

THE GUIDE: THE ONE-STOP SOURCE FOR 2010 SUMMER NAMM **PAGE 56**

**FOR PROGRESSIVE MUSIC RETAILERS**

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JUNE 2010 | MUSICINCMAG.COM

## DAVID & GOLIATH

David Slan, a piano retailer from St. Louis, plans his triumph in the D.C. market

**PAGE 50**

"When the economy is good, you don't get this kind of opportunity."

**The Ultimate MAP Policy Debate**

{PAGE 38}

**School Music, Piano Retailers Turn to Facebook**

{PAGE 32 & 82}

**Allegro Pianos Unveils New Showroom**

{PAGE 16}

**Casio Connects With Indies**

{PAGE 25}

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# INSIDE

David Slan

»»  
50

Photo by Stan Barouh

## 50 | DAVID & GOLIATH

Steinway dealer David Slan triumphed in the central Illinois and St. Louis piano markets. Now, he's ready to face his biggest challenge yet — the formidable D.C. market.



Ray's Midbell Music's Ray Guntren and Art's Music's Jessica Freehling-Kazzie

## 32 | NASMD SOCIAL NETWORKS

Attendees at the 2010 National Association of School Music Dealers find new fans, friends and followers with social media marketing.

## 56 | NAMM GUIDE

2010 Summer NAMM promises to be a small but powerful show, and independent retailers say they can't afford to miss it. Check out the complete schedule of events and exhibitor listing.

## GEAR >

- 63 | PIANOS & KEYBOARDS
- 66 | GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES
- 68 | AUDIO & RECORDING
- 70 | DRUMS & PERCUSSION
- 72 | BAND & ORCHESTRA
- 74 | PRINT & MULTIMEDIA
- 76 | DJ & LIGHTING



### 82 | ASK THE RETAILER

- How piano dealers make Facebook friends

## »» RETAIL

### 13 | PROFILES

- Kurt Saphir Pianos builds a destination
- Allegro Pianos designs a piano heaven

### 18 | NEWS

- Jordan Kitt's to relocate headquarters

## SUPPLY <<<

### 25 | PROFILE

- Casio celebrates 30 years in MI

### 26 | NEWS

- IRS files lien against Gibson
- Young Chang unveils new pianos

## IDEAS >>>

### 37 | INDEPENDENT RETAIL

- Eschliman debunks retail myths

### 38 | MY TURN

- Two independent retailers debate MAP

### 42 | THE LESSON ROOM

- Gamber teaches real-world social networking

### 44 | STREETWISE SELLING

- Smith on overcoming a selling rut

### 46 | LESSONS LEARNED

- Rosenbloom honors working moms

### 48 | THE CUSTOMER WHISPERER

- Billings on the pitfalls of an inventory glut

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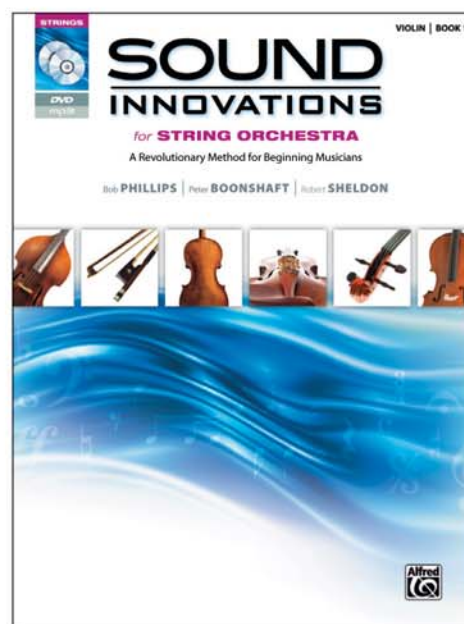
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PERSPECTIVE | BY ZACH PHILLIPS

## WHY YOU NEED SUMMER NAMM

Every spring, I hear from music retailers who can't make Summer NAMM. I feel sorry for them, especially the combo and full-line sellers. I get it, people have commitments — store events, graduation ceremonies, vacations. But if you're an independent retailer on the fence about heading to Nashville, Tenn., from June 18–20, I implore you to pull the trigger. Here's why.

**1. You'll get more one-on-one face time with industry leaders.** Try tracking down the president of a major manufacturer at a winter NAMM show, and you might get a handshake. Do the same at Summer NAMM, and you might score a new line.



**2. There's more time to learn.** Yes, there are fewer exhibitors at Summer NAMM than the winter show, but I think that's a good thing. Not only does it give you more time with key partners and new suppliers, it also gives you more time to hit NAMM University sessions. Folks, NAMM U isn't lip service. Most of these sessions offer hard-hitting ideas on everything you could ever want to know, from managing inventory and people to improving product turns and margins to harnessing guerrilla marketing strategies and, let's not forget, social media and other online promotional platforms. (And many are taught by *Music Inc.* columnists.)

**3. It's an innovation show.** Think Summer NAMM's not a gear show? What about the BreezSong JamHub, Morpheus DropTune pedal, Spider Capo, KickPort, O-Port, Tama Quick Set Cymbal Mate, Boss FRV-1 Fender Reverb pedal and GuitarGuard NeverKink cable clip? These were but a few innovations that made their debut at 2009's convention. "Best In Show" panelists had no shortage of winners to choose from, particularly in small goods.

**4. Music City USA is a vacation-worthy destination.** Vacation and business make strange bedfellows, but Summer NAMM's laid-back schedule leaves plenty of time to explore Nashville. And what a killer summertime hang it is. Clubs, museums and honky tonks — all in a city you can cover in a few days. (Make sure to set aside a few hours to check out the cozy Hillsboro-West End neighborhood.)

**5. Indies are royalty.** In my opinion, this is the single biggest reason for independent retailers to go to Summer NAMM. With fewer dealers in attendance, you'll get the red-carpet treatment. This show is tailor-made for smaller dealers looking to make a big impression.

And here's an unofficial sixth reason to go to Summer NAMM: It's relatively cheap. No trade show is inexpensive once you factor in lodgings, airfare and time away from your business. But as far as bang-for-your-buck world-class trade show experiences go, Summer NAMM has no equal. We've packaged all the info you need to plan your convention in *The Guide*, beginning on page 56.

Now go book that hotel. **MI**



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# LETTERS

## Music Retail Ph.D.

Out of all of the industry magazines that come through my door, none is more anticipated than *Music Inc.* The articles written by store owners, managers, sales experts and other industry people are so valuable that we rip them out and put them in a series of binders, based on content (inventory management, lessons, promotions, management, etc.). Over the years, this has resulted in a substantial resource of excellent information — almost equivalent to a Ph.D. in music retail.

Thank you, *Music Inc.*, for the great resources.

**Danovan Bankhead**  
Springfield Music  
Springfield, Mo.

## How to Fight the YouTube Rebuttal

In Pete Gamber's excellent May 2010 article, "Competing With YouTube," he brought up a great subject about the Web site causing a decrease in music lesson sales. If your lesson program has slowed due to YouTube, then I'm sure your print and video program has suffered, as well.

On a daily basis, retailers tell me that they are cutting back on stocking videos and DVDs, explaining that customers often say, "Oh, I can learn this from YouTube." At the same time, we have independent retailers, such as First Start Music in Citrus County, Fla., who are selling our DVDs in record quantity.

A little investigation has gone a long way for us. Visit YouTube and search a topic you would like to learn. The videos are limited to 10 minutes and filmed in messy bedrooms. The content of these



free lessons just doesn't cut it. The time spent on YouTube searching through endless do-it-yourself videos, sifting through wrong information and learning bad habits can be your lesson and media department's biggest ally.

We encourage our dealers with the old saying, "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em" — sort of. All of our retail accounts are invited to play our DVDs in-store. We send full-content sample DVDs to be played in their entirety on the music store's DVD player. You may think this is counter-productive, but not when you consider the content on a professional retail DVD versus a homemade YouTube video. If a potential buyer grabs a guitar off the rack and sits down in

front of your TV screen, don't make the mistake of thinking they are trying to get something for free. Instead, consider the deal closed. In comparison to YouTube, a pro instructional DVD will stand out as far superior. I wouldn't hand customers a remote, so they can rewind and fast forward, but I would recommend you let them sit there long enough to sink their teeth in. Chances are, they will purchase the DVD that's playing. Quite often, they may add another title from the same author or the same series.

An inexpensive TV/DVD setup in your store can be the equivalent of adding Zig Zigar to your print and video sales team. The quality of a professional DVD method will put

the once-dreaded YouTube rebuttal to rest every time.

**Mark Sternal**  
MJS Music & Entertainment,  
Crystal River, Fla.

## A Piano Tech's View

I received my latest copy of your magazine. I must say, my head is still reeling in regards to the "What Went Wrong With the Piano Industry" article (June 2009).

I am a piano technician of 37 years. In this well-written article, manufacturers passed the buck and blamed everyone except themselves. Writer Greg Billings only touched on the piano technical support system, but these people have spent their lives dealing with the maladies created by manufacturers.

It has been said that all manufacturing has done for the piano in the last century is make it cheaper. The piano tech is the last phase of manufacture.

My point is: Manufacturers do not give a damn about anything except the sale. I think there is a real article in the service people's story.

**Scott Colwes**  
Registered Piano Technician  
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

## Correction

The "Quick Movers" article, part of May 2010's *The Source*, listed the Washburn WD10S guitar's MAP as \$119. Its correct MAP is \$199. *Music Inc.* regrets the error.

EDITOR'S NOTE: MUSIC INC.

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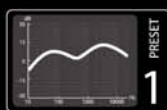
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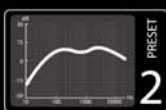
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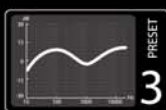
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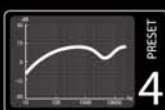
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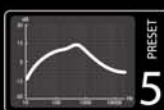
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# RETAIL



## Inside RETAIL

- > **Allegro Pianos**  
Opens high-end showroom  
[PAGE 16](#)
- > **Jordan Kitt's Music**  
Liquidates HQ, prepares to move  
[PAGE 18](#)
- > **Gist Piano Center**  
Hosts physicians' charity concert  
[PAGE 19](#)
- > **Noble Art Pianos**  
Donates instrument for art exhibit  
[PAGE 20](#)

KURT SAPHIR PIANOS | BY JENNY DOMINE

## DESTINATION BUILDER

There was a time when customers walked into Kurt Saphir Pianos in Wilmette, Ill., quoting the slogan they'd heard on the radio, "If it sounds good to the ear, it came from Saphir."

Today, owner Dennis Saphir no longer uses radio spots, TV promos or newspaper ads to promote his business. And even with virtually no prospects wandering in from the street, Saphir is still able to maintain a steady business by marketing his company's name and reputation in high-end piano retail.

"I hear customers say, 'Oh yeah, my neighbor has something like this,' or 'My mother bought a piano from you,'" Saphir said.

### THE VALUE OF A NAME

While Saphir said he enjoyed the economic boom of the 1990s, he had the foresight to shift his family's business from a five-store, high-volume piano dealership to a more niched, high-end business model.

"We've made huge manufacturer changes," Saphir said. "It was pretty obvious this whole economic situation that we enjoyed during the dot-com era wasn't going to last forever."

Dennis Saphir



### Kurt Saphir Pianos markets its reputation in the high-end piano market

He reshaped the main store into a destination location and closed the dealership's last auxiliary store in 2005.

Without a large marketing

budget, Saphir said customers find his business through its Web site or a manufacturer reference. Kurt Saphir Pianos carries exclusive brands, including Bechstein, Blüthner, Bösendorfer, Charles Walter, WM Knabe, Kohler & Campbell, Mason & Hamlin and Schimmel.

In addition to its unique products, Kurt Saphir Pianos has a long history going back to the 1800s in Vienna. The name provides a marketable brand that most referred cus-

tomers already recognize.

"We tend to sell the name of our company and what we stand for, in additions to our products," Saphir said.

Location is another important key to Saphir's success in the high-end piano market. Chicago's North Shore region is a wealthy suburb that supports music and arts education.

Saphir has also built strong relationships with local teachers who are part of his store's teacher referral network.

"We'll screen the customer

for what they are looking for,” he said. “I am not comfortable just giving people a name. If someone asks for a teacher, I really want to know about their needs.” The teacher referral is an essential part of Saphir’s sales approach.

**‘There is a comfort level when people come here and buy a used piano from us.’**  
— Dennis Saphir

“We don’t want them to come back years later and say, ‘I have this wonderful \$50,000 piano, and nobody plays it,’” he said.

#### USED PIANO GROWTH MARKET

According to Saphir, his biggest growth market is used pianos. “That has grown leaps and bounds over the last few years. People starting as beginners will justify it.”

For Saphir, the one downside to his established presence in the community is he’s often competing against his own product when someone tries to sell it used. To prevent this, he has a used piano department that restores pianos that come back when people decide to upgrade.

Saphir estimated that, of the pianos he has on display, he might only have six used ones available because they move so quickly.

“That is a good thing about our reputation,” he said. “There is a comfort level, I think, when people come here and buy a used piano from us. They know it is something we serviced. Those are always in high demand.” **MI**

## OLD-WORLD ELEGANCE

A walk through Kurt Saphir’s two-story showroom



### + THE COMFORT ZONE

“When people walk in, they need to see a sense of commitment,” Saphir said of his 25,000-square-foot, two-story showroom. The first floor has hanging chandeliers, which provide elegant lighting and are also for sale.



### + HEAVY-HITTERS

The most expensive European pianos sit front and center in the showroom. They have “Do Not Play” signs “out of respect for the instrument,” Saphir said. However, musicians are encouraged to sit down and play.



### + PRINT RESOURCE

Print music has been a staple at Kurt Saphir Pianos for 35 years. It’s an important resource for local piano teachers and acts as an advertisement. “People come in for sheet music and then start looking around,” Saphir said.



### + WORKSHOP WONDERS

Piano restoration is another service provided on site. It takes a year to restore a vintage piano completely. Recently, Saphir has begun converting old uprights into one-of-a-kind customized office desks.



### + THE UPPER LEVEL

The second floor is used as an additional showroom and warehouse space. Saphir said he likes to keep his eyes on the high-end product and control the environment they are in rather than use a remote storage area. The second floor also doubles as a performance space for recitals.



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ALLEGRO PIANOS | BY KATIE KAILUS

# PIANO RETAIL AS ART

**A**llegro Pianos is more than a high-end piano showroom. It's an acoustic work of art.

The 10,000-square-foot Greenwich, Conn., dealership pays homage to beautiful architecture, as well as high-end pianos, and its acoustic design has no rival.

"We are an exclusive authorized dealer for piano brands, such as Bösendorfer, Bluthner and Steingraeber, for Connecticut, New York and Massachusetts, as well as much of the Northeast," said owner Ori Bukai, who also carries August Förster and Estonia. "We have a wide array of pianos, but the selection of the high-end brands is virtually unmatched."

Allegro's previous showroom was located only a few miles away. When Bukai saw a pond-side lot down the road go up for sale, he knew it would be an ideal place to relocate. And when the new dealership opened in June 2009, his predictions were affirmed by the public's praise.

"More than just providing the 'wow' factor to customers and industry people alike, our new showroom creates an ideal setting, and its relaxed atmosphere allows customers to choose from among more than the 50 available high-end grand pianos on our floor," Bukai said.

## FUNCTIONAL BEAUTY

John Storyk designed the acoustic aspects of the building. "There aren't many showrooms like this one," said Storyk, principal designer for Walters-Storyk Design Group.



Allegro Pianos' new showroom. Notice the floor-to-ceiling windows (below right) and Persian rugs.



## Allegro Pianos' new showroom has been designed to acoustic perfection

"I've never seen so many pianos of this caliber in my life."

The building features two levels. Along with the main showroom, there's a mezzanine, performance room and

music school. Its floor-to-ceiling windows also play a major role in its acoustic design.

"The curtains are there to control the mid- and upper-frequency controls," Storyk said. "There is a lot of glass in the showroom. People want to play pianos and hear reflections, and a lot of glass can cause problems and reflections can come back. So basically, we put the curtains up to soften the sound."

The electric curtains can be operated at the touch of a button. "This way, we can simulate a customer's residence

and provide them with a better idea as to how a particular piano may sound at their home," Bukai said.

The windows themselves are UV-protected and acoustically treated. "STC [sound transmission class] is the measure of sound transmission," Bukai said. "These windows are set at 43, which is a very high value and successfully isolates possible outside noises."

Attention to detail was taken when decorating, as well. Persian rugs line the hardwood floors, and incan-



descent track lighting illuminates the piano selection.

"I wanted to have all dimmable incandescent lights in the showroom areas because they allow the natural color of the wood to come out," Bukai said.

"By using the dimmers and spotlights, we can make the grain of exotic wood veneers come out to fit a specific customer's taste. It shows the customers that, using lighting, they can create the same effect

music school and the piano showroom is fantastic," Bukai said. "It reduces the operating costs for both of them, and it works really well."

Bukai even equips lesson rooms with high-end pianos. "Sometimes people ask me, 'Are you crazy? Why are you placing high-end pianos, such as Blüthner or Estonia, in your teaching studios?'" he said. "But this is how the kids learn to develop musicality. I believe



Allegro Pianos' performance hall



once the piano is in their home to get the desired look."

#### POSH LEARNING

Long Ridge Music Center, which is a part of Allegro Pianos, features 10 lesson studios — all acoustically isolated. The music school currently houses 200 students on all different instruments.

"The synergy between the

there is a difference between just banging on the piano and actually making music and that a great piano definitely helps in developing musicality."

Bukai, who has been selling high-end pianos for the past 12 years, shows no signs of slowing down. In January 2011, he'll open his second location in New York, along "piano row" near Carnegie Hall. **MI**

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The Fork's team accepts top Gretsch honors

#### AWARD

### Fork's Top Honor

KMC Music recently named Fork's Drum Closet the top Gretsch USA Custom Dealer for 2009. Gretsch's Ridgeland, S.C., custom drum workshop created a commemorative award made of a USA Custom snare shell that was cut in half, wrapped in black glass glitter nitron and mounted on wood that was finished in piano black gloss lacquer. KMC presented the award to Fork's Drum Closet during a Stanton Moore clinic in March.

#### CONTEST

### The Next Blues King

Guitar Center has launched its fourth annual King of the Blues contest, a nationwide search for the next undiscovered blues guitar giant. Starting April 1, guitarists were invited to sign up at any GC location for the chance to compete for thousands of dollars in prizes and perform alongside Derek Trucks at the King of the Blues finals in Los Angeles. Local competitions are being held at each of GC's 214 locations. The final competition will be held Sept. 2.

#### APPOINTMENTS

### New M.F. Veeps

Musician's Friend has appointed Tim White as vice president of sales and Pamela Turay as vice president of human resources. White brings 15 years of experience in sales and management and will be responsible for leadership of sales activities. Turay also brings more than 15 years of experience in human resources, branding, sales, marketing and finance. She'll be responsible for the development and implementation of company strategies, policies and programs for human resources.



Tim White



Pamela Turay

#### JORDAN KITT'S MUSIC | CLOSING

## KITT'S PLANS TO RELOCATE HQ

Piano retail chain Jordan Kitt's Music is currently liquidating inventory from its College Park, Md., headquarters and plans to close the store. From April 16–18, the company hosted a by-appointment-only pre-sale for preferred customers, dubbed the "Largest Piano Store Closing in History."

According to P.J. Ottenritter, the company's vice president of sales and marketing, Kitt's plans to relocate the facility but hasn't determined the new location yet. He said recent construction at the University of Maryland has made the area around the store less accessible.

"With all the changes to College

### The piano chain liquidates its flagship location, prepares to move

Park in the past few years and with stores now covering area counties once only served by College Park, we're better suited with a more efficient facility with easier distribution capability and a more suitable [administration] office for our current staffing needs," Ottenritter said.

He added that store count "may not change."



Inside Alto Music's new Airmont, N.Y., location

#### ALTO MUSIC | OPENING

## Alto's Design-Focused Retail

Alto Music recently opened a fifth location in Airmont, N.Y., and according to owner Jon Haber, it's the company's best-designed store yet.

"Everyone's jaw hits the floor when they see it," Haber said. "It is a full-line store with a really beautiful design and layout."

The 5,600-square-foot store is located a mile and a half from the original Alto Music location, which opened in 1966. Haber mentioned that he also recently purchased a new building for the company's Wappingers Falls, N.Y., store.



STEINWAY PIANO GALLERY | SALES

## Bower Goes Strictly Steinway

The Bower School of Music at Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) in Fort Myers, Fla., recently became an all-Steinway school. It's the 111th school in the United States to receive the designation, which means it only features Steinway pianos. Steinway Piano Gallery of

Naples handled the transaction.

Greg Billings, owner of Steinway Piano Gallery, and Tommy Edds, regional manager for Steinway & Sons, presented a commemorative plaque to FGCU dignitaries. The Bower School invested in more than 30 Steinway, Boston and Essex pianos.



Performers in Gist Piano Center's first annual Doctors' Recital and Benefit concert

GIST PIANO CENTER | OUTREACH

## MUSIC, DOCTORS & HEALING

On April 8, Gist Piano Center in Louisville, Ky., hosted its first annual Doctors' Recital and Benefit concert, featuring a dozen physicians performing live on The Kentucky Center stage.

Guests enjoyed the music of Dr. B and The Boppers, led by Dr. Kenneth Beilman, along with other musical works and refreshments. Thirty-five dollars of each ticket sale went to Kentucky's Arts in Healing program, a partnership between members of Kentucky's arts community, medical professionals and The Kentucky Center. Through this initiative, The Kentucky Center partners with healthcare providers to bring local and national artists into places of healing.

"Countless studies have proven that people of all ages, styles or skills can gain permanent benefits to body, mind and soul through participation in music," said John Gist, vice president of Gist Piano Center. "With partners like The Kentucky Center, we are working to build a musical future for our community."

"Through music and art, patients transcend pain and the confines of their illness or hospital room, escaping into the worlds of imagination," said Kelly Cummings, Arts in Healing corporate gifts manager. "They move from a sense of helplessness to a mindset of control, from hopelessness to optimism, from depression to motivation."

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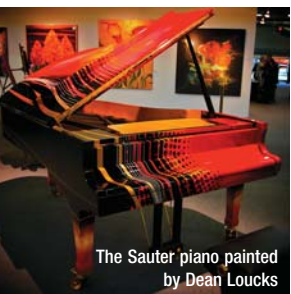
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NOBLE ART PIANOS | DONATION

## Music to the Eyes

Noble Art Pianos of Easton, Pa., recently arranged the delivery of a piano to artist Dean Loucks. He painted the Sauter semi-concert grand, and it became part of his display at International ArtExpo New York, a fine art trade show held March 25–28.



The Sauter piano painted by Dean Loucks

Noble Art Pianos also arranged for the piano to be disassembled and put back together again.

“Painting on pianos is not new in itself — it has been done for over 100 years — but Dean’s work is now, new, contemporary and tasteful,” said Peter Becker, president of Noble Art Pianos. “In the past, some treatments were gaudy. He paints things I would want in my home.”

BETHEL MUSIC CENTER | COMMUNITY

## BETHEL AWARDED FOR HANDS-ON TRAINING

On March 18, Bethel Public Schools of Bethel, Conn., recognized Bethel Music Center for supporting and participating in its Community Based Education and Training Program. The award was given at an appreciation ceremony at the municipal center.

Bruce and Dana Treidel, owners of Bethel Music Center, also located in Bethel, have been involved with the program for the past five years and received this award in 2007, as well.

The training program provides Bethel High School students with the opportunity to develop practical career experience in a real business environment. Every school year, 12 students are chosen to work at a local business for 10 or more hours each week to acquire retail upkeep and maintenance skills, as well as to learn workplace expectations.

“I am so proud of the students who have been and are currently involved with this program,” Dana Treidel said. “I’m so happy that we have been able to positively impact their lives.”



Dana and Bruce Treidel

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## Note from Joe

### "Wanna Play Music Sunday" Encourages People to Come Out and Play

We're looking forward to "Wanna Play Music Sunday" in Nashville, and we hope you are too! Why? Well, "Wanna Play Music Sunday" represents a new level of outreach to connect our industry with the people who use our products and services, and gives us the opportunity to promote the lifelong benefits of making music to a new audience.

All NAMM Members are connected to music making in a deep, meaningful way. We believe that what we bring to the world is important and has real benefits for people of all ages. We promote this message throughout the year through public relations, advocacy efforts and market development programs that raise awareness and help create more active music makers. With the new "Wanna Play Music Sunday," we will have another way to showcase our Members and help achieve our mission. In the best

of times, it's important to promote our industry—in times like we're experiencing now, it's absolutely *critical*.

There will be plenty to see and do during "Wanna Play Music Sunday". Our Members have really stepped up to the plate and created exciting programming and opportunities for attendees to immerse themselves in all things musical, including workshops on topics like "How to Lay Down Tracks," and "Techniques to Hook Up Your Gear." The day will also feature activities like free guitar set-ups and restringing, providing musicians with instrument support, and the chance to visit the "Vintage Guitar Roadshow." Attendees can have the chance to jam in The Best Band You Never Heard contest. The agenda is full of events, activities, workshops, live music and fun for all to enjoy.

At the end of the day, "Wanna Play Music Sunday," will inspire people and remind them that music is something that will always be a part of their lives. It will send a powerful message to the rest of the world that music making is important and that NAMM Members are committed to seeing more people benefit from becoming active music makers!

*Joe Lamond*

Joe Lamond • NAMM President/CEO

**Summer 10  
NAMM**

**"Wanna Play Music Sunday" Welcomes Music Students, Parents and Enthusiasts to Summer NAMM**

**6.20.10**  
NASHVILLE CONVENTION CENTER

In an effort to broaden attendance at Summer NAMM, for the first time, NAMM is inviting and allowing its Members to invite more music students, parents, music advocates and enthusiasts to the 2010 event. Called "Wanna Play Music Sunday," NAMM will open its show floor on Sunday, June 20, to these groups to see demonstrations of the latest products, watch unique live musical performances, attend valuable workshops taught by known professional musicians and talk with music products industry insiders.

NAMM hopes to help its Members generate increased excitement for playing music and stimulate demand for many of the newly displayed products.

To help make this program a success, we encouraged all "Wanna Play Music Sunday" attendees to visit their local NAMM Members' retail stores in order to receive special "50% off" discount coupons containing promotional codes that could be used when ordering tickets online.

To communicate this unprecedented opportunity, NAMM Members were also able to print out discount coupons to hand out to customers. Proceeds from "Wanna Play Music Sunday" at Summer NAMM will go to support music education through the Wanna Play Fund.





YOU'RE INVITED TO...

# WANNA PLAY MUSIC SUNDAY

# 6.20.10

NASHVILLE CONVENTION CENTER

For the first time, NAMM welcomes local music students, music advocates and enthusiasts to Summer NAMM, one of the largest musical instruments and products trade shows in the country. Come see it before you can buy it!

Summer <sup>10</sup>  
**NAMM** *Don't Miss It!*



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- Catch Live Music Performances
- Attend Musician-Friendly Workshops
  - Clinics from top professional players
  - How to get more gigs
  - How to break into the pros
  - Effects 101
  - Techniques to hook up your gear
  - Record your own tracks
  - How to get endorsed
- Compete in Drumming Competitions
- Get Free Guitar Set-ups & Restringing
- Talk with Music Products Industry Insiders
- See the Vintage Guitar Roadshow
- Much, Much More!



# \$10 TICKETS\*

\*with coupon from your local music products dealer.  
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See the Dealer Locator at [www.wannaplaymusic.com](http://www.wannaplaymusic.com)  
to find a music store near you. It's that easy!

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**play?**  
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[www.namm.org/wannaplaysunday](http://www.namm.org/wannaplaysunday)

Summer NAMM is a business and entertainment event. All students and children under the age of 17 must be accompanied by an adult.





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- > **Young Chang**  
Hosts gala piano unveiling  
PAGE 26
- > **Yamaha Corp. of America**  
Names Nakata president  
PAGE 28
- > **Taylor Guitars**  
Holds guitar night at Harrods  
PAGE 30
- > **Wheatware**  
Combats manufacturing woes  
PAGE 31

# SUPPLY

CASIO | BY JENNY DOMINE

## CASIO'S MASS APPEAL

Casio, known for its mass-market digital keyboards, has boosted its professional line, and consumers and independent music retailers are taking a second look.

The company has seen double-digit growth and greater market share during the past two years while the overall digital piano industry has been in decline, according to Mike Martin, director of marketing for electronic musical instruments at Casio.

"The economy, to some degree, has worked in our favor," Martin said. "I think, because customers are more price-conscious, they are looking at digital pianos more than ever. And likewise, compared to our competition, customers are giving our brand a longer look."

### CASIO COMES OF AGE

This year, Casio is celebrating its 30th anniversary in the music industry with the release of its limited-edition Privia PX-3 and Celviano AP-6. The flagship Privia line features a slim, lightweight design and USB connectivity.

"The Privia line has expanded into a new, more professional area," Martin said. "The P-X3 offers features really



aimed at the professional and semi-professional musician. The sound quality and performance of Privia has increased so much, this is the next natural step for the line."

Casio's background as an electronics and engineering-based company has given its keyboards a technological edge, according to Martin. He added that the decreasing cost of computer and audio technologies gives consumers better quality at lower price points.

"I don't think anyone would have believed 10 years ago that you could have an 88-note keyboard that felt great, had weighted action but only weighed 25 pounds," Martin said. "Product development never stops."

Martin also said Casio has made an effort to expand its keyboard lines to promote greater product differentiation between its mass-merchant and independent channels.

"Our distribution actually works for the independent," he said. "The independent dealer has opportunity with our wider selection that's available."

### CONNECTING WITH INDIES

Another key to Casio's success is its growing brand-name recognition through distribution to large chains and online sales outlets. A quick Internet search shows Casio's presence at Wal-Mart, Costco and Guitar Center, to name a few. But Martin said that shouldn't discourage independ-

ent retailers from carrying the Casio brand.

"Some dealers may dismiss us too early," Martin said. "They think, 'Casio is at Target. Why would I want to carry that line?'"

Kraft Music in Franklin, Wis., carries Casio keyboards, and owner Ben Kraft said the brand recognition, quality and affordable prices make it a popular choice in today's economy.

"The awareness of that product, particularly the Privia brand, has just exploded and is now driving customers to our store," Kraft said.

"The Privia line has lots of different models, and you're only going to find one or two of them [at a big-box retailer]. As a specialized music retailer, that gives us a chance to talk shop and give the customer an education."

Tim Praskins, owner of Arizona Piano Wholesale in Glendale, Ariz., has been selling digital keyboards for 35 years. He said he has seen a new level of quality and value in Casio's Celviano AP-220, 420 and 620, as well as Privia PX-130 and 330 keyboard models.

"Their current lineup is by far the best bang for the buck in the business now," he said. "I have customers who can't believe how good the Casio is. I hear that all the time." **MI**

## EVENT

**Petrof Goes to Mexico**

Petrof U.S.A. recently provided a two-day technical seminar in partnership with its largest dealer in Mexico City, Pianos y Organos. Open to technicians from the U.S. border to Acapulco, Mexico, the seminar was led by Paul Rea, Petrof's national service manager. He provided a comprehensive training course to 60 attendees, covering such techniques as regulation, key brushing and voicing. At the end of the event, all technicians were awarded certificates and a Petrof service manual. [petrof.com](http://petrof.com)

## PARTNERSHIP

**JamHub Goes Direct**

Direct Sound has partnered with BreezSong, maker of JamHub, to offer Essential Headphone Kits to complement the JamHub BedRoom, GreenRoom and TourBus systems. The color-coded headphones will provide matching impedance and

fidelity so that all players will have an equal monitor mix. The headphone kits will be available this summer.

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

## PROMOTION

**Uke Video Contest**

Eleuke, makers of solid body electric ukuleles, will give away \$15,000 in cash prizes as part of an Eleuke video contest. The grand prize winner will be awarded \$5,000. Other prizes will be given out in a range of categories, from beginning uke player to ukulele virtuoso. The contest will run from June 1 through Oct. 31.

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

## DISTRIBUTION

**D'Addario Delivers Dare**

D'Addario and Dare Music Group, an Austin, Texas-based musical instrument and guitar aftermarket product company, have made a distribution agreement for Dare's new product, the O-Port.

This small guitar device enhances the sound of acoustic guitars without the use of electronics.

The O-Port will be sold in music stores worldwide as an after-

market self-installation device. It's available in two sizes that fit in most acoustic guitars. [daddario.com](http://daddario.com)



Inside Young Chang's product launch

## YOUNG CHANG | EVENTS

**CHANG'S PIANO PUSH**

Approximately 100 music teachers, piano technicians, dealers and church music players were invited to the Marriott Hotel in Norwalk, Calif., on April 22 to see the unveiling of Young Chang North America's new piano lines.

Guests were treated to a performance by Mario Merdirossian, a music professor at the Music Conservatory of Buenos Aires in Argentina. He played on the Young Chang AW 275 piano.

New vertical and grand pianos designed by Del Fandrich, an international piano designer, were also shown. The vertical 112 and 114 mod-

els have new string scales and soundboard designs that include new tenor and bass bridges, as well as longer back scales through the bass. They also feature enhanced bass and a better tone balance throughout the scale.

Hyundai Development Corp. acquired Young Chang in 2006 and provided capital for the piano maker to renovate its production facilities and improve its products.

"Young Chang is going into a new phase with the new decade, new dealers and new products, and it is very exciting to us," said Young Chang President Vincent Choi.

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

## GIBSON GUITARS | FINANCIAL

**GIBSON'S TAX TANGLE**

The Internal Revenue Service filed a lien against Gibson Guitar for \$445,994 in unpaid corporate and payroll taxes dating back to 2006, according to an April 14 article in *The Nashville Post*.

In a statement issued by Gibson, the company said multiple errors were made in the returns by its previous outside independent tax and auditing firm.

"The company is currently amending each of these returns and believes that, once amended returns

**The guitar maker is working with the IRS to amend old tax returns**

are filed, substantial tax refunds will be due and that any penalties or interest claimed due will be abated," read a statement issued by Gibson. [gibson.com](http://gibson.com)





## WEBNEWS

# SUMMER SITES LAUNCH

Two companies bring new cultural and community life to their Web sites.

### **hottieguitars.com**

On April 17, makers of Hottie Amps and Hottie Pickups launched a new Web site to support their high-end electric guitar line, Hottie Guitars. The interactive site lets players customize their own guitars, upload their jams and download posters (pictured).



### **deeringbanjos.com**

The new Deering Banjos Web site went live on March 29. The site makes it easier to find out about Deering products, order accessories and download online manuals. It also offers FAQ, video content, and a calendar of banjo and folk music festivals around the country.

## ««« TRIBUTE

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

### **John Beltrandi**

John Beltrandi, a KMC Music sales veteran, passed away on March 14.

Beltrandi worked at KMC for 40 years and was a district sales manager in the Connecticut, western Massachusetts and southern New York state territories until March 27, 2009.

"John touched the lives of so many people," said Paul Damiano, KMC's senior vice president of sales and marketing. "We are all saddened that his life was tragically shortened but rejoice in having called him a friend and colleague. His spirit will live with us always."



SUPPLY  «««

THE MUSEUM OF MAKING MUSIC | EXHIBIT

## Effect Pedal Turns to Artwork

The Art of the Stompbox, the Museum of Making Music's newest exhibition, will open June 1 and run through Sept. 30. The show will highlight the development of effect pedals in American music with



examples of historic pedals and artist-decorated pedals on display. A film about stompboxes by Henry Kasier with Wilco guitarist Nels Cline will also be featured in the exhibit. [museumofmakingmusic.org](http://museumofmakingmusic.org)

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FISHMAN | VENUES

## FISHMAN'S NEW DIGS

Earlier this year, Fishman moved into a new 34,000-square-foot facility in Andover, Mass. The company will continue to design and engineer its products on site with modern laboratory facilities for both

hardware and software, along with a large engineering lab for R&D.

The facility centerpiece is The Fishman Artist Lounge, which serves as a space for meetings, company events and artist appearances. [fishman.com](http://fishman.com)

**Kyser + Klassics**

# K-Lever

Series of Partial Capos

Alternate guitar tunings are catching on fast. That's why we decided to go all out and bring you four new tools to create sounds you never thought possible. The K-lever is a partial capo with the ability to press down the uncapoed string/strings whenever you want. All you have to do is press the lever... It's just that easy.

**Dbl Drop D** **Open G** **(DADGAD) Short-Cut** **Drop D**

**What's Your Color?**  
WWW.KYSERMUSICAL.COM

## APPOINTMENTS

### Nakata Succeeds Osawa

Takuya Nakata has been named president of Yamaha Corp. of America. Most recently, Nakata served as director and executive officer of Yamaha. The president position in America will be Nakata's first post outside of Japan.



Takuya Nakata

"As we celebrate Yamaha's 50th anniversary in the United States this year, I look forward to building upon our company's legacy of unparalleled quality and technological innovation," Nakata said. [yamaha.com](http://yamaha.com)

**Buffet Crampon** has named Bob Newhouse, Laurie Orr, Don Reynolds and Joseph Taylor as new members of its North American sales team.

**Harman** has appointed Jim Garrett to the market manager position for its Mark Levinson, Lexicon, Revel and JBL Synthesis brands.

**Korg** has promoted Jerry Kovarsky to director of brand management. Joe Gilmartin has been promoted to Lâg brand manager. Michael Gabriel has been named Marshall brand manager.

Joe Fant has been appointed **Pearl's** marching percussion marketing and product manager, while Kerry Massey has been named its corporate controller.



>>> Joe Fant

**Pearl River America** has appointed Ying (Evelyn) Luo as president and CEO.

**Renkus-Heinz** has appointed Derrick Pierce staff loudspeaker engineer.

**The Stanton Group** has tapped Sean Bowman as Eastern regional sales manager and Erik Kosnar as Western regional sales manager.



>>> Sean Bowman

**Tornavoz Music** has hired David Hager as its national sales manager.



# Where Do You Go for Vendor Managed Inventory? **HAL LEONARD!**



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## SUPPLY

TAYLOR GUITARS | EVENT

# HARRODS HOSTS TAYLOR

Taylor Guitars and luxury goods store Harrods in London hosted An Evening of Guitars on April 1. Nearly 150 attendees filled the store's musical instrument section to meet luthier Bob Taylor.

Accompanied by Brian Swerdfefer, Taylor's vice president of sales and marketing, Bob Taylor offered insights on the design processes he engineered. He also discussed the impact of different tonewoods and body shapes on a guitar's acoustic properties. [taylorguitars.com](http://taylorguitars.com)



Bob Taylor (right) gives a product demo at Harrods

MARLO PLASTICS | STATS

# Music Lesson Outlook

Marlo Plastics, a music binder and plastics supplier, recently surveyed its music product customers on music lesson trends. It released the results on March 25. [marloplastics.com](http://marloplastics.com)

## WHERE MUSICIANS TAKE LESSONS

1%  
UNKNOWN

44%  
TEACHER'S HOME

11%  
RETAIL STORE

44%  
SCHOOL

## RETAILER INCOME FROM MUSIC LESSONS

(Minus Direct Teaching Costs)

50%  
COVERS EXPENSES

36%  
POSITIVE INCOME

14%  
LOSS

## WHO ARE THE TEACHERS IN RETAIL STORES?

29%  
NO FORMAL AFFILIATION

18%  
EMPLOYEES

53%  
INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS

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#### WHEATWARE | MANUFACTURING

## Wheatware's Factory Woes

Earlier this year, Midwest Manufacturing, which produced goods for Wheatware Biodegradables, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. The Grand Island, Neb.-based company has listed \$1.3 million in assets and \$4.1 million in liabilities.

Midwest Manufacturing CEO and Secretary Warren Kirsch, who also serves as CEO of Wheatware, said that the filing was made to reorganize the manufacturer's debt. Wheatware is a separate business entity and is not named in the bankruptcy filing.

Wheatware makes eco-friendly guitar picks and drumsticks. [wheatware.com](http://wheatware.com)

#### MUSIKMESSE | SHOWS

## Messe Gets Small Attendance Bump

The Musikmesse and Prolight and Sound 2010 trade show in Frankfurt, Germany, was held March 24–27 and attracted 79,069 visitors. Of the attendees, 33 percent, or 25,662, came from outside Germany, an increase of 1 percent from last year. More than 1,510 music product exhibitors also attended.

#### PEAVEY HONORED

The Musikmesse International Press Awards (MIPA) were announced on March 25. Hartley Peavey, founder of Peavey Electronics, received the 2010 MIPA Hall of Fame Lifetime Achievement Award.

"Peavey Electronics has stayed at the forefront of the music and audio industry by evolving," Peavey said.



The next Musikmesse and Prolight and Sound will be held April 6–9, 2011. The organization's other big trade show, Music China, will be held Oct. 12–15, 2010, in Shanghai. [messefrankfurt.com](http://messefrankfurt.com)

#### NAPBIRT | SHOWS

## NAPBIRT MAKES REPAIRS

The National Association of Professional Band Instrument Repair Technicians (NAPBIRT) held its 34th annual international conference from April 9–12 at the Hyatt Regency in Tampa, Fla., with 293 members and guests in attendance. Twenty-one educational seminars covered topics,

such as repair procedures, shop safety and machine tool operation.

NAPBIRT's next two conferences will be held April 4–8, 2011, at the Atlantis Casino Resort in Reno, Nev., and April 13–16, 2012, at the Marriott Hotel and Conference Center in Bloomington-Normal, Ill. [napbirt.org](http://napbirt.org)



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- + **317** total registrants signed up for the 2010 NASMD convention in Hilton Head, S.C. This was an increase of 58 people from last year.
- + **109** member companies came out, up 21 member companies from 2009.
- + **53** first-time attendees came out, up 20 people from last year's conference.

# SHOWS



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL MUSIC DEALERS | BY ZACH PHILLIPS

## GETTING SOCIAL

Facebook can save school music programs.

That was Ryan West's point at the 2010 National Association of School Music Dealers (NASMD) convention, held March 25–27 at Hilton Head Marriott in Hilton Head, S.C.

West, senior vice president of Coralville, Iowa-based West Music, discussed social media's marketing potential during "Social Media in Under Five Minutes a Day." He mentioned

### School music dealers have a new friend, and its name is Facebook

that West Music created a Facebook page for a local band parent organization, Music Matters In Moline. It amassed 1,200 fans in one week, and when school budgets tightened,

the effort saved a fifth-grade band program from extinction.

"People started posting their stories," West said. "There were pages of testimonials. It was a nice grass-roots tool."

#### BUDGET CUT ANGST

The message wasn't lost on NASMD's crowd of school music retailers and suppliers.

Beneath the convention's upbeat vibe simmered anxieties about the 2010–'11 academic year. Several attendees expressed concerns about deeper school budget cuts and, with them, the possibility of fewer school music programs.

"School bid has been very quiet in California so far this year," said Nick Rail, president

1. Beacock Music's Russ Beacock; 2. From left: Conn-Selmer's Judy Schuchart, All County Music's Fred Schiff and Conn-Selmer's John Stoner; 3. Paige's Music's Mark Goff; 4. Springfield Music's Donovan Bankhead; 5. From left: Mississippi Music's Dex Johnson, Pecknel Music's Scott Peck, Mississippi Music's Rosi Johnson and Heid Music's Todd Heid; 6. Meyer Music's Mitzi Phelan; 7. Separk Music's Marlene and Drew Parker; 8. Summerhays Music's Cris Behrens



of Santa Barbara, Calif.-based Nick Rail Music. "The small amount of activity we have seen has attracted the attention of more national bidders than usual, illustrating that California isn't the only state appreciating a down economy."

Still, some markets haven't been hit as hard. Rick Verfaillie, owner of Rick's Musical Instruments in Cumberland, R.I., estimated that 90 percent of the schools he services are preserving their programs this year.

"We did 1,200 rentals over the last two Septembers and Octobers, and I think we're going to do it again," Verfaillie said. "That's what I'm [stocking up] for. That's what I'm aiming for."

For Bill Harvey, co-owner of Cincinnati's Buddy Rogers Music and a former NASMD president, budget cuts, while troubling, are business as usual.

"As long as I've been in the business, there have been schools in trouble — *every* year," he said. "It's always been there. If the economy turns around and the cash starts flowing back into the schools — and it may be a few years — I think it'll come back again."

Rail added that he expects to have a good 2010 fall rental season, provided programs stay intact. "The old adages of underpromise and overdeliver, the early bird gets the worm, you never get a second chance to make a first impression — all these as they relate to how we conduct business come under [the] microscope as we plan for back to school," he said.

#### SCHOOL MUSIC & SOCIAL MEDIA

Amid this atmosphere, school music retailers were especially marketing-sensitive.

"Marketing strategies are constantly changing with new, innovative ways to bring cus-

1. From left: Traf Group's Cathy Farrell, Vic Firth's Neil Larrivee, Sides Music's Peter Sides and Traf Group's Mike Farrell; 2. Meyer Music's Tom Meyer; 3. Ray's Midbell Music's Ray Guntren and Art's Music Shop's Jessica Freehling-Kazzie; 4. Jupiter's Andy Strayer (left) and Harris-Teller's Jon Harris; 5. NASMD President Grayson Zeagler (far right) of Zeagler Music performs with his vocal group; 6. Paige's Music's Steve Purcell celebrates winning an award from the "First Annual Road Rep Olympics"; 7. West Music's Ryan West; 8. Nick Rail Music's Lisa and Nick Rail; 9. Yamaha's Gary Winder and West Music's Robin Walenta; 10. Sides Music's Pete Sides (left) and Quinlan & Fabish's George Quinlan

tomers in the store, and we want to know the best avenues to accomplish this," said Grayson Zeagler, NASMD president and owner of Monroe, La.-based Zeagler Music.

During the convention's second annual lunchtime roundtable discussion, retailers weighed in with more ideas for harnessing social media.

Donovan Bankhead, vice president of Springfield Music in Springfield, Mo., said he'll occasionally offer a \$5 gift card on his store's Facebook page to get people to check it more regularly. David Jones of Mynett Music in Fort Wayne, Ind., mentioned getting sign-ups for a clinic right after he announced it on Facebook.

Mark Goff, owner of Paige's Music in Indianapolis, started the Celebrate Music Makers video blog on his company's Web site. His son shoots videos of students in local band and orchestra programs, who share stories about their music making experiences.

At his session, "Guerrilla Marketing on a Chimp's Budget," Cris Behrens, store manager of Summerhays Music Center in Murray, Utah, explored inexpensive, hard-hitting promotions. Among the session's highlights, Behrens discussed more uses for Facebook. For instance, Summerhays Music hosts Facebook Fridays, which promotes something new at the





Joe Lamond

## **+ LAMOND'S STATE OF THE UNION**

Joe Lamond, NAMM president and CEO, kicks off every NAMM show with "Breakfast of Champions," a state-of-the-industry address where he interviews music business insiders. At NASMD, Menchey Music Service owner Joel Menchey turned the tables, interviewing Lamond to hear his views on the musical products market. Lamond's highlights:

### **The State of MI Retail**

I've spoken with some guitar dealers who think the \$2,000 guitar sale is gone. And the days of somebody tossing down a credit card to buy that guitar may be gone.

Capitalism is this pendulum because we're human and we're emotional. I'd predicted there would be an [upsurge] in independent businesses, and I believe that time is now.

Does that mean you do things the old way? I don't think so.

### **The Value of NAMM**

NAMM University, those conversations and sessions change the course of history. MIDI began on the NAMM show floor.

### **NAMM Attendance**

This year was pretty good [for The NAMM Show]. We were up a bit in terms of attendance and down in terms of income.

Our members say 95 percent of their buying decisions happen at winter NAMM. So as manufacturers, you want to be there.

### **The FTC & Class-Action Suits**

Regarding the FTC [Federal Trade Commission] investigation and pending industry class-action lawsuits, there are some things to be aware of. It's absolutely critical for anyone who has [industry] events to take it seriously. Getting it wrong can [lead to] expense and investigation. Saying "I didn't know" or saying "business is rough" doesn't cut it.

end of each week. The company also held an essay contest to win \$500 and backstage passes to meet Trans-Siberian Orchestra. Participants needed to submit a 30- to 100-word piece on why they deserved a new instrument.

In terms of store events, the Summerhays Hands-On Contest invites kids to compete for a prized instrument. Each kid has to keep both hands on an instrument case, and the one who lasts the longest, without removing his or her hands, wins. The contest brings tons of kids and their parents into the store for long periods. Behrens said some contests have gone on as long as 36 hours.

"Yes, it was my idea, but I didn't reinvent the wheel," Behrens said. "Sometimes, we get so caught up in reinventing the wheel that we forget that there are a lot of good ideas out there."

### **SALES PRIMER**

There were plenty of sales-boosting ideas, as well. Tom Meyer of Blue Springs, Mo.-based Meyer Music walked attendees through his dealership's noted step-up sale process in "Capture and Convert the Elusive Step-up Sale." Industry veteran and consultant Danny Rocks offered real-world tips for relationship selling in "How to Make All of Your Customers 'Customers for Life.'"

"Listen twice as much as you speak," Rocks said. "Most salespeople like to talk. We want to ask strategic questions and then actively listen for the answers."

In "10-Percent Growth Stories," Russ Beacock of Beacock Music in Vancouver, Wash., shared his strategies for boosting company revenues by 10 percent last year. This was achieved, in large part, through

more assertive selling and prospecting company-wide.

He explained how salespeople were required to keep "books" with notes on prospects. Management would meet with them every four to six weeks to make sure they were sticking with it. This created an environment where salespeople were constantly encouraged to follow up with customers.

"And we've found that people aren't annoyed when you follow up," Beacock said. "Customers are not getting those phone calls anymore. It's not only *not* annoying to them, but they appreciate it. And the book helps us do that."

Beacock's road reps also began giving customers both their own business cards and those of on-the-floor salespeople. This way, clients had a contact inside and outside the store, letting them purchase at their own leisure, not just when a rep stopped by.

Beacock added that tapping the home school market helped boost his music lessons program. "We're going to write \$1 million this year in lessons. It drives the rental business, and it drives other segments."

### **GOFF'S WISDOM**

Near the convention's end, Mark Goff boiled down 25 years of retail wisdom in his session, "Building a Win-Win-Winning Team." It focused on ways to improve the customer experience and the quality of a company's staff.

Goff mentioned his dealership's Bravo program being key to maintaining customer satisfaction. Every customer gets a feedback card to fill out, no matter how small the purchase.

"When the customer marks 'boo' on the card, I call them right away," he said. "The first thing they say is, 'I didn't think



anyone read those cards.' The second thing they say is, 'I didn't expect anyone to call.' The third thing they say is they didn't expect the owner to call." Goff added that his company has a program for employees to recognize one another's work via feedback cards, as well.

He also discussed the importance of sharing numbers with employees, which he does at quarterly meetings. "Do your employees know the score?" he asked rhetorically. "Do you trust them enough to tell them? If not, what does that tell them?"

"Two years ago, we had a tough year. I said, 'We have to make some changes.' And they said 'OK' because they knew the score."

In related news, NASMD held the "First Annual Road

1. *Music Inc.*'s Bernadette Ray and Kevin Maher; 2. Musical Innovations' Tracy Leenman and Amro Music's Pat Averwater; 3. PM Music Center's Julie and Frank Pampenella; 4. Summerhays Music's Scott and Jill Summerhays

Rep Olympics." Reps competed in different categories and were awarded at the convention's closing banquet. (One winner was Miles Ahead Music President and NASMD first-timer Miles Davis.)

"Despite the obstacles our industry has faced, there seems to be no lack of enthusiasm to conquer them with creativity," said Jason Pachona, store manager of PM Music Center in Aurora, Ill.

The 2011 NASMD convention will be held March 30–April 2 at the Hyatt Grand Champions Resort in Palm Springs, Calif. **MI**



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# IDEAS

>>> **Inside IDEAS**

> MAP Page 38

> Lesson Room Page 42

> Streetwise Page 44

> Lessons Learned Page 46

> Customer Whisperer Page 48

INDEPENDENT RETAIL | BY TED ESCHLIMAN

## WHAT ARE WE WORTH?

There's a fine line between vision and delusion. Both involve perspective, and both direct one's path. One leads to positive progress while the other leads to destruction. Individuals and businesses would do well with a reality check in the face of today's exponential market changes. Let's review some of the relevant myths that independent dealers are vulnerable to believe.

### MUSIC RETAIL MYTH BUSTERS

**Myth 1:** A music store is the place people go to find everything they need to make music.

**Untrue:** The information highway's vast resources have denigrated our role as the center of musical knowledge. Customers visit us well-versed in product features and specifications and also ready to announce their selling price.

**Hope:** We all know the Internet can be the misinformation highway, too, but it holds the advantage of appearing benignly neutral and altruistic. The suspicious image of a narcissistic, commission-driven sale is frequently trumped by the impartial and collective



### Myth busters for a fast- changing retail market

voice of online consumer opinion forums. However, a customer will trust the genuine voice of a trusted salesperson's personal experience, provided it lacks the scent of agenda.

**Myth 2:** A customer will pay more to buy local.

**Untrue:** A customer may pay a little more, but other factors weigh in heavily, such as expedience and authentic assurance.

**Hope:** Loyal customers will pay a slightly higher price but only if it's still competitive. Other intangibles, such as convenience, reputation and after-the-sale reliability, are real and perceptively quantifiable, provided they are honest. Be warned: The notion of your company's longevity doesn't impact today's generation. They will only appreciate what you do for them right now.

**Myth 3:** The public thinks the best place to buy musical products is in a music store.

**Untrue:** When exposure to musical items was confined to music retailers in the not-too-distant past, this was largely true, but today, the number of outlets and opportunities has diminished our market sovereignty.

**Hope:** We still hold influence to bring customers to a purchasing decision. There's nothing like walking onto a welcoming, nurturing sales floor when on the verge of a resolution and having another credible human say, "Go ahead. Invest. You deserve this guitar." That power of affirmation in the hands of the right salesperson is far more intoxicating than an e-blast special, radio ad or Internet price search.

**Myth 4:** Customers will gravitate toward what is new in your store.

**Untrue:** Customers will not notice what is new and don't want to hunt to find it.

**Hope:** They will be drawn to what you have already signed as new. Try a test run with a secret shopper. Assign the shopper to ask, "What's new?" If your staff is primed with a 10-seconds-or-less answer, they will not only make an occasional sale but establish justification for your store's existence.

**Myth 5:** Customers will buy the best they can afford.

**Untrue:** Not all customers are willing to pay for quality.

**Hope:** Not everyone feels this way. As a matter of fact, your better customers don't, and you don't want to run the risk of dumbing down your goods and services to the lowest common denominator. That said, your staff needs to be prepared to accept the cheapskate customer. We need to restrain our music store elitism and let them buy what they will. **MI**

Ted Eschliman is a 30-year veteran of music retail and co-owner of Dietze Music in Southeast Nebraska. Mel Bay published his book, *Getting Into Jazz Mandolin*.

JAMES BETHEA THE PERFECT GUITAR/THE PERFECT BASS BATON ROUGE, LA.

# WE NEED TO ABANDON MAP

I am relatively new to our industry, having started my business in 2002. But in the last eight years, I have developed a theory about minimum advertised price (MAP) policies.

When large-scale retailers entered the market, they enjoyed massive economies of scale and were able to negotiate better relationships with suppliers than smaller retailers. They were also able to sustain smaller margins by way of volume. Suppliers have become dependent on these large retailers as they have become more dominant in the retail space. This has fostered a PR nightmare for suppliers with their smaller independent retailers. MAP was developed in an honest attempt to maintain brand values, or simply to placate indie retailers.

I believe some suppliers are truly concerned about their brand equity, but I also believe others are more interested in providing lip service to smaller stores in order to salvage their businesses. Either way, I don't think many will argue that MAP policies are effective.

## MAP CONSEQUENCES

Large-scale retailers now have the power to either abide by policies adopted by manufacturers or not, and at their sole discretion. After all, will a manufacturer really give up 25–50 percent of its sales to maintain a policy that's ineffective? I also see smaller retailers disregarding MAP policies and cutting prices to the bone to compete with larger dealers. Unfortunately, current economic conditions have made this problem worse than ever before.

On the supply side, MAP policies tend to be enforced selectively. This makes it more difficult for new competitors on the retail side to emerge as major players.

Either by design or by chance, we have ended up with a system that protects larger players and suppresses potential retail competitors. At the core of the problem lies MAP policies.

## THE CROSSROADS

At its best, MAP is ineffective. At its worst, it's oppressive for consumers and smaller retailers. Ineffective because there are always retailers willing to forgo their contractual obligations to secure a sale. Oppressive because it forces those of us willing to stick to our contractual obligations to remain at a disadvantage, despite natural market forces of supply and demand. This keeps prices artificially high, which is bad for consumers.

After studying, participating in and competing in our industry during the last few years, the road signs are in sight. We are at a crossroads. We must seriously consider leaving MAP behind or prepare to endure painful consequences.

We can continue to embrace MAP and encourage the dominance of a handful of massive players, or we can unshackle the marketplace and get back to a more competitive environment where we control our destinies as individual business owners.

## WHY WE SHOULD ABANDON MAP

**1. Freedom equals opportunity.** Free market capitalism is the American way. It has provided us with a level of prosperity for more people than any other system in the world, for all recorded history. It represents the freedom to chart your own course, set your own sails, and take control of your success or failure. MAP policies are inherently anti-capitalistic by means of dictating what we can or cannot do in our own businesses, which we have put much sweat and treasure into.

Doing away with MAP policies will unshackle our creativity and let us compete with the best of the best on every level. It will also remove any suspicion regarding the legality of these policies. With all the litigation surrounding MAP, why do we continue to embrace it? I want to be free to run my business the way I see fit, and that includes pricing.

*James Bethea, continued on page 40*



JAMES BETHEA

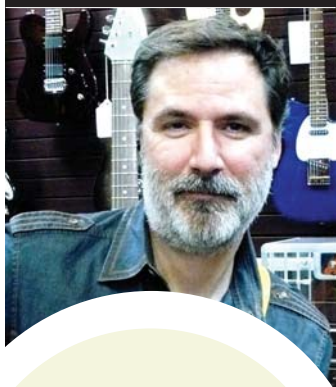
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SERVICES.**

**MAP  
FOCUSES  
RETAILERS  
ON SERVICE,  
NOT PRICE  
NEGOTIATIONS.**

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# MAP LEVELS THE PLAYING FIELD

I am opposed to the race to the bottom for my company, my industry and my country. The given in our current economy is low prices are good for the consumer, so we should seek to drive to the lowest price. There are economic and human costs in doing so, and we should consider the consequences for retailers, manufacturers, wholesalers, music education systems, the economy and civic resources.

I built my business with the goal of creating a dream guitar store staffed by industry experts who could make a great living as respected professionals. Ten years later, my brick-and-mortar mom-and-pop shop is a valued part of the local music community, providing music education through lessons and in-store clinics, a welcoming atmosphere to compare different gear, expert advice, trusted repair services, and a trade-in and consignment business. Most of this can't be done online, but I consider the Internet to be vital to my business, letting me reach clients across the world, around the clock. I want to survive and feel that MAP guidelines offer the best hope of keeping Main Street as relevant as the World Wide Web.

## MAP PROMOTES QUALITY SERVICE

MAP guidelines give consumers an incentive to purchase products based upon seller experience and expertise, not just the lowest prices. When used properly, they ensure that quality products stay in production and knowledgeable retailers — both online and brick and mortar — stay in business.

As one of my competitors put it, "Without MAP, it's over for the independent retailer." It's a cannibalistic scenario: The effects of removing MAP include margin loss, further job cuts and poorer service. Brick-and-mortar stores won't be able to afford to sell products that are offered online for significantly less money, and eventually, even the remaining online sellers will increase pressure on manufacturers to lower their wholesale prices.

MAP helps halt a future of cost-cutting and outsourcing, of reducing quality and draining our economy. As Sayer Payne, owner of boutique pedal company Heavy Electronics argued, MAP is vital to keeping high-quality, innovative products manufactured in America.

"If MAP is repealed, the number of dealers will decline because of price wars, leaving fewer companies to experiment with new and innovative product lines," Payne said. "Dealers will be reluctant to experiment with products that are unproven when they know they must buy massive quantities in order to compete on price. Most alarming for the manufacturer, if MAP is dissolved, there will be immense pressure to lower production costs. Inevitably, to achieve lower wholesale prices, manufacturers will move overseas to compete. This race to the bottom could perpetuate massive deflation at a time when we need to be encouraging minimal inflation to stomach national debt.

"MAP focuses retailer efforts toward attracting customers with service performance rather than making constant negotiating of wholesale costs their primary activity. In short, MAP may be the last thread for privately owned, community-based retailers and independently owned manufacturers."

## MAP PROMOTES QUALITY OF LIFE

Keeping our mom-and-pop shops and manufacturers in business is an investment in everyone's quality of life. As the 3-50 Project — a non-profit organization devoted to saving brick and mortars — outlines, for every \$100 spent at locally owned independent stores, \$68 returns to the community through taxes, payroll and other expenditures. Spend that at a national chain, and only \$43 stays in the community. Spend that online, and nothing comes back to the community. Roads, schools, parks and

Cory Lake, continued on page 41

James Bethea, continued from page 38

**2. Free market natural selection equals a stronger industry.** The knee-jerk response I hear to the suggestion that MAP should be abolished is, "Won't that start a race to the bottom?" In some cases, it might.

But after all is said and done, top-line managers will see their profits erode and will either wise up or simply discount themselves out of business. This is free market natural selection. While I hate to see people fail, especially when they're passionate, this is how the market regulates itself. We will be left with more competent competition, and our industry will be stronger.

**3. List price will mean something again.** Today, list price means nothing because MAP has taken its place. To the consumer, list price is completely irrelevant. But what seems to be relevant is the percentage discount the consumer can get off MAP. If MAP is abolished, won't mass retailers only discount more? Maybe, but it will be out in the open for everyone to see. We will have the freedom to choose between brands that fit our margin requirements and brands that don't.

Without MAP, we are left simply with list pricing. By default, list price will have meaning again. This is imperative for our future. Otherwise, the race to the bottom will end with only the retailers moving

massive volumes of product at the finish line.

**4. Supplier-buyer relationships will be healthier.** With MAP, we have effectively created a buffer for our suppliers from the marketplace's true conditions. Since we are bound by MAP agreements to maintain pricing, in general, we try to do so, at least in healthy marketplaces. But when hard times hit, we delay in reducing our prices in order to remain compliant with our agreements. Not only do we lose business to retailers that don't care about MAP agreements, but we don't send market feedback to suppliers until it's too late.

If MAP policies didn't exist, we could immediately send feedback to our suppliers. If

demand slowed, we could manipulate price instantly to stimulate demand rather than waiting on approvals to run a promotion. If that didn't work, again, the response time is greatly reduced between the time the market reacts and the time that suppliers make adjustments.

Clearly, having a realistic, real-time view of the marketplace is preferable to the delay created by MAP. Not every product is right for every retailer, and having a more immediate market response will help dealers find the right products for their stores and help suppliers find the right retailers for their products.

In addition, the fact that we have MAP inherently creates an adversarial supplier-buyer

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relationship. In effect, the supplier is telling the dealer what he or she can and cannot do. Eliminating MAP also eliminates this problem. Dealers will sell more product, and consequently, they will buy more product.

## 5. What has MAP done?

Really, what has it done for you? What has it done for your business? What has it done for the industry? Ask yourself if there's any real benefit to having MAP, and answer honestly. I have yet to think of a real benefit.

### THE ACTION PLAN

Suppliers, let market forces work. Let dealers run their businesses. If you want to prosper with us, let the market tell you what it wants and at what price it wants it. If it's not working, change! It's up to you to develop products that are desirable and to find ways to produce them at a profit. We

retailers can handle getting them to the marketplace.

Retailers, it's not the supplier's job to make you profitable. Manufacturers are in business to make themselves profitable. Take ownership of your successes or failures, stop blaming others, and focus on the mirror instead of the window.

I love guitars, and I love my business. It's a blessing to be able to have my daily work be in an industry I'm passionate about. But to prosper, we have to be able to make a profit. Our passion is useless unless we have good business sense to go along with it. MAP is a perpetual thorn in our side that stifles innovation, progress and freedom to run our businesses. Thus, it's a roadblock to prosperity, and we should have the courage to send a clear message to our suppliers about which road our industry should follow. **MI**

Cory Lake, continued from page 39

police budgets rely on local retailers, as do job opportunities and real estate values.

MAP helps me sustain and promote a sense of pride in the goods I sell. Historically, to become an authorized retailer of prominent products, you needed a brick-and-mortar store that met certain standards, including regular hours, regular employees and a physical shop, not to mention an ability to educate consumers on your products. The recent recession has led many manufacturers to grow massive dealer bases in order to distribute excess inventory. Among the latest wave of so-called new "dealers" are online jobbers that also offer children's toys, household appliances and pho-

tography gear. With sellers who have no understanding of, let alone passion for, the items they sell, brand equity and consumer confidence declines.

I believe that MAP helps ensure survival of the fittest, not proliferation of the cheapest.

Manufacturers need to vet dealers, and dealers need to maintain standards. MAP enforcement has become such a problem that a new industry has sprung up: watchdogs for hire that electronically monitor and report MAP violations. These professionals offer one way to keep MAP in check, but as an industry that serves the arts, it's our responsibility to create and sustain a culture of respect surrounding the tools of our trade. The end result? Our favorite lines and shops can thrive. **MI**

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THE LESSON ROOM | BY PETE GAMBER

# Networking Your Staff

Music retailers hear a lot about how online social networking can enhance their businesses and create a strong Internet presence. We're all busy figuring out how to use Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn to bring new customers in and keep regular customers updated on store events. But in reality, much of this will only yield small returns.

Developing strong relationships, on the other hand, is not a trend. While you're in the back office tweeting, what's your staff doing on the retail floor to network with your music lesson students? Don't get me wrong: Online social media is important. But what good is it if customers come in and have to deal with a staff member who has the personality of a brick?

Cyberspace isn't the instant fix we're all looking for. Students come into your store every week for music lessons. Shouldn't your staff know who they are?

## HOW TO TRAIN YOUR PEOPLE

Try this test. Hand each of your employees a blank sheet of paper and have them fill out the names, first or last, of all the students who are going to come in tonight. How many names can they list? How many, as the store owner or manager, can you list? I bet you know more names than your staff do, and you spend less time on the retail floor.

Veteran retailers have learned customer networking chops from traditional shopping experiences, both good and bad. We've taken that knowledge and developed our own approaches to retail and selling.

Be aware that new, younger staffers have gotten most of their shopping experiences from the Internet or at large self-serve box stores. These experiences don't naturally lend themselves to face-to-face networking. You need to

show them how to network.

Here are 10 things to teach them.

1. Get out from the safe zone behind the counter.
2. Greet the student and parents.
3. Introduce yourself.
4. Find out the student's name, parents' names and which teacher the student takes lessons from.
5. Write down this information, and include the lesson time. I use a low-

tech steno pad and keep it where I can access it quickly.

6. Find out which school they go to, what music they're working on and any other information that puts the focus on them. A simple "How's the lesson going?" will work, too.

7. Make students and their families feel as if they have a trusted contact in the store. That's something that doesn't happen at Wal-Mart or online. Tell them, "I work every Tuesday, and I'm here to help you with anything you need."

8. Update the student and parents on upcoming clinics, recitals, summer programs, YouTube postings and new gear. Give them the verbal pitch and a handout.

9. When the student leaves, use his or her name. ("See you next week, Billy.")

10. Use those steno pad notes to reference a student's name when he or she comes in the following week.

Greeting customers by name when they arrive makes them feel special. It's much better than, "Hey dude, how's it going?"

Increasing face time, not Facebook time, will create more sales, lesson enrollment and referrals for your music lessons program and your products. **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).



**Tweeting won't matter if the employee behind the counter has the personality of a brick**



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STREETWISE SELLING | BY KENNY SMITH

# Fighting a Sales Slump

Everyone in sales lands in a sand trap from time to time. As in golf, the key is to avoid digging yourself in deeper and to get out quickly. Using these basic techniques, you can help yourself get back in the game.

**Attitude is crucial.** Leave your luggage at the door. In sales, you'll often get only one shot, and no one wants to buy from somebody who's depressed or angry. Distance yourself from negative comments and advice from co-workers because this will only weigh you down. Remember, customers buy from salespeople with good attitudes more often, so keep your chin up.

**Read 'em and weep reports.** Salespeople in slumps don't like seeing their low numbers. In actuality, it helps them to know exactly where they stand and that you're concerned about their sales. Many times, I've seen salespeople rally to the occasion and start producing again by simply going over their numbers in detail.

**Isolate the problem.** There are a host of reasons for the sales slump. Frequently, the main cause occurs during the selling process itself. Many salespeople are oblivious to what they're doing wrong or not doing at all. Observe how they handle each step of a deal, and you may quickly discover the problem. Many times, you can help them out of a slump if you listen first and offer advice second. Stick to the basics.

**Get back on the horse.** Disasters can trigger a slump. In my 20s, I had four deals go completely south in one day. I was so bummed out, I went to my dad for a lecture. He said, "Kenny, any salesman who's trying his hardest is always going to lose a few deals, and even though it's not good when it happens, I worry even more about salespeople who never lose any deals. They may not be selling enough."

**Pan for gold.** Previous customers are twice as easy to sell to as new ones. Reach out to old customers. They may even know someone who needs something. Constant prospecting and follow-up are a key slump defense. The best salespeople are always either with a customer or on the phone with one.

**Don't get pushy.** Customers have a sixth sense for spotting desperate salespeople. If you try too hard to sell someone, especially if you're in a slump, it can do you more damage than good. Focus on telling them your story and showing them around for the first couple of minutes. This will relax both of

you and get things started on the right foot.

**Bunt.** Many times, salespeople, especially superstars, in a slump feel pressured to hit one out of the park, but instead, they end up striking out over and over. One cure is to bunt. Start by selling something small, and work your way up.

**Re-demo.** After negotiating and attempting different closes, if the customer seems close but is still going to walk, try this: Nonchalantly take him back to the product and demo the one thing he liked best about it. Then ask, one more time, to buy. When used correctly, your closing ratio will go up by a noticeable percentage.

**Sell when it's slow.** Create your own traffic by scheduling appointments with customers who've already bought from you. It helps you keep your fingertips sandpapered, it makes previous customers happier, and the extra traffic looks impressive to new shoppers. A word to the wise: When new customers need to be waited on, you can go back and forth if you have to. This is called spinning plates.

**Think positive.** When you're closing deals, envision your customer happily buying the product from you, and it will happen more frequently. Use the Force, Luke. **MI**

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



**What to do when a usually good salesperson gets caught in a rut**





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LESSONS LEARNED | BY GERSON ROSENBLUM

# Matriarchs of Music

As soon as I received the sad news about the passing of Marge Levin of Wheaton, Md.-based Chuck Levin's Washington Music Center, it got me thinking about the rare breed of women that she epitomized. I'll call them the matriarchs of music, and they are often the unsung heroes of the music products industry.

## ESSENTIAL BUSINESS WOMEN



Let's start with the name: Chuck Levin's Washington Music Center. Chuck was clearly a legend — a hard-hitting, street-smart entrepreneur who created the single largest music retail store in the country. But if Chuck were still with us, he would be quick to credit Marge for being by his side the whole way and playing a key role in Washington Music Center's success. In an "Ozzie And Harriet" and "Leave It To Beaver" world, the male focus of the store was likely never given a second thought back at the store's inception.

Our industry is replete with other examples of incredible women who played important roles in the growth of music retail companies. It would be insane to try and list them all. You could write a book.

NAMM's Oral History program at [namm.org](http://namm.org) offers a multitude of stories about these industry heroes. Think of the likes of Rose Ash, Eleanor West, Mickey Jent, Kay McDowell and Martha Markowitz — all important and respected figures in the music industry.

**For all they do behind the scenes, music industry moms deserve some time in the spotlight**

loan, the security for which was my mom's relationship with her grandmother. In the day-to-day operations of the store in its infancy, Mom was the chief bookkeeper. She handled all music lesson scheduling and served as the entire human resources department. She was the person who, in later years, somehow always knew when a manufacturer's rep was in the store and would track him down with those famous words, "I want to see you before you leave." The rep knew he was about to have both a warm conversation, plus a no-holds-barred reckoning to clean up some sort of

invoice error.

But what made my mom and the other matriarchs of music extraordinary were the roles they played beyond their daily business functions. Besides all the everyday work she performed so well, Mom was, well ... Mom. She was not only my mother but served that role for the scores of store personnel who worked there through the years. She provided a calming influence, support and motherly advice. She treated each and every young person who worked for us as one of her own children.

And then, at the end of each day, she went home and actually was my mother, my adviser, my confidante, the chief home engineer and director of transportation.

These matriarchs of music were, and are, remarkable women. Today, more and more, we see them in leadership roles. But whatever their positions, you can be certain that many of them continue to take on that additional duty of mom.

Who's the matriarch of music in your life? Drop me an e-mail, so we can pay tribute to her. (See below.) It's high time that we get these ladies out of the back office. **MI**

## PERSONAL HEROINE

The best description I can give of a matriarch of music is based on my personal experience. I believe that my mom, Ileana "Lenny" Rosenbloom, was fairly representative of the breed that defines these grande dames.

The very beginnings of Medley Music can be traced to a family

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](mailto:gersonmusicinc@gmail.com).



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THE CUSTOMER WHISPERER | BY GREG BILLINGS

# How Much Is Too Much?

I remember being 15 years old and looking at a seemingly endless supply of guitars and amps for our new rock 'n' roll department. And I was the first person to touch them — every one of them. I remember grimy shipping dust on the cardboard, the smell of lacquer when guitar cases were opened and the ions in the air when the amps were turned on for the first time.

My father's display reflected the conventional wisdom: customers buy from the store with the biggest selection and the most brands. Unfortunately, there has never been an iota of statistical evidence to prove the highly unlikely proposition that inventory drives sales. Could it be a myth?

## CHOICES, CHOICES, CHOICES

As we learn more about how people make decisions, we are discovering that too many choices can cause confusion and may make it harder for customers to decide. So, large inventories might be costing us more than just interest. They could be costing us sales.

The history of musical instrument retailing is littered with the corpses of fully stocked dealers. Do you remember Hale Piano, Holcombe-Lindquist, Fields, Biasco or Mars Music? Neither their massive square footage nor their impressive inventories saved them from the harsh realities of the marketplace. On the other hand, I can't think of any dealers who failed because they didn't have enough inventory. Many of us are nostalgic for our early days in business when the shortage of capital forced us to sell one before we could buy one. Those were the days of fast inventory turn and the profits that funded growth.

It's not just the musical instrument industry that's enthralled with inventory. Auto dealers advertise 1,000 cars in stock, furniture dealers offer the biggest selection in the Tri-State area, and I understand there's a grocer on the West Coast that keeps 100 varieties of olive oil on hand. But things have changed, and today, it's virtually impossible to have the biggest selection. What book or DVD merchant could possibly compete with the choices on Amazon?

Some retailers present the illusion of a large selection when their displays are a mile wide but really an inch deep. Big-box electronics stores may have a whole wall of flat-screen TVs, but there are probably just a dozen different models. Most of the products in these stores have only one or two options.

Wholesale clubs offer massive quantities but often only one choice, unless the choice is between the house brand and the major brand. Elite retailers, such as Apple and Bose, have very narrow product ranges, and the designer boutiques on Rodeo Drive and Fifth Avenue deliberately offer a limited selection.

These retailers know something we don't. Too many choices only serves to confuse customers. Research suggests three options are about the most people can handle. In his intriguing book, *Predictably Irrational*, Daniel Ariely makes a convincing case that the ideal options for both seller and buyer consist of the one they want to buy; one like it with a minor difference, such as color or finish; and a decoy they can easily disqualify.

## MAKE THE TURN

Of course, too many choices means too much inventory, and too much inventory eats profit. Nonetheless, we cling to the dream that we can buy our way to success. The old-timers used to say, "You can't sell from an empty cart," as they reached for their order pads. Gerson Rosenbloom candidly attributes buying inventory with credit cards as one of the contributing factors in the demise of his former dealership, Medley Music.



**'Too many lines kill turns, confuse staff and customers, and erode vendor relationships.'**



One major manufacturer recently published a stocking requirement that is 50 percent of its dealers' annual sales target. It would be pretty hard to find a CPA or banker who's impressed with a two-time inventory turn. Maybe the reason inventory turns are so anemic in our industry isn't because sales are too low. Maybe our stocking levels are too high. Grocery stores turn their inventory 20–30 times a year, and bakers and fish mongers turn it once a day. Is three times a year too much to ask for guitars?

Calculating an inventory turn is actually easy. Just divide the total cost of goods sold by the total inventory on hand. If the year-end inventory isn't a fair representation, the average inventory level at the end of each quarter will do.

My colleague and financial guru Alan Friedman has an exquisite formula for calculating inventory turn as part of a purchasing decision:

"Take the gross profit percent you expect to achieve and multiply it by 360 (days in a year). The result is how many days you have to sell all quantities of that item. If you can't sell them in that time frame, reduce your order until the answer is yes.

"For example, consider buying a trumpet that sells for \$400 and costs \$300, producing \$100 of gross profit. One hundred dollars represents a 25-percent (\$100/\$400) gross profit. Multiply 0.25 times 360, and you'll get 90. Ask yourself: Can I sell all of these trumpets in 90 days? If the answer is 'yes,' buy it all. If the answer is 'no,' reduce the quantity until the answer is 'yes.' This formula considers profit and time (or turns) in determining what and how many to buy."

Simply stated: The lower your gross profit is, the faster you must sell the items and vice versa.

#### AVOID PITFALLS

Alan's formula is a great place to start, and his discipline would improve the bottom line of most music retailers. It's hard to imagine that a music store that turns inventory three times a year wouldn't be highly profitable with excellent cash flow. But even this formula may be too liberal for the selling environment we find ourselves in today. A two-time turn of a 50-percent gross item may be acceptable on paper, but I think we can do even better if we realize that customers neither need nor want as many choices as we are offering. Presenting too many options is probably why our prospects so often tell us they're confused.

Nothing plumps up inventory like carrying competing brands. The allure is that having both lines guarantees a sale, but it doesn't. Too many lines kill turns, confuse staff and customers, and erode vendor relationships. Sometimes, the best thing to do is just decide which product offers the best customer value and profit potential, and commit to it.

Most of us are obsessed with gross margin as the path to net profit, but increasing inventory turn can also generate cash. Let's say you invested \$4,000 in a sousaphone that you hope to sell for \$7,995 within six months. You'd have a \$3,995 gross profit and \$4,000 to reinvest. However, if you could sell one unit at \$4,995 in one month, generating a \$995 GP, and repeated that each month for six months, you would generate \$5,970 in GP on the same \$4,000 investment. (If you rein-

**'Maybe the reason inventory turns are so anemic isn't because sales are too low. Maybe our stocking levels are too high.'**

vested the profit as you went along, the return would be even greater.)

Granted, there's a limited demand for sousaphones, and there would have been a few other expenses, but turning inventory fast generates cash. Holding on to slow-moving product, hoping to make a big GP, is a losing strategy. Often the best course with old stock is to take your lumps, get some or all of your original investment back, and reinvest in something that will sell more quickly.

#### BITE THE BULLET

Managing inventory turn is largely a matter of purchasing discipline and cold-hearted realism when it comes to disposing of old stock. Buying on terms is the most dangerous trap we fall into. (Free freight is the other.) Suppliers don't offer terms because they're nice guys. They offer terms because they want to move stock from their balance sheets to yours.

Every morning, the first thing I see in my gallery is a piano I bought two and a half years ago with 180-day terms. (I always keep my oldest item in view from my desk as a reminder not to do anything stupid.) The cost of holding this unit has wiped out what-

ever gain there might have been. Never buy on terms.

The human brain has a remarkable capacity for rationalization and pain avoidance. In his book, *Why We Make Mistakes*, author Joseph Hallinan states the obvious: "We are really good at BS'ing ourselves." Rather than endure the pain of loss, we procrastinate, making matters worse. The same motivations that prevent amateur investors from accepting a loss also cause us to cling to our old inventory. While a professional stockbroker will sell a falling stock the moment it reaches the stop-loss price, many people will ride it all the way to the bottom. I know I have.

Here's my stop-loss system for inventory: If it's more than 180 days old, keep marking it down until it sells. Also, use the "if it was in my refrigerator, would I throw it out" rule. Bite the bullet, and sell the old inventory for anything you can get and reinvest in something that will sell. The first offer is bound to be your best offer. The longer you wait, the worse it will be.

As we emerge from a painful economic era into a more normal business environment, let's be careful not to abandon the difficult business disciplines we imposed on ourselves to survive. If you spruced up your balance sheet by reducing inventory and debt, keep a tight rein on purchasing, and keep your inventory lean. Take a pass on free freight and special terms offers, and buy only what you really need. Your banker and your bottom line will be pleased, and you'll sleep better. **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).

# David *and* Goliath

DAVID SLAN CONQUERED THE CENTRAL ILLINOIS AND ST. LOUIS PIANO MARKETS.

NOW, HE'S SET HIS SIGHTS ON  
THE TOUGHEST MARKET YET: D.C.

BY ZACH PHILLIPS  
PHOTOS BY STAN BAROUH

“Timing has been very much in my favor,” said David Slan.

He spoke from his new showroom, having just returned from courting what he called “a major institution” for its piano business. If the deal goes through, the institution will join a clientele that includes the Kennedy Center, a





David Slan

cluster of all-Steinway schools and several foreign embassies. It's a piano retailer's dream portfolio, and it's all tied to Slan's latest timing coup: the opening of Steinway Piano Gallery in Washington, D.C., last September.

"Difficult economic times like the one that just happened are when opportunities present themselves," he said. "When things are going great, you don't get many opportunities. No one's going to sell you a property inexpensively or offer you a major market with a big manufacturer."

For Slan, the D.C. area isn't another major market, though: It's the holy grail of the piano business, second only to New York. It was the type of opportunity he acknowledged comes along "once every 20 or 30 years" and served as the payoff of nearly 30 years' hard work. So far, Slan said business has

been "very strong," and Ron Losby, president of Steinway & Sons—Americas, mentioned being "delighted" with the D.C. dealership's performance.

But the venture has come with tremendous risk, not least of all the recent collapse of the acoustic piano market and a city still devoted to its previous Steinway dealer, piano giant Jordan Kitt's Music. And Slan, who's also a professional poker player, wouldn't have it any other way.

"I am conservative in that I run my finances in a conservative fashion," he said. "But in all actuality, I am a very, very large risk taker. At 22, I purchased a piano company. At 50, I took the step of opening up in the Washington, D.C., metro area at a time when everybody thought the entire world was coming to an end. It's all about risk and reward. There are things I've done in every step

I've taken to minimize the downside and risk while maximizing the potential upside."

#### OPENING IN ST. LOUIS

The economy hasn't been the only timing factor working in Slan's favor. Industry politics have also presented generous opportunities to him, and he has seized them.

Once the wunderkind of the piano industry, Slan became the youngest Steinway dealer at 24 years old, a year after he purchased Peoria, Ill.-based Byerly Music in 1981. "At my first Steinway dealer dinner in Chicago, when I walked up to the table, the other dealers thought I was the waiter," he said with a laugh. In 1993, when longtime St. Louis Steinway retailer Ludwig Aeolian parted ways with the piano maker, Steinway execs offered their rising star the franchise.

"We were in the midst of a very bad recession," he said. "That was when Steinway had pianos stacked up in its warehouse."

Still, Slan jumped, opening Steinway Piano Gallery in St. Louis. For its first weekend, the dealership hosted a Steinway Selection Event at Plaza Frontenac, a high-end St. Louis shopping center. It required deep inventory, as well as deep pockets to set up and publicize. "The promotion was a big gamble," Slan said.

The payoff? According to Slan, the brand-new store ended up selling more Steinway pianos in those four days than Ludwig Aeolian "had sold in the last four years."

"We were extremely good and extremely focused at selling Steinway pianos, whereas Ludwig Aeolian had everything," he said. (He later sold Byerly Music in portions to fel-

low Illinois retailers Kidder Music and Samuel Music, as well as to a pair of former Byerly owners.)

#### CAMPAIGNING IN D.C.

Industry politics dropped another opportunity in Slan's lap when, in May 2009, Steinway sent a shock wave through the piano business.

Maryland-based piano retail chain Jordan Kitt's, one of Steinway's largest and longest-running dealers, had begun taking on Yamaha pianos. Soon after, Steinway cut off all five of Kitt's D.C.-area locations. Steinway needed a new dealer, and its management knew where to turn.

For Slan, it was a no-brainer. He assembled a crack team of four veteran ex-Jordan Kitt's salespeople — three for the floor, one for institutional accounts. Gerry Malzone, his longtime business partner, stayed in St. Louis to run the other store. Before the new dealership opened, Slan began calling on institutional prospects, armed with nothing but a briefcase. The St. Louis store had helped cement his company's reputation, but winning new institutional business made for the challenge of a lifetime.

"The whole situation was a big upset," he said. "It turned the market on its head. So at the beginning, there wasn't a great deal of love going around Washington, D.C." He qualified that: "But the music and cultural community has welcomed us with open arms."

And ultimately, the hardest part for Slan was the 85-hour workweeks. "I wouldn't be where I am today without the love and support of my wife, Joanna," he said. "She was able to handle that and help support me through the long hours."

"I also have to say the

## **+ The 13-Step Retail Program**

David Slan does business by 13 key principles:

1. Represent the finest products.
2. Encourage suppliers to provide exclusive distribution, and support those that do.
3. Provide and be willing to pay for outstanding service to enhance the value of products.
4. Resist adding fixed costs. Make as many expenses variable as possible.
5. Demand timely, accurate financial statements.
6. Pay as close attention to the balance sheet as you would to your sales figures.
7. Treat employees like family — they are. Compensate them as if they're irreplaceable — they are. Make the work environment one they'll want to work in forever — they will.
8. Predict what customers want, and give it to them.
9. Treat employees, suppliers, competitors and customers with respect.
10. Don't get too proud. There's always room for improvement.
11. Always consider the long-term implications of decisions. Short-term rewards pale in comparison to long-term prosperity.
12. Give back generously to the community. It's the right thing to do, and it will come back to a business in spades.
13. Be honest, and do the right thing. It might be painful in the short term, but it will pay dividends over the long haul.



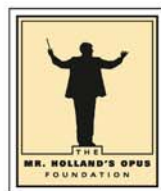
Dear

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

Sincerely yours Joseph Posey



That's why.



Music education is a gift that can last a lifetime. It sets the stage for greater creative expression.  
(Like, for instance, the above letter.)

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Contact The Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation at:  
[www.mhopus.org](http://www.mhopus.org)

people at Jordan Kitt's have been quite civil and cordial."

#### TLC & PIANO RETAIL

But the best timing in the world would've meant nothing if not for sound business practices. Year after year, Slan's stores have earned a healthy profit, many times while the rest of the piano industry has languished. Here, every piano retailer could take a page from his playbook.

To start with, Slan is obsessed with TLC. Before he even considered the D.C. opportunity, he held phone interviews with local piano technicians to gauge their levels of expertise. Scoring famed piano technician Rick Butler helped seal the deal.

Slan considers meticulous preparation critical to selling Steinways and bemoans how many piano retailers "do the absolute least amount of service and the absolute least expensive job that you can to make a piano acceptable to put on the floor." He said he has found that the best technicians are usually independent. "And even though they are more expensive than lesser-quality technicians, because we use them only when they are needed, we save the company money."

It sounds ridiculously simple, but as Slan pointed out, Steinway retailers "only get one chance with a discerning concert pianist. They're going to sit down, and if the piano doesn't sound and play just right, you've lost them."

"When we compared our total operating expenses in [a piano retail sharing group], my expenses as a percentage of sales were always the lowest of the entire group — by maybe 5 or 6 percentage points — but my service expense was always the highest. What I'm doing is



### Slan keeps a high level of equity in his company to cushion it in tough times

putting my money where it will have the biggest impact on my customers."

"David treats every customer as if [he or she is] purchasing a Steinway Concert Grand," Losby said. "He never forgets from whom his success has come."

#### HIGH EQUITY, LOW DEBT

Slan's fiscal conservatism also helped spare him from the brunt of the piano market's downturn. While he'll splurge

on service and payroll, he'll often pore over each column on a profit and loss statement to find ways to reduce expenses without sacrificing quality. "The difference is we do that in bad times *and* good times."

He doesn't floor plan. He pays cash for inventory, helping him get what he called "a very low rate and very favorable terms" when he has needed to borrow money. This also lets him take advantage of discounts from suppliers. And he said he keeps a higher level of equity in his company than most piano stores. In doing so, he sacrifices a higher return on his investment but cushions his company from market fluctuations.

"There are some [retailers] who feel very comfortable with a lot of leverage in their company," Slan said. "The problem

is, whenever you have an economic downturn like we had and things get a little shaky, your floor plan companies, banks and suppliers all get nervous. With me, nobody got nervous.

"When economic conditions are good, we do very well, and when business conditions are more difficult, our company is still profitable."

To other dealers, he recommended that they pay as close attention to their balance sheets as they do their sales figures. "Just selling another piano may not always be the most profitable thing to do," he said. "To run your company effectively, you need to understand and manage your balance sheet. For example, what should my debt-to-equity ratio be? How much inventory should I have to create the desired inventory turn? How much equity do I need to support my inventory and financing needs and allow me to borrow money under favorable terms?"

Slan learned which ratios worked best for a dealership of his size by studying other companies in retail sharing groups. And he credited Bill McCormick, the late president of Jordan Kitt's, as a key mentor in teaching him the financial side of the piano business.

#### MARKETING TO THE INFLUENTIAL

One interesting fact about the D.C. and St. Louis Steinway dealerships: They do very little traditional advertising. Prior to the D.C. store's grand opening, Slan took out four ads in *The Washington Post* and later bought a set of ads for the Thanksgiving weekend. That's it.

In place of traditional publicity vehicles, he and his staff network endlessly. Courting centers of community influ-



ence comes with being a Steinway dealer, but Slan has made it an art form.

When he opened the D.C. store, for instance, he met a major local concert promoter. By exclusively providing Steinways for the promoter's events, Slan's company gained a foothold among the program's musicians and patrons. Then, last October, he supplied the piano for a Young Concert Artists benefit, hosted by a celebrity couple at their home. (He preferred to keep their names off the record.) There, Slan learned of their foundation for autistic children. With his promoter contact, he arranged for the couple to serve as celebrity guests at a concert series event to raise money for their foundation. All the while, he looked like a community hero and raised awareness of his dealership.

"Part of business is doing favors for people," Slan said. "And when you need a favor, you can ask for a favor back."

Recently, he got a call from a woman connected with Washington Performing Arts Society. She had a concert pianist playing at her house party and needed to rent a Steinway. The high rental price was a turnoff, though.

"Once we knew who she was, we said, 'Look, we'll take care of you,'" Slan explained. "By supporting her needs for a minimal cost, we have developed a strong relationship with her, and a powerful ally."

#### 911 FOR PIANOS

Janet Adams Laird served at Jordan Kitt's for nearly 30 years before joining Slan's enterprise as its institutional sales director. She mentioned one customer, the director of a premier performance venue, likening the new dealership to a piano crisis hotline. "[The customer] said, 'It's like dialing 911 for pianos, and Steinway Piano Gallery is there immediately.'"

"We're a leaner, more agile organization than what I'm used to."

Slan prefers calling his business model "efficient" rather than lean, but consider that he and his four salespeople handle the entire D.C. area's Steinway business. As he said, "The smaller number of employees allows us to compensate each individual at a higher level" — not to mention afford such talent in the first place.

"I admire his business model tremen-

dously, which allows for fair and generous commissions and very low overhead," said Charlotte Woods, a sales rep at the dealership.

Maybe Slan's greatest timing coup was simply recognizing this talent and seizing the chance to work with them.

"The timing was certainly right in Washington," he said. "The skill level

that's required to present a Steinway piano properly to a discerning customer is a pretty rare commodity. The nice thing here is there are a large number of working piano retail salespeople — it's been a pretty successful piano market over the years.

"Because if you're working at a very high skill level, you want to be selling Steinway pianos." **MI**

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MI10

# THE GUIDE

2010 SUMMER NAMM

2010 SUMMER NAMM | BY JENNY DOMINE

## SUMMER NAMM PREVAILS

**S**luggish Summer NAMM registration among music product dealers and suppliers led to rumors that the show might not happen this year. Not true, said NAMM President and CEO Joe Lamond.

"We've always said as long as there are NAMM members who want and need the second gathering, NAMM will provide the venue," he said.

And many independent music retailers remain vocal about the necessity of Summer NAMM, which will be held June 18–20 in Nashville, Tenn.

"It's a relaxed business environment where you can actually have a real conversation without losing your voice," said Billy Cuthrell, owner of Raleigh, N.C.-based Progressive Music Center. "Plus, it gives dealers the opportunity to order some Christmas product and plan for the second half of the year."

Rick Santos, president of Rick's Music World in Raynham, Mass., said the NAMM Idea Center is "a must" to make a full economic recovery.

"During these times especially, it's so important to keep up with new, fresh ideas and find what others are doing to



The Broadway strip in Nashville, Tenn.

### Retailers defend the need to meet in June

stay successful," he said. "This information is invaluable."

#### IDEA MUST-HAVES

The NAMM Idea Center, booth 837, will present some of those new ideas. Speakers will cover topics ranging from "How to Manage Your Inventory for Maximum Profit" to "Sales Strategies From the Top: 10 Secrets to Success for Selling More" and "Your Business Budget: Plan to

Make a Profit."

Technology sessions will be held every day, emphasizing how to use social media, blog and sell products effectively online.

"NAMM always covers, in great detail, the latest discussions in industry trends, such as how a dealer can incorporate Facebook, improve their Web pages or build a music lesson program," said Menzie Pittman, owner of Contemporary Music Center in Haymarket, Va. "It is a wealth of helpful information that can benefit any dealer."

#### THE SUNDAY SPECIAL

This year, NAMM will open its show floor to the public on Sunday, June 20. With

Wanna Play Music Sunday, NAMM is encouraging its members to invite music students, parents, music advocates and enthusiasts to see product demonstrations; watch musical performances; attend workshops, such as "Recording Tips and Tricks" and "How to Get Endorsed"; and talk with music industry leaders.

"It's about adding value to Summer NAMM on the last day for the exhibitors since we know Sunday can be a somewhat slower day," Lamond said. "And just by offering it, we've been able to bring in some larger exhibitors to this year's show who previously were unable to justify the expense." **MI**



# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

The Idea Center will be all a-Twitter during 2010 Summer NAMM, as industry experts explain how to make social media a relevant promotional tool for music retail businesses. Retail veterans will also host hard-hitting sessions on sales, marketing, training and customer service.

NAMM University "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 noted. For more information, visit [namm.org/summer](http://namm.org/summer).

## FRIDAY, JUNE 18

### 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 upcoming challenges and opportunities for the music products community.

#### 10:30 A.M.

##### What's Working for My Store — Now

Moderator: Danny Rocks  
Hear real-world tales from the front lines, as music retailers share ideas that are working for them.

#### 11 A.M.

##### How to Get a Crowd in Your Store Every Day

Bob Popyk  
Keep the cash register ringing in the slowest times.

#### 11:30 A.M.

##### Five Ways to Get More Business Out of Every Customer

Bob Popyk

#### NOON — DOUBLE SESSION

##### Back to Basics: DNA of a Successful Music Store

Alan Friedman and Daniel Jobe  
Routinely performing some basic but important tasks can separate the profitable from the bankrupt.

#### 1 P.M.

##### Basic Marketing for Smart Music Store Owners

Scott Robertson

#### 1:30 P.M.

##### Finding More Customers and Capital in a Continually Changing Economy

Mark Dobosz  
Access free resources to boost your business marketing.

#### 2 P.M.

##### Give Your Lesson Program a Profit Makeover

Robin Walenta  
Learn different strategies for running a successful and profitable lesson studio.

#### 2:30 P.M.

##### Five Things to Consider When Placing a Purchase Order

Peter Dods

#### 3 P.M. — DOUBLE SESSION

##### How to Manage Your Inventory for Maximum Profit

George Hines

#### 4 P.M. — DOUBLE SESSION

##### Improving Your Business Cash Flow Through Your Music Lesson Program

Pete Gamber

## SATURDAY, JUNE 19

#### 8 A.M.

### BREAKFAST SESSION

##### Driving Customer Traffic and Sales in This Economy With Destination Principles

Jon Schallert  
Renaissance Nashville, Grand Ballroom

Schallert will discuss his proprietary 14-step strategy for turning businesses into consumer destinations.

#### 10:30 A.M.

##### Top Five Marketing Ideas Using Social Media: If You Do Nothing Else, Do These

Jen Lowe

#### 11 A.M.

##### Do I Have to ... Be on Facebook and Twitter?

Jim Hodgson

#### 11:30 A.M.

##### Start Driving Customer Traffic Today With Facebook

Mike Nessen

#### NOON

##### How to Start Selling Your Products Online: A Checklist for Success

Danny Rocks

#### 12:30 P.M.

##### Your Business Budget: Plan to Make a Profit

Alan Friedman and Daniel Jobe

#### 1 P.M.

##### A Creative Approach to Merchandising Without Spending a Fortune

Jen Tabor

#### 1:30 P.M.

##### Build Your Customer Base and Increase Your Sales for Free

Josh Vittek

#### 2 P.M. — DOUBLE SESSION

##### Sales Strategies From the Top: 10 Secrets to Success for Selling More

Bill Hinely

How to rise above the pack.

#### 3 P.M.

##### YouTube or Your Lesson

##### Program: How to Sell Music Lessons to Your Customers

Pete Gamber

Train your staff on the selling points of your store's lesson program.

#### 3:30 P.M.

##### Increase Your Store Traffic by Hosting In-Store Events

George Hines

#### 4 P.M. — 60-MINUTE SESSION

##### How to Make a Quick Buck — or Two

Moderator: Danny Rocks

## SUNDAY, JUNE 20

### BREAKFAST SESSION

#### 8 A.M.

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

Moderator: Frank Alkyer  
Renaissance Nashville, Grand Ballroom

Join this panel of retail buyers and gearheads as they dig into the convention's best products, ideas and trends.

#### 10:30 A.M.

##### Social Media Update: People Who Won't Say 'Tweet' Support Group

Scott Robertson

#### 11:30 A.M.

##### Streetwise Blogging

Kenny Smith  
See how blogging can rev up your employees to generate more sales leads and local traffic.

#### NOON

##### Big-Time Social Media Results From Small-Store Resources

Danny Rocks

#### 12:30 P.M. — DOUBLE SESSION

##### 2010 Best Tools for Schools Awards

Symphony Publishing

#### 1:30–4 P.M.

##### Wanna Play Sunday Workshops

## WHAT to SEE

### U.BASS SEQUEL

Kala Brand Music has added two models to its U.Bass line with the U.Bass 2 fretted and fretless basses. The 20-inch scale U.Bass is equipped with proprietary polyurethane strings, a passive pickup system with four individual piezo elements, a rosewood fingerboard and bridge, and a solid mahogany neck. The U.Bass 2 sports a solid spruce top and mahogany back and sides, and it comes with a heavily padded gig bag. [kalaaukulele.com](http://kalaaukulele.com)

### TECH SOLUTIONS

Retail Up! provides Web sites with extensive product data and live online rental forms that transfer customer information to a printed agreement. It also books sales by school or instrument, drop-ships from every supplier that offers such a service, and includes associated accessories. Plus, it can handle e-newsletters, lead tracking, lessons scheduling and more. Retailers can use point-of-sale with easy-to-use touch screens and menus, a supported SQL database, exports to QuickBooks, Peachtree and Sage, and lessons, repairs and rental modules. [retailup.com](http://retailup.com)

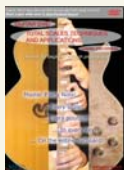
### TOUCH & TONE TO GO

Yamaha will unveil its Piaggero series of portable keyboards, the NP-V60 and NP-V80, at Summer NAMM. These 76-key portable keyboards emphasize portability, interactive features and piano voice quality.

They include graded soft-touch keyboard action and a USB-to-host port, which connects directly to any Mac or PC for an array of musical applications. Both models weigh less than 16 pounds, include 361 XGlite instrument voices and feature 30 internal songs for use with the performance assistant function and lessons. MSRP: NP-V60, \$499; NP-V80, \$599. They are expected to ship in June. [yamaha.com](http://yamaha.com)

### MJS TOTAL SCALES

The Total Scales Techniques And Applications method for guitar or bass from MJS Publications starts with all the basics a beginner needs to know and moves progressively through more advanced levels. Using easy-to-remember shapes found in every musical key, author Mark John Sternal teaches students scales, leads and fills on the entire fretboard, plus hammer-ons, pull-offs, picking patterns, vibrato, string bending, slides, two-handed tapping and more.



Advanced features include increment patterns, string skipping, double-note harmony patterns, scale notes as chords and songwriting tips. [mjspublications.com](http://mjspublications.com)

### D'ADDARIO EXPANDS EXP

Through advanced EXP-coated technology, D'Addario's coated string making delivers extended play that sounds identical to its XL strings. To ensure that its specifications are followed, the company's exclusive EXP wire machine draws wire from rod, anneals, cleans, coats, cures and spools wire all in one continuous process. By using a 50-percent-thinner and more concentric coating on the wrap wires, D'Addario EXP electric strings deliver longer life, natural tone and the feel of uncoated strings. [daddario.com](http://daddario.com)



### V9 GETS CERTIFIED

Tri-Tech has released the ninth version of its AIMsi point-of-sale (POS) software. Version nine has been PA-DSS-certified and uses tokenization for credit card and auto-pay processing. AIMsi lets users build their own custom retail software solutions by adding on the modules that are needed. Version nine also offers two distinct POS screens. One is a touch screen, which is customizable and offers an array of button options. The other POS screen is traditional and uses a keyboard and mouse. Both can scan bar codes. Retailers can also mix and match interface options within one installation by having a touch screen setup at select workstations and the traditional interface at others. [technology4retailers.com](http://technology4retailers.com)

### ALFRED PLAYS ON

Alfred is offering a new educational multimedia series, Play. It combines the convenience of multimedia lessons with the quality of expert instructors. Providing three ways to learn in every package, the Play series contains high-quality digital video that shows step-by-step lessons. It uses Alfred's GuitarView software to slow down or speed up the audio and displays note names, finger numbers or scale degrees on an animated guitar neck that's synced with each lesson. Titles include: *Play: Acoustic Guitar 1*, *Play: Acoustic Guitar 2*, *Play: Blues Guitar 1*, *Play: Blues Guitar 2*, *Play: Jazz Guitar 1* and *Play: Jazz Guitar 2*. [alfred.com](http://alfred.com)



3rd Power Amplification .....	1627
Aboveground FX .....	1635
Absara Audio .....	1327
Access Bags and Cases .....	721
Acorn Pianos .....	646
Advanced Plating .....	911
Akai/Alesis/ION/Numark .....	400

#### ALFRED PUBLISHING BOOTH 1118 ALFRED.COM

Alfred has added new guitar titles to its The Complete Idiot's Guide series and will introduce the educational multimedia series, Play. Plus, Alfred now distributes Course Technology PTR titles for music technology. Alliance Rubber .....223  
Amedia Cymbals.....505

#### AMERICAN DJ BOOTH 518 AMERICANDJ.COM

American DJ's new Jellyfish is two effects in one: a RGBW LED beam and a color-changing clear glow case. American Audio also has the VMS4, a digital workstation that offers both MIDI and analog channels. The VMS4 can be used with a computer or as an analog mixer without a computer.

American Guild of Organists .....	150
American Music & Sound .....	900
American String Teachers Assoc. ....	150
American Way Marketing .....	230
AMV Sales & Consultation .....	1638
Analysis Plus .....	547
Ansir Music .....	1705
Aquarian .....	713
ART - Appld. Rsrch. And Tech. ....	300
Art Strings Publishing .....	1018
Asterope .....	548
Audio Media .....	926
Avedis Zildjian .....	600
Awesome Musical Instruments .....	246
B & S .....	232
B-Band .....	1123
Bass Player Magazine .....	926
Bazhou Basix Musical Inst. Co. ....	1309
Beamz Interactive .....	405
Beard Guitars .....	1422
BEIiMEIiUP Stuff .....	212
Belcat .....	1123
Benedetto Guitars .....	1546
Better Audio Technologies .....	1636
Big Island Ukulele .....	1610
BigHeart Slide Co. ....	1537
Bigsby .....	700
Blackstar Amplification .....	1524
BML .....	1347
Bolt .....	437
Boulder Creek Guitars .....	1408
Bourgeois Guitars .....	1405
Bourns .....	1245
Brace Audio Corp. ....	331
Breedlove Guitar Co. ....	1210
Breezy Ridge Insts. ....	1006
Bridgecraft.....	428
BSX .....	1309
Burriss Amps & Effects Pedals.....	1629
C.F. Martin & Co.....	1200
CAD Audio.....	322

Cakewalk .....	318
Cascade Microphones .....	312

#### CASIO AMERICA BOOTH 736 CASIO.COM

Casio will present the Celviano AP-6 and the Privia PX-3 in honor of its 30th anniversary in addition to a white version of the PX-130.

CE Distribution .....	1227
Cedar Creek Custom Case Shoppe .....	1205
Charles Dumont & Son .....	918
Charles Navasky & Co. ....	443
Cherry Lane Music .....	1018
Chesbro Music Co. ....	536
Christian Musician Magazine .....	1138
Cloud Microphones.....	308
Cole Clark Guitars.....	1507
Collings Guitars.....	1201
Commercial Credit Reports .....	CLUB
ConventionTV@NAMM .....	838
Coopercoia .....	1702
Cordoba Guitars .....	1208
Cort .....	1309
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 The Stage ([tothestage.com](http://tothestage.com)), The Lesson Room ([thelessonroom.com](http://thelessonroom.com)) and [guitar.com](http://guitar.com).

D'Addario products are marketed in approximately 120 countries.

D'Andrea .....	1425
D'Angelico Guitars .....	1248
Daisy Rock Girl Guitars .....	1118
DBZ Guitars/Diamond Amps .....	1119
Deering Banjo Co. ....	903
Digitech .....	1218
Direct Sound Headphones .....	311
DJ Times .....	838
DownBeat .....	1029
DR Handmade Strings .....	1310
Drake Ceramic Instruments .....	239
Dream Cymbals and Gongs .....	704
Eden Electronics .....	906
Egnater Amplification .....	1429
Electro-Harmonix .....	1518
Elixir Strings .....	728
EMD Music .....	1236
Emery & Webb .....	1045
EMG.....	1319
Empirical Labs.....	308
Epilog Laser .....	429
EQ Magazine .....	926
Ernie Ball .....	1600, 1603
Essential Sound Products .....	406
Evans Drumheads.....	1401
Extreme Isolation Headphones .....	311
EZ Key Publishing.....	1027
Fargen Amplification .....	1449
Flavoreeds .....	744



Flaxwood.....	1106
Fleabass .....	1336
Folkcraft Instruments .....	907
Forge .....	437
G-Wiz Electronics .....	343
G7th.....	1106
Gall Tech .....	219
Gallien Technology .....	1513
Gallien-Krueger .....	1513
GAMA Teaching Guitar Workshops .....	150
Gatchell Violins Co.....	822
Gator Cases .....	819
George L's Musical Products .....	913
GlassTones .....	1224
Gold Tone .....	1422
Goldfish Guitars .....	1110
Grassroots Musical Distributor.....	214
Gretsch Co.....	700
Grip Studios .....	1701
Guangzhou Lang Qing Dev. Corp. ....	1344
Guitar Edge .....	922
Guitar Hands.....	1007
Guitar Player Magazine.....	926
Guitars in the Classroom .....	150
GWV Group .....	1109
H & F Technologies.....	810
H.E.A.R.....	166
H.G. Leach Guitars .....	1501
Hagstrom Guitars .....	906

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Hall Crystal Flutes.....743

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Hanson Musical Inst. ....	1626
Harmony .....	1309

Harris Musical Products .....	1136
Headway Music Audio .....	1444
Heil Sound.....	319
High Spirits .....	1711
Holloway .....	1502
Homespun Tapes .....	1018

**HOSA TECHNOLOGY  
BOOTH 528  
HOSATECH.COM**

Hoshino .....	1318
House Band .....	645
Howard Core Co. ....	737
Hoyer .....	526
HQ Percussion .....	1401
Hudson Music.....	1018
Hughes & Kettner .....	300
Humes & Berg Mfg. Co., Inc. ....	901

**HUNTER MUSICAL INSTRUMENT  
BOOTH 828  
HUNTERMUSICAL.COM**

IBC Trading .....	1106
IBMA .....	150
Indie Guitar Co.....	1536
Innovation Strings .....	1505
Jack Deville Electronics .....	237
JamHub .....	410
JangleBox .....	1442
Jarrell Guitars .....	1528
Jay Turser .....	906

Jean Larrivee Guitars .....	1000
Jeff Earl Design.....	1449
Jensen Musical Inst. Speakers.....	1227
John Pearse Strings .....	1006
K and S Music.....	426

**KALA BRAND MUSIC  
BOOTH 1328  
KALAUKULELE.COM**

Kala Brand Music Co. offers more than 120 ukulele models, including the Kala U-Bass and a complete line of Uke Crazy ukulele accessories. Kala's new models include the 16-inch-long Pocket Uke, U.Bass 2, ukulele amplifier and Slimline travel model with pickup and EQ. KAM Instruments Corp. ....345 Kelly Concepts .....

607

Keyboard Magazine .....

926

Keys Program .....

150

KHS America.....

506

Kiwaya .....

1308

Koozee Armor Products .....

1716

**KORG  
CLUB  
KORG.COM**

Kush Audio .....

308

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BOOTH 1304  
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## WHAT to SEE

### LEVY'S SATIN DOLLS

Levy's Leathers has expanded its Urban Print guitar strap line for 2010 with six art nouveau original printing designs. Model M15SP (pictured) uses a satin canvas and features a quick-release end-piece strap construction. [levysleathers.com](http://levysleathers.com)



### TAKE A STAND

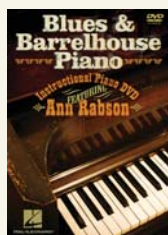
Hamilton Stands, distributed by Dansr, has introduced its latest amplifier and speaker stand, the Uni-Stand. It's lightweight, portable and fits in most gig bags. The product is adjustable for different cabinets and works well with either open- or closed-back cabinet construction. The Uni-Stand keeps the cabinet in contact with the floor, providing greater resonance.



The Uni-Stand is constructed of steel and has a color-indicated label for adjusting to cabinet size. The adjustment knob features steel-on-steel threads. MSRP: \$29.99. [hamiltonstands.com](http://hamiltonstands.com)

### HAL'S NEW BLUES

In Hal Leonard's new instructional DVD, *Blues & Barrelhouse Piano*, blues performer Ann Rabson



teaches her own brand of blues and barrelhouse piano with six in-depth lessons based on left-hand grooves. With each groove, musicians learn to play fills and turnarounds and develop soloing ideas. For 25 years, Rabson was a member of Saffire — The Uppity Blues Women. MSRP: \$24.99. [halleonard.com](http://halleonard.com)

### ADJ DOUBLES UP

The new Comscan LED System from American DJ provides an easy-to-use LED lighting system that includes everything a DJ needs to create a roomful of visual effects in one compact package. The system includes two Comscan LED DMX



scanners, one universal UC3 hand-held remote controller and a DMX cable for linking the units together. Each Comscan LED scanner measures about 1-foot long and weighs 8 pounds. The system is simple to operate with the UC3 remote, which provides easy control over blackout, strobing and other functions.

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



### STAGE PRESENCE

The newly developed Privia PX-3 from Casio is a stage piano packed with functions. The master control provides command over four zones, each of which can simultaneously control internal tones and external MIDI instruments. Players can assign two tones to each of the low and high registers of the keyboard. The PX-3 can be programmed for all kinds of performances. The internal tone banks offer various instrument sounds, including pianos and electric pianos that are often used in live performances. [casio.com](http://casio.com)



### CAT'S BACK

Don Oriolo has launched his new enterprise, The Oriolo Guitar Co., for Summer NAMM.

The Oriolo line consists of more than 50 stringed instruments, including 3/4-size acoustics, ukuleles in both concert and soprano sizes, 3/4-size electrics, composite guitars, and a Felix bass. The line also includes Felix the Cat amplifiers and accessories. All items are designed by Oriolo and his creative team at Felix the Cat Studios. [oriologuitars.com](http://oriologuitars.com)

### COMBO CABLE

Zaolla Silverline's Artist 500 guitar cable combines the performance of the company's silver-core cable with a new plug — the silver-core version of the Show Saver by G&H Industries. The cable unites sonic transparency with durability. The Artist 500 solid-silver center conductor yields greater HF and LF transmission and overall signal clarity. To boost the MF and add warmth, the cable also features an enamel-coated, stranded-copper ancillary conductor in a unique hybrid configuration with the solid-silver center conductor for the best of both worlds. [zaolla.com](http://zaolla.com)

Lakota Leathers .....	1708
Lazy River Guitars .....	1712
Legacy Learning Systems .....	1128
Les Basses Erizias .....	248

### LEVY'S LEATHERS BOOTH 1226 LEVYSLEATHERS.COM

Levy's is introducing new guitar strap models, expanding its urban print designs and offering a new ukulele bag.

Line 6 .....	1323, RM213
Listen Hear .....	427
Lloyd Prins Guitar Co. ....	1621
LM Products .....	725
Long Hollow Leather .....	1548
Lou Capece Music .....	542
Low End .....	1437
Luanyu International .....	825
Ludwig Drum Co. ....	601
Luminous Espial .....	446
M Music & Musicians Magazine .....	240
Mad Professor Amplification .....	1231
Madarozzo .....	526
Major Music Supply .....	1209
Mano Percussion .....	906
Mapex .....	500
Marshall Electronics .....	401
Martin Ritter .....	526
Meinl .....	610
Mel Bay Publications .....	928
Merano Musical Instruments .....	719
Miami Audio Music Corp. ....	1628
Mighty Mite .....	1309
Miktek .....	209
Miller Guitar Strap .....	224
Ministar .....	906

### MJS MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT BOOTH 924 MJS PUBLICATIONS.COM

MJS Music & Entertainment distributes guitar and bass instructional methods, including the Total Scales Techniques And Applications series, the entire Easy DVD and Beginner Basics And Beyond series, the Phrase By Phrase Guitar Method, and other top-sellers.

Mobineko .....	336
Mogami Cable .....	401
Molten Voltage .....	206
Moog Music .....	CLUB
Morgan Hill Music .....	1408
Morpheus .....	437
Motion Sound .....	437
MP Audio Corp .....	347
MTD .....	CLUB
Muse Inc. ....	1326
Museum of Making Music .....	150
Music Dealers Resource Group .....	334
Music Distributors Assoc. ....	150
Music for All .....	150
Music Furniture .....	1447
Music Inc. ....	1029
Music Player Network .....	926
Music Sales Corp. ....	1018
Music Teachers National Assoc. ....	150
Musical Distributors Group .....	1436
Musical Merchandise Review .....	1031
Musiquip .....	1618
MXL Microphones .....	401

### NAMM IDEA CENTER BOOTH 837 NAMM.ORG

National Assoc. of School Music Dealers ..	150
National Piano Foundation .....	150
Native Music Rocks .....	150
Nektar Technology .....	646
NEMC .....	836
New Horizons Intl. Music .....	150
NewBay Media .....	926
Nova Strings .....	1446
Old Jersey Music Lab .....	221
On-Stage Stands .....	800
Opus Enterprise .....	338
Orange Music Electronic Co. ....	1508

### ORIOLO GUITARS BOOTH 1400 ORIOLOGUITARS.COM

Oriolo Guitars was born of Don Oriolo's love of both Felix the Cat and guitars. His company, Felix the Cat Productions, is known for its creative team and approach to licensing and merchandising. It has created a line of guitars and ukuleles that have a unique style. Stop by to check out the instruments and meet Felix the Cat himself.

Oscar Schmidt, Division of Washburn .....	906
Osiama .....	332
Overture Guitars .....	1439
Pacer Concepts .....	1710
Paige Musical Products .....	1406
Pantheon Guitars .....	1405
Panyard .....	604
Papa's Boxes .....	1606
Parker Guitars .....	906
Peak Music Stands .....	729
Pearl Corp. ....	CLUB
Peavey Electronics .....	CLUB
Pedaltrain .....	1511
Percussion Marketing Council .....	150
Performer Media .....	234
Perri's Leathers .....	1531
Perry's Music .....	1611

### PETERSON ELECTRO MUSICAL BOOTH 418 PETERSONTUNERS.COM

Phonic .....	906
Pick Guy .....	1617
Pickboy .....	332
Pigtronix .....	1327
PJLA Music Sales & Marketing .....	330
Planet Waves .....	1401
Players Music Accessories .....	831
Power Wrist Builders .....	709
Prat Basses .....	1529
Premier Builders Guild .....	1428
Premier Guitar .....	922
Pro Audio Review/Pro Sound News .....	926
Pro Stage Gear .....	1511
Pro-Active Web sites .....	918
ProFile .....	906
PureSound .....	1401
Pztronics .....	200
Q Lighting .....	1629
Quik Lok .....	906
Rack Writer .....	204
Raising The Blues .....	150



Randall Amplification .....	906
Rees Harps .....	827
Remo .....	605
Retail Print Music Dealers Assoc. ....	150

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Reunion Blues .....	1443
Reverend Guitars .....	1250
Rico Reeds .....	1401
Riptide Ukuleles By Boulder Creek .....	1408
Ritter Europe .....	526
Rock House.....	1018
Rock It .....	422
Rock On Audio .....	202

**ROLAND  
CLUB  
ROLANDUS.COM**

Rowdy Pickers Musical Products .....	226
Rox-xy Guitars .....	1500
S.I.T. Strings Co. ....	1300
Sabian .....	710
Saga Musical Inst.....	1100
Salebug.com .....	320
Samick Music Corp. ....	636
Samson Technologies Corp. ....	510
Santa Cruz Guitar .....	1211
Schneider Guitars .....	444
School of Rock .....	1144
SCORE .....	162
Score Mktg.....	323
Sensaphonics Hearing Conservation.....	307
Shanghai Max Precision Inst. ....	729
Shenzhen Fzone Technology Co.....	1544
Shoreview Distribution .....	207

**SHS INTERNATIONAL  
BOOTH 327  
SHSINT.NET**

**SHUBB CAPOS  
BOOTH 1010  
SHUBB.COM**

SICA Speakers .....	1227
Sixth Street Ocarina .....	244
SKB .....	1145
Sonic Edge .....	1449
Sonoma Wire Works .....	408
Sony Electronics .....	207
Soul House Sound .....	1426
Souldier .....	1706
Source Audio.....	442
St. Louis Music .....	436
Strings & Things .....	1505
Strings by Aurora .....	1110
Studio-Blue .....	309
Supro .....	1327
Taixing Shenyun Stringed Inst.....	829
Taylor Guitars .....	105
TC Electronic.....	229

Telefunken .....	213
Telescript .....	228
The Case Brace Co. ....	1527
The Lampifier Co. ....	208
The Music & Sound Retailer.....	838
The Music Link .....	1336, 1343
The Music People! .....	800
The Musician Network .....	1142
The Paige Capo .....	1406
The RapcoHorizon Co. ....	411
TKL Products Corp. ....	1205
ToneRite.....	1336
Tornavoz Music .....	1208
Traveler Guitar .....	1613

**TRI-TECHNICAL SYSTEMS  
BOOTH 1037  
TECHNOLOGY4RETAILERS.COM**

AIMSi is a POS, inventory management, accounting and business software application. The software gives retailers a way to control inventory, manage customers and track sales. It offers integrated custom add-on modules, such as repair and service tracking, lesson scheduling, short-term rentals, rental and sales contracts, contact management, e-mail capabilities, and a time scheduler.

Tropical Music .....	1307
Tunerguard .....	1704
TV Jones .....	1427
Two Old Hippies .....	1009
Tyler Retail Systems .....	1043
U.S. Band & Orchestra Supplies .....	436
Ultimate Ears.....	306
UltraSound Amplifiers.....	1525
UpBeat Daily .....	1029
U.S. Music Corp. ....	906
V-Picks .....	1538
V.J. Rendano Wholesale Music .....	328
Vee Strap.....	1542
Veritas Inst. Rental .....	818
Vintage Guitar magazine.....	238
Voyage-Air Guitar .....	1501
W.L. Gore & Assoc. ....	728
Waldron Instruments.....	1612
Warwick.....	718
Washburn International.....	906
Wave Distribution .....	308
Wavelength Audio .....	444
WD Music Products .....	1420
Wechter Guitars .....	1329
Wedgie Products.....	1408
Wells Co. ....	1542
Wild Ass Suits .....	443
Williamson Works .....	1445
Willis Music Co. ....	1018
Wilmington Fibre .....	1229
World Liberty Thailand Co. ....	236
Worldwide Music Services .....	1126
Wristies .....	1707
Xcel Drumsticks .....	210
XP Audio .....	437

**YAMAHA CORP. OF AMERICA  
BOOTH 618  
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Yorkville Sound .....	300
Zaolla Silverline .....	528
Zuni Custom Guitars & Amplifiers .....	1539
ZZGuitarWorks .....	1703

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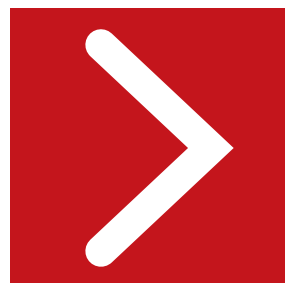
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# GEAR



## PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

STUDIOLOGIC | NUMA PIANO

### Tailor-Made Keys

Studiologic's new Numa Piano combines an integrated stage piano and master keyboard controller. The Fatar weighted hammer-action keyboard can be customized to the musician's playing style by pressing the Fatar Touch button on the front panel. This technology samples the player's velocity styles and stores them in 10 different velocity curves for use while performing.

Additional features include splits and layers, along with 128-voice polyphony. Bass and treble controls are available to tailor the master output signal. Thirty-two factory presets and a real-time demo are provided.

Sixty-four user presets are available to store unique player-created sounds.

[studiologic.net](http://studiologic.net)



### Inside GEAR

#### > Pianos & Keyboards

Roland gives keys new voice with VP-7  
[PAGE 64](#)

#### > Guitars, Amps & Accessories

Fender Strats, Teles go deluxe  
[PAGE 66](#)

#### > Audio & Recording

Earthworks' piano mics travel light  
[PAGE 68](#)

#### > Drums & Percussion

LP's Vibra-Slap II adds eerie effect  
[PAGE 70](#)

#### > Band & Orchestra

KMC brings new color to classical violins  
[PAGE 72](#)

#### > Print & Multimedia

Alfred teaches guitar Just For Fun  
[PAGE 74](#)

#### > DJ & Lighting

Denon DJ adds all-in-one mixer  
[PAGE 76](#)

# GEAR >

## PIANOS & KEYBOARDS

YAMAHA | DGX640

### Keys to Learning



Yamaha has debuted the DGX640 digital keyboard to replace the YPG635. The DGX640 offers an 88-key graded hammer standard keyboard, auto-accompaniment, style content and a front-panel USB port to make creating and saving music quicker and easier. A high-quality speaker system is placed on the front panel, providing improved tonal positioning for the user. The DGX640 also has interactive features for multistudent music education labs.

MSRP: \$1,299. [yamaha.com](http://yamaha.com)



ROLAND | VP-7

### Voice Box

The new VP-7 Vocal Processor from Roland sets up on top of keyboards and creates ensemble vocal sounds. This portable processor offers four human voice sounds, including female choir, boys choir, Gregorian choirs and jazz scat. The VP-7 also has three vocal designer algorithms that can generate multivoice backing harmonies that sing the same lyrics as the performer sings into the included DR-HS5 headset microphone. When harmonizing, the VP-7's sounds can be blended with the live vocal harmony or used with 100-percent processing. The interface features large quick-access buttons and knobs, on-board ambience effects, and a mute switch. [rolandus.com](http://rolandus.com)

YOUNG CHANG | Y 122, Y 114 VERTICALS

### Balanced Bass

Young Chang and Weber have released the Y 112 and Y 114 vertical pianos.

They have new bass bridges, longer back scales and other features that enhance the bass, providing a smoother transition in the break and creating a more balanced sound throughout the scale design.

A brighter, more powerful sound has been added in specific models. The Young Chang verticals couple this with a warm, rich tone to create a traditional classic sound.

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







SCHIMMEL | C 182

## Classic Art

Schimmel's Classic series has been expanded with artistically designed grand models. These instruments were originally available through Schimmel's Vogel brand. Each grand represents a unique design. The C 182 Tradition Intarsie Liaison is a floral model. The wooden inlays are made from black ebony wood and emphasize the piano's craftsmanship. ([schimmel-piano.de](http://schimmel-piano.de))

CASIO | CELVIANO AP-6

## Grand Anniversary

To commemorate its 30th anniversary, Casio's new Celviano AP-6 keyboard offers the specs of the AP-620 flagship model. It's equipped with a high-output amplifier and four two-way speakers, a damper pedal with continuous half-pedal operation, 250 various instrument tones, and an SD memory card slot. As a final touch, the AP-6 has been finished in a black polish befitting a grand piano. ([casiousa.com](http://casiousa.com))



KORG | PA50SD

## Storage Upgrade

The new Korg Pa50SD professional arranger keyboard has replaced the original Pa50's old floppy disk drive with SD card data storage.

Featuring Korg's Triton-based synthesis, the Pa50SD also offers a variety of acoustic and electric sounds. It features four stereo multieffects; assignable pads; and a large, easy-to-read LCD screen. The XDS dual-song player enables one song to play as another song loads. Sixty-one velocity-sensing keys and an on-board stereo sound system round out the Pa50SD package. MSRP: \$1,149. ([korg.com](http://korg.com))

# performance | art



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**1 LEVY'S LEATHERS SKULL, CROSS STRAPS**

The fashion industry has been channeling rock's more macabre side with gothic crosses and skeleton imagery. Levy's has kept pace with the trend and is offering skull and cross designs printed on 2-inch cotton guitar straps. They feature suede ends and tri-glide adjustment. The pictured MSSC8A model is available in six original designs.

{levysleathers.com}

**2 GATOR MULTI-FX BAGS**

Gator's new nylon Multi-FX bags are designed to take multieffects pedal boards on the road. The bags feature a thick 1/2-inch padded interior with a large zippered accessory pocket for storing cables, tuners and capos. They have an adjustable shoulder strap and padded-grip handle. The Multi-FX bags are available in three sizes to fit various pedal boards.

{gatorcases.com}

**3 MEISEL COM-90** The flexible gooseneck mount featured on the new Meisel COM-90 clip-on tuner lets players place the display in the ideal viewing position. The COM-90 is chromatic and can tune a variety of instruments with selectable calibration for guitar, bass, violin and ukulele. Players can tune with the built-in microphone or use the contact transducer in the gel-padded clip. MSRP: \$34.95.

{meiselaccessories.com}

**4 SKB 1SKB-16, 1SKB-17** SKB has added two guitar cases, the 1SKB-16 and 1SKB-17, to provide case solutions for roundback acoustic guitars. The 1SKB-16 is designed for shallow bowl acoustics, while the 1SKB-17 holds standard-depth roundback acoustics. Each case is molded with proprietary rubber-modified styrene, which provides maximum protection and durability. MSRP: \$139.99.

{skbcases.com}

**5 STRING SWING CC22 STAND**

String Swing's latest development in floor displays, the CC22 hardwood floor stand for guitars, features handmade construction from real ash hardwood, which provides aesthetics and stability. It includes padded rests to hold the guitar safely and securely. The stand is designed to be folded flat for easy transport — ideal for the musician on the go.

{stringswing.com}





EGNATER | RENEGADE-65

## Renegade on the Run

The new 65-watt Egnater Renegade head and combos each feature a two-channel powerhouse. Both channels offer independent three-band EQ, bright and tight switches, and a wattage selector switch, which lets players set the output power from 18–65 watts. The Renegade-65 is available in a head version, a 1- by 12-inch combo, a 2- by 12-inch combo and a 4- by 10-inch combo. MSRP: \$1,149.99–\$1,499.99. [egnaterramps.com](http://egnaterramps.com)

FENDER | AMERICAN DELUXE SERIES

## Deluxe Overdrive

Fender's latest incarnation of the American Deluxe series delivers high-tech tone and performance. The Stratocaster and Telecaster models feature compound radius fretboards, N3 noiseless pickups and reconfigured S-1 switching. The American Deluxe Strat (pictured) includes a two-point synchronized American Deluxe tremolo bridge with pop-in arm, beveled neck heel and staggered locking tuners.

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



PEAVEY | BUTCHER

## Bring Home the Bacon

Peavey's new Butcher guitar amplifier is a 100-watt, all-tube head. The two-channel amp has five 12AX7 pre-amp tubes and four EL34 power amp tubes. Both the clean and crunch channels feature independent three-band EQ. It has master volume and pre-amp gain controls, so guitarists can adjust the interplay between the pre-amp and power amp on each channel for an array of gain possibilities. Both channels include a separate footswitchable gain boost, while the crunch channel has a 12-way punch selector that adjusts the low-end attack of the amplifier. [peavey.com](http://peavey.com)

TAYLOR GUITARS | DMSM

## Moore Honored

Taylor Guitars has collaborated with Dave Matthews of Dave Matthews Band to create the DMSM model guitar, which is based on his Taylor 914ce.

With a back and sides of Indian rosewood and topped with Sitka spruce, the DMSM is decorated with abalone inlays based on Matthews' own designs to honor his late bandmate, saxophonist LeRoi Moore.

Matthews also contributed a vine-like design to the ebony peghead. MSRP: \$5,428.

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



EARTHWORKS | PM40T PIANOMIC

## Piano Impact

Earthworks' new PM40T Touring PianoMic System provides quick, simple setup in a compact carry-on case. Featuring a frequency response ranging from 4 Hz–40 kHz, these mics deliver ideal impulse response and short diaphragm setting times — making them well-suited for a piano's diffused sound field. They exhibit no proximity effect regardless of distance from the piano strings or soundboard. The result is a consistent piano sound across the entire instrument. MSRP: \$4,695.

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



B-52 | ACTPRO SERIES

## Stage Ready

The new Actpro series from B-52 is a line of active loudspeaker systems made in the United States. The Actpro amplifiers employ acoustically tuned fourth order crossovers, four stages of equalization, a built-in intelligent compressor/limiter and short-circuit/over-current protection. An extra high current output stage provides uninterrupted extended play without the risk of thermal shutdown. All Actpro full-range amplifiers are bi-amped with discrete output stages.

{[b-52pro.com](http://b-52pro.com)}

SAMSON | AIRLINE MICRO WIRELESS

## Get Charged

To eliminate the need for conventional battery replacement, Samson has designed its AirLine Micro wireless system with lithium ion rechargeable batteries and USB DC power inputs for both the AH2 earset transmitter and AR2 receiver. A docking and charging station for the receiver also provides a 3.5-mm balanced audio output.

The AH2 is a single earset transmitter for uninhibited movement. The transmitter features an omnidirectional microphone to ensure a user's voice is picked up and amplified even during high-energy movement.

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







DYNAUDIO ACOUSTICS | BM5A MKII

## Revamp Champ

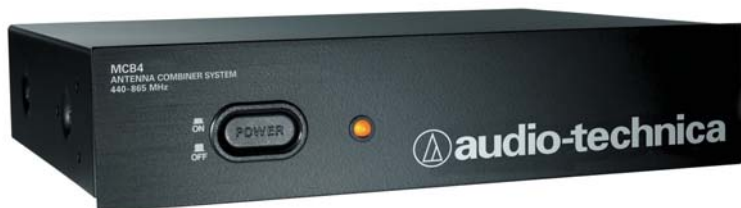
Dynaudio Acoustics has revamped its BM5A monitors to create the BM5A MKII nearfield precision monitors with handcrafted driver technology. The BM5A MKII features handmade drivers and a woofer that offers longer excursions, resulting in a cleaner, tighter bass response. The monitors' dual amps deliver 117 dB SPL while maintaining sensitivity. MSRP: \$715. {[dynaudioacoustics.com](http://dynaudioacoustics.com)}

TANNOY | REVEAL MONITORS

## The Big Reveal

Tannoy has released the 501a, 601a and 601p Reveal studio monitors. The 501a (pictured) is an active monitor with a 60-watt integrated amplifier, which ensures maximum efficiency from the 5-inch LF/MF driver and 1-inch soft dome tweeter. The 601a also features the same driver and tweeter as the 501a and has total power output of 90 watts.

This compact speaker with extended lower frequency response is ideal for home, project and pro studio setups. MSRP: 501a, \$249; 601a, \$349; 601p, \$179. {[tannoy.com](http://tannoy.com)}



AUDIO-TECHNICA | MCB4 IEM

## Clutter Killer

Audio-Technica has released the MCB4 IEM Antenna Combiner. It combines the signals of up to four A-T M3 wireless in-ear monitor stereo transmitters onto a single transmitting antenna, reducing rack clutter. Operating over a 470-865 MHz range, the MCB4 is designed to complement many other in-ear wireless systems. It provides one output and four isolated transmitter inputs. The 12-volt supplies for the powering transmitters are short-circuit protected, and the unit features all-metal construction for durability and protection from RF interference. MSRP: \$799.

{[audio-technica.com](http://audio-technica.com)}

at Summer NAMM

248

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LP | VIBRA-SLAP II

## Exotic Tone

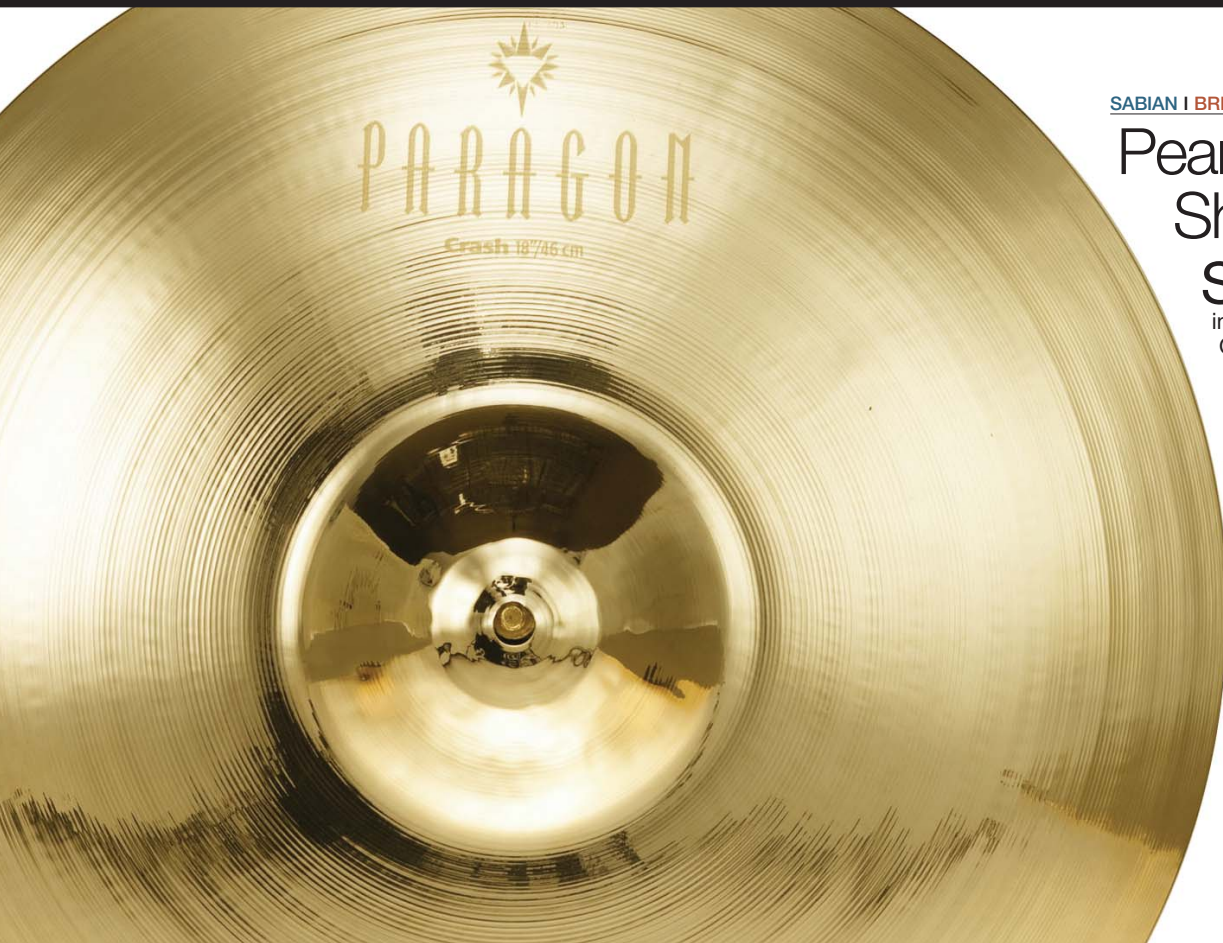
LP has launched a new version of its Vibra-Slap II. It yields an exotic, more penetrating sound. When the hard ball strikes the player's palm, it sets off shuddering in the resonating chamber. The improved Vibra-Slap II emits stronger tones and heightened sustain due to its exotic hardwood chamber. MSRP: Standard, \$61; Deluxe, \$68. [lpmusic.com](http://lpmusic.com)

CYMPAD | HI-HAT WASHER SYSTEM

## Optimized Hi-Hats

Cympad has released the Hi-Hat Washer system, which is designed to enhance hi-hat sounds. The system's Optimizer hi-hat washer set includes a pair of 22-mm washers for the hi-hat clutch and a high-density 50-mm washer for the bottom hi-hat cymbal seat. This combination offers natural shock absorption and a fuller cymbal sound. MSRP: \$10.95.

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



SABIAN | BRILLIANT FINISH

## Peart's Bronze Shines

Sabian Paragon cymbals are now available in brilliant finish.

Originally available in natural finish only, Paragon was designed in collaboration with Rush drummer Neil Peart. Created using a combination of traditional and modern cymbal-making techniques, Paragon models have a played-in quality. The complete range of models from the 8-inch splash to the 22-inch ride are available in brilliant or natural finishes.

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





LOS CABOS |  
STANDARD, CLEAN SWEEP

## Brushin' Up

Los Cabos Drumsticks has unveiled two new brushes. The Standard model is a medium gauge, retractable wire brush with a soft rubber handle. At full extension, this brush offers a 4-inch fan, which produces full snare playing and bright cymbal voicings. The Clean Sweep is a non-retractable nylon brush with a wooden handle. It's ideal for drummers who are looking for a softer brush tone with greater depth. MSRP: Standard, \$19.50; Clean Sweep, \$16.10. [loscabosdrumsticks.com](http://loscabosdrumsticks.com)



GROVER | NITESTALK

## Night Stalker

Grover Pro Percussion has added the Nitestalk to its SilverFox line of sticks and mallets. It's a 16-inch-long multirod with 25 nylon bristles secured to a 5/8-inch diameter high-impact plastic handle. Nitestalks have a balanced, natural feel on both drums and cymbals. Each rod features a firmness adjustment band that controls the feel and flex of the nylon bristles. MSRP: \$30. [groverpro.com](http://groverpro.com)

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# Strings Gone Wild

From designer bows to rainbow-colored violins, these string products are a feast for the eyes and ears.



## 1 BARCUS-BERRY METALLIC GREEN VIOLIN

Barcus-Berry has added the Metallic Green Burst acoustic-electric violin to its Vibrato violin series. This instrument is a traditional-style violin with a hand-rubbed lacquer finish and Barcus-Berry electronics. The violins are made from fully carved and graduated select seasoned carpathian maple and spruce wood. Each comes setup and includes ebony fittings, Super Sensitive Red Label strings, four Wittner tuners and a Glasser bow. MSRP: \$799.

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

## 2 KMC MUSIC STENTOR HARLEQUIN

KMC Music, the U.S. distributor of Stentor stringed instruments, has released Stentor Harlequin colored violin finishes in deep purple (pictured) and Atlantic blue. The violins feature a spruce top; maple back and sides; solid maple neck, scroll and pegbox; blackened rosewood fingerboard; dark rosewood pegs; and alloy tailpiece with four integral adjusters. KMC-distributed instruments are supplied with Super Sensitive Red Label strings and are fully set up. MSRP: \$205.

{[stentor-music.com](http://stentor-music.com)}

## 3 WOOD VIOLINS STINGRAY

Wood Violins has redesigned and streamlined its Stingray SV-4 and Stingray SV-5 electric violins. Both lightweight instruments feature Wood Violins' bridge piezo pickup. Modeled on the previous custom-built Stingray, the SV-4 and SV-5 have the same edgy, modern design that looks like a battle-axe. The SV-4 has an on-board pre-amp with a headphone jack for silent practice. The violins come in a red sparkle or gloss black finish. MSRP: Stingray SV-4, \$599; Stingray SV-5, \$799.

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

## 4 ST. LOUIS MUSIC JACQUES RÉMY BOWS

Knilling String Instruments from St. Louis Music now offers two Jacques Rémy Master series carbon fiber/wood hybrid bows. The bows blend the consistency and durability of carbon fiber with the resonance of brazilwood or pernambuco wood. They have a carbon fiber core sheathed in silver-mounted pernambuco or nickel-silver mounted brazilwood. MSRP: violin, \$299.95–\$499.95; viola, \$349.95–\$549.95; cello, \$399.95–\$599.95; and double bass, \$859.95–\$999.95.

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





CONN-SELMER | VINCENT BACH SERIES

## Artist Collection

Vincent Bach has introduced the Artisan Collection, which includes five Stradivarius models. The collection offers Bb, C, Eb, tunable bell D/Eb combination and four-valve long bell piccolo trumpets. Design features include a one-piece hand-hammered yellow brass bell with a flat rim, special acoustic bell treatment and a two-piece nickel/brass valve casting construction. The series also has enhanced radius ferrules and deluxe engravings. All models come with cases. [bachbrass.com](http://bachbrass.com)

DANSR | HERITAGE MOUTHPIECES

## Agility Pro

Dansr has unveiled Heritage tenor horn mouthpieces from Denis Wick. The mouthpieces are available in seven different sizes and offer extreme dynamics, volume and definition. Heritage mouthpieces provide horn players agility and responsiveness.

Denis Wick manufactures professional-level mouthpieces and mutes for all brass instruments, from piccolo trumpet to BBb tuba.

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



MADAROZZO | B050 GIG BAG

## In the Bag

The Madarozzo 2010 band instrument gig bag couture line, designed by Martin Ritter, features 12 different models.

The new B050 model (pictured) accommodates trumpets and triple trumpets, alto and tenor saxophones, and trombones.

The fashion-forward bags are available in an assortment of colors and feature a soft interior, detachable backpack system, integrated semi-rigid panels, pockets and pouches. [madarozzo.com](http://madarozzo.com)



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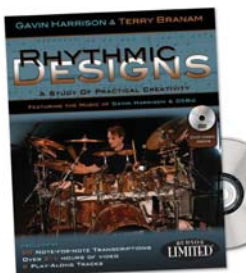
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HUDSON MUSIC | 'RHYTHMIC DESIGNS' DVD

## Practically Creative

Hudson Limited, Hudson Music's music education sublabel, has released *Rhythmic Designs: A Study Of Practical Creativity* by Gavin Harrison and Terry Branam. It includes a 204-page book of note-for-note transcriptions and practice exercises. The double-sided companion DVD features more than 2 1/2 hours of video with discussions of drum parts, setups, tunings and minus-drums play-along tracks.

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



ROCK HOUSE | FUSION DVD

## Fusion House

Rock House is now offering *Creative Fusion, Beyond Pentatonics & Power Chords*, a two-set instructional DVD featuring Brazilian guitar virtuoso Kiko Loureiro. It provides two hours of lessons with Loureiro and such extras as iPod-ready video and bonus lessons. MSRP: \$24.99.

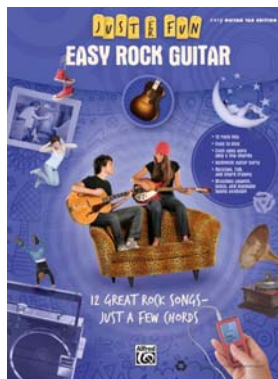
{[rockhousemethod.com](http://rockhousemethod.com)}



ALFRED | JUST FOR FUN

## Fun Times

Alfred's new Just For Fun songbook series is made up of 16 easy songbooks for guitar, ukulele, mandolin and banjo in four genres, including classic rock, easy rock, rock and pop, and swinging jazz. All songs in the series are arranged from the original recorded guitar parts and simplified. Each song includes standard music notation, instrument-specific tab, chord charts and lyrics. {[alfred.com](http://alfred.com)}



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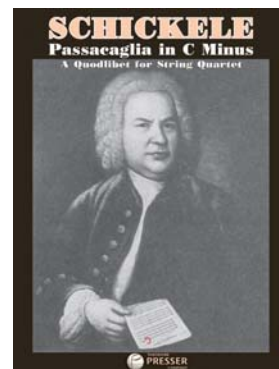
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ELKAN-VOGEL | 'PASSACAGLIA IN C MINUS'

## Witty Strings

Elkan-Vogel's new publication of Peter Schickele's *Passacaglia In C Minus: A Quodlibet For String Quartet* maintains the wit of a P.D.Q. Bach piece while remaining short and easy for the developing string quartet. It's a collage of known themes containing more than 24 melodies by Brahms, Bach and Haydn. The work's namesake, Bach's "Passacaglia In C Minor For Organ," is woven throughout the entire piece. {[presser.com](http://presser.com)}



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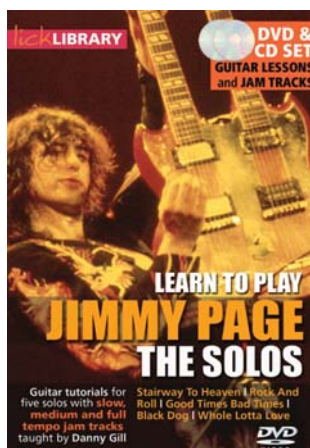


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LICK LIBRARY | JIMMY PAGE DVDS

## Page Player

Lick Library continues to grow its Learn To Play series with *Learn To Play Jimmy Page: The Solos*. This tutorial DVD, presented by Danny Gill, features five guitar solos from "Stairway To Heaven," "Rock And Roll," "Good Times Bad Times," "Black Dog" and "Whole Lotta Love." The DVD teaches these solos one lick at a time and provides practice jam tracks on the CD. Each track is featured at slow, medium and full tempo, so players can learn at their own pace. {[licklibrary.com](http://licklibrary.com)}





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### DJ & LIGHTING

CHAUVET | COLORTUBE 3.0 EQ

## Sound Looks Good

The new Colortube 3.0 EQ from Chauvet is an LED linear chase effect, static color effect and real-time music visualizer — all in one fixture.

The EQ mode lets the audience view music through color, similar to the display on a graphic equalizer. With the optional CT3EQ controller, the user can select up to 36 different color combinations. Sold individually, the Colortube offers 144 red, green and blue LEDs contained in a frosted, UV-coated plastic tube that measures 39.2 inches long and 2.9 inches wide.

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



DENON DJ | DN-X1600

## Highly Compatible

Denon DJ has released the DN-X1600 digital DJ mixer. This unit is compatible with vinyl, CD, digital files, DJ software applications via laptops and USB storage devices. It features rubberized knobs, studio-quality 60-mm Alps custom channel faders, a high-visibility VFD display, an extended 16-point LED channel and output metering. The unit comes with 14 digital effects. {[denondj.com](http://denondj.com)}

EKS | OTUS RAW

## Raw Capability

The Otus Raw, the newest controller from EKS, can be used as a single- or dual-deck controller. Unlike the original Otus, the Otus Raw is equipped with two SL-turntable-style pitch sliders, one for each virtual deck. The unit also features large velocity pads and buttons and a layer switch, which multiplies the layers of controls available on the Otus Raw.

{[eks.fi](http://eks.fi)}



AMERICAN DJ | COLOR BURST 8 DMX

## Color Blast

American DJ has doubled the size of its original Color Burst LED RGB+A color wash bar by creating the elongated Color Burst 8 DMX. Featuring eight colored LED banks — two banks each of red, green, blue and amber — the Color Burst 8 DMX is twice as long and has twice as many LED lamps as the original. Equipped with built-in high-energy programs, this easy-to-use LED bar will produce color chases to the beat of the music.

MSRP: \$229.95. {[americandj.com](http://americandj.com)}



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Allparts.....	30
American DJ .....	9
Audix .....	24
Big Bends .....	74
Casio .....	47
D'Addario .....	15
Eastwood Guitars.....	60
Hal Leonard .....	3, 29
Horizon Rapco .....	4
Hosa Tech.....	69
House Of Troy .....	55
Hunter Musical Products .....	60
Kala Ukelele .....	59
Kawai.....	36
Kickport .....	41
Korg USA .....	11
Kurzweil.....	65
Kyser .....	28
Latin Percussion.....	71
Levy's Leathers.....	43
Lowrey.....	61
Mapes Piano Strings .....	31
MJS Music & Entertainment .....	74
Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation.....	53
Music Inc. Magazine .....	62
Musicorp .....	5
NAMM .....	22-23
Oriolo Guitars .....	17
Peterson .....	45
Petrol Pianos .....	40
PianoDisc .....	12
PianoMart.com .....	73
PMAI .....	75
Retail Up Music .....	8
Roland .....	2
Samson.....	84
SHS .....	59
Shubb Capos .....	30
St. Louis Music.....	20
Tycoon Percussion.....	35
Vandoren.....	19
WD Music Products .....	41
Dansr Wick .....	27
Wyman Pianos .....	73
Yamaha.....	83



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**Kristen Schussler**

Richmond Piano  
Glen Allen, Va.

We use Facebook as a network for our students to get information about what concerts are coming up in the area and to be as community-oriented as possible. In December, we brought our students out to a local coffee shop to play holiday music, and it was a roaring success. We are doing it again in May. Between what I post on Facebook and the Daily Grind Coffeehouse promotions on its Web site and calendar, we try to hit as many people as we can.

>>>

**Ken Turner**

Piano Gallery  
Murray, Utah

We are trying to make the transition to a younger clientele. I think being connected and putting ourselves in front of those people is very important. We try to build the clientele through Facebook with educational articles and video postings. The goal is to build their trust. When we post a mailer online through Facebook, they can see we are having a special event, and hopefully, that trust that has developed will intrigue them enough to come to the store and shop a little bit. From this time last year, we have seen a 10- to 15-percent increase in people going to our Web site. I think Facebook has contributed to some of that.



>>>

**Catherine Bloemker**

Meridian Music  
Carmel, Ind.

I put up pictures of a rare 1887 Weber grand, and it's going to be a rare person who is going to fit that piano. What



better way than go through Facebook to connect to a large array of people? We have an average close to 400 hits on our Facebook page a week.

We also posted an oddball organ that we used as a rental. I went to a conference and

somebody came up to me and said, "Did you find a home for that organ?" I am thinking, "I didn't send anything to him." He was from Missouri and saw it on Facebook.

>>>

**Casey Saliba**

Steinway Hall Dallas  
Dallas



# How does your piano dealership use Facebook?

Facebook, in my opinion, is a great branding tool, as well as a way to connect with others. I want to be able to provide [customers with] information that they might not find out on the Web. My goal is that if they want to go to a local concert, they go to our Facebook page.

If it's a concert in our store, we'll promote it a little more, but consistency is the biggest part of it. I aim for quality over quantity in posts. I could put something up there every hour, but people would just see a lot of junk.

We can use it as a platform to promote a local

piano teacher studio or the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. If we have an event or post a really good article, the Dallas Symphony will put it on its Facebook [page]. It is a good way to exchange with industry partners.

We also did a meet The 5 Browns promotion. The Plano Symphony seats about 2,000, but when The 5 Browns come, they add additional seating onstage. I worked out an agreement with [the symphony] that if they named the extra seating Steinway Stage Seating, we would do a contest where people could submit their names

and e-mails on our Web site for the chance to win two free Steinway Stage Seating tickets. I think we had 140 people register for it. The two winners got to meet The 5 Browns and were just ecstatic. Events like that generate a lot of feedback on Facebook, as opposed to a selling event.

I can't say 100 percent that we have sold a piano from our presence on Facebook, but we have had people visit our Web site from Facebook and request forms for more information about our products. This is a very good sign.



# piaggero

[ pē•a•jer•ō ] The lyrical combination of piano and leggero (Italian for lightweight)

## Meet the New Ultra-Portable Yamaha Digital Pianos

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