concerns as everyone else.

S & K's not alone in harnessing the power of Internet video for a little extra promotional push. Dealers in every market have found different applications for this technology.

Creative Music Center in Monroe, Conn., posts footage of in-store clinics at online video hub YouTube. The store's name is always included within the clip's title, and owner Liz Reisman said this has helped boost her company's Google search engine ranking.

Print music dealership Stanton's Sheet Music in Columbus, Ohio, recently began posting product reviews on both YouTube and its own Web site. According to Eric Strouse, Stanton's president, employees have jumped at the chance to share their knowledge. And the benefits are plenty.

"First of all, I'll get better Google rankings," Strouse said, noting that Google purchased YouTube in 2006. "The second thing is customer perception. We're going to seem a little more credible out there. We'll seem more in touch with what customers are looking for. We're already getting feedback on those videos, like 'Great video. I'm glad to see you're producing this because it really helped me choose between two books.'"

In late April, Grant Billings of Steinway Piano Gallery in Madison, Wis., launched a new Web site featuring a password-protected area with videos of local student piano recitals. Families can forward video links to share their kids' performances. In the process, people get introduced to Steinway Piano Gallery's products and services.

Creating online product demo videos can also be an effective sales training tool. One of *Music Inc.*'s new contributors, industry veteran Kenny Smith, discusses this application in his column, "YouTube Sales Training." It's not to be missed. (See page 48.)

"YouTube videos are like little soldiers that go out and do serious battle for a business, working 24/7," Smith wrote, adding, "and they're free."

It's up to you to get imaginative and do the legwork. Drop \$100 on a Flip camcorder, download some free video-editing software and show the world all that you do. People need to know. **MI**



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The legendary crunch of British steel and Greenback-style speakers delivers searing blues to UK anarchy from this Anglo-voiced pedal. Tough Bluesbreaker overdrive, the throaty roar of a Plexi or the ballsy smack-down of a '70s Metalface, it all adds up to a well tasty spot o' bowver, Brit-style.



#### CALIFORNIA

Come for the chiming, woody cleans, the gnarly 'wicker-grille' overdrive and the supernatural silky sustain of the lead tones. Stay for the devastating chunk of a high gain rectifier. With the velveteen punch of a US-style speaker emulation, you have everything you need to create your own California dream tone.



#### LIVERPOOL

That distinctive diamond grille tone is yours for the tweaking. From the jangle of mop-top pop to the top-boosted growl of mod rock, this amp style has a voice that shook generations. Push it to the limit and it will, it will, rock you.



#### BLONDE

This Blonde dishes out pure American tone to the stratosphere. Sparkly, spanky cleans that overdrive with a satisfying low-end rumble become the punchy bark of hard-pushed tweed, maxing out in a fat sizzle of lead boosted tone. This Blonde is one wild ride through history.



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# LETTERS

## Printed Gratitude

Just a note of gratitude for all that you and your magazine do in support of RPMDA (Retail Print Music Dealers Association). Your annual presence at our convention, as well as your continual promotion of our event throughout the year, are both such important facets to our success. I know we will likely never be able to thank you enough.

RPMDA 2009 in Salt Lake City was another one of those “can it ever get better than this?” conventions. The opening keynote was by Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser, there was a special performance by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and a closing address was by Sesame Street’s Bob McGrath. It

**+ FOR FULL COVERAGE OF THE RPMDA CONVENTION SEE PAGE 34**

seems year after year the industry/educational sessions and off-site events just can’t measure up to the previous year. But, lucky for us, they do!

Despite the doom and gloom on the status of our national and global economy, the RPMDA convention and its participants — both publishers and dealers alike — proved that the strength of our industry is in our people and our relationships with each other. Now more than ever, that is the thread that will hold us together as we weather the tough times and revel in the good times, when they come around to all of us again.

I, for one, look forward to seeing you in Oklahoma City in 2010.

*Becky Lightfoot  
Fender’s Music  
Former RPMDA President  
Denton, Texas*

## Bringing Profit Back

I enjoyed Zach Phillips’ perspective on minimum advertised pricing (“MAP Is Good, Period,” May 2009). I think Fender’s recent change of MAP percentage upward (less discount) is a giant step in the right direction. Ignore the fact that they made a large increase in retail prices. That’s obviously a margin matter for them, but at least it makes the product more profitable for all retailers, even big-boxes in spite of themselves. It may cost Fender some sales, as selling price on product A jumps from approximately \$1,000 to more than \$1,400! Raising MAP percentages to a less-discounted MAP price by all manufacturers would be a giant step to putting profitability back into music retailing.

*Bart Wittrock  
Rockin’ Robin Music  
Houston*

## Disgruntled Dealer

Here we go again — a letter from some disgruntled, smaller dealer who got treated unfairly by a larger company.

After 35 years, Fender Musical Instruments decided Fender’s business philosophy and Buzzo’s (the Big B) weren’t the same, so we were not renewed as dealers in 2009, even though I received product in January, February and March 2009 and have the “Official Authorized Fender Repair 2009” sign.

It would have made more sense to have informed me after a quarter of the year passed that I would not be renewed in 2010. All of my long-range advertising, telephone books, seasonal advertising and business cards advertise Fender for the duration of each



**‘I think Fender’s recent change of MAP is a step in the right direction.’**

**— Bart Wittrock**

advertising vehicle. I’m paying phone directories in five counties to advertise items I am not able to get! Does Fender care?

Actually, the “inside people” at Fender seemed concerned. I was told the direct salesperson and the regional sales manager made the decision.

The salesperson said in mid-March that I was a dealer until April 1. On March 31, I called in an order for 20 amps — all one model that is a great value — and Fender’s inside salesperson said I was no longer a dealer and to call my road rep salesperson.

I called the salesperson, who said I “was only a dealer until April 1 if a customer wanted something.” Obviously, after 35 years of buying merchandise from Fender, I considered myself “a customer.” The salesperson then said she would call the regional sales manager about it. I called my inside sales rep, explained my

situation and asked him to have the regional sales manager call me, and finally, he did. I pleaded my case with him, and he granted my request. The whole procedure took 10–12 phone calls and five days. Of course, after 35 years of paying my bills on time, I had to pay in advance with a credit card.

I will not complain about the Fender product line or quality. I will not complain about the inside sales, customer service, credit people, etc. They were always polite and incredibly helpful. However, except for one road rep, I have nothing but disdain and disappointment for the outside salespeople.

I have seen and been through much in 39 years as a store owner, and although I was always a minuscule part of Fender’s business, Fender was a very big part of mine.

*Al ‘The Buzzo’ Bruno  
Buzzo Music  
Geneseo, N.Y.*

## Corrections

The “Smart Buys” sidebar featured in May 2009’s *The Source* had a typo in the Web address for Wyman Piano. The Web site is wymanpiano.com, not wyamanpiano.com. Also, in the June 2009 *Band & Orchestra* section, Conn-Selmer’s Web address is incorrectly shown as connselmer.com. The correct Web site is conn-selmer.com. *Music Inc.* regrets the errors.

EDITOR’S NOTE: MUSIC INC.

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# RETAIL

THE LABORATORY | BY SARA FARR

## CALCULATED RISKS

Aaron Barbarics and Steve Delaney were in the final planning stages of opening The Laboratory two years ago — right around the time most economists agree the wheels of the recession started turning.

Many prospective business owners would have rethought their plans to open a dealership using their discretionary income, but Barbarics and Delaney went full steam ahead.

“For months prior to securing a leasehold, we had a really vibrant dialogue about the culture of the store we wanted to see — brand names, customer service, a think-tank atmosphere,” said Delaney of the Deptford, N.J.-based operation.

### INSTANT EXPANSION

He and Barbarics drew on their previous decade of MI retail experience, as well as their backgrounds as local musicians and in the CD duplication/manufacturing business. Because of the downturn, some local music stores had dropped lines, so Delaney and Barbarics were able to secure nearly every brand they wanted. When it came to guitars, Delaney focused on brands that were both economical and playable, and Barbarics was able to serve



Aaron Barbarics (left) and Steve Delaney

Photo by Ernie Rose Christensen

The Lab opened right as the economy tanked. So why does it keep posting monthly gains?

the higher-end market. (The store’s guitar selection tops out at around the \$2,000 range.)

They leased a 3,000-square-foot location in a strip mall and opened their doors to a warm

response, but soon realized the space wasn’t big enough to suit their vision. When the iSold It on eBay shop next door closed, they jumped on the chance to expand, doubling their square footage.

“We’ve been well-served by biting off a little more than we can chew and not living within our means,” Delaney said. “We’re not reckless, but when we have a choice between being careful and trying to act like we’re the next big thing, we choose the more exciting option and are prepared to suffer the consequences.”

Barbarics said the expansion

was possible because he and Delaney were the only employees, and they both agreed to take pay cuts. It “took us up several notches in credibility,” he said, and when customers came through the door, they were hit with the “wow” factor.

Delaney added that the duo’s philosophy of calculated risk has often paid off. “I’m a drummer first, and I felt very passionate about Yamaha drums,” he said. When he discovered that Yamaha required a full-line commitment, rather than balk at the prospect, Delaney took on the inventory. The Lab has since become well-known among the local, pro drummers.

“Drummers have a lot of needs for accessories, so having a huge inventory of accessories backed up by remarkable high-end drum kits means that we get the drummers’ business,” Delaney said. “Being a pro shop wasn’t a core vision, but it turns out that following that path gave us great benefits.”

### STRICT POLICIES

Since opening, The Lab has posted month-on-month gains, according to Barbarics. Both partners said the store’s lesson program contributes 10–15 percent to the company’s overall bottom line and adds immeasurable value to

floor sales. During the past two years, it has gone from one teacher and a clutch of students to 10–12 teachers and more than 200 students.

Two factors have contributed to the success of The Lab's lesson program: strict guidelines and the launch of Rockademy Live, a program that teaches students to play in a live band and culminates in a performance at a local venue. The Lab posts lesson program guidelines on its Web site, so students, parents and teachers are on the same page. Lessons are paid for upfront in blocks of one month, helping eliminate last-minute cancellations and no-shows. The result is that The Lab and its teachers have a source of predictable income, and students and teachers know the program is credible.

"We didn't want an environment where [students] can come as they please and pay as they please," Barbarics said. "Having strict rules laid down in an understandable way and then being flexible adds great value. If you do make an

exception for a customer, they feel like you're taking care of them versus them taking advantage of us."

**INTEGRATED MARKETING**

The Lab also reaches customers with an active e-commerce site. While Barbarics said the Web site generates a small percentage of overall sales, it lets local customers familiarize themselves with the store's inventory. "I think independent stores need to have a solid site," he said. "You'll get additional customers, and your local customers can better understand your inventory."

Barbarics spends a lot of time networking with local musicians at open-mic nights, going out to see local bands perform and advertising through newspapers, the Internet and *Yellow Pages*. However, listening and responding to customer needs is ultimately what both partners feel is The Lab's best advertising.

"We want our customers to feel that this is their shop," Delaney said. **MI**

WILLIS MUSIC | BY JENNY DOMINE

# SUPERSTORE DESIGN

## Willis Music moves Louisville store, refreshes look

Willis Music recently relocated its Louisville, Ky., full-line dealership from a small mall space to a larger shopping center. The official

grand opening was held on March 14.

“Coming from a mall to a freestanding store usually results in less foot traffic,” said

Dan Herbert, Willis Music’s vice president. “Not this time.”

Herbert and store manager Mike McAfee, along with the Willis staff, worked together to

create the store’s new look.

“The joint effort let us talk with our customers and find out what was going to knock their socks off,” McAfee said.



### + THE SUPERSTORE

“We answer the phone, ‘Thanks for calling the Willis Music Superstore,’” McAfee said. “I know 7,800 feet isn’t a superstore like Mars or Guitar Center, but we really believe we are giving a super experience.”

The new location offers a superstore look with double the showroom space from the previous store. It holds 10 lesson studios; a full band studio; an in-house repair center; and an 80-seat, sound-proof auditorium with full stage lighting and a P.A. system provided by Peavey.



### + CEILING & FIXTURES

The guitar department has an edgy, industry feel with exposed, black ceiling; silver stage truss; and exposed, fluorescent lights. “I like the ceiling because it helps give the room an acoustically great sound,” McAfee said. The florescent lights and spotlights show off the guitars without overheating them.



### + CLEAR SIGNAGE

Every sign in the store features reflective, diamond-plate letters. This gives the entire showroom a sense of uniformity.

“If you walk in and want to browse on your own, you have a clear vision of where every department is,” McAfee said. “It’s very easy to maneuver through the store.”



## + BLENDED VIBE

The acoustic wall has its own unique vibe, which McAfee likened to “a gentlemen’s smoking room.” The wall’s rich, red color makes the acoustics guitars stand out. From the industrial ceiling to the rustic, wooden floors, the transition from rock ‘n’ roll to sensual warmth blends together seamlessly.



## + THE MIC STAND

The Mic Stand space was inspired by a display Herbert saw at a convention. It gives a musician the opportunity to hear his or her voice through multiple microphones for side-by-side comparison.



## + PRINT LIBRARY

The print music department is a different world, with soft, green walls and a lower ceiling to create the feel of a private library. The back wall is organized like a library, too, so teachers can find music easily. The red carpet matches the red paint on the acoustic wall to unite the store.

## + CHECK-OUT TIME

“We wanted a front counter that was unique,” McAfee said. The counter is a giant, crescent-shaped desk covered in diamond plate and a red countertop. “When you are in the interior of the store and want to checkout, you see it immediately,” he said. In addition to the flat-screen TV at the checkout counter, several others have been hung throughout the store to show products and promotions.



TRIBUTE

**Remembering Palmer**

Lon Palmer passed away on Dec. 12, 2008, at the age of 79. He was the founder of the Palmer Music Center and Music School in Belrose, N.Y., as well as the owner of Freeport Music in Long Island, N.Y. He also served as president of musicalinstruments.com and owned U.S. Regulation Bugle. Contributions may be made to The Lon T. Palmer Music Education Fund at Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, c/o Financial Manager, 6 W 48th St., New York, NY 10036.

In related news, Freeport Music has moved to a new store in Farmingville, N.Y., and appointed a new president, Steve Interrante.

CLOSING

**Goodbye, Patelson**

New York print music retail establishment Joseph Patelson Music House will be closing. At press time, the company was liquidating inventory at 50-percent off and "would be closing any day now," according to a clerk. Owner Marsha Patelson said the store had been losing money for years, and the weak economy hurt business "beyond repair." Patelson Music House is located next to Carnegie Hall.

VENUES

**Dave's Gets New Digs**

In early May, Dave's Music Den of Fort Wayne, Ind., moved its store inside fellow local retail giant Sweetwater. According to a May 8 article in the *News-Sentinel*, store co-owner Theresa Haner said the new location will offer more space to do business.

"We wanted to place ourselves in a musical environment," Haner said. "Being at Sweetwater offers the latest technology."

CLOSING

**Kauffman Closes**

Kauffman Music of Cumberland, Md., will close its doors for good on June 30. Proprietor Dave Kauffman cited less expendable income among residents as the reason for the closure, according to *Cumberland Times-News*. The store has had three different locations since opening in 2000.

BANANAS AT LARGE | CORPORATE

**BANANAS UNDER NEW LEADERSHIP**

This year, Bananas at Large in San Rafael, Calif., celebrates its 35th anniversary with a new owner and a new look. Industry veteran JD Sharp and his wife, Andrea, have named Alan Rosen and his wife, Meredith, the new owners of the dealership. Rosen has served as general manager of Bananas since 1992.



Alan Rosen

"It has been a very comfortable transition," Rosen said. "We've been friends and family for many years. [The Sharps] wanted to retire, and I want to keep the place open for another 35 years." JD Sharp will remain involved in marketing the company.

Rosen and his landlord plan to

improve the look and layout of Bananas, beginning with new interior paint, carpeting and a side roll-up door. Rosen said he also expects to have new lighting installed in June. The new design will include vendor kiosks, a play area for kids, a green room for high-profile clients, sofas and armless chairs, mirrors, microphone testing stations, and window displays.

Rosen said he plans to include more group lessons and increase the number of private teachers, in-store classes and events. Bananas will expand its teacher database to help local music teachers connect with more students.



From left: M&A's Jeff Phipps, band director David O'Neill, contest winners Michael Taunton and Erica Kushner, Jupiter's John Gronemeyer, and M&A's Matt Griffith

MUSIC & ARTS CENTER | AWARDS

**M&A's Student Pulitzers**

Music & Arts recently selected the winners of its Give the Gift of Music band contest and Give the Gift of Music orchestra contest. Students were asked to write essays on what made their directors stand out. Winners received several Jupiter horns or Otto Benjamin stringed instruments.

Erica Kushner from Colonial Middle School in Plymouth Meeting, Pa., won first place in the band contest, and Michael Taunton, also a Colonial

Middle School student, took second place. Aston Carrick from South Charlotte Middle School in Charlotte, N.C., came in third place.

Akarshan Giroti from Rocky Run Middle School in Chantilly, Va., took first place in the orchestra contest. Mariah Bishop of Cary Academy in Cary, N.C., won second place, and Florence Stevenson of Redland Middle School Rockville, Md., took third place.



ROCKLEY MUSIC CENTER | RECOVERY

# Rockley Suffers Fire Damage

Smoke and flames were sighted coming from Rockley Music Center's warehouse in Lakewood, Colo., on April 17. Fire crews had control of the blaze within 20 minutes, but the warehouse and 55 pianos were severely damaged. Nearby stores in a strip mall also suffered some smoke damage, according to Michelle French of the West Metro Fire Protection District.

Rockley Music Center, located just down the street from the warehouse, was not damaged. The warehouse held mostly used pianos, and no one was injured in the fire.

"By the end of the weekend, all we could do was laugh because you couldn't cry anymore," said Liane Rockley, Rockley Music Center's co-owner.

Rockley said she was touched by the outpouring of support from the music industry and the Lakewood community since the fire. She also received some good advice from Skip Maggiora of Skip's Music in Sacramento, Calif. He advised her to hire an adjustor.

"[Adjustors] know all the ins and outs of the [insurance] policy," Rockley said. "There are different ways to get your



stuff claimed depending on what it was used for. The adjustor is trying to get us an

advance on some funds, but I hear this could drag out for a year and a half."

**Sales Begin to FIZZLE...  
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ALL COUNTY MUSIC | COMMUNITY

# All County Named Partner of the Year

Broward County Public Schools recently honored All County Music of Tamarac, Fla., as its Partner of the Year. The award was presented to All County President Fred Schiff during the district's annual Community Involvement Awards, held at the Broward Convention Center in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Roughly 1,200 people were in attendance.

Schiff was nominated for the award by Joe Luechauer, Broward County music supervisor, and Christine Flynn, Westglades Middle School principal. Superintendent Jim Notter, school board Chairperson Maureen Dinnen



From left: Luechauer, Flynn and Schiff

and school board Vice Chairperson Jennifer Gottlieb presented the award.

The winner is chosen based on its innovation in the

schools, impact on the quality of children's education, and support of teachers and administrators.

During the ceremony,

Merrie Meyers-Kershaw, director of community involvement for Broward County Public Schools, explained how Schiff and All County Music came to the aid of Westglades Middle School in the 2008 fall semester when its band director suffered a medical emergency. Schiff and his staff began teaching the beginning band classes, so students could perform in the annual winter concert.

According to Schiff, the value of All County Music's 2008-2009 partnership exceeded \$30,000.

"Partnerships characterized by this level of dedication are rare," Flynn said.

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SWEETWATER | OUTREACH

# GIVE THE GIFT OF GEAR

In May, Sweetwater launched GearGift, a donation campaign designed to provide music gear and instruments to people of limited means with an interest in music.

Sweetwater regularly receives requests for gear donations from soldiers overseas, disaster victims, foster parents and non-profit organizations. GearGift encourages musicians from across the country to donate old instruments and recording and performance equipment. Sweetwater plans to refurbish the donated gear and ensure that it finds a new home with a deserving individual.

Donors will be encouraged to choose who they'd like to receive the gear — a soldier, child, non-profit organization and so on. GearGift is being promoted mainly through Sweetwater's Web site and e-mail and print publications.

"This is just one small way for Sweetwater to give back, and it makes our customers all across the country our partners in that effort," said Chuck Surack, founder and president of Sweetwater. ([sweetwater.com/geargift](http://sweetwater.com/geargift))



From left: Godin's Terry Swanson, raffle winner Coyde Perry, and West L.A. Music's Christina Ruffalo and Mark Spiwak

JOHN LENNON BUS | EDUCATION

# Lennon Bus, Dealers & Raffles

The John Lennon Educational Tour bus recently swung by two music product dealers to spread the joy of music making. Godin Guitars served as the bus' exclusive guitar sponsor.

West L.A. Music hosted the bus on March 21, and Godin rep Terry Swanson came out to host a raffle. Coyde Perry of Bakersfield, Calif., won the raffle, taking home a Godin Redline 3 Trans Amber Flame MN electric guitar.

The bus also toured three different Daddy's Junky Music locations from April 30 through May 3. A raffle was held at each store for a Godin Redline 1 Flame RN electric guitar. Winners included Sean Conant from Hampton, N.H.; Brock Massa from Warwick, R.I.; and David Plante from Lynnfield, Mass.

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# NAMM<sup>®</sup> News

JUNE 2009

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

## Wanna Play? Drives More People to Make Music—Every Day

NAMM's mission is to create more music makers and drive them into your stores. It's our daily focus, as we develop and execute marketing initiatives, speak our minds on Capitol Hill and engage the media in events that tell our story. The end result: customers walking through your doors, asking how they can make music. Have we achieved our goal? Our recent Gallup Poll shows we are getting there—but our job will never be done!

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# 85%

of people who don't currently play a musical instrument wish they had learned to play one.

**Highest Ever!**

SOURCE: "Attitudes Toward Music"  
2009 U.S. Gallup Poll commissioned by NAMM

### Note from Joe

To those of us in this great industry, there are only two kinds of people in the world: those who make music and those who wish they did.

That is what NAMM's *Wanna Play?* campaign is all about. Our goal is to make it easy for people of all ages to pick up an instrument and begin fulfilling their dream of playing. Put another way, we want to get them "off of the freeway" and into our Members' stores!

The *Wanna Play?* program received great media coverage last month for Wanna Play Music Week. NAMM's pro-music making message was on television, in newspapers, in magazines and on the Internet. Many Members capitalized on this promotion, holding events of their own that helped drive traffic and increase sales—all welcome news during these difficult economic times. Your business can benefit too.

To find out more, go to [www.namm.org](http://www.namm.org) or [www.wannaplaymusic.com](http://www.wannaplaymusic.com) and see how you can get more people in your community playing music today!

**Joe Lamond**  
NAMM President/CEO

### Wanna Play? Lesson Locator Makes Starting Easy

NAMM launched the most comprehensive database of music educators on the Web, featuring NAMM Member stores, MTNA (Music Teachers National Association) and [TakeLessons.com](http://TakeLessons.com).

This tool will connect prospective players with a teacher. More players equals a stronger music products industry! To take advantage, be sure your lesson program is included in the locator—e-mail us at [info@namm.org](mailto:info@namm.org).





## National Wanna Play Music Week Gets the Public's Attention

On May 4, the Bacon Brothers and a group of LaGuardia High School students kicked off Music Monday in New York. That same day, a simultaneous concert connected more than 130 schools, organizations, music educators and music lovers from across the country—even the NAMM staff—at exactly 10 a.m. Did you hear it?

The week of music making was featured in national media including Fox News, *USA Today* and *Wall Street Journal Market Watch*, driving our industry's message into millions of American homes: Now is the perfect time to start playing, regardless of your age or skill level!

### Wanna Play? Driving Customers Virally!



It's the way the next generation communicates and where they're spending their time—Facebook, MySpace, YouTube—and NAMM is there promoting music making and driving customers into your stores.

The *Wanna Play?* Film Contest capitalized on the crossover between the music and film enthusiasts and spoke to them within their social communities. This film content is now being shared on social networking Web sites, building a buzz and creating more active music makers.



### Wanna Play? at the White House

The Blue Man Group and NAMM Members carried the *Wanna Play?* message to the front steps of Capitol Hill. The battle cry was heard loud and clear: Every child in America deserves to receive a complete, well-rounded education that includes music and arts.



NAME NAMM News No. June 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](mailto:playbackdigital@namm.org).

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Lobbies for music on Capitol Hill  
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Allegedly violate California law  
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# SUPPLY

M. RODRIGUEZ & SONS GUITARS | BY JENNY DOMINE

## GUITAR DIPLOMACY

**M**anuel Rodriguez Jr., president of M. Rodriguez & Sons Guitars, is changing the world one guitar at a time.

He travels with the King of Spain to meet foreign leaders and diplomats. He shares Spanish culture with them and presents Rodriguez hand-crafted, classical guitars as gifts. This outreach is intended to educate politicians about the importance of music education, music trade and cultural history in their own countries.

"I say to these leaders, 'The most important thing here is music for children and music education,'" Rodriguez said. "Please give students these programs because learning music makes them more intelligent."

Rodriguez was raised in a family business that has been making classical Spanish guitars since 1905. When Manuel Rodriguez Sr., passed away on Dec. 25, 2008, he left a legacy of high craftsmanship that his company continues today. Its guitars are hand-made in Toledo, Spain, and have been played by performers, such as Andres Segovia, Eric Clapton, Sting, Narciso Yepes, David Palau and Pedro Andrea.



From left: Rodriguez Guitars' Manuel Rodriguez Jr., Uruguay's President Tabaré Vázquez and Spanish business leader Gerardo Ferrán

### CHANGING THE MARKETPLACE

The younger Rodriguez said he believes in driving business by changing the marketplace. His guitars are an expensive, niche product. As such, he has taken a two-pronged approach to promoting them during a global financial crisis: emphasize the value of his guitars, and champion music education and ecology.

"People have less credit, and they're buying cheaper instruments," Rodriguez said. "That's happening in the United States and worldwide, so we have to do new things — look at innovations and adapt our industry with the economic situation right now."

A big part of his promotions include his diplomatic work.

dent of Costa Rica; Eduardo Aguirre, the United States ambassador to Spain; and Traian Basescu, president of Romania, to name a few.

Rodriguez is particularly proud of his working relationship with former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and the Carter Foundation. M. Rodriguez & Sons Guitars plans to give 100 free guitars each year to the foundation's programs for children.

### SAVING THE TREES

Ecology is also a key value in Rodriguez Guitars' promotional message. The elder Rodriguez had grown increasingly concerned about the destruction of the environment in recent years. Historically, the company has used woods certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, which has a system of controlled tree harvesting and replanting.

Recently, the younger Rodriguez began working with former U.S. Vice President Al Gore to create ecological guitars. Rodriguez said he is especially concerned about tropical forests and endangered woods, such as Brazilian rosewood.

"We need to do this with all instruments and all the guitars in the world," he said. **MI**

Rodriguez's simple act of giving promotes music education, forest conservation

"Some of these leaders play guitar," he said. "They value what you're doing, and they love musical instruments."

So far, Rodriguez has met with 15 diplomats and world leaders, including Hu Jintao, president of China; Tabaré Vázquez, president of Uruguay; Óscar Arias, presi-

TECH 21 | BY ZACH PHILLIPS

# INDEPENDENT VISION

Tech 21 has managed to bypass just about every major industry trend.

When the company launched its (now best-selling) SansAmp emulator pedal two decades ago, most professional guitarists wouldn't dream of plugging into something without tubes — much less pay more than \$100 for a stomp box. And in the mid-1990s, when the company pioneered direct-recording amplifiers with the all-analog Trademark 60, the rest of the industry was abuzz with digital modeling.

More recently, Tech 21 managed to bypass another trend: the recession. In fact, Dale Krevens, vice president of the Clifton, N.J.-based manufacturer, said sales were up 30 percent last year and mentioned that it's a good time to be in the effects and small goods market.

"Somebody who might have been thinking about buying an amp or new guitar may go a different route and say, 'What can I do to improve what I have without spending a huge amount of money?'" she said. "The fact that [the recession] coincided with our SansAmp Character series, which we introduced two NAMM shows ago and has a street price of \$150 — that's kind of a no-brainer."

## A SANS WHAT?

Tech 21's singular vision, driven by company founder and president Andrew Barta, may be the biggest factor in its success, but it has meant some uphill battles from the start.

When he first brought his SansAmp pedal to Sam Ash Music on 48th Street in New



Tech 21's Andrew Barta (left) and Dale Krevens

York, the dealership sold it that same day — and, Krevens estimated, five or six more that week. Other music retailers weren't as enthusiastic about the new technology.

"There were a lot of tube snobs, and they were not receptive to this information — that this little box could sound as good as a cranked-up tube amp — that is until they heard it," Krevens said. "But that took a lot of leg work and a lot of talking just to get them to listen to it."

Demand for Tech 21's early products was mostly consumer-driven, boosted by endorsements from players, such as Mick Jones of Foreigner. "[Guitarists] would go into a store and say, 'Do you have a SansAmp?'" Krevens said. "And then we'd get a call from a

dealer going, 'I have a customer here asking for a SansAmp? What the heck is that?'"

And even consumers took some cajoling. Krevens laughed as she related a story about an enthusiastic customer who brought a SansAmp to the check-out counter at a dealership and asked for some extra tubes to go with it. When the salesperson informed him that the SansAmp didn't require tubes and was, in fact, solid state, the customer said he didn't want it anymore. (His friend later convinced him to buy it.)

"That's the key, I think, to our success and why people are such loyal followers," Krevens said. "They just love that analog sound. Because you get the same responsiveness as you do with a tube amp, but it's a lot lighter, and it's not tempera-

mental and costly to maintain."

Operating outside of the latest buzzwords and fads has also helped Tech 21 stand out in its sea of competitors. The company created the SansAmp Bass Driver DI, for instance, because Barta believed the market for bass effects was underserved, if not ignored. The box went on to become Tech 21's all-time best seller.

## INDIE THROUGH & THROUGH

As Tech 21 celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, Krevens said it's holding off on pomp and circumstance out of respect for companies that are hurting in the economic downturn. "We may do a concert at the next winter NAMM in celebration of our *next* anniversary — Tech 21's 21."

Still, she said there's plenty to celebrate. While the company's business is evenly divided between chains and independent dealers, Krevens stressed Tech 21's status as an indie-friendly company, citing its lean, 20-person staff.

"We run this place very much the same as a mom-and-pop operation," she said.

That means no huge buy-ins to become an authorized dealer, no unfair restrictions, no sweetheart discounts and no forcing dealers to purchase slow-moving product. "If anything, we do the opposite," Krevens said. "We encourage them to buy the products we know will move quickly."

Typical profit margin on Tech 21 product ranges from 30–35 percent. "Our stuff sells through," Krevens said. "You don't need to discount it. *And* it's made in the U.S.A." **MI**



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YAMAHA GUITARS | BY ANDREW GREINER

# YAMAHA'S TOP SPOT

Yamaha Guitars is ringing in its 40th anniversary this year, and to celebrate, the instrument supplier received a very nice present. According to MI Sales Trak, Yamaha Guitars moved past U.S. competitors Martin and Taylor to take the top sales spot in these companies' home turf.

Yamaha has led the field in number of acoustic guitar units sold for some time, but just one year ago, the company ranked fourth behind Martin, Taylor and Ibanez in dollar volume, according to Dennis Webster, marketing manager for Yamaha Guitars.

Not anymore.

"We say, 'The easy part is over,'" Webster said. "We want to celebrate our 40 years in the U.S., but now comes the tough work of staying competitive over the next five, 10, 20 years."

## THE WOODSTOCK PUSH

Yamaha had been building guitars for some time in Japan prior to 1969, when it began exporting the steel string FG model to the United States and Europe. And it couldn't have asked for a better introductory marketing push.

When Country Joe McDonald wandered out on stage at Woodstock on Aug. 15, 1969, he played a borrowed Yamaha FG-150 with a piece of cord for a strap and a matchbook for a pick. In the process, he became one of the iconic portraits of the music festival and, in a sense, so did Yamaha acoustics.

"I was really nervous about playing by myself in front of



Yamaha Guitars' Dennis Webster (left) and Armando Vega

## At 40, Yamaha leads acoustic guitar sales in units sold, revenue

that huge crowd," McDonald recalled in *The History Of Yamaha Guitars*, a book celebrating the company's legacy.

"I started making up excuses for why I couldn't do it. I said, 'I don't have a guitar.' That's when someone found me a Yamaha. It was an FG-150."

At the time, that guitar sold for less than \$100. "Most of the guitars in that price range were horrible," McDonald said. "My life would have been totally different if they had handed me a typical \$100

acoustic. I thank my higher power that they handed me a Yamaha FG."

## COMMEMORATIVE AXES

To this day, the Yamaha FG is one of the best-selling acoustic guitars, according to Webster, a feat that is not lost on the company's marketing team.

For its 40th anniversary, Yamaha Guitars commissioned a limited-edition solid body FG to celebrate. Only 40 of the special-edition FGs were produced, and each will include a plaque on the back of the headstock and be individually numbered.

Yamaha is also releasing a limited edition of its SBG3000 high-end electric guitar. Each of the anniversary guitars come with a limited-edition, numbered display case. And like the anniversary FG, only 40 SBG3000s were made.

## THE GROWING ELITE

Yamaha Guitars' future includes a few exciting prospects, such as expanding the number of dealerships participating in the company's Rosewood Program, boosting the number of sponsored artist clinics and increasing its focus on the education market.

Yamaha Guitars' Rosewood dealers represent its elite. They are required to keep at least 30 Yamaha guitar products stocked at all times and to take a two-week trip to Japan to build guitars. "It's quite an intense trip," Webster said. "And it makes a big difference when they get back to their stores."

Yamaha's goal was to gain 100 Rosewood dealers over three years. It already has 82 after just a year and a half.

"We could have 150 dealers today if we wanted it," Webster said. "But we want to have the right representation." **MI**

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**GEAR**

**\$460K Paid for Rare Guitar**

An anonymous bidder recently acquired Roy Rogers' OM-45 Deluxe Martin Guitar for \$460,000. The winning bid was made during an auction held at Christie's in New York. The guitar was put up for auction by The Roy Rogers-Dale Evans Museum in Branson, Mo. [martinguitar.com](http://martinguitar.com)



**PARTNERSHIP**

**Graph Tech Supplies Schecter Guitars**

Graph Tech Guitar Labs is now supplying Schecter Guitars with the ghost ResoMax bridge for the C-1E/A guitar. "Schecter Guitars is a true innovator in cutting-edge guitar design, and we are pleased to be able to help them keep their innovative edge with the ghost pickup system," said Dave Dunwoodie, president of Graph Tech Guitar Labs. [graphtech.com](http://graphtech.com)



**SALES**

**Wick Business Soars**

Wick's product sales increased more than 20 percent in the first quarter of 2009. "Denis Wick sales were on the rise in '07 and in '08 and continue to perform extremely well," said Richard Galime, Wick specialist for Dansr. "Our dealers deserve a lot of credit for this strong, sustained growth," said Andy Blanco, Dansr account manager. "They've done a great job in representing Wick products in their stores and online." [deniswickusca.com](http://deniswickusca.com)

**ENDORSEMENT**

**Jackson Inducted**

In April, rockabilly queen Wanda Jackson was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland. As one of the first endorsers of Daisy Rock Guitars, Wanda Jackson plays the Pink Burst Wildwood Artist acoustic/electric. To celebrate her induction, Daisy Rock has created a special Wanda Jackson Signature Guitar, which she played on air at the ceremony. [daisyrock.com](http://daisyrock.com)



From left: Richard Riley, Sen. Lamar Alexander, Blue Man Group, Amfo Music's and NAMM's Chip Averwater, VH1 Save the Music Foundation's Paul Cothrane and Blue Man Group founder Matt Goldman

**NAMM | ADVOCACY**

**NAMM, Blue Man Group Go to D.C.**

NAMM and Blue Man Group presented Sen. Lamar Alexander with the SupportMusic Advocacy Award for his contributions to music education. Blue Man Group's Washington, D.C., visit was part of NAMM's annual advocacy "fly-in," which brings business leaders to meet with members of Congress and advocate for music and arts education issues.

**NAMM AWARDS**

In related advocacy news, NAMM has announced 31 recipients of the NAMM Foundation's 2009-2010 grants program, allocating \$848,807 to various music programs and research. During the recent NAMM board of directors meeting, the following programs received approval: American

String Teachers Association; Australian Music Association; Coalition for Music Education in Canada; Guitar and Accessories Marketing Association; Guitars in the Classroom; Intercultural Family Services; Levine School of Music; Little Kids Rock; Merit School of Music; Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation; National Center for Creative Aging; National Guild of the Community Schools of the Arts; National Piano Foundation; National String Project Consortium; New Horizons International Music Association; North Shore Boys & Girls Club; Percussive Arts Society; Percussion Marketing Council; The Music Center of Los Angeles County; Raising the Blues; Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls; and the Technology Institute for Music Educators. [namm.org](http://namm.org)

**TRI-TECHNICAL SYSTEMS | ANNIVERSARY**

**Tri-Tech Turns Silver**

Tri-Technical Systems is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year.

"Providing quality customer service is something Tri-Tech continuously strives for," said Paul Acton, Tri-Technical's president.

Tri-Tech is expanding its product offerings with the new PC/POLL Systems, which it acquired in 2006. The PC/POLL software includes polling and programming tools to help businesses collect and utilize information from electronic cash registers. [technology4retailers.com](http://technology4retailers.com)



# ↑ SUPPLIER PROMOS

While supplies last, customers who purchase a new Korg M3 music workstation from an authorized U.S. Korg dealer can receive an MR-1 mobile DSD recorder free. The offer expires on Aug. 31.

In honor of the 75th anniversary of the Martin D-18 and D-28 dreadnoughts, Martin Strings is introducing a new three-pack string set with a free, limited-edition collectors T-shirt.



Shure is extending its rebate program of up to \$1,000 for trade-ins of its 700 MHz frequency band (698–806 MHz) wireless systems and for any other manufacturers' qualifying 700 MHz frequency band wireless systems and their related components until Dec. 31.



Pearl is offering a free 8-by 7-inch or 10-by 8-inch tom with the purchase of a new Vision series drum set with mounting hardware. Running

through July 31, customers can download the coupon from [pearldrums.com](http://pearldrums.com).

Sierra Guitars has launched two new promotions on [sierraguitars.net](http://sierraguitars.net). Consumers can take advantage of a limited-time rebate and/or a free guitar stand or hanger with a Sierra purchase through the end of July. A \$20 rebate is also available on the purchase of a Sierra Compass travel-size guitar, or a free guitar stand or hanger is available with an applicable Sierra guitar purchase.

Through July 31, Sennheiser's CX 300 in-ear headphones are free by mail with any purchase of a Sennheiser Sport II or RS series headphone.



Tycoon Percussion is giving away a Percussion JamPack personal percussion kit for free with the purchase of any Tycoon djembé or cajon with a minimum retail value of \$289. The offer is valid at participating Tycoon Percussion dealers from June 1 through Aug. 31.

Sonaré Winds' rebate program, 100 Bucks For 100 Days, will offer anyone purchasing a new Sonaré flute or trumpet a cash rebate of \$100 between May 15 and Aug. 21.

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USA Series

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**NAMM Booth 318**

Because an ear is a terrible thing to waste.

## Nothing New to Offer?



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CHARITY

**Dixon Beats for Eats**

Dixon Drums recently held Beats for Eats: Rock Out for a Good Cause, a series of food drives that took place during April at select music retailers, benefitting local food banks and shelters in Southern California. The event showcased a Dixon Demon drum set that interfaces with Playstation 3's *Rock Band* video game. Guests were treated to free food, refreshments, professional drumming tips and tricks, and door prizes. {[dixondrums.net](http://dixondrums.net)}

ANNIVERSARY

**Peavey Turns 44**

Peavey Electronics celebrates its 44th anniversary this year.

"Our new 19th Street Custom Shop amplifiers are taking off quite well," said Hartley Peavey, company founder and CEO. "Since we debuted the program in January, we have had a solid demand. That proves that there is always new ground to plow, and there is an ongoing need for companies to reinvent themselves."

Peavey also recently began a company-wide lean initiative that will maximize efficiency among its 33 facilities. {[peavey.com](http://peavey.com)}

PROMOTIONS

**Taylor at Harrods**

Taylor Guitars will have a limited line presence at Harrods of London. Harrods, known for its luxury products, will offer a selection of Taylor's most popular acoustic and electric models as part of the store's collection of music instruments. {[taylorguitars.com](http://taylorguitars.com)}

DISTRIBUTION

**Hal Delivers IK**

Hal Leonard and IK Multimedia recently negotiated a distribution agreement. Effective May 1, Hal Leonard will distribute IK Multimedia music production software and hardware to music stores in North America. {[halleonard.com](http://halleonard.com)}



THE MUSIC APP STORE

Five music-minded companies take advantage of the latest app craze



**OCARINA (\$0.99)**

Blow into the mic and tap virtual flute values, and turn an iPhone into an instrument. Then listen to melodies by more than 700,000 other users.



**CHORDMASTER (\$1.99)**

This Planet Waves app has a library of 7,800 guitar chords, notes and fingerings on a virtual fretboard. Its companion app, Scale Wizard, provides 10,000 guitar scales, modes and arpeggios.



**IBONE (\$2.99)**

It's a trombone to go. Practice and learn scales and songs, or play-along with music from your iPod. Sliding your finger changes the pitch. Raising or lowering the bell changes the volume.



**TAPPYTUNES (\$1.99)**

Watch animated graphics come to life as you tap the phone's screen to the tempo of your favorite songs. The tune comes to life in full chords like your own personal band. Try TappyTunes Lite for free.



**IDRUM (\$4.99)**

This iZotope app lets you take control of rhythmic patterns, drum hits, effects and instrument sounds to create instant remixes or new original music.

SEYMOUR DUNCAN | EVENTS

Seymour Sings Like Hell

On April 25, at the Lobero Theater in Santa Barbara, Calif., Austin-based Redd Volkaert invited pickup maker Seymour Duncan to sit in with him on a few tunes.

It was all part of the Sings Like Hell concert series. Now in its 25th season, the concert functions as a not-for-profit California corporation and is funded by Santa Barbara individuals and businesses. Though this was the first onstage appearance by Duncan, the Seymour Duncan company was the series' first sponsor. {[seymourduncan.com](http://seymourduncan.com)}



Seymour Duncan (left) and Redd Volkaert

STRING MANUFACTURERS | LEGAL

## String Violation

On April 13, several string companies doing business in the California were issued 60-day notices for violation of Proposition 65, the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, for the presence of lead and lead components in guitar strings.

The alleged violators of Prop 65 include: Albert Augustine, Black Diamond Strings, Breezy Ridge Instruments, C.F. Martin, Cleartone Strings, D'Addario, Dean Markley Strings, Dr. Strings, Dunlop Manufacturing, E.L.V.H., Electro-Harmonix, Elixir Brands, Ernie Ball and Everly Music. Under Prop 65 businesses are required to provide a "clear and reasonable" warning before knowingly and intentionally exposing anyone the restricted chemicals. {[prop65clearinghouse.com](http://prop65clearinghouse.com)}

## TRIBUTE

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

### Ed Garbett

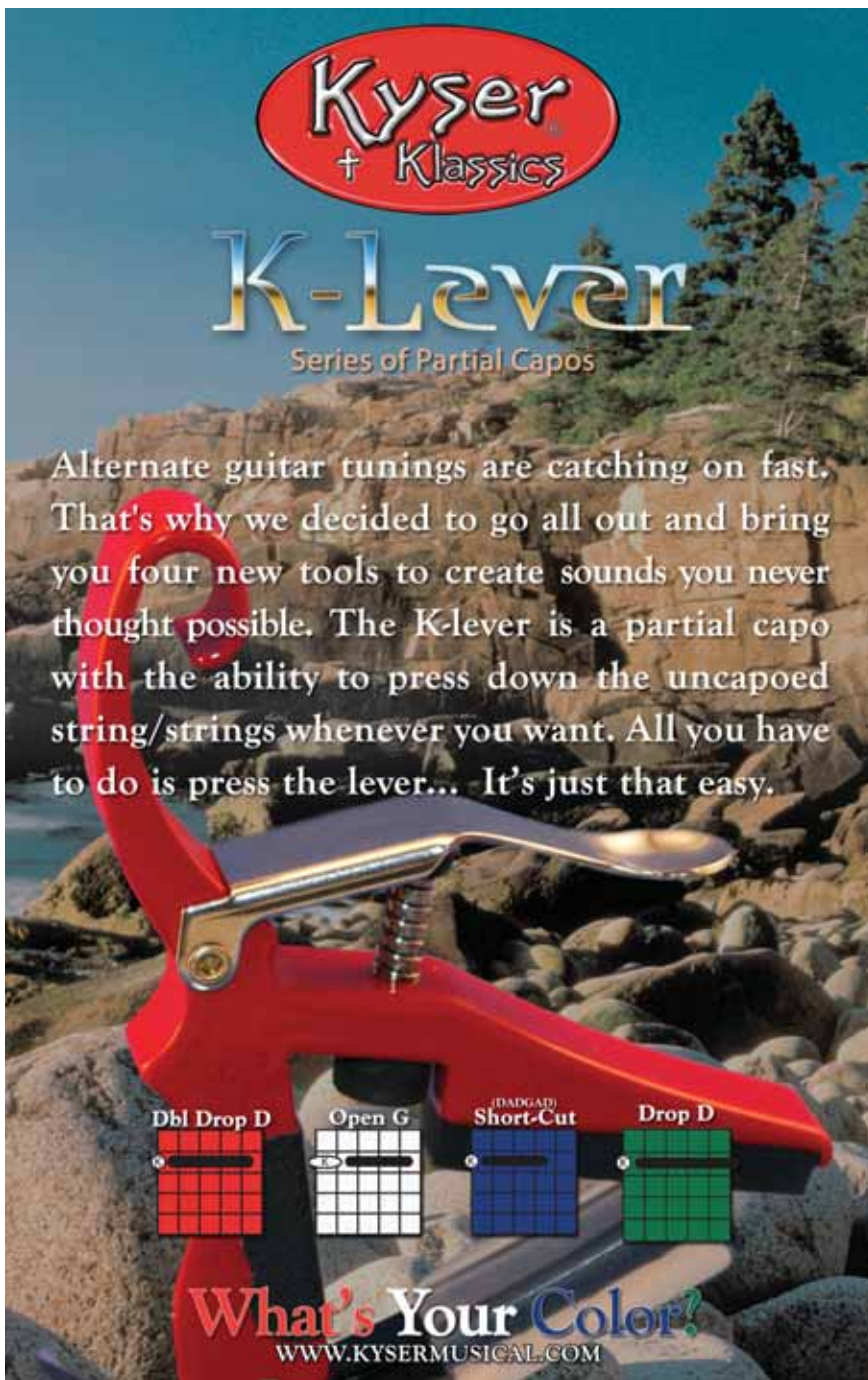
Ed Garbett passed away in Houston on May 2. Born in McKeesport, Pa. on July 27, 1914, Garbett learned to repair band instruments as a teen and helped form the retail store Progressive Music in the late 1940s. He served as a salesman at Gretsch and was later hired by Yamaha and taught classes for the company as early as 1958. One of his many students was Bill Schultz, who later became the chairman of Fender.

Garbett's daughter, Susan Farrell, has asked that donations in her father's name be made to the Museum of Making Music. {[museumofmaking-music.com](http://museumofmaking-music.com)}

### Nate Dolin

Nate Dolin recently died at the age of 95 in Palm Desert, Calif.

He owned The Cleveland Indians from 1949-1963 during which time they won the American League pennant. He also owned King Musical Instruments in Cleveland and Gulbransen Piano and Organ, which he later sold to CBS. He and his family built The Front Row Theatre and operated it for 20 years.

**ENVIRONMENT**

**Recycling Dreams**

Dream Cymbals has started a limited-time recycling program. From June 1 through Aug. 31, drummers can “cash in” broken cymbals for credit toward new Dream models. The recycled cymbals can be from any manufacturer, as long as they are made of B20 alloy. Dream dealers who collect the old cymbals can periodically contact Dream to obtain pre-paid shipping tags for their return. Dealers will then receive a \$1 credit-per-inch-returned toward their next order.  [{dreamcymbals.com}](http://dreamcymbals.com)

**ALFRED, MIGHTY BRIGHT | DISTRIBUTION**

**Alfred's Bright Deal**

Alfred has formed a distribution deal with Mighty Bright. The Mighty Bright music lights are known for their durable designs and feature energy-efficient LEDs, including the Duet 2 music light, the Triple LED music light and pedal board lights. “Alfred publishes the music, and Mighty Bright illuminates it,” said Mighty Bright’s Michael Farley.  [{alfred.com}](http://alfred.com)



**SHOWS**

**RPMDA Making History**

NAMM acquired more interviews for its Oral History program at the 2009 Retail Print Music Dealers Convention in Salt Lake City. These included: Grace Marquette of Loser’s Music Store; Klint and Rosanne Day with Klint’s 93-year-old mother, Arlette, of Day Murray Music Store; Susan Beacock of Beacock Music Store; Craig Cornwall of Kendor Music Publishing; Mark Cabaniss of Shawnee Press; Ruby Beeston of Best In Music; and Randy Navarre of Northeastern Music Publishing.  [{namm.org}](http://namm.org)

**LEGAL**

**Hailun Files Suit**

Hailun Distribution filed suit against Ningbo Hailun Musical Instruments and other defendants in the Superior Court for Gwinnett County, Ga., in April over a dispute regarding the agreement between the two parties granting Hailun Distribution the exclusive rights to market, distribute and sell Hailun brand pianos in the United States. The lawsuit alleges that Ningbo Hailun Musical Instruments acted improperly under the agreement and has damaged Hailun Distribution.  [{hailunusa.com}](http://hailunusa.com)



From left: Andreas Oberg, Howard Alden, Bucky Pizzarelli and Howard Paul at Miner Family Vineyards

**BENEDETTO GUITARS | EVENT**

**PERFECT PAIRING**

**B**enedetto Guitars and the Miner Family Winery have partnered to offer an evening of wine and music. The Jazz Guitar and Cabernet Celebration will be held on Aug. 15 at the Miner vineyard in Oakville, Calif.

The evening of wine and live jazz will feature The Benedetto Players with Bucky Pizzarelli, Howard Alden and Howard Paul. The winery will also release the 2006 Miner Benedetto Signature series cabernet sauvignon in honor of Benedetto Guitars’ 41st anniversary.  [{minerwines.com/events}](http://minerwines.com/events)

**APPOINTMENTS**

**Tornavoz Taps Morrissey**

**T**ornavoz Music, a supplier of nylon-string guitars and accessories, has named Jay Morrissey its new key accounts manager. Morrissey joins Tornavoz after years of experience in both the retail and corporate sectors of MI.  [{tornavozmusic.com}](http://tornavozmusic.com)



Jay Morrissey



>>> Keith Klawitter

Berlin-based Adam Professional Audio has hired Robert Caputo as president of Adam Audio U.S.A.

Michael Spesser has been named Alfred’s pop and Lawson Gould choral editor.

American Music & Sound has appointed Chris Griffiths as the company’s division manager of musical instruments.

Radian Audio has appointed Keith Klawitter for its west-ern regional sales.

Sennheiser has added Patrick

Steding and Scott Haas to its U.S. professional products sales team.

Sensaphonics has named veteran monitor engineer Mike Adams as director of touring sales for North America.

Studer’s executive vice president of sales, Bruno Hochstrasser, will retire at the end of 2009 making way for Adrian Curtis, previously vice president of sales for Soundcraft, to take the reigns for both Harman affiliates.

Universal Audio has appointed Erik Hanson to the position of director of marketing.

Wyman Piano has named Darald Hough and Dan Yuter as its new regional sales managers for the distribution of Orla digital pianos.



>>> Erik Hanson



**WEBNEWS**

# For Guitar Geeks

Five Web sites that put the latest guitars, guitar news and educational technology at your fingertips

**(gbase.com)**

This online gear source, acquired by D'Addario in 2002, has been revamped and includes more thumbnail images with a facebox feature, which lets the thumbnails be viewed in greater detail.

**(sierraguitars.net)**

Sierra Guitars now offers free monthly e-mail newsletters, which link to Sierra Guitars' social networks and include additional links to free desktop wallpapers and fun facts about the guitar line.



**(telecaster.com)**

This Web site, devoted to the Fender Telecaster, celebrates its 10th anniversary. Also known as the TDPRI or the Telecaster Discussion Page, it's one of the largest privately owned guitar Web sites in the world.

**(godinguitars.com)**

Godin Guitars' latest Web site offers a streaming video format for various Godin endorsee- and product-related videos, which are also available as podcasts on iTunes.



**(iperform3d.com)**

This online lesson program presents hundreds of riffs and full songs, all captured using live musicians, motion-capture cameras and 3-D animation software. It lets users precisely control lesson camera angles and speed.



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- + The 2009 RPMDA convention drew in roughly 200 total registrants, a 30-percent drop from last year's 286 attendees.
- + It attracted roughly 40 first-timers, as compared to 31 last year.
- + This year's show also drew in 45 exhibiting companies, down from last year's 58 exhibitors.

# SHOWS




RETAIL PRINT MUSIC DEALERS ASSOCIATION | BY ZACH PHILLIPS

## PRINT FIGHTS BACK

A sunny group of print music retailers and publishers recently gathered in Salt Lake City to share best practices and snag some face time with one another. The occasion was the 2009 Retail Print Music Dealers Association (RPMDA) convention, held April 30 through May 2 at Salt Lake City's Downtown Marriott hotel.

The meeting opened with a concert from the Mormon

Recession, Internet woes, brand-new competition? Retailers at RPMDA came prepared

Tabernacle Choir and continued with a string of parties and cocktail receptions — even a

visit from *Sesame Street*'s Bob McGrath. The festive atmosphere, however, undercut deeper concerns among attendees about the economy and increased online competition.

Attendance, in fact, dropped 30 percent from last year's meeting. (The show drew in roughly 200 total attendees.) Still, as Madeleine Crouch, RPMDA's executive director, pointed out, the general energy levels and mood were unquestionably positive.

"Those who attended were there to learn and become more competitive," she said.

1. Long & McQuade's Christie Smith models her 'pimped' briefcase; 2. Hal Leonard's Keith Mardak receives the 2009 Dorothy Award, the print music industry's highest honor; 3. Friedman, Kannenberg & Co.'s Beth and Alan Friedman; 4. Alfred's Bryan Bradley, who was recently appointed as COO (left), and Ron Manus; 5. The RPMDA board, from left: Jeff Stonier, Carol Wilbur, Gayle Beacock, Lori Supine, Steven Loweth, Myrna Sislén and David Jahnke; 6. Creative Music Center's Liz Reisman; 7. Advance Music's Veronika Gruber and Kendor's Craig Cornwall; 8. NAMM's Dan Del Fiorentino receives the Sandy Feldstein Service Award

Their timing was spot on. Chain booksellers and forward-thinking, deep-pocketed music retailers continue grabbing up market share for print product online. This has left many independent print dealers hungry for an Internet strategy — one that goes beyond investing millions in a cutting-edge e-commerce site or finding the alchemical formula for high Google rankings. But as this year's RPMDA meeting showed, there's more than one way to harness — and compete against — the Internet.

**NEW WEB STRATEGIES**

Several indie retailers attending the convention recently altered their Web sites and business systems. Ruby Beeston of Best In Music, a three-store, full-line dealership in Orem, Utah, said she just finished networking her stores with Radiant's CounterPoint business software for faster communications.

"I see a trend where we will have to work much harder to earn our business, and also we have to shift our focus to more young people and follow the technology," she said.

"We got a new computer system so that we will be qualified for a lot of promotional sheet music referrals, so we can get more business from the Internet. We have a new e-commerce Web site, and we are focusing to build it up and do better at that.

"If you're the fastest one, you'll get the business. If you're the slower one, it's gone."

Richard Gore of Denton, Texas-based indie print music giant Pender's Music said that his company recently redesigned its Web site.

"Hopefully, as we adjust our budget to more pay-per-click search engine advertising, our company will see continued improvement against the online competition," he said. "I estimate that 25 percent of all print music sales are now researched or conducted via our Web site."

Gore added that he's encouraged by steps print publishers are taking to send referral orders from their Web sites to music retailers.

Hal Leonard announced one such service at the convention, its new Order Referral Program. The initiative features two programs, one to accommodate traditional, brick-and-mortar retailers, the other

# + BEACOCK SHARES THE BUZZ

"Defying gravity is what we've been doing since the day we opened." So began Gayle Beacock's session, "Give Your Business an Energy Drink!" — partly based off of the musical "Wicked." Equal parts better-business seminar and inspirational sermon for independent retailers, the discussion gave practical advice on the elusive topics of creating store culture and selling "attitude." Highlights:



Gayle Beacock

**ON SUCCESS IN A TOUGH ECONOMY:**

- "Getting [recognition] in the community is the way to get through these times."
- "The most important thing you can do is get out of the store. Do your customers know that you are here [at the RPMDA convention]? That you're learning?"

**ON POPULARITY:**

- "If you want to be successful in life, it's all about presentation. We get so bogged down in details. But it's all in the presentation."
- "Being popular is created, manufactured and figured out."
- "What do we have to do to be popular? You have to be a little mad, a little crazy. Crazy is good. You have to find a way to stand out."

**ON SALES:**

- "People buy from someone who is happy, nice and excited about sales."
- "We're through with accepting limits because someone says it's so."

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Here's another one of many others: **Lessons Up!**

- ▶ Sign up students right online
- ▶ Students can select teacher by profile, choose & reserve appointment, pay for lessons & music camps.

**RETAIL UP!** Websites. POS. Success!



1. RPMDA's Madeleine Crouch; 2. From left: Alfred's Michael Finkelstein, Elisa Palladino, Antonio Ferranti, Holly Anzalone-McGinnis and Daniel Frohnen; 3. Best In Music's Ruby Beeston with Carl Fischer's Hayden Connor; 4. Consultant Danny Rocks; 5. From left: Carl Fischer's Hayden Connor and Rachele Gayer, West Music's Nathan Ersig, and Carl Fischer's Anne Sobel and Chris Scialfa; 6. Frederick Harris' Les Portelli, Tim Sellers and Ellen Reeves; 7. FJH's Kevin Hackinson (left) and Dave Olsen; 8. Dowling's James Li (left) and Rick Valentine; 9. From left: Beacock's Dianna Rogers, Susan and Gayle Beacock, Cierra Roberts, and Michele Dwiggins; 10. From left: Northeastern Publications' Randy Navarre, LuAnn Clouser and Bill Heese; 11. Shawnee's Tony Bakker receives the Ed Adams Scholarship; 12. Retail Up's Gordon O'Hara (middle) with Alta Loma's Genett and Pete Gamber; 13. From left: Hal Leonard's Doug Lady, Keith Mardak, Mary Vandenberg and David Jahnke; 14. Schott's Bernhard Muller; 15. Friedrich Hofmeister's Stefanie Eva Clement; 16. From left: Lorenz's Kris Kropff and Geoff Lorenz with Musical Innovations' Tracy Leenman; 17. From left: Kjos' Karl Kjos, David Gereghly and Timothy Kjos; 18. Aim Gifts' John Fullerton

for Internet dealers. The Preferred Retailer program lets any Hal Leonard retailer with a physical store and e-mail address fulfill consumer orders that come from Hal Leonard's Web site. The Full-Line Internet Provider program is designed for Internet retailers and will drop an order from Hal's site directly into the dealer's online shopping cart.

Doug Lady, Hal Leonard's vice president of sales, said roughly 200 dealers had already signed up for the service at the time of the convention. He added that it's free, and dealers make the same margins that they would in-store.

**THE YOUTUBE CONUNDRUM**

Gore cited legal and illegal sheet music sites as a major factor in reduced pop folio sales. He explained that these sites have made it less likely for customers to purchase a full book for one or two songs. And he's equally concerned about the effect of online video hub YouTube on print sales.

"People are also using YouTube to learn a song by viewing online videos," Gore

said. "This trend is really negative, as no one makes a sale and it is perfectly legal. Unfortunately, YouTube may be the killer application for learning to play a song on the guitar without purchasing the sheet music."

Still, some retailers are taking an if-you-can't-beat-'em-join-'em approach to YouTube, posting videos about their businesses on the site. At RPMDA's annual "Best Ideas" session, Stanton's Sheet Music's Julia Moessner won first place for suggesting that retailers post YouTube videos about their products and services. She mentioned that it's also an effective way to get a higher Google search engine ranking.

Publishers have stepped in, too, with new titles aiming to

## + SISLEN'S PROMO STRATEGY

Myrna Sislen of Middle C Music in Washington, D.C., has fast established herself as one of independent retail's star promoters. She shared her knowledge in the session "Make the Most of In-Store Events and Double Your Press Coverage."

Sislen emphasized that there are two ways to make the most of in-store events: get press on them and make your customers love you. Referencing the latter, she explained that she joined a youth rock band to sing "Wild Thing" at a recent student recital. "It's good to let your customers see you in a different context," she said.

She added that she has also held in-store *Guitar Hero* tournaments and art exhibits for local photographers, as well as marched in local parades to give away gift certificates to her store.

In terms of getting press, Sislen offered some guidelines for writing a press release and communicating with editors and reporters.

- Use proper press release form. Include the phrase "For Release (DD/MM/YY)" and all relevant contact information.
- Include a headline. Imitate your main local paper, use action verbs and keep it as short as possible.
- The first sentence should make absolutely clear who is doing what, where, when and why.
- Include a quote from someone other than the contact.
- Don't be afraid to follow up with a call to editors and reporters.
- Go over your draft with someone to make sure that it is clear.
- You can't send too many press releases.



Myrna Sislen

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add even more value to printed product. Alfred showed several new books designed to serve as one-stop, bang-for-your-buck packages. The company's *Billboard Magazine Hot 100 50th Anniversary Songbook* features more than 250 pages of definitive hits in a piano/vocal/guitar edition for \$24.95. The Rolling Stone Sheet Music Classics series is based off of the magazine's 500 greatest songs of all time list. And the company continues adding to its 10 For 10 series, which Alfred Senior Account Executive Michael Finkelstein called "one of our biggest series in this recession." It gives consumers 10 songs for \$10.

Hal Leonard's exhibit featured dozens of new titles in its Play-Along and Sing With series, including *Christian Rock Guitar Play-Along* and multiple Classical Play-Along, Big Band Play-Along and Sing With The Choir books. These include play-along CDs with high-quality, full backing tracks (bands, choirs, orchestras) that users can jam with. As of now, YouTube can't compete with that.

In the same vein, some publishers made a special effort to cater to the same customers they lose to YouTube. Frederick

Harris, for instance, debuted *Fiddleworks*, a fiddle repertoire collection with a book and CD aimed at younger players.

Craig Cornwall, president of Kendor Music, said his company is re-promoting several of its classic jazz ensemble titles specifically to reach younger musicians who may not be familiar with the pieces.

**E-MAIL MASTERY**

Ron Cates, a marketing specialist for Constant Contact, pointed out that e-mail's return on investment is 20-times higher than direct mail. During his session "The Power of E-mail Marketing," he offered dealers the following advice on maximizing their e-mail impact.

**Use every opportunity to add e-mail addresses to your database.** Every time someone calls your store, make sure you or your employees ask for the person's e-mail address. Add a visible link on your Web site's homepage where customers can sign up for your e-newsletter. Also, display a print-out of your e-newsletter or e-blast at the front of the store. "Show them what they're going to get," Cates said.

"Put a note at the top the first time you send it. 'I'm sending this to you because you [signed up] at the trade show last week.' And you must have an opt out."

**Develop a strategy for content on paper.** As Cates explained, if you develop engaging content, people will never think you're a spammer. Develop a strategy on paper. "This is not a business plan," Cates said. "You can do it in 10 minutes."

Determine whether your goal is to drive traffic to your Web site, promote a future product or service, or just stay top-of-mind. "Present yourself

1. Bethel Music Center's Dana and Bruce Treidel; 2. Arpeges' Pierre Cotelle (left) and Trognon Sebastien; 3. Duck's Deluxe's John Duck; 4. From left: Shawnee's Mark Cabaniss and Tony Bakker, Music Sales' Steven Wilson, Shawnee's Krista Montgomery and Music Sales' Phil Smith; 5. Alfred's Antonio Ferranti (left) and Johann Gouws; 6. FreeHand's Chaim Rubinov (right) explains the company's latest product; 7. From left: Steve's Music's Norm Zimmerman, Robert Martin's Max Desmurs and Mayfair Music's Lucie Stubbington; 8. Hutchins & Rea's Don Eubanks and Senseney's Lori Supine, who also serves as RPMDA's president; 9. From left: NAMM's Dan Del Fiorentino, Schenectady Vancurler Music's Rhonda Luborsky and NAMM's Eric Ebel; 10. Lauren Keiser Music's Lauren Keiser; 11. Stanton's Sheet Music's Julia Moessner (left) and Musical Innovations' Tracy Leenman; 12. From left: Tri-Tech's Dave Cox, Ward-Brod't's Connie Smith and Tri-Tech's Ron Koppes

as the expert. Show that off.”

**Send on Tuesdays.** Tuesday has the best e-mail open rate, particularly around 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

Cates added that retailers must get their brand name in the body of the e-mail and in the subject line. He also stressed keeping subject lines no more than 49 characters long.

**FAST & EASY STORE DESIGN**

And despite all the talk about the Internet, brick-and-mortar still got its due at RPMDA. Multiple sessions focused on simple, inexpensive store design ideas.

Print industry veteran Danny Rocks of The Company Rocks presented a panel discussion on retail aesthetics in “Design Your Retail Store on a Dime.”

Panelist Gayle Beacock of Beacock Music in Vancouver, Wash., discussed two slides of displays at her store. One showed a bunch of drumsticks in a paint bucket, which was covered with stickers of the particular brand. Another showed a display table at a fiddle event. All the fiddles for sale were laid out on a black velvet sheet for a luxurious look.

Fellow panelist Valerie Johnson of West Music in Coralville, Iowa, explained how all of her store’s signage features the same fonts for consistency. Its roadside sign also says “Lessons for All Ages” beneath “West Music” to promote the music lesson program. (The sign also includes West’s Web address.) And panelist Bob Kohl of Long and McQuade in Vancouver, British Columbia, emphasized the importance of changing displays regularly to keep return customers’ interest.

Rocks added that chain bookseller Borders recently initiated three times as many face-forwards with its book selection, cutting 5 percent of its inventory to do so. He applied the same idea to print music merchandising.

“It’s a turn on the old adage, ‘You can’t judge a book by its cover, but you can sell a book by its cover,’” Rocks said. “If it’s something that you strategically want to sell a lot of, face out.”

Liz Reisman of Creative Music Center in Monroe, Conn., encouraged retailers to make their stores more appealing to moms in her seminar “Creating a Mom-Friendly Atmosphere in Your Store.” While planning

the session, Reisman had several moms visit music stores and provide feedback. Using that information, she listed the attributes of mom-friendly stores. These include:

- Salespeople who approach customers and explain product in simple terms.
- Clean bathrooms.
- A location with other activity and shops around.

- A clean, organized waiting room with women’s magazines, comfortable chairs and pictures of kids playing instruments.

- Adequate lighting.
- Soothing colors on the wall.
- Neutral music. No hard rock. And it can’t be too loud.

Next year’s RPMDA convention will be held in Oklahoma City from April 14–17. **MI**

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# IDEAS

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INDEPENDENT RETAIL | BY TED ESCHLIMAN

## CELEBRATE THE PLAYER

After banging on his brother's hand-me-down guitar, Seamus decided to scour the Internet and snag his own. He found his first "real" guitar on Craigslist and bought it. The reviews said it was a good ax, but when he took it to the guitar store to get a broken tuner fixed, the salesman treated Seamus as if he had Swine Flu. He sensed an unspoken, you-didn't-buy-it-from-me hostility and began to wonder if he needed a membership card to shop at a music store.

Jeanine couldn't resist the guitar-in-a-box display next to the linens at Bed Bath & Beyond. But what was supposed to be a surprise for her 10-year-old's Christmas stocking seemed hard to get in tune. During her lunch hour, she journeyed across town to her uncle's favorite music store only to get a dose of humiliation. "You really got stuck with junk!" the clerk said. Great, yet another thing to stuff in her closet until next spring's garage sale. So much for music.

Hank's bandmates were embarrassed by his chronic miserliness. "Tip" was not a word in his vocabulary when



So a customer bought his first guitar at a non-music store. Roll out the red carpet to create a lifelong client

the waitress brought the check for post-gig pie and coffee at the local dive. They always had to slip an extra buck under his plate while he wasn't looking to cover his end of the tab. The guy could play, though, and he had a legendary knowledge of music

and guitars. Music store salespeople would pretend to be busy when he came in to avoid his queries about the latest trade acquisition. They knew Hank was never going to buy anything. He just used his weekly drive-bys to pump them for info.

### NO MORE NARCISSISM

Maybe music store employees could afford to have a narcissistic attitude in the days when their shop was the only game in town. Today, our livelihoods depend on how well we treat people discovering music products outside of the traditional music retail channel.

Seamus had never set foot in a music store. He learned what little he knew about guitars from his older brother and, sadly, Craigslist. Jeanine had a great idea: music for her child. But when a music store had the opportunity to set her back on course for discovery, the employees blew it by treating her as if she were a traitor. Hank wasn't exactly the cash register's best friend, but he was immersed in the local music scene. He could still be a player conduit to, if not an advocate of, a music store if treated politely.

What do all three people

have in common? They all have an interest in guitar, and *they all came into your store!*

The guitar market is at a historic high, with the broadening exposure to the instrument through big-box retailers, the Internet and *Guitar Hero*. It's hard enough to get customers into a store. If they do come in, they deserve red carpet treatment.

So how do you rewire veteran staff to cut the attitude and treat these folks as guests? Three words: *celebrate the player*. If someone has graced your storefront with his or her presence, that person's desire to create music needs to be celebrated. So what if the first sale was lost to Craigslist? Guitar players don't just buy one guitar. A child starting on guitar is a latent goldmine of future guitar-buying. And a self-professed expert like Hank may not be afflicted with guitar acquisition syndrome (GAS) but is likely a carrier of this condition. Create a new store culture: celebrate the player. Celebrate the interest and their presence. **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 LESSON ROOM | BY PETE GAMBER

# Economy-Proof Lessons

**G**uitar lessons are not recession-proof. To me, the phrase “recession-proof” means “got lucky — so far.” What you do this month to generate guitar lesson sign-ups will affect what’s going to happen two to three months from now. That’s a scary thought if you’re not promoting sign-ups.

Don’t wait for the phone to ring for that next new student. Start by reviewing with your sales staff the basics of pitching guitar lesson sign-ups to in-store customers. Most guitar lesson sign-ups happen when a customer asks, “Do you have lessons?” Teach your staff to initiate the, “Do you know we have an awesome guitar lesson program at our store?” approach.

## BE THE CONVERSATION STARTER

Introduce guitar lessons into every customer interaction. Here are some opportunities:

**The guitar-tuning customer.** Ask the client, “How long have you been playing?” A well-trained staff member will talk about a guitar tuner purchase, but he or she should also say, “We’ve got some great guitar teachers who can teach you how to tune your guitar and get you playing the stuff you’re interested in.”

**The guitar repair customer.** After the customer comes in to pick up the repair, ask, “Are you familiar with our guitar lessons?”

**The just-looking-at-the-guitars customer.** You know the drill. You ask, “How long have you been playing?” The customer knows the next question. “What kind of guitars do you have?” It’s the guitar-selling routine.

Introduce your lesson program like this: “Cool, you’re looking for a guitar to learn on. Are you

familiar with our guitar lesson program?” Bundle the guitar purchase with the lessons. It separates you from the “other dudes” and will increase both your guitar sales and guitar lesson enrollment.

**The mom with the *Guitar Hero*-playing kid.** When Mom says, “He plays *Guitar Hero* all the time,” your staffer can say, “That’s awesome. Our guitar teachers can play those songs on the guitar and teach you son how to play them.”

**The kid quitting school band who likes the guitar.** This is really overlooked. Perhaps a kid hated playing the clarinet but might love to play the guitar and may not know that your store offers lessons. When Mom or

Dad returns the rental, say, “It’s too bad the clarinet didn’t work out. Do you know that we teach guitar here? What they learned on the clarinet will help him with guitar.”

**The parents in your lesson waiting area.** They’re already at your store. Why not tempt them to take guitar lessons while they’re waiting? Grab a guitar, and ask a teacher with a no-show to demonstrate to the parent how easy it is.

## PLAY THE PROMOTION GAME

**A**re your employees looking for guitar lessons by telling everyone about your exciting guitar program, or are they asking, “Ready to check out?”

Let’s face it: Your foot traffic count this year is probably lower than last year and lower than two years ago. You need to be harvesting new students better than ever before.

You are not going to get 100-percent immediate sign-ups, but as the California Lottery says, “You can’t win if you don’t play.” If you and your staff aren’t active in keeping your guitar lessons in an active promotion game, you can’t win. Stay in this promotional mode, and the benefits will recession-proof your business long after this recession is over! **MI**

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



Guitar lessons are not recession-proof unless they’re promoted at every possible opportunity

Reality  
sets in.

Send

**Ninja92:** dude, a little gaming tonight? bring your drum controller

**Out4w:** can't

**Ninja92:** how come?

**Out4w:** my new Dixon Demon kit is coming in and gotta be home to get the delivery

**Ninja92:** WHAT?!

**Out4w:** LOL yeah I got a REAL kit. its friggin sweet too.

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

**Out4w:** ok, but you can leave the plastic guitars at home ROFL! 😂



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THE CUSTOMER WHISPERER | BY GREG BILLINGS

# Motivating Employees in Difficult Times

As I look out the front window of my store, I see the abandoned lot of our local Hummer dealership. The faux military Quonset hut showroom now presides over yellow-striped asphalt and the mini-mountain where the ubiquitous monster jeeps were once displayed.

My employees see the empty lot, too. They remember the shiny Hummers that also used to be parked in our lot while their owners shopped here. They talk about it among themselves.

How can we keep our employees positive, secure and motivated in the face of hard economic realities and a deluge of bad news? We can do it by becoming employee whisperers. Just like being a customer whisperer, it requires calm, assertive leadership and a little planning.

Last year, John McCain and his advisor, Phil Gramm, were mocked when they suggested our economic problems were largely psychological. Of course these problems are *partly* psychological. Psychology plays a major role in economic behavior. People make decisions based on emotions and use logic to rationalize their decisions. Don't think for a minute that emotionally driven mass hysteria isn't real. But rest assured: It is ephemeral, passes just as quickly as it appears and can be managed.



'We can't manage the entire nation's mood, but with a little effort, we can minimize the effect of bad news on our staff.'

## MANAGE ATTITUDE

We can't manage the entire nation's mood, but with a little effort, we can minimize the effect of bad news on our staff. Since employee attitudes are contagious, their effect on our customers is powerful and immediate, so we have much to gain. Here are a few simple and specific steps you can take to improve the

atmosphere (or "vibe" if you sell guitars) in your store.

**Create a refuge from the 24-hour news cycle.** If there's a TV in your store tuned to Fox News, turn it off. Replace the bad news with a DVD showing product demos or a concert. If someone has Rush Limbaugh or Al Franken squawking out of a radio, change it to music. If your staff is monitoring the news online, stop them.

Consumers go shopping as much to be entertained as they do to fulfill a tangible need. Your store needs to be a magical place, a refuge from the

realities of everyday life. Don't let the real world intrude.

**Lead the discussion.** If your staff wants to kick around the issues of the day with their morning coffee, use the opportunity to direct the conversation into positive territory. And if you're the guy preaching a falling sky, cut it out.

Here are a few talking points you can use:

- Most failed businesses are the victims of their own bad management, not the economy. Circuit City was a poor knockoff and provided lousy service. The same is true of Linens 'n Things and Mars Music. We should be glad they're gone.

- Don't worry too much about vacant storefronts. Retail space has increased faster than retail sales for more than a decade. An adjustment was inevitable, and eventually, the empty space will be occupied by productive businesses.

- Remember: 91.5 percent of people who want jobs still have them — compare that to 95 percent in the best of times. And 99 percent of families aren't dealing with home foreclosures.

- In 1970, it cost 28 minutes of work at minimum wage to buy a gallon of gas. Today, it only costs 22 minutes.

- Economic cycles aren't new. They are not pleasant, but they are necessary. Like forest fires, they clear out dead wood and stimulate new growth. A business that uses downtime to increase its efficiency and refine its focus will reap benefits in the next wave of prosperity. Make sure your business is one of them.

- A paper loss on your 401(k) is only a real loss if you cash it in. Stocks go up and down, but over time, markets recover and grow. Only fools sell at the bottom or obsess about paper losses. If you trust your pension plan administrator and aren't retiring soon, it might be a good idea to back away from the computer screen and just check your balance monthly. Better yet, quarterly.

- The recession may be ending. The average length of a post-World War II recession is 10 months. This one, while worse than most, started in December 2007, and it will be nearly a year until the experts know exactly when it ended.

- The price of every musical instrument, from a Stratocaster to a Steinway, costs less in inflation-adjusted dollars now than at any other time in history. The quality is better, and interest rates are low. It's a great time to buy.

- People's fundamental desire to play musical instruments hasn't diminished. Actually, NAMM-funded research shows the opposite.

An employee whisperer will quickly figure out how to change the daily buzz from doom and gloom to the joy of making music and the opportunity music gives us. His purpose isn't to win an argument. His purpose is to change the subject. Intervening in the group conversation on a regu-

lar basis can change the general tone of the discussion over time — and shorten the discussion, too.

Be proactive. Ask your wettest blanket if he has heard any good news lately, and ask again every time he starts to pour out the cold water. Over time, your staff will come to respect you and dismiss him as a whiner. Your status will grow, and you'll start to hear your people spreading the "good news" to your customers.

**If you have a grim reaper on staff that you can't turn around, fire him.** It will boost morale for the entire staff. A recent research project in the National Football League found a team's poorest players had more impact on overall performance than its all-stars. Pro teams are always cutting their weakest players. Similarly, you can't afford to keep people who drag your team down. Apply the same discipline to your supplier reps.

**MANAGE DOWNTIME**

Beyond guiding the discussion and quashing downers, there are simple and effective steps you can take to raise spirits (and maybe generate a little cash). Here are a few suggestions.

**Keep everyone busy.** Activity is a strong motivator, and idle hands ... well, you get the point. Plan an event, student competition, clinic, talent show or food drive. Get everyone involved in painting the store, cleaning out drawers and throwing away clutter. Workers who go home exhausted do not have time to complain or worry.

Retail is detail. Sam Walton, Wal-Mart's founder, was famous for saying, "If you

'Activity is a strong motivator. Plan an event, student competition, clinic, talent show or food drive.'

have time to lean, you have time to clean." If sales are down, your store should look immaculate, amazing and ready for business. Customers are more likely to approach a clerk who's building a display or cleaning than one who's standing around or talking to other employees. Burned-out light bulbs, crooked frames and missing price tags send a message to customers that a store is in trouble, the staff doesn't care, or both.

**Go on a treasure hunt.** Sell unused, unneeded supplies on Craigslist. It will keep people busy, reduce clutter, bring in a little income and, most importantly, bring people into your store. Old computers and monitors, posters, and those dusty fake plants might find a buyer. Posting on Craigslist is free, easy and gets your name in front of consumers. Consider donating proceeds from these sales to a local charity. Use other proceeds to throw a party for the staff or buy awards for contests.

**Train, train, train.** Practice, practice, practice. Use slow time to refine everyone's

selling skills. See "The Customer Whisperer" series of articles. They can be downloaded for free at *Music Inc.'s* Web site, [musicincmag.com](http://musicincmag.com).

**Find a reason to celebrate.** Have a Thursday night customer calling party. Order in pizza and soft drinks. The first person to make a contact wins a prize and gets to ring a bell. The first person to get an appointment for Saturday gets a bigger prize and also gets to ring the bell. The first person to make 25 calls gets the grand prize and gets to ring the bell really loud! This may sound goofy, but it's effective, fun and cheap.

**Take advantage of what the industry has to offer.** Use NAMM programs, such as Support Music, Vans Warped Tour, John Lennon Educational Tour Bus, Weekend Warriors, Sesame Street Music Works and Wanna Play? These are turnkey, proven programs and mostly free to members. NAMM has done most of the work for you.

**Never let them see you sweat.** If you've got problems with the bank, a supplier or a floor plan company, keep it to yourself. Smile often, and reassure everyone that things are going to be OK. Because they are going to be OK. Your staff looks to you for leadership, and employees will respond to your style as much as your substance.

When you change the attitude of your staff, you change the mood of your store, and your customers will respond. It's not hard, and it's not expensive. It's just a matter of calm, assertive leadership, and that is one job you can't delegate. **MI**

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

LESSONS LEARNED | BY GERSON ROSENBLIOM

# Never Rule Out Selling

In the Oscar-winning film “The Curious Case Of Benjamin Button,” Brad Pitt plays a man born in an elderly body who gets younger with age. Imagine if his mind followed suit — born with wisdom and growing more innocent through the decades. This is the first installment in a series of columns that aims to bring you the benefits of that scenario.

I’ve been immersed in the music products industry for the past four decades. Before that, I spent after-school hours and Saturdays at my parents’ music store. I did plenty right, and my company prospered for 54 years. But like almost everyone I know, I made my share of mistakes. With hindsight, the things I would have done differently were the best teachers. Let’s begin.

## HOLD OR FOLD?

We are in an industry of small, family-run businesses. Many of us aim to grow the company, maximize profits and exist for the benefit of future generations, just because that’s all we think we know how to do. And that’s where a little piece of insanity is imbedded in our collective psyche.

Remember Kenny Rogers’ song “The Gambler?” (“You got to know when to hold ‘em, know when to fold ‘em.”) All businesspeople need to evaluate their company’s health regularly to decide whether to “hold” or “fold.” The boards of publicly traded businesses expect the companies’ decision-makers to grow the ROI. It’s their responsibility to bring valid tender offers that allow a return greater than near-term, anticipated growth.

We all understand this basic tenet, so why do small companies often ignore it? Why don’t we add the option of selling the company to its financial performance evaluations? Now that I have closed my store, I can speak from personal experience about this concept, which is foreign in our industry.

## MISUNDERSTANDING BUSINESS CYCLES

All companies experience cycles. I became very good and very practiced at controlling my business’ low points in that cycle. But when we’re at a high point, we seldom put as much effort into managing that part of the cycle.

I failed in one area: evaluating my company’s marketability at those high points. I was holding three aces, and I decided to wait for a fourth. Perhaps I was concerned for future generations in the family business. Maybe I was respecting my parents’ toil in starting the company, or it

could’ve been that the 70-hour workweeks made me tired enough to think I was seeing extra zeros on the financial statements. Whatever the reason, I missed an opportunity to sell my business more than once. I was blinded by being too close to the situation.

Here’s the irony. At the top of the business cycle, I would have added to my personal and family wealth by selling at even a “bargain” price. I may have been riddled with a sense of defeat, but it could have been a huge financial victory, especially compared to liquidating at the bottom of the cycle. Unfortunately, music retailers are not wired that way. When I later decided that the business’ foundation had become shaky, I was willing to accept about any offer as I cleared the assets.

It’s an odd psychological phenomenon that has its roots in timing issues. When we’re riding high, we feel like we have forever to make decisions. When we’re faced with failure, time is of the essence. I submit to you that the weight of the decision is as pressing in the good times as in the bad. The value that you place on your business is nothing more than numbers on a page until you turn it into cash. **MI**

Gerson Rosenbloom is the president of Spectrum Strategies, a consulting firm serving the music industry. He’s former president of Medley Music and a past NAMM chairman. E-mail him at gersonmusicinc@gmail.com.



‘The value that you place on your business is nothing more than numbers on a page until you turn it into cash.’

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STREETWISE SELLING | BY KENNY SMITH

# YouTube Sales Training

If you're not promoting your dealership on YouTube, you should be. YouTube videos are like little soldiers that go out and do serious battle for a business, working 24/7, and they're free.

Creating YouTube videos can also be a powerful music retail sales training tool. Salespeople require many skills, and none is more important than the product pitch. And after making just one video, salespeople usually begin to change their pitch for the better. Their enthusiasm levels also rise, and their attitudes about their jobs improve.



## ONE VIDEO, 25 NEW SALES

Having produced tons of videos for music retailers, I've noticed a trend. At first, salespeople are shy, reluctant to try hard and don't spend much time rehearsing what they're going to say. However, once their first video gets posted on YouTube and they see themselves on the Internet, they begin to realize two things: They're not that bad, and they can do a lot better next time.

Jorge, a salesman at Astro Audio Video Lighting in Glendale, Calif., was a bit standoffish at first about starring in a video for the store, but he agreed to try it out. After some coaching and a few takes, we had enough footage to make Astro Audio's first online video. Three days after posting it, a customer Jorge had never seen before came into the store and said, "You're that guy on the YouTube video! I'm here to check out one of those lights." Jorge pointed out that this customer had a happy face, not the usual closed look you get from new prospects. The customer was easy to deal with and ended up purchasing the light. Since then, he has brought in two friends (new customers) that both bought the same light.

"I can honestly say I've made nine to 10 sales from that video,

but my best video to date has made me 25 sales," Jorge said.

## THE ULTIMATE PRESELLER

YouTube offers its member viewers the option to rate and comment on videos. If you misquote or flat-out don't know something important, your video may draw some painful comments. Still, this is all part of the training process. Salespeople are ego-driven and usually care how others see them. The viewer feedback, albeit positive or negative, creates a drive in the salesperson to deliver his best performance without you, the owner

or manager, having to say anything. The ultimate effects that making these videos have on the salesfloor include: stronger presentations, more training for other employees and increased outreach to e-mail customers.

Some dealers use artists, clinicians, teachers and outside companies to create their videos, which is OK. However, I like to use the people who are most likely to end up speaking with customers. A relationship can get created when a customer watches your salespeople and then wants to meet or talk with them. This is what makes YouTube such a powerful tool: It presells.

A few additional pointers: keep your videos less than two minutes long; distill a demo down to a product's key features; be yourself (people can spot a phony); and, most important, be friendly — a person customers would like to meet.

Once your staff starts getting positive customer feedback and sales as a result of these short videos, salespeople will all look forward to making their next ones. Take advantage of this free social media. It's a whole new way to train. **MI**

Kenny Smith is an industry veteran and consults for both retailers and suppliers. He can be reached at kennysmith8888@gmail.com.

Posting product pitch videos on YouTube presells the customer, inspires salespeople to improve their craft



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THE CUSTOMER CONNECTION | BY RAVI

# EcoNAMMics

The past several NAMM shows have spawned favorable vibes despite difficult realities at home. Still, enthusiasm often dissipates once everyone returns to their stores. This summer's NAMM show will likely continue that trend given the uncertain economy.

I ask attendees at every show how they would summarize the convention. Plenty dwell on it meeting their deflated expectations, but for the past several years, "pleasantly surprised" reigns king. (At some point, you would think the element of surprise would wear off.) Some exhibitors incorporate a glass-half-full perspective and embrace less floor traffic in exchange for more one-on-one time with key dealers.

So, how does one procure a sustainable return on a trade show less traveled? Change the attitude. Change the approach.

## EMBRACE HUMAN CONTACT

I frequently hear grumbles about a lack of dealer orders at NAMM, yet these are usually from exhibitors walking through the center rather than working the perimeter. The reality is the entire population is impersonally overstimulated 24/7. Initiating human contact solicits interest. It's amazing what you can accomplish with a smile and simple "hello" or "enjoying the show?"

At one of my aviation lectures, a leftover attendee from the previous seminar told me he stayed for my talk because I personally introduced myself and shook his hand before he had a chance to get up and leave. He wound up enjoying my presentation and later bought my music CDs, book and marketing lecture from my Web site.

## EMBRACE EDUCATION

Ultimately, the best way for exhibitors to secure more orders is to empower dealers to sell more merchandise. For buyers and exhibitors committing precious funds to attend NAMM, the prospect of spending more time together is a golden opportunity to brainstorm and educate each other on how to move existing inventory.

Product education helps everyone, even the most seasoned salespeople. Today's typical store owner carries more items than he could ever demonstrate proficiently. So why not make NAMM appointments specifically for

sales training and product education? Smart manufacturers compile feedback from their best dealers and learn what works. Such information should flow freely throughout the booth and will help manufacturers gain a competitive edge within individual stores. Presentations don't even need to be one-on-one. Offer 15-minute, product-specific, in-booth seminars, say, each hour on the hour. Bringing dealers together will encourage them to share ideas and pitfalls among themselves. Instead of using NAMM booths solely to emphasize new products, prices and show specials, also promote POP displays, co-op advertising programs and other tools to move inventory. Help sell what's already out there.

Another benefit of less foot traffic is the opportunity to do business more efficiently and reserve time for NAMM University. Rarely do I see exhibitors attending Idea Center sessions. If booth traffic is a little slow, sit in on a few, and learn something new. Even presentations targeted at retailers can help manufacturers better understand their own customers' (dealers) needs and interests. That will lead to more effective collaborations in moving product to end-users. **MI**

Ravi is a musician, clinician and music industry lecturer. Visit him at [heyravi.com](http://heyravi.com).



Summer NAMM exhibitors can improve their presence by refocusing on dealer education

# Classic Series



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ALEX TERMAN CAPTAIN	WOLTER PRALOGNSKI	ROB BALLARD DAVID GRAY	LAURA KIM AHA	NICK COSTANZO CROWDED HOUSE	STEVE FISHER EMBRACE
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Aaron Soriero

BY CHARLES FULLER  
PHOTO BY MIKE MORELAND

# SHARING THE WEALTH

How Music Matters built the ultimate lesson program and achieved 151-percent, controlled growth last year

**A**ron Soriero has paychecks from his retail chain, Music Matters, that he hasn't cashed yet. Co-owner Jeff Tarae invested three years of sweat equity in the company before taking any payment at all. Not that either owner had purely charitable intentions.

"Jeff and I think as long-term as we can, and long-term, we want to get big," Soriero said, sitting inside Music Matters' newest location, a 5,000-square-foot strip mall space in Alpharetta, Ga. "We could be making more than we are right now, but we choose not to do that."

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## {SHARINGTHEWEALTH}

Instead, the duo made an important decision early on in their partnership: The best way to grow the Atlanta-area business would be to share the wealth — with their employees, with outside investors and with vendors. And the investment has returned to them in the form of capital (actual and human) and opportunity.

Since 2006, Music Matters has grown

from one store to three stores and from 2,000 square feet of total space to 13,000 square feet. Top-line sales have skyrocketed more than 330 percent since 2005 — 151 percent in 2008 alone.

“We’re not publicly traded,” Tarae said. “We don’t manage this business month-to-month or quarter-to-quarter. This is about looking at year-to-year goals and making

# + WEALTHY INFORMATION

Practical advice from Aaron Soriero and Jeff Tarae on how to spread wealth and grow your company

## SELLING A PORTION OF YOUR COMPANY

**Tarae:** It was a combination of sweat equity, a valuation of the business and an understanding of what the person coming in is going to bring into the mix.

I think everyone has his or her own way of doing the valuation piece. That’s where you have a lot of conversation.

We then raised additional funds and went through more of a traditional process. At the end of the day, I think what was cool about it was that, with the kind of investor we brought in, it was a similar approach. A combination of valuation, contribution and goals.

And you always get guidance from attorneys. For us, the business terms were already set, but they always bring up a few things that you haven’t thought about.

**Soriero:** Take a stab at it. You can make those numbers be anything at the end of the day, but you have to start somewhere. Create the first number. Draft a letter of intent, and move it up and down from there.

## WORKING WITHIN YOUR LEASE TERMS

**Soriero:** Figure out what you know you are able to make work. For us, with lessons, it takes a few months. We need some free rent at first, and that’s the only way to sign a lease.

**Tarae:** Have a good understanding of what it is that you need, and focus on conveying that to the agent that’s representing the space. The landlord wants you there for a long, long time.

If you approach it that way upfront, conveying that to them and making sure it’s a concise, clear message, that impresses them. They appreciate that. That’s how they run their businesses, and they quickly recognize that these people know what they’re talking about, and they respect that.

I tell them, if I have to, ‘I’m not trying to be a stickler on rent. I need this rent to be here for this period of time for us to be successful.’ You shop that around until you find a home run.

## GETTING GROWTH CAPITAL

**Soriero:** I think you just need to be able to stay alive for the first three years. Do whatever it takes. It was weird for me to learn they were just looking at the money you brought in. Not if you made or lost money. So stay alive for the first three years, and then you can get some money and you can start to expand.

**Tarae:** It’s about your tax return, your revenue figure to-date, your profitability and how long you’ve been in business.

If you’re going to a smaller, regional bank, you have more of an opportunity to pitch your business as someone who’s contributing to the local economy — you both have mutual interests — and that story will be considered. Someone from a local bank might be more willing to come and look at the store.

What we’re thinking about right now is re-evaluating our banking relationship based on that. There are financial opportunities with local regional banks right now. We’re looking at that because we have a good story to tell. — C.F.

## {SHARINGTHEWEALTH}

sure that our employees, our manufacturers, our landlords — they all understand the big picture of what we're trying to get to. We're all partners in this."

### SHARING THE JOY OF MUSIC

In early 2003, Soriero was living in Atlanta and teaching guitar at a local music studio. There, he noticed two untapped opportunities: selling gear while people were waiting and teaching kids more appealing material (i.e. the songs that they wanted to be taught). Soriero rounded up a small amount of money from his family and scored an ideal lease, and in June, he opened his 2,000-square-foot music dealership and lessons studio in Roswell, Ga.

He created a summer rock band camp, which organizes kids into groups to play their favorite songs — on a real stage, at a local rock venue, with professional lighting and sound. (It's now a yearlong program called Rock U.) Another adventure brought guitars into inner-city schools, so kids from low-income families could experiment with music. While it didn't generate a lot of new students directly, the program resulted in great media coverage.

According to Soriero, it all has to do with cross-promotion and longevity. His overarching goal is to get students to stay as long as possible. That usually starts with private lessons, but it often leads to other programs, such as Rock U. (About 80 percent of kids in Rock U came from the lesson program.) That way, Music Matters can continue to generate new revenue from current customers, whether it's a rock camp or a gear upgrade.

To keep kids from dropping out of lessons, Soriero places special emphasis on hiring the right instructors.

"I can tell a great instructor in 30 seconds," Soriero said. "It's personality. You don't necessarily want to look for the best player. I find people that most want to teach and are great with others. Not people who [teach] on the side because they have to."

Whether teaching rock guitar or classical strings, this philosophy goes a long way toward offering the "fun" lesson experience that Music Matters sells. It also contributes to what Leslie Barnett,

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head of education at Music Matters, calls “the triangle relationship.”

“Student, parent and teacher — it has to be a team,” she said. “All three need to communicate and cooperate for the experience to be a success.”

Parents figure into Music Matters just as much as students, whether it’s the

instructors or the aesthetics of the show-rooms. As Tarae pointed out to Soriero early on, “We’re selling lessons and instruments to moms.”

“That plays into everything,” Tarae said. “You’ve got to realize, these parents are dropping off their kids at a store, or they’re spending a half-hour here. From the way the place looks to the people, it creates a sense, a feeling: ‘This is a cool, comfortable place to learn.’ Then, their kids get into the lesson room and have a good educational experience, and it closes the loop for us. That can be very powerful.”

And valuable. Soriero currently charges \$125 per month for lessons, which is about 25-percent higher than the local competition. He’s not trying to be the cheapest option, and he has added value to back it up.

“Most of the time, I tell them how much lessons cost, and they don’t flinch,” Soriero said. “Even if they do, I walk them through to show what we have in each lesson room. Then, I explain Rock U and camp. I tell them the procession of the lessons, that we want to get people onstage. They forget about the price at that point.

“To me, since kids are the focus and we don’t need to sell a lot of retail, you

can put one of our stores in almost every school district. So all our stores are really about five miles apart.”

**SHARING OWNERSHIP**

Upon arriving at the Alpharetta store on a Saturday afternoon, Tarae began to engage the staff about business. He tinkered with the POS system. He asked an employee about a particular issue that he’d been evaluating.

Soriero, on the other hand, said, ‘Hi,’ to the staff and leaned against a counter behind the checkout. He observed everything. In part, he was tired. He had run sound and lighting for a concert the night before and had gotten home at 4 a.m. (Music Matters purchases a considerable amount of professional sound and lighting equipment to produce its summer camp and Rock U concerts. When it’s not being used, Soriero rents it out to generate extra revenue.)

But while Tarae prefers information and deliberation, Soriero relies on intuition and action. They have a running joke between them about Tarae’s love of meetings.

“After a while, I just have to get up and do something,” Soriero said.

Still, Tarae’s disposition helps give

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Soriero extra perspective and structure.

As a commercial real estate professional in 2003, Tarae was happy to give some free leasing advice to his college buddy. He helped Soriero redesign his music lessons brochure to look more professional. He consistently helped fine-tune the store's business model.

"I'm the creative guy on the ground, promoting the store," Soriero said. "He's the more organized, financial guy. So our skills really work well together."

They shared a lot of the store, except ownership. Then, in 2006, with the original location busting at the seams, Soriero decided to expand. He also wanted to add computer

Soriero was reluctant at first to bring on a fellow co-owner. 'Bottom line: It wasn't easy, but it changed the store for the better.'

workstations to each lesson room. This required a new lease and a bank loan.

Tarae was integral in help-

ing Soriero score both, and at that point, he approached Soriero about formalizing the relationship. It was a no-brainer for Soriero — he already knew what they could accomplish as a team.

But he still had to overcome a feeling that plagues many business owners: control.

"Even when he bought half the business, I didn't want to let him work in it," Soriero said. "It was like, 'You can own half, but I still have to do payroll, do this, do that.' Ultimately, I had to realize that he's better suited for some things. I have to trust and know that he's going to do it as well as me — oftentimes better."

"Bottom line: It wasn't easy, but it changed the store for the better."

SHARING OWNERSHIP, PART II

The arrangement worked out so well, they decided to share ownership with even more people, namely outside investors. For one, they had a tenacious desire to grow. Their organic cash flow could have funded a new location, but that would have taken longer than they had planned.

Someone familiar with the operation showed interest as an investor. So, they decided to experiment with the franchise model. The new partner funded a new, 4,000-square-foot space in Suwanee, Ga.

The result was a mix of good and bad. The Suwanee store started off incredible: a few hundred students in the first 30 days.

Still, as Tarae said, "There

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were challenges that Aaron and I didn't plan or think about."

"The whole franchise thing sometimes feels a little weird," Soriero said. "You leave yourself open to [the franchisee] making decisions that you don't want them to — and they're not necessarily bad decisions. We figured it was better to all be on the same team."

By "we," he also meant the investor. They sat down and all agreed to revert back to a corporate-owned-stores model. Luckily for Soriero and Tarae, the franchise had so much early success, the investor was willing to go in for more. In that sense, while the franchise model didn't work, the experiment was a success.

### Music Matters' executive management is currently tinkering with a profit-sharing plan based around key performance measures

The duo used part of the new investment money to open the third location in Alpharetta. The rest went toward the chain's infrastructure. A new corporate head-

quarters and extensive operational technology (new servers and systems) created an information and management core for future growth. They now have the operations capability to double their size.

"We had done enough to prove to somebody that the model works," Tarae said. "Until you get to that point, it's a very difficult challenge to raise money. Now that we've proven it, we get people who come to us."

Not that they want it just yet. "I think at this point, we can grow the chain with our own money," Soriero said. "With the economy, we're just leaning back a little bit to see. The investments have us ready to operate many more stores, but we're just not ready for that."

#### SHARING LEADERSHIP (AND PROFIT)

Soriero's and Tarae's partnership started a larger trend. Over the past three years, Music Matters has added a number of management positions and responsibilities in various parts of the operation. Two vital jobs include the head of education, Barnett, and a manager devoted solely to Rock U, David Shore. This has provided the support and human capital needed to grow. It has created leaders in the company who can independently improve and grow their niches.

"I used to steer the ship, clean the ship, stock the ship and dock the ship," Soriero said. "Now, I'm just kind of on it."

In education, Music Matters aims to keep valued

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**3:30 p.m. — 'Recession-Proof' Lesson Programs**

This block of sessions will bring back the lesson room basics.

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**SATURDAY  
JULY 18, 3:30 P.M.**

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instructors happy and productive, which translates to the student. With a degree in music education and experience in public high schools, Barnett had the background to develop the lesson experience and teach the teachers.

“Being an instructor can be very isolating — literally,” she said. Barnett regularly meets with each teacher one-on-one. She helps if they have problems with students or parents. If a teacher’s behavior causes problems, she addresses it as a friend. All the instructors meet with her to develop events and techniques to introduce more fun and originality into the program.

For Rock U, Shore puts his undivided attention into recruitment. Also, as a former professional touring musician, he brings an authenticity when grouping kids into bands or teaching them about stage presence.

At the store level, Soriero and Tarae have started giving managers more control over purchasing. They are limited to a set list that they can choose from, but they also have access to data on price, sales, margin and other critical information. Soriero and Tarae still approve all purchasing, but the managers have proven much more knowledgeable about demand in their individual locations.

In every area, the democratic style of leadership has had a trickle-down effect. “There’s no rigid sense of hierarchy or structure,” said Alex Simmons, store manager at Alpharetta. “If someone who just started has an idea about how to do something better, everyone has open ears.” Simmons said he encourages input from everyone, especially those accustomed to

keeping their thoughts to themselves.

Recently, Soriero and Tarae added real financial incentive to these leaders’ success. They’re tinkering with a profit-sharing plan based on key performance measures in the various positions and departments.

“We continue to drive home that ‘You don’t work for us, you work with us’ [mentality],” Tarae said. “Then, we back it up by including these people in the process and updating them on the development. Then, we back it up even further by finding a way to tie their compensation to that success.

“If you can get [your team] involved to where they’re formulating the idea, touching the success and then feeling it financially, you’re going to drive them to be productive.”

Soriero and Tarae also share information and some profit with their vendors. They regularly attend NAMM to build personal relationships with, as Soriero put it, “everyone I can.” They tell their vendors what they’re planning and what they need. They’ve also started paying down their obligations to vendors more aggressively.

Then, when they’re looking to expand into a new store or, as they decided a few years ago, to rent band instruments, they’re able to get the terms they need to maintain growth. Top-line revenue growth, that is, often in temporary lieu of profitability. Which will come later.

“Obviously, we need to be profitable to survive,” Tarae said. “But psychologically, we feel that if we’re going to get big, we need to get as many people as we can who are in the company and associated with the company to be working toward growth.” **MI**

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# THE GUIDE

2009 SUMMER NAMM

2009 SUMMER NAMM | BY JENNY DOMINE

## A BOLD APPROACH

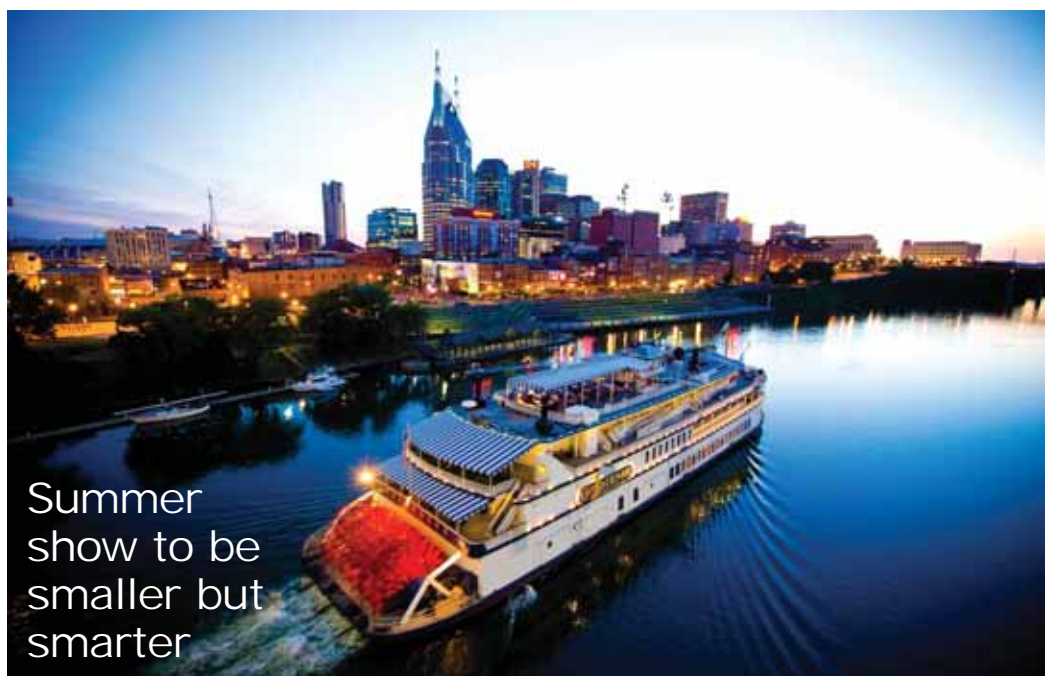
Summer NAMM's return to Nashville, Tenn., last year was met with an enthusiastic rise in attendance, as compared to the 2007 show. However, in the wake of the recession, big-name manufacturers have reduced their exhibit spaces this year or opted out altogether.

But for dealers preparing for the critical third and fourth quarters, 2009 Summer NAMM will offer an opportunity to meet more than 100 new manufacturers, cultivate new markets and learn how to turn good ideas into everyday business practices. It will be held from July 17–19 at the Nashville Convention Center.

"I'm an optimist at heart," said NAMM President and CEO Joe Lamond. "And I do believe things are improving out there. There are lots of consumers out there who want what we, as an industry, are selling."

### TABLETOP TALK

Notable absentees from this year's exhibitor list include Fender and Nashville-based Gibson Guitars. Other heavy-hitters, such as Roland, Korg and Pearl, have given up their showroom-style spaces in favor of the Club, a meeting area located on the second-



Summer show to be smaller but smarter

level mezzanine of the convention center. There, tabletop business can be discussed. And fewer big names means retailers can get more face time with 375 other exhibitors.

### TURNING TO CHURCH

This year, NAMM is making an extra effort to reach the house of worship community. According to TFCinfo, more than 93 percent of houses of worship use musical instruments as part of their services.

NAMM has partnered with *Technologies For Worship* magazine, which will offer educa-

tional sessions and hands-on training to house of worship staff in lighting, pro audio and integration of MI.

"This is an exciting opportunity for Summer NAMM members to meet with church tech teams from across North America and discuss how to integrate their products into the worship environment," Lamond said.

### TAKING IDEAS HOME

NAMM University sessions will be held at booth 837. This summer's program will address economic issues head-

on with seminars, such as "Three Low-Cost Ways to Ride Out the Storm" and "Your Retail Stimulus Plan."

But unlike past NAMM U. events that focused on quick ideas, this year's format will feature many 50- and 90-minute sessions on how to implement those ideas in practical ways. This will include strategies for maximizing the Internet with Google searches, video content and social networks.

"We have to be bold about how we look at it and market to all of these new potential customers," Lamond said. **MI**

# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Translating ideas into action is a major theme for this year's NAMM University sessions. During the three-day period, industry experts will share their best practices for sales, marketing, training and customer service, as well as the how-to details necessary to turn those ideas into immediate, real-world solutions.

"Breakfast Sessions" begin with an 8 a.m. meal (first come, first serve) at the Renaissance Nashville Hotel and run from 8:30–9:30 a.m. All other sessions take place at the NAMM Idea Center, booth 837, unless otherwise stated. For more information, visit [namm.org/summer](http://namm.org/summer).

## FRIDAY, JULY 17

### BREAKFAST SESSION

8 A.M.

#### State of the Industry Address

Moderator: Joe Lamond  
Renaissance Nashville, Grand Ballroom

NAMM President and CEO Joe Lamond will discuss the changing economy, its impact, and ongoing challenges and opportunities.

10:30 A.M.

#### Seven Ideas in 20 Minutes

Danny Rocks

11 A.M.

#### How to Find Customers When No One Is Walking Through the Door

Bob Popyk  
Five ways to keep the cash register ringing in the slowest times.

11:30 A.M.

#### Five Secrets to Closing a Sale When a Customer Starts to Walk

Bob Popyk

NOON

#### Music by Numbers

Alan Friedman and Daniel Jobe  
The basics of reading a financial statement and how to use it to save your business.

1:30 P.M.

#### Three Low-Cost Ways to Ride Out the Storm: Re-Think, Re-Focus, Re-Tool

John Stiernberg  
Learn three ideas you can implement for the greatest positive impact now.

2 P.M.

#### How to Prepare for the Post-Recession Economy

Ken Murray

2:30 P.M.

#### The Power of Effective Employees

Gayle Beacock

3:30 P.M.

#### It's Not Just an Idea, It's My Action Plan!

Moderator: Danny Rocks  
A panel of dealers from the 2009 NAMM Show Breakfast Session "25 Ideas to Fix Your Business — Now!" will show how to customize their ideas.

5:00 P.M.

#### NAMM User Group: Getting the Most Out of Your In-Store Financing With GE Money

Jonathan Pershing

## SATURDAY, JULY 18

8 A.M.

### BREAKFAST SESSION

#### Your Retail Stimulus Plan — Jump-Start Your Sales No Matter What's Happening in the Economy

Bob Negen  
Renaissance Nashville, Grand Ballroom

Find out how to jump-start your sales — no matter what time of year. Pick up easy-to-execute strategies to grow your business without spending a fortune.

10:30 A.M.

#### I Want More Web Site Traffic —

#### It's Easy to Use Video

Jen Lowe, Jim Hodgson and Mike Nessen

NOON

#### This Worked for Me! Will It Work for Your?

Moderator: Danny Rocks  
Prepare to contribute your ideas, ask lots of questions and take home a plan for success.

1:30 P.M.

#### Electronic Marketing — It's Easy, Low-Cost and It Works!

Bob Negen

2:30 P.M.

#### How to Make Your Customers and the Press Love You

Myrna Sislen

3:00 P.M.

#### Hope Is Not a Strategy; Create Your Own Economy

Marc Smith  
This workshop will demonstrate proven techniques and best practices that can increase sales, profits and customer satisfaction.

3:30 P.M.

#### 'Recession-Proof' Lesson Programs

Pete Gamber  
This block of sessions will bring back the lesson room basics.

5:00 P.M.

#### NAMM User Group: Bank Card Payment Processing 101 With First National Merchant

Jason Wagner

## SUNDAY, JULY 19

### BREAKFAST SESSION

8 A.M.

#### Best in Show: This Year's Hottest Products

Moderator: Frank Alkyer  
Renaissance Nashville, Grand Ballroom

Join *Music Inc.* publisher Frank Alkyer and his panelists to find the best products, ideas and trends from the show.

10:30 A.M.

#### How Tweet It Is: Using Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Other Social Media to Build Community and Drive Store Traffic

Scott Robertson

11:30 A.M.

#### Tune Your Web Site to Search Engine Favorites

Tom Nessen and Jeff Anop  
Learn how Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Search Engine Marketing (SEM) can help customers find your Web site.

NOON

#### Establishing Your Web Presence

Danny Rocks  
Improve your Web presence through video clips and blogs.

1 P.M.

#### The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act: Local Community Impact for Education Support and Music Education

Moderator: Mary Luehrsen

1:45 P.M.

#### 'Legs and Regs' Update: Small Business Legislation Activities

Moderator: Mary Luehrsen  
Learn about legislation affecting small business.

2:30 P.M.

#### Community Music Education Advocacy

Co-Moderators: Sandra Jordan and Eric Ebel

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CADMICS.COM

CAD Professional Microphones is returning to its roots at Summer NAMM with the introduction of the new Equitek E100S large diaphragm cardioid condenser mic, which has been redesigned from the ground up and engineered and built in the United States.

Cadmat Global .....256  
 Calzone Case Co. ....1507  
 CE Distribution .....1225  
 Cedar Creek Custom Case Shoppe .....1205  
 Cerventis.....1525  
 Chafin Custom Guitars.....1243  
 Cherry Lane Music .....1018  
 Christian Musician Magazine .....224  
 ChromeDomeAudio .....1638  
 Club World .....836  
 CodaBow Int'l.....1126  
 Coil .....1630  
 Cole Clark Guitars .....1505  
 Collings Guitars .....1201  
 Computerized Guitar.com .....229  
 Connolly Music Company .....1126  
 ConventionTV@NAMM.....836  
 Cort USA .....1309  
 Crafter USA .....1618  
 Creation Audio Labs.....1524  
 Creative Bags and Cases .....236  
 CruzTOOLS .....235  
 CSC Products.....749  
 Curt Mangan.....1418

**D'ADDARIO**

BOOTH 1401

DADDARIO.COM

D'Addario designs, manufactures and markets complete lines of strings for fretted and bowed musical instruments, drumheads, drum practice pads, and guitar and woodwind accessories under the proprietary brand names D'Addario, Evans Drumheads, Planet Waves, Rico, HQ Percussion and PureSound Percussion. The company also runs Gbase.com, an online gear source, and D'Addario's Musician Hub, The Stage (tothestage.com) and The Lesson Room (thelessonroom.com).

Daisy Rock Girl Guitars .....1027  
 Dana B. Goods.....1318  
 D'Andrea.....1425  
 DARE Music Group .....1405  
 Daylight Design .....218  
 DBZ Guitars .....1510  
 DC Voltage .....1346  
 Dean B. Zelinsky Guitars .....1510  
 Dean Markley Strings.....1218  
 Deering Banjo Co. ....903  
 Delaney Guitars .....1244  
 Diamond Amplification.....1510  
 Direct Music Supply .....324

**DIRECT SOUND HEADPHONES**

BOOTH 308

EXTREMEHEADPHONES.COM

DJ Times.....836  
 DownBeat Magazine .....1029  
 DPA Microphones.....311  
 DR Handmade Strings .....1310  
 Dream Cymbals And Gongs .....704  
 D-TAR .....1411

**WHAT TO SEE**

**Levy's Pro-to-Go**

The new Pro series of gig bags from Levy's features 1-inch foam padding, a neck stabilizing system and strap pin suspension shock absorbers that offer superior protection in a gig bag. Levy's Pro series gig bags are also available for electric guitar and electric bass guitar.



{levysleathers.com}

**Portable Player**

The new Orla Stage Ensemble digital piano, distributed by Wyman Piano, features an 88-note, graduated hammer action keyboard; 476 orchestral sounds; and 260 styles.



Additional styles can be loaded via the USB port. The player can also use a USB memory stick to record up to 16 tracks of musical data or play back standard MIDI files.

{wymanpiano.com}

**Hal at a Glance**

Hal Leonard will unveil three new titles in its At A Glance DVD/book series at Summer NAMM: *Blues*

*Guitar*, *Jazz Guitar* and *Guitar Licks*.



Each book/DVD features several lessons pertaining to one topic, and the hi-def DVD features on-screen music.

Popular song examples help to demonstrate the concepts in action. MSRP: \$9.99.

{halleonard.com}

**Mic Arsenal**

The CAD Equitek E100S large-diaphragm cardioid condenser mic has a very low noise floor (8.3 dBA) and the smooth, rich tone with full, low-end CAD is known for. The boothstrapped, full differential Quadra-FET front end delivers high sensitivity and low distortion.



Plus, CAD's proprietary circuitry ensures the highest performance. {cadmics.com}

**New Traditions**

Tradition electric guitars and basses will take \$25 off orders placed at NAMM in room 2010 — The Club. New models include the Jerry Reid Signature Pro, S2000 Deluxe and Flame, SP-1 and 2, and the JR Vintage. A limited lifetime warranty is also included.



{traditionguitars.com}

**Green Drum Thumb**

With rubber made from recycled tires and a base made from residual wood waste materials, the 6-inch, one-sided Mountable EcoPad from D'Addario provides a practice surface and saves trees. It has an 8-mm threaded insert on the bottom for mounting to most standard cymbal stands.



{daddario.com}

**Guitar Protection**

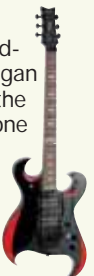
In addition to new protective guitar coverings for Tele and dreadnought acoustic guitars, GuitarGuard is also launching NeverKink Guitar Cable Management at Summer NAMM. NeverKink allows for secure control of guitar and bass cables on and off the stage. It can also be imprinted with a band or company logo for a more personalized product. MSRP: NeverKink. \$3.



{guitarguard.net}

**Syren Song**

The SyrenXT is the second-generation Syren from Tregan Guitars. The new look of the SyrenXT features a two-tone paint job, Floyd Rose-licensed tremolo, Grover tuners, black hardware and a more comfortable, tapered back.



{treganguitars.com}

## WHAT TO SEE



### Music to Wear

AIM Gifts has expanded its jewelry line to include new and unique designs for

the music industry. Show a love for music with AIM's necklaces, brooches, bracelets and earrings. Stop by booth 226, or call 800-233-2800.

{sales@aimgifts.com}

### Grand Concept

Yamaha's Keyboard Division has introduced the

AvantGrand N2, the the follow-up to the



flagship AvantGrand N3 hybrid piano. The N2 features the same advanced sound reproduction and sampling technology as the N3 without the tuning, cost or footprint of a comparable stringed instrument.

{yamaha.com}

### Vibrato Innovation

Check out the Trem King fixed-bridge vibrato system. Trem King's design eliminates old whammy bar frustrations and stays in tune. Affordable bulk pricing for manufacturers and packaged units for retailers and luthiers are available.

{tremking.com}

### Anywhere Recorder

The Olympus LS-10 Linear PCM audio recording device delivers the high fidelity of a portable, professional recording studio in a light, go-anywhere body.



No extra gear is required to record audio in uncompressed, 24-bit, 96-kHz Linear PCM format for digital stereo recordings that are true to the original performance.

{olympusamerica.com}

Duesenberg .....	1222
Charles Dumont & Son .....	918
E.K. Blessing .....	436
Eastman Strings .....	1000
Eden Electronics .....	906
Egnater Amplification .....	437
Eko Music Group SPA .....	1007
Electro-Harmonix .....	1518
Electroswitch .....	1527
Ellixir Strings .....	728
EMD Music/Stagg .....	1236
Emery & Webb .....	1045
EMG .....	1319
Enhanced Listening Technologies .....	504
Epilog Laser .....	429
EQ Magazine .....	926
Ernie Ball .....	1603
Essential Sound Products .....	406
ETI Sound Systems .....	536
Everly Music Co. ....	1428
Farley's Musical Essentials .....	268
FBT U.S.A. ....	408
FireBelly Amplifiers .....	1445
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Flaxwood .....	1249
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Four Star Wire & Cable .....	500
Fred Kelly Picks .....	219
Fryette Amplification .....	1345
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Future Percussion Concepts .....	221
G & L Musical Instruments .....	1337
G7th Ltd. ....	1007
Gallien Technology .....	1610
Gallien-Krueger .....	1610
Gatchell Violins .....	824
Gator Cases .....	809
GCV Violins .....	648
GE Money .....	2000

#### GEORGE L'S MUSICAL PRODUCTS

BOOTH 911

GEORGE'SSTORE.COM

GlassTones .....	1342
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Gold Tone .....	1422
Goldfish Guitars .....	234
Goodsell Electric Instrument .....	1244
W.L. Gore & Associates .....	728
Graneli Audio Labs .....	347
Greatmind Inst. Manufacturing .....	239
Gretsch .....	700
Grip Studios .....	1701
Guilford Guitars .....	1606
Guistar Picks .....	270
The Guitar Folks .....	1611
Guitar Mill .....	1700
Guitar Player Magazine .....	926

#### GUITARGUARD

BOOTH 1546

GUITARGUARD.NET

Guitars of the Stars - Boobtone .....	214
GWW Group .....	1106
H & F Technologies .....	810
H.E.A.R. ....	166
Haight Guitars .....	244

#### HAL LEONARD

BOOTH 1018

#### HALLEONARD.COM

Summer NAMM highlights include: the At A Glance and Guitar Play-Along DVD series; Instrumental Play-Alongs for *Twilight*, *High School Musical 3* and *Rock Band*; matching folios for *Slumdog Millionaire*, *Hannah Montana* and *Spectacular!*; and new titles from Cherry Lane Music, including Children of Bodom's *Are You Dead Yet?* and Joe Bonamassa's *Blues Deluxe*.

Hall Crystal Flutes .....	743
Hammond Suzuki .....	737
Hanson Musical Instruments .....	1548
Bob Kilgore's Harmonic Capo .....	1504
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Heil Sound .....	319
Homespun Tapes .....	1018
Hosa Technology .....	528
Hoshino .....	618
Howard Core .....	827
Hudson Music .....	1018

#### HUGHES & KETTNER

BOOTH 300

HUGHES-AND-KETTNER.COM

Humes & Berg Mfg. ....	901
HyperLabs .....	202
IBC Trading .....	1007
Ibrahim Diril Cymbals .....	605
International DJ Expo .....	836
JA Musik .....	232
JAMS Audio .....	320
Jazzkat Amplifiers .....	1627
Jensen Musical Inst. Speakers .....	1225
Jet Fretz .....	1304
JT Sound .....	1439
JZ Music .....	548
K and S Music .....	822
Kahler International .....	208
Kala Brand Music .....	1528
KAM Instruments .....	345
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Kazoobie .....	330
Kelly Concepts .....	607
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Keyboard Magazine .....	926
Knilling String Inst. ....	436
König & Meyer .....	1126
Korg .....	CLUB
Kyser Musical Products .....	1304
Lace Music Products .....	1501
Jean Larrivee Guitars .....	1400
Lashbrook Guitars .....	1145
Lava Cable .....	1307
H.G. Leach Guitars .....	1500
Legacy Learning Systems .....	237
Listen Hear .....	403

#### LEVY'S LEATHERS

BOOTH 1226

LEVYSLEATHERS.COM

Levy's will be introducing almost 100 new guitar strap models. Expanding on the successful themes of fashionable and affordable, Levy's has picked the best designs inspired by the fashion runway.

#### LM PRODUCTS

BOOTH 725

LMPRODUCTS.COM

Low End .....	1437
LSL Instruments .....	1250
Ludwig Drum Co. ....	601
Mad Professor Amplification .....	1231
Madarozzo .....	236
Mainland Ukcs .....	258

#### MAJOR MUSIC SUPPLY

BOOTH 1209

MAJORMUSICSUPPLY.COM

Mapex .....	508
Marshall Electronics .....	401
C.F. Martin & Co. ....	1200
Matrixx-N .....	254
Meadowbrook Insurance Group .....	2000
Meinl USA .....	610
Mel Bay Publications .....	928
Merano Musical Inst. ....	719
Merlin 5 Products .....	228
Miami Audio Music .....	505
MIDC - Musical Inst. Distribution .....	1617
Mighty Bright .....	266
Mighty Mite .....	1309
MixMeister Technology .....	400
MJS Music & Entertainment .....	924
Mogami Cable .....	401
Moog Music .....	CLUB
Moon Wha S.O.G. ....	231
Morgan Hill Music .....	1408
Morpheus .....	736
Morrell Music .....	1248
Motion Sound .....	736
MottAudio .....	307
MPR Enterprises .....	268
MTD (Michael Tobias Design) .....	CLUB
Muse Inc. ....	1324
Music & Sound Retailer .....	836
Music Dealers Resource Group .....	334
Music Freight .....	2000
Music Inc. Magazine .....	1029
The Music Link .....	1336
The Music People! .....	800
Musical Player Network .....	926
Musical Merchandise Review .....	1031
Musician's Wholesale America .....	1526
Musiquip .....	225
MXL Microphones .....	401

#### NAMM IDEA CENTER

BOOTH 837

NAMM.ORG

NAMM Endorsed Business Providers .....	2000
NAMM's Friends of Music Making .....	150
NEMC .....	838
New Sensor Corp. ....	1518
NewBay Media .....	926
Nova Strings .....	1529

#### OLYMPUS IMAGING AMERICA

BOOTH 309

OLYMPUSAMERICA.COM

Olympus Imaging America is a precision technology leader, designing and delivering award-winning products for consumer and professional markets. It works collaboratively with its customers and its parent company, Olympus Corp., to develop breakthrough technologies with revolutionary product design and functionality that enhances peoples' lives.

Oscar Schmidt, Division of Washburn .....



Osiamo .....238  
 P3 Phantom Powered Pedal System .....1346  
 Paige Musical Products .....1406  
 Palmer Speaker Simulators .....320  
 Pantheon Guitars .....1326  
 Panyard.....808  
 Parker Guitars.....906  
 PartnerShip.....2000  
 Peak Music Stands .....729  
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 Perfection Pegs .....436  
 Perri's Leathers.....1531

**PETERSON ELECTRO-MUSICAL**

BOOTH 418

PETERSONTUNERS.COM

Pick Guy .....332  
 Pigtronix .....1442  
 Pioneer Valley Imports .....223  
 Players Music Accessories .....831  
 Portastand .....442  
 Power Wrist Builders .....709  
 Premier Guitar.....922  
 Pro Audio Review .....926  
 Pro Sound News .....926  
 Pro Stage Gear .....630  
 Pro-Active Websites .....918  
 ProSing .....422  
 PZtronics.....200  
 Q Lighting .....1629  
 QMP Sales .....343  
 RainSong Graphite Guitars .....1537  
 Randall Amplification .....906  
 Realist .....1126  
 Red Leaf Technology .....444  
 Rees Harps .....821  
 Remo .....711  
 Rental & Staging Systems .....926  
 Reunion Blues .....144  
 RoboKey .....1705  
 Roc-N-Soc .....604

**RETAIL UP!**

BOOTH 842

RETAILUP.COM

Retail Up! is a provider of industry Web site services and touch-screen POS systems. For your Web site, add in-depth data on more than 400,000 products, online survey tools, e-newsletter marketing, downloadable sheet music and more. The Order Up! program transmits customer orders directly from the Web site to all major distributors and manufacturers.

**REVEREND GUITARS**

BOOTH 1429

REVERENDGUITARS.COM

Reverend Guitars offers more than 25 models in the hot mid-priced market. New releases include Reeves Gabrels Signature, Six Gun, Double Agent II and Unknown Hinson Signature.

**ROLAND**

CLUB

ROLANDUS.COM

Rowdy Pickers Musical Products .....272  
 RS Berkeley .....819  
 S.I.T. Strings Co.....1300  
 Sabian .....710  
 Saga Musical Inst. ....1100

Samick Music Corp.....636  
 Santa Cruz Guitar.....1211  
 Schatten Design .....1706  
 Schroeder Guitars .....1613  
 Score Marketing .....323  
 Sensaphonics Hearing Conservation .....405  
 Seymour Duncan .....1411  
 Shanghai Max Precision Instrument .....729  
 Paul Shelden Global Productions .....336  
 Shelfactory.....1447  
 Shoreview Distribution .....207  
 SHS International .....426

**SHUBB CAPOS**

BOOTH 1010

SHUBB.COM

After many requests from players for a lighter version of its original capo, Shubb has introduced the Shubb Lite capo. It's made of aerospace grade aluminum with a nickel finish.

SICA Speakers .....1225  
 Simple Amps .....1344  
 Souldier .....1222  
 Sound & Communications .....836  
 Southland Music Distributors .....1142  
 Sperco .....1146  
 St. Blues Guitar Workshop .....1323  
 St. Louis Music.....436  
 Not Just Stands .....1544  
 String Swing .....CLUB  
 Strobel Guitars .....1539  
 Supernatural Percussion .....606  
 Systems Contractor News .....926  
 TC - Helicon/Electronic .....329  
 Technologies For Worship Magazine102, 1037  
 Testa Communications.....836  
 The Learning Dock.....204  
 Thomastik-Infeld .....1126  
 Tianjin ACME Trade .....233  
 Tianjin Hanbang Musical Instrument .....825  
 Tianjin Zhong Tian Qi Jian Imp. & Exp. ....823  
 TKL Products .....1205  
 TMP Pro Distribution .....800

**TRADITION GUITARS**

CLUB

TRADITIONGUITARS.COM

Tradition Guitars will feature new releases at NAMM and invites dealers to come by room 2010 — The Club — to learn more. New products include: the Jerry Reid Signature Pro, S2000 Deluxe & Flame, SP-1 & 2 and JR Vintage.

**TRAVELER GUITAR**

BOOTH 1506

TRAVELERGUITAR.COM

**TREGAN GUITARS**

BOOTH 1436

TREGANGUITARS.COM

Unique electric guitars and basses, custom looks, feel and playability, without the custom price.

**TRI-TECHNICAL SYSTEMS**

BOOTH 1039

AIMSI.BIZ

**TREM KING**

THE CLUB

Trem King Vibratos are available in three models, including the TK-1, TK-2 and TK-3. The vibratos' four color options are chrome, black,

gold and satin nickel. Learn more at NAMM in Room 2010 — The Club.

Tsunami Cables .....446  
 Tunerguard .....1704  
 TV Jones .....1427  
 U.S. Band & Orchestra Supplies .....436  
 UglyAmps .....1542  
 Ulbrich Stainless Steels .....242  
 Ultimate Ears .....306  
 Ultrasound Amplifiers .....322  
 UpBeat Daily.....1029  
 U.S. Music Corp. ....906  
 U.S. Patent And Trademark Office .....162  
 V & R Remote.....1702

**VERITAS INSTRUMENT RENTAL**

BOOTH 818

VERITAS-ONLINE.COM

Visual Sound.....911  
 VJ Rendano Music .....328  
 VNewsletter.....836  
 Voyage-Air Guitar .....1500  
 Warehouse Guitar Speakers .....1536  
 Warwick .....718  
 Washburn International .....906  
 Watch & Learn .....1118  
 Waveform Dynamics .....1449

**WAVEANGLE**

BOOTH 260

WAVEANGLE.COM

**WD MUSIC PRODUCTS**

BOOTH 1420

WDMUSIC.COM

WD Music Products has been providing quality pickguards and replacement parts for guitars and basses since 1978. With the inclusion of brands, such as Kluson Tuning Machines, Kent Armstrong Pickups and Stromberg Jazz Guitars, WD Music Products has grown to become the largest supplier of aftermarket guitar parts in the world.

Weaseltrap Records .....1504  
 Wechter Guitars .....1328  
 Willis Music Co. ....1018  
 Wilmington Fibre .....1227  
 Xcel Drumsticks .....210  
 XP Audio .....736

**WYMAN PIANO**

BOOTH 739

WYMANPIANO.COM

Wyman Piano now distributes Orla digital pianos exclusively in the United States. See the company at NAMM Booth 739.

**YAMAHA**

BOOTHS 104, 136

YAMAHA.COM

Yamaha will debut the AvantGrand N2 hybrid piano, the S90XS and S70XS music synthesizers, the Motif XS DVD collection, and the NTX and NCX nylon-string guitars, developed with the guitar duo Rodrigo y Gabriela.

Yorkville Sound.....300  
 Zaolla Silverline.....528  
 Zero Crossing .....1229  
 Zildjian .....600

WHAT TO SEE

**Instant Recognition**

Kluson Tuning Machines has reintroduced two significant parts from the golden era of electric guitars: the Waffleback tuning machine and the number six trapeze tailpiece. [wdmusic.com](http://wdmusic.com)



**Signed by Gabrels**

Reverend will unveil the Reeves Gabrels Signature guitar. It features a Korina body with flame maple top, 25.5-inch scale maple neck, Reverend uncovered bridge humbucker and a DiMarzio Fastrack 1 neck pickup. Reeves Gabrels will make an appearance at the booth. (Times to be announced.) [reverendguitars.com](http://reverendguitars.com)

**Alfred's Latest**

Alfred has released the album-matching guitar tab songbook to *21st Century Breakdown*, Green Day's latest album. The 18 compositions on this album range from power punk to ballads. Titles include: "Song Of The Century," "21st Century Breakdown," "Viva La Gloria!," "The Static Age" and "21 Guns." [alfred.com](http://alfred.com)



**The Next Step**

Retail Up!'s OneStep POS is designed for greater profitability. Built with fully supported Microsoft SQL or Java database, it tracks revenue and costs and can help with purchasing decisions. It improves receiving and accounting accuracy, and it integrates directly into QuickBooks and other accounting packages. [retailup.com](http://retailup.com)



\* LISTINGS AS OF MAY 11.



Paul Tobias of Tobias Music with the Jay Turser JT-Shark guitar

WORDS & PHOTO BY JEFF CAGLE

# GOT INDIE BRANDS?

Marquee-name guitars draw customers into stores and give dealers big brands to sell. They also come with massive distribution and often large buy-ins and thin profit margins. Selling lesser-known brands can help round out margins, and some dealers have even built their smaller

Why you need to carry lesser-known guitar brands, and how to get the most bang-for-your-buck from them

brands into big names in their own markets.

Offering lesser-known brand names also provides dealers with the opportunity to connect with and educate customers about something off their radars that could save them money. This strengthens the buyer-seller relationship and reassures customers that dealers are looking out for their

needs, not just the bottom line.

## SET THE PRICE

Brian Reardon, owner of Monster Music in Levittown, N.Y., has about 700 students in his store's lesson program and said he likes to have something new to show them each week. He uses NAMM shows to identify interesting products without deep

market penetration — products his customers will likely have no familiarity with. One brand caught his attention at this past January's show: AXL, which is distributed by The Music Link.

Reardon said he puts himself in the position of the consumer when determining the price of his lesser-known guitar brands. He asks himself what he would expect the guitar to be priced at if he were seeing it for the first time.

"What I liked about the AXL guitars, with every component antiqued down to the tone knobs and whammy bar, was that they had the feel, to me, of instruments that should retail for \$500 or so," Reardon said. "So I priced them at about half of what I would have expected to see them at as a consumer. My customers saw these guitars for the first time in February and March [and were] amazed by the extent of the craftsmanship and agreed: great guitar for the money."

He said he makes a 67-percent margin on the sales.

**BYPASS ONLINE SELLERS**

Reardon has found an advantage in being the only dealer in his area to carry AXL. A customer recently said he loved the feel of a particular AXL guitar at Reardon's store, only to return the next day with an Internet ad listing the guitar at \$169. But the customer conceded that he couldn't try out the guitar online and that he'd have to pay freight if he bought it from the Internet seller. He suggested that he and Reardon meet in the middle.

"He paid \$200 for the guitar and left thinking that I just did him a monumental favor, feeling great about both the guitar and Monster Music," Reardon said. "I originally paid about \$90 for the guitar at NAMM."

Rusty Kephart, president of Iowa-based Kephart's Music Center, has found a way around Internet competition with Greg Bennett Guitars, which makes entry-level through high-end instruments with a limited distribution and no online presence. Kephart, who called his stores a "mom-friendly environment," said his market is the family or the player who's a little intimidated by a huge selection and the "dude" salesperson.

To build brand awareness for Greg

Bennett, Kephart's Music has hosted two clinics featuring Bennett himself.

"We did some fairly heavy advertising and held the clinic off-premises at a nice, high-end steak house/lounge party room," Kephart said. "We had a drawing and gave away merchandise, including two Bennett guitars. We advertised special, one-night pricing and brought a nice sampling of the line to the location. We put them on stands and littered the place with guitars. Greg was fantastic. There were 100-plus in attendance. We sold a bunch of guitars, and the residuals were great. [Customers would come up and say,] 'I got his autograph!'"

**SELL SOFT**

Johnny Thompson has found that less is more when pitching mid-range and high-end guitar brands from smaller makers, such as Tregan, an up-and-coming line of metal guitars.

"By the time musicians are into metal, they've been around a while and likely have been in some bands already," said Thompson, founder and owner of Johnny Thompson Music in Monterey Park, Calif. "So they're very aware of what's out there and what the other guys are playing. We're not exactly going to talk these guys into anything — it's [already been] coming at them from every direction. They tend to know what they want, so all we can do is give them options. We just lay on a few technical points and see if they like it when they sit down and play it. It's a grass-roots kind of thing."

Pitching a lesser-known, high-end guitar can be made easier if a dealer also happens to own a few himself. Andrew Loggins, owner and manager of Music Authority in Cumming, Ga., has three guitars and a bass from boutique manufacturer Gadov Guitars.

"When a salesperson has such a personal experience with the guitars, it makes it easier for them to have an effective sales pitch," Loggins said. "It's also easier to understand how these guitars are upgraded from the big-name brands. The idea that these guitars are custom-made and if the customer wants an option in electronics, hardware, wood type or any number of custom options makes these guitars stand apart from the big names.

Where do I get the World's Finest Music Creation Products?

american music & sound **AM & S**

Focusrite

novation

nord electro 3

Vestax

www.AmericanMusicAndSound.com

# + OTHER INDIE GUITAR BRANDS



## + REVIVAL GUITARS

SAN FRANCISCO

"I like the simple look of the Revival guitars," said Jimmy Brown of Guitar Emporium in Louisville, Ky. "Some companies overdo it and make their guitars real flashy looking. Revival has done a good job of building a relatively inexpensive guitar that's pretty simple-looking.

"With these smaller brands, we really haven't had issues with an instrument but maybe once or twice. Smaller companies seem to get it right the first time." ([majormusic.com](http://majormusic.com))

## + REVEREND MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

WARREN, MICH.

"The design is timeless, in the sense that it doesn't come across as retro even though it is," said Joe Pistorio of Joe's Music in Eastpointe, Mich. "It's timeless, but with modern-day features — modern locking machine heads and bass roll off. No other manufacturer does that. It gives the customer the quality of an American brand at the import prices. It's a go-to guitar for almost any customer."

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

## + SPARROW GUITARS

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

"The Sparrow fits a niche in the sense that it's a foreign-made guitar, but the actual construction of them — the fretwork, the electronics [installation] — is done in Canada," said James Gast of Fazio's Frets and Friends in Ellisville, Mo. "There aren't many guitars in that price point that have that quality. They're a lower-high-end guitar. It fits just underneath the American Fender stuff. It's a great price point."

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

## + INDIE GUITARS

CORNWALL, ONTARIO

"It's nice that Indie only deals with independent dealers," said Michael Clark of Crossroads Music in East Hampton, N.Y. "It makes us somewhat unique in a tough market like New York. But the bottom line is they make nice guitars at a good price, and that's the real reason we carry them. It's an excellent product, and our customers say so. We wouldn't carry them otherwise." Key models include the Quilted Standard, Futuristic, Total Natural and Double Cut. ([indieguitars.com](http://indieguitars.com))

## + TRADITION GUITARS

FORT WORTH, TEXAS

"I saw my students overspending for guitars, so I started looking into it to see if there was something else," said Steve Carroll of Black Hills Guitar in Spearfish, S.D. "The fit and finish [of Tradition Guitars] are so good. I don't know how such a small company gets their guitars built in such a fine factory, but their guitars come beautiful. They really fit my electric market in that \$200–\$500 category, which is a hard category to build a good, solid guitar." ([traditionguitars.com](http://traditionguitars.com))

And the fact that any customer can just pick up the phone and speak to Ryan Gadow [president and chief luthier] about all these options makes the guitars so much more personal and easier to pitch simply because the number of guitar companies doing this are very few.

“The main key is not to just have lines that are smaller or lesser-known but to have quality products [from manufacturers] that make the customer feel like he is special.”

#### SERVICE FACTOR

Big-name suppliers may hang their hats on having top-notch customer service, but Thompson said he’s noticing smaller brands getting into the service game, as well.

“If you have a problem, [large manufacturers] tend to cover you and will take care of it — they’re in the business of keeping their customers,” Thompson said. “Having said that, Tregan is ahead of the game when it comes to setting their guitars up when they send them out. Sometimes, when you’re working with a bigger name that makes their guitars outside of the country, they come in needing a fair amount of setting up — inconsistent you might say. It’s sometimes a hassle to have to do a lot of setup over every instrument.”

Ken and Paul Tobias of Tobias Music, a high-end acoustic shop in Downers Grove, Ill., have taken on entry-level brands Jay Turser and Walden to offer to students in their lesson program. Paul mentioned that these brands offer robust dealer incentives, which he hasn’t seen from larger manufacturers of late.

On a recent order, for instance, the Tobiases were about \$300 shy of hitting a threshold that would have saved them an extra 10 percent on the order. The sales rep dropped them a quick call, suggesting they add to the purchase, which they said will end up saving them in the long run.

“Because they have done very well here, we get that final end-column pricing on our guitars,” Paul said. “They always seem to have some kind of promotion going, and we definitely pay attention to their sales sheets, even if it means getting a few extra guitars more than our original order.”

“The larger companies don’t seem to be giving dealers a whole lot of incentive

with their buy-ins lately. Obviously, with the tough economy, they’re offering the customers some good percentages like zero-percent financing, gift cards, etc. But for the dealers, it doesn’t seem like we’re getting a whole lot of incentives from the bigger companies, so we can appreciate the dealer incentives from the smaller brands, and we take full advantage of that when it’s offered and it’s possible.”

With Tobias’ 30-year history and reputa-

**Brian Reardon of Monster Music recently made roughly 120 points on an AXL guitar sale — and that was after he’d already discounted it**

tion as a high-end acoustic store, Paul said that they have to be extra careful about their product selection, as their clientele, even the beginners, tends to be discriminating.

“We have to do our research and homework,” he said. “It has to be a top-notch product, even if it is considered entry-level. Walden and Jay Tursers have been falling right into that category. Parents have been pleased with these and sometimes have purchased them for themselves and have come back, bought a second or, even in a couple of cases, a third guitar.”

“With the quality of the product, we tend to not run into a lot of issues. They get it to us right away, our reps are always e-mailing and calling to check in with us and making sure we have what we need. We’ve been extremely pleased.”

“It’s fun to sell a Taylor and make \$400 or \$500, but it’s an awful lot of fun to sell five Waldens and make \$1,000,” added Ken Tobias.

“[Smaller brands] want their dealers happy because of their limited distribution,” Kephart said. “They are also trying to build a reputation. Remember, Peavey and Ibanez were struggling to get known against the big boys once, too. Small brands can learn from larger brands’ successes.” **MI**

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# GEAR



## PRODUCT OF THE MONTH >

GODLYKE | LITTLE DIPPER

### Wycked Effects

Godlyke has launched Totally Wycked Audio (TWA), a new line of boutique effects pedals. The line's flagship model is the LD-01 Little Dipper. It's an envelope-controlled vocal formant filter based on a classic '70s circuit. The pedal's dual filters react to playing dynamics, creating peaks and notches that simulate the vowel sounds of human speech. Users can emulate talk boxes, auto-wahs, filters and phase shifters. A built-in fuzz circuit emphasizes harmonics, while dry blend and noise-gate trim pots offer a full-frequency response with low-noise operation. {godlyke.com}



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TC Electronic delays with Nova pedal  
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Elation's new spot, wash turn heads  
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# GEAR AddOns

GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

**1 TC ELECTRONIC NOVA REPEATER** This delay pedal features six delay types, mono in and stereo out, a dedicated tap-tempo switch, audio tapping, and a Killdry switch, which kills the dry sound and only outputs the wet signal from the pedal. The Nova Repeater also has a multi-function pot, enabling musicians to personalize their sounds with a range of chorus and vibrato effects. Turning the modulation pot clockwise will gradually add more chorus, while turning it counter-clockwise will add more vibrato. MSRP: \$149.99. [tcelectronic.com](http://tcelectronic.com)

**2 EMG CHROME, GOLD COVER CAPS** EMG now offers several pickups with a new option: chrome or gold cover caps. Addressing durability issues of chrome plating over brass, the EMG solution for the chrome look is a one-piece, high-quality, mirror-polished, stainless steel cover cap that is designed and produced in the United States. The gold version is the same polished stainless steel cap with the addition of a gold-colored finish that's commonly used to harden machine tools. [emginc.com](http://emginc.com)

**3 PRS SIGNATURE SERIES GUITAR CABLE** The new PRS Signature series guitar cable has a low-capacitance design that transfers the rich guitar tone and dynamics to the amplifier without compromise. The flexible design provides tangle-free use, while the OFC (oxygen free copper), 99.9-percent spiral shield guards tone from unwanted wireless microphone noise, cordless phones, cell phones and radio interference. MSRP: \$49.95-\$64.95. [prscables.com](http://prscables.com)

**4 LEVY'S LEATHERS METAL GUITAR STRAPS** The Levy Metal product offering for 2009 incorporates black and white distressed leather into the company's metal guitar strap series. Pictured is model PM28DR with foam padding, soft leather backing and a two-prong buckle adjustment. [levysleathers.com](http://levysleathers.com)

**5 CORE ONE CREATIVE CORE X2** Created for acoustic guitars, the Core X2 Acoustic premium cable from Core One Creative is made with oxygen-free strands of multi-gauged copper wrapped in audiophile-grade components. Available in 12- and 20-foot lengths, the cable is wrapped in a woven-cloth argyle jacket and finished with gold-plated jacks encased in turned wood connectors and detailed with vintage brass. MSRP: \$79.99. [coreoneproduct.com](http://coreoneproduct.com)





EPIPHONE | 'OH, PRETTY  
WOMAN' GUITAR

## Oh, Orbison

The new Epiphone "Oh, Pretty Woman" guitar is a reproduction of the 1962 original. It features a solid spruce top, solid mahogany back, rosewood 12-string bridge and vintage tuners. For this limited-edition release, the back of the guitar's headstock includes a replica of Roy Orbison's signature and the notation for the first measure of the "Oh, Pretty Woman" opening riff. Also included is a hard case with Orbison's signature and sunglasses icon on it. MSRP: \$1,332.

{[epiphone.com](http://epiphone.com)}



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RECORDING KING | RD-07

## Updated Acoustics

Recording King's latest acoustic, the RD-07, features an ultra-thin, C-profile, mahogany neck; scalloped spruce forward X-bracing; and a rosewood fretboard. It also boasts upgraded features, such as a bone nut and saddle, die-cast tuners, and a classic tortoise shell body binding. MSRP: \$319.99. {[recordingking.com](http://recordingking.com)}





**1 APPLIED ACOUSTICS STRUM ELECTRIC GS-1** The Strum Electric GS-1 is a guitar track plug-in that includes a collection of classic, single coil- and humbucker-fitted guitars, a two-channel amplifier with spring reverb, a speaker cabinet, and effects in a preset library. It automatically voices chords played on the keyboard as a guitar player would play them on a fretboard. MSRP: \$229. [applied-acoustics.com](http://applied-acoustics.com)

**2 UNIVERSAL AUDIO 4K SERIES** The 4K Channel Strip is an exacting circuit emulation of the SSL 4000 G+ console with the Type E "black knob" four-band EQ. The companion 4K Buss Compressor offers a simple control set and transparent compression characteristics. Each of the UAD 4K plug-ins includes a 14-day demo. MSRP: 4K Channel Strip, \$249; Buss Compressor, \$199. [uaudio.com](http://uaudio.com)

**3 WAVES AUDIO HYBRID LINE** The H-Comp Hybrid compressor combines the modeled behavior of transformers, tubes and transistors with the precision of modern plug-ins. The H-Delay delivers vintage sounds, such as slap-back echo and ping-pong delay, as well as PCM42-style effects controlled by an intuitive interface. [waves.com](http://waves.com)

**4 NOVATION PLUG-IN FX SUITE** The five independent VST/AU plug-ins from Novation's FX suite include chorus, delay, tremolo, phaser and filter effect featuring overdrive. Each of these plug-ins offers an upgrade. Five filter types, three different octave slopes and a crunchy overdrive let the filter plug-in deliver a wide variety of dynamic filter modulation effects. [focusrite.com](http://focusrite.com)

**5 SOLID STATE LOGIC X-VERB** The X-Verb is a reverb generator based on SSL algorithms. This approach generates sonic results with the lowest possible latencies. This allows dynamic access to the detail parameters of the early reflection and reverb structure. The Morph feature allows MIDI-controllable crossfading from one reverb preset to another. MSRP: \$379. [solid-state-logic.com](http://solid-state-logic.com)



### QSC | K SERIES LOUDSPEAKERS

## Performance Powered

QSC has debuted the new K series, a combination of a molded ABS enclosure, uniformly matched drivers, advanced DSP and QSC's touring spec amplification. The same 1,000-watt, class D amplifier module powers all four models. When the speakers are pole-mounted, the tilt-direct pole socket converts to a 7.5-degree down-tilt with a 180-degree rotation of the dial. A locking IEC power cord is included.

{[qscaudio.com](http://qscaudio.com)}

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### ALESIS | AUDIOLINK

## Instant Link

The new Alesis AudioLink series lets musicians connect analog audio sources directly to a computer and record them on a standard USB jack. AudioLink includes GuitarLink, MicLink and LineLink. Each cable outputs 16-bit, 44.1-kHz digital audio. MSRP: MicLink and LineLink, \$49; GuitarLink, \$39. {[alesis.com](http://alesis.com)}



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# CYMBAL SAMPLE

This latest cymbal sampling from around the world meets the needs of everyone from marching percussionists to eco-friendly set players.



**1 PAISTE ALPHA CONCERT/MARCHING CYMBAL** The new Alpha Concert/Marching cymbals are made entirely by hand in Switzerland and designed for universal applications, ranging from indoor ensembles and concerts to outdoor marching and drum corps. Available in 16-, 18- and 20-inch sizes, each pair consists of two slightly different A and B versions, which achieve a greater pair sound when combined. {[paiste.com](http://paiste.com)}

**2 MEINL BYZANCE TRADITIONAL RIDE** The new 23-inch Byzance medium and heavy rides fill the tone gap between the 22- and 24-inch versions. The 23-inch medium ride features a balanced, controllable stick response with a defined ping and a blend of bright overtones. The 23-inch heavy ride offers a full-bodied stick response with a clear ping and focused sound with a defined, bright bell. MSRP: \$730. {[meinlcymbals.com](http://meinlcymbals.com)}

**3 SABIAN SR2 LINE** To reach the reconditioned cymbal market, the SR2 line consists of high-quality, pre-played Sabian AA, HH, AAX, HHX and Vault models. This includes cymbals played by Sabian artists, returned from consignments, reviewed in magazines and displayed at trade shows, which will get the new reconditioned SR2 look. Because this line is dependent on cymbal availability, they will not be in the Sabian catalog. {[sabian.com](http://sabian.com)}

**4 TRX BRT SERIES** In response to requests from hardcore and progressive drummers for larger, more powerful cymbals, TRX has expanded its BRT series to include a 24-inch ride, 21- and 22-inch crashes, and 15-inch hi-hats. TRX's BRT series cymbals are custom-crafted by Turkish cymbal smiths and feature heavier weights with extensive hand-hammering and highly-polished surfaces. {[trxcymbals.com](http://trxcymbals.com)}

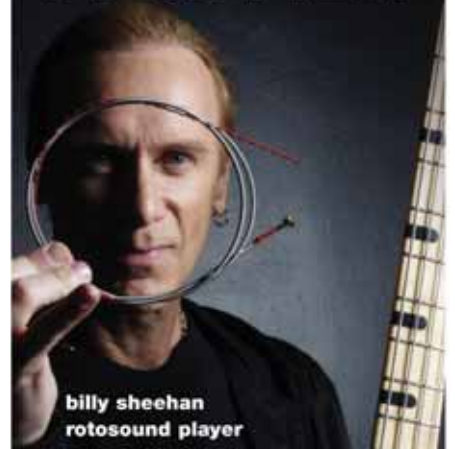


PRO-MARK | JOEY JORDISON MODEL

## Signed in Blood

Slipknot drummer Joey Jordison has joined Pro-Mark's artist roster. The new TX515W Joey Jordison model is 14 mm in diameter and 16-inches long. Made of American hickory, the sticks feature the tribal S that Slipknot fans will recognize. The red ink on the sticks has even been mixed with Jordison's blood. MSRP: \$15.25. {promark.com}

# ROAD TESTED



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LUDWIG | LEGACY EXOTIC

## Exotic Origins

Ludwig's new Legacy Exotic drum kit is made of three exotic hardwoods: sumauma, lacewood and black limba. The company has combined these woods with inner and outer plies of North American maple and a single, 1/8-inch-thick poplar core ply, creating a rich, sonic warmth to the Legacy's shell. Legacy's trademark rounded bearing edge compliments the 1/4-inch, single-ply, maple reinforcement rings. {conn-selmer.com}



AM&S | MANO HAND PERCUSSION

## Hands-On Timbales

Based on Latin American and Afro-Cuban designs, the Mano Percussion series includes congas, bongos, djembes, timbales and an assortment of accessories. Mano's MP-1401 timbale set includes 13- and 14-inch steel shells with a stand and cowbell included. {americanmusicandsound.com}



# GEAR >

## BAND & ORCHESTRA



GEBR. ALEXANDER | F/B-FLAT-DOUBLE HORN MODEL 103

### Tradition Returns

To mark the 100th anniversary of its patent, Mainz brass instrument manufacturer Gebr. Alexander has issued a limited edition of its original model 103 F/Bb-double horn. The fixed bell of the yellow brass instrument is hand-hammered with gusset from a single piece of brass. Other traditional features include a lead pipe without a water key, the absence of a nickel-silver hand guard on the lead pipe and bell branch, and brass inner slide sleeves. The bell is hand-engraved with the Alexander crest. [\[musik-alexander.de\]](http://musik-alexander.de)

PEARL FLUTES | BASS FLUTE

### Base Projection

Pearl Flutes' new PFB305 Bass Flute completes its Harmony line, which includes the C flute, Alto flute and patented Grenaditte piccolo. Its headjoint offers the flautist easier projection. The silver-plated Bass Flute incorporates Pearl's pinless mechanism with one-piece core bar for reliability and smooth feel. It also features pointed tone arms, trill keys, wooden touch pads and a hand-turned crutch. MSRP: \$4,800. [\[pearlflutes.com\]](http://pearlflutes.com)



VANDOREN | 50-PACK REED BOX

### Packs of Profit

Vandoren's new 50-pack reed boxes contain 50 individually wrapped reeds available for Bb clarinet and alto saxophone in all cuts.

"This new packaging offers several advantages to our dealers," said Andy Blanco, Dansr account manager.

"Probably the biggest one is that they are no longer locked into selling reeds in predetermined quantities. They [can] sell reeds in quantities that make sense to their customers."

[\[vandoren.com\]](http://vandoren.com)



YAMAHA | BLACK PHOENIX TROMBONE

### The Phoenix

The Black Phoenix line of wind instruments from Yamaha Corp. of America, Band and Orchestral Division, is designed to celebrate the company's 50th anniversary of manufacturing musical instruments in the United States. The new Black Phoenix YSL-697ZBP trombone features custom engraving and black lacquering. It has a compact, well-centered tone, along with a quick response suitable for a variety of trombone performances. MSRP: \$2,399. [\[yamaha.com\]](http://yamaha.com)



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## KORG | MICROKORG XL

## Micro Expansion

Korg has expanded its micro line of portable synthesizers with the microKORG XL synth with vocoder. The 37-note, velocity-sensitive synth offers Korg's analog modeling, along with an ergonomic interface in a lightweight keyboard. Eight-voice, multi-modeling technology; a 16-band vocoder; parameter editing; and USB MIDI connectivity are all available with this keyboard. Its Radius engine offers a rich analog sound with 128 sounds right out of the box. Its size and battery power option is ideal for easy transportation. MSRP: \$750. {[korg.com](http://korg.com)}



## ROLAND | PRELUDE KEYBOARD

## New Introduction

Roland has released a home entertainment keyboard, the Prelude. Boasting 61 velocity-sensitive keys and a compact footprint, the Prelude is intended for entry-level keyboardists or hobbyists. It lets players choose from four style variations for each song progression and creates a live performance utilizing the D-Beam and pitch and modulation controllers. The keyboard also includes a built-in speaker system designed to reproduce the arranger's high-quality sounds and a USB memory player. {[rolandus.com](http://rolandus.com)}



## RITMULLER | UH121R

## Vertical Beauty

German piano company Ritmuller recently released the UH121R model. Created by master piano designer Lothar Thomma, this model offers plate modifications to accommodate new scales, new calculated string lengths, 100-percent hornbeam actions and double wheel metal casters. The UH121R is suited for both studios and professional venues. {[ritmullerusa.com](http://ritmullerusa.com)}



## NORD KEYBOARDS | PROGRAM LIBRARY

## Nord Sounds

Nord has gathered synthesizer sound programmers from around the world to create new sound banks for the Wave synthesizer. The Nord Wave is designed around a synthesizer architecture that provides modulation and sound-sculpting capabilities. These new programs do not use any additional samples, so Nord Wave owners do not have to reorganize their Wave's sample partition. {[nordkeyboards.com](http://nordkeyboards.com)}



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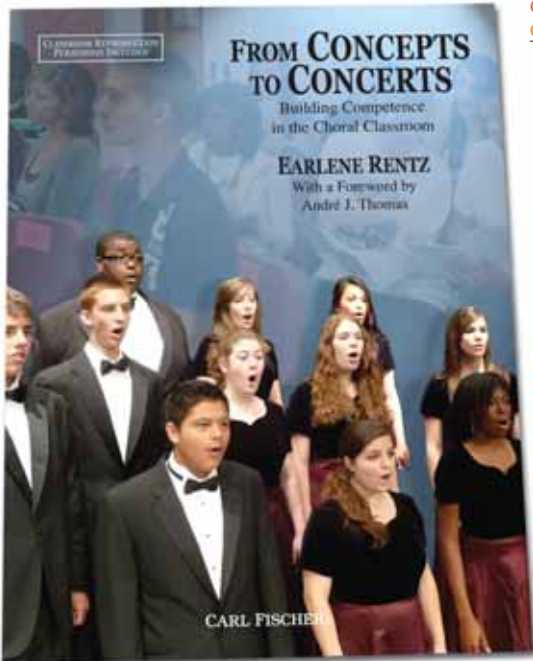
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# GEAR >

## PRINT & MULTIMEDIA



CARL FISCHER | 'FROM CONCEPTS TO CONCERTS'

### Choir Corrections

Carl Fischer's *From Concepts To Concerts* by Dr. Earlene Rentz is a supplementary text for choral rehearsals. Rentz's fundamental choral exercises are arranged progressively by difficulty, allowing all grade levels to benefit from the collection. Some basic concepts covered include rhythm, pitch, tempo, phrasing, diction, style and meter. Carl Fischer has also provided classroom reproduction permission for all exercises. MSRP: \$34.95. [carlfischer.com](http://carlfischer.com)



HUDSON MUSIC | 'VERA CRUZ ISLAND' MULTIMEDIA PACKAGE

### Brazilian Beats

Written by Brazilian drummers Vera Figueiredo and Daniel Oliveira, *Vera Cruz Island* is a new book and double-CD package that offers a system for applying Brazilian rhythms to the drum set. The multimedia education package is based on Figueiredo's *Vera Cruz Island* CD. It includes a copy of the full-length audio CD; a second minus-drums, play-along version of the disc; and a 106-page book. [HUDSONMUSIC.COM](http://HUDSONMUSIC.COM)

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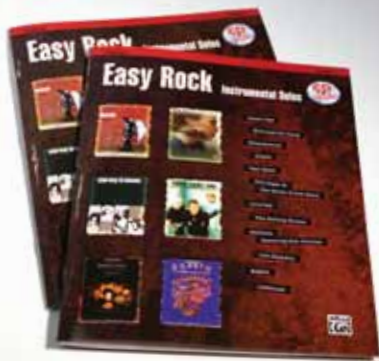
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HAL LEONARD | MARTIN GUITAR SET

## All About Martin

Part of a two-book set from Hal Leonard, *Martin Guitars: A History* is an illustrated, full-color, 220-page hardcover book that recounts the Martin legacy from its early days in New York, circa 1833. Book two, *Martin Guitars: A Technical Reference*, is a 304-page hardcover book that provides details on guitar necks, headstocks, bodies, bridges and woods, as well as chapters on models by style, the Custom Shop, limited editions, mandolins and ukuleles. MSRP: *Martin Guitars: A History*, \$30; *Martin Guitars: A Technical Reference*, \$35; box-set, \$70. {halleonard.com}



LATHAM MUSIC | 'THE VIOLINIST'S WEDDING ALBUM 2'

## Wedding Day Songs

*The Violinist's Wedding Album 2* is a second volume of perennial wedding songs, arranged by Lynne Latham and Catherine McMichael. Violinists must be comfortable playing through fifth position, and the piano accompaniment is moderately difficult. This volume offers 11 songs, including "Laudate Dominum" by Mozart, "O Perfect Love" by Joseph Barnby and "The Girl With The Flaxen Hair" by Claude Debussy. {lorenz.com}



## Important news for independent dealers



Guitar forums and  
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AKAI | MPD18

## Convenience Control

Akai Professional's MPD18 compact pad controller has a bank of 16 velocity- and pressure-sensitive MPC pads. Users can access three different banks of sounds from the pads for a total of 48 sounds at once. The unit also has assignable Q-Link controllers that enable users to control nearly any parameters in their software in real time. The MPD18 is convenient for sending MIDI information using the plug-and-play USB interface.

{[akaipro.com](http://akaipro.com)}



EKS | OTUS

## Solid Touch

The EKS Otus DJ controller's design provides a solid touch and feel while its aluminum frame can withstand the physical abuse of DJing and travel. It features assignable buttons, knobs, push and rotate selectors, a touch-sensitive slider, and capacitive touchpad. The controls can be doubled via a color-indicated layer selection switch capable of controlling two virtual decks. MSRP: \$899. {[eks.fi](http://eks.fi)}



MBT LIGHTING | LEDPAR64PRO

## Performance Ready

MBT Lighting's LEDPAR64PRO is a 36-watt LED par can with 36 bright, 1-watt LEDs. It produces built-in chasing patterns with speed control, or an audio control can be used in stand-alone or master/slave modes. The rear panel includes an LED display to show mode and DMX address, along with two sets of mode/DMX dipswitches. MSRP: \$539. {[mbtlighting.com](http://mbtlighting.com)}



ELATION | 1400E MOVING HEADS

## Light Wonders

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**Chris Stanley**  
Richmond Music  
Richmond, Va.

Guitar strings are a key add-on, and they stay consistent. D'Addario is a heavy hitter for us. Ninety percent of the time we're going to try and get something added-on [to a sale.] Some of the higher-end sales have dropped off a little bit, but people still need to restring their guitars.

In addition to strings, Levy's Leathers straps have done well. They have a good margin. All things considered, we're doing well. And it seems like sales have been getting better in the last couple of months.

>>>

**Mark Musich**  
Mid Michigan Music  
Midland, Mich.

I manage to sell a lot of Planet Waves Humidifiers for acoustic guitars even though we are now out of the winter season. I like the Planet Waves product quite a bit. That's always a big seller.

Another product that has always done well is the Korg CA-30 Chromatic Tuner. I sell a lot of those. Often when I sell a package, I require that [new players] have something to get started with. When I sell, I create my own packaged deals. I try to get a tuner in everybody's hand. This is just me creating an on-the-spot sales environment for my customers.

>>>

**Shawn Gerhart**  
Marty's Music  
Annville, Pa.

The newest thing to hit the market is clip-on tuners. Intellitouch tuners have been around for 15–20 years, but they were always more expensive. Now, you can get [clip-on tuners] for \$21. And it's not just students who are buying them.

Here's why the clip-on tuner is so unique: It's picking the vibrations up on the wood of the instrument, so when you've got a bass player, drummer and two guitar players, and if one guitar player breaks a string and needs to tune up, he can use that clip-on tuner. The other musicians never have to stop doodling around. That tuner only picks up what it's clipped to. It's the privacy of it that sells.



>>>

**Todd Skaw**  
Guitars Etc.  
Longmont, Colo.

## What are your best-selling guitar add-ons?

Actually, lessons are our top-selling add-on. It's intentional. Electric guitars get different add-ons than acoustic guitars and basses, but they all get the add-on of lessons. We want to grow our lesson program every single day. The reason why is we want that residual foot traffic every week. We have 538 lessons a week in our store, and [the students have] to walk past all this product.

You'll have some of the "luck" people who come in randomly, but these [students] are like assigned customers. So we have 538 people walking past the strings, walking past

the tuners, walking past the books — that's why. There is more residual income if our No. 1 add-on is lessons.

And it's not only 14 year olds who are starting. We have a lot of adults in our lesson program. A lot of adults are re-entries, somebody who played when they were younger, and they stopped playing because they had a family and a career. Now the family's grown and the job's just fine, and they re-enter. We see a lot of that. We also have a lot of beginners.

Don't get me wrong: We go for the traditional add-on sale. If we sell an

electric guitar, we have 11 SKUs that we want that person to buy. We know we want the amp, the cable, the two books, the pick packs, the gig bag carrying case and the tuner to go with it. That we aim for. But to me, that's the kill. You've got the guy, you sold what you wanted to sell. That's how we make a living — we got our 11 SKUs sold. But if we get them in lessons, he or she comes back every week. We get our percentage of the lesson, and we've really increased our availability to sell this person many more things when he or she comes in for lessons.

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