

20 MUSIC RETAILERS, THEIR BIGGEST BUSINESS LESSONS **PAGE 39**

**FOR PROGRESSIVE MUSIC RETAILERS**

JULY 2010  
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To celebrate *Music Inc.*'s 20th anniversary, 20 of the music retail industry's leading voices share a lifetime of business lessons, including hard-learned, hard-hitting advice.

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Lori Supinie (left) and Sheilah Craven

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Thank you to Shane East, Karen Solem, Marianne Williams, Chris Watkins and all of the other photographers who have made this cover possible



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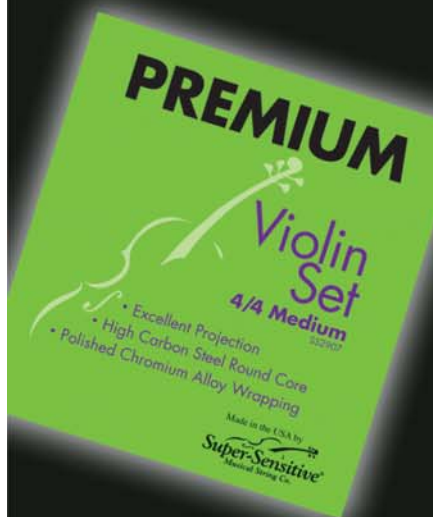
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# PERSPECTIVE

PERSPECTIVE | BY FRANK ALKYER

## LESSONS LEARNED; MANY, THE HARD WAY

You hold in your hands the 20th anniversary issue of *Music Inc.* magazine. As someone who's worked here since the beginning, I'd love to say it's been easy — that we created a turnkey business, found instant acceptance, made tons of money from the first issue on and never looked back.

That, of course, would be an enormous lie.

Those first issues of *Music Inc.* were total experiments. Some worked, some failed miserably. I remember one advertiser telling me, "You guys won't last a year." I still see him at NAMM shows, give him a smile and think to myself, "We're still here, going strong, and we just might outlast you."

In an issue packed with lessons learned (see page 39), that's the first one I can offer: Be stubborn about the big picture.

We felt from day one that *Music Inc.* needed to be the magazine of business-building ideas for music retailers. It was — and is — a great concept. But it still took five years for *Music Inc.* to get any real traction in the industry. It took a decade, in my mind, before we became any

sort of serious player. And believe me, like all of you, we feel we have to prove ourselves with every issue of the magazine and every entry on the Web site — every day of the week — or risk going right back to "Go."

You can chalk up any success *Music Inc.* has enjoyed to the fact that the entire staff is foolishly stubborn about that big picture, from Kevin Maher, our president, to the editors to the sales staff to the circulation pros to our bookkeeper to our interns. Being true to that mission has put the voice of music retailers front and center in the magazine. From our feature articles to great columnists, such as Greg Billings, Ted Eschliman, Alan Friedman, Pete Gamber, Gerson Rosenbloom and Kenny Smith, we think of *Music Inc.* as the retailer's voice, and we hope that rings true with you.

That philosophy has helped us through good times and bad. When 9/11 hit, we wondered what to do with the next issue. The answer was in the big picture. We tore up the magazine and let retailers share their stories and talk about how they were coping. When the Great Recession stormed in, we focused on how retailers were getting through the mess. In fact, that's where "Lessons Learned," the theme of this issue, came about. After Gerson Rosenbloom closed down Medley Music in late 2008, we invited him to write a column. He called it "Lessons Learned," and it proved to be an insightful look into the mind of a veteran retailer. We humbly expanded the column for this issue, inviting a number of retailers to offer their viewpoints.

We hope you enjoy it as much as we enjoy producing *Music Inc.* for music retailers. This business might be tough, but it's also great fun. If you'd like to offer your own lessons learned, e-mail us at [editor@musicincmag.com](mailto:editor@musicincmag.com). **MI**







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# LETTERS

## Straightforward Advice

I want you to know how much I appreciate and enjoy Kenny Smith's monthly articles. Business has never been easy, and anyone involved in sales at any level needs to pick up as many ideas and approaches as they can to stay ahead.

Kenny knows the art of sales, and his articles provide honest assessments and effective ideas. Selfishly, I hope that your readers and fans take what he writes about to heart. Even more importantly, I hope they put his straightforward recommendations to work right away. They'll be glad when they do.

**Ken Fuente**  
Vice President of Sales  
Gator Cases



Kenny Smith

**'Kenny knows the art of sales, and his articles provide honest assessments and effective ideas.'**

— Ken Fuente

## Building Trust Online

As an ex-journalist now working in marketing at Rodgers Instruments, I appreciated Gerson Rosenbloom's perspective on social media in the May *Music Inc.* ("Your Friend, Social Media") His point about trust, even more than brand loyalty, certainly applies to the classical organist community. I am looking forward to reading more from him.

**Jennifer Brandlon**  
Marketing Services Manager  
Rodgers Instruments

## Creating Destination

This weekend, I was reading a letter about inventory turns (*Letters*, May 2010), and it occurred to me that there are many dealers, big and small, who are challenged in respect to their inventory offerings. This particular dealer was saying that he was going to focus on higher-turning inventory. It made me think of

black Strats and SM58s. Then, there were a bunch of bits and pieces throughout the magazine suggesting ways of getting rid of white elephants or, in one case, "Selling Old Yeller." All good except for one problem: Will carrying the same safe inventory as the big guy up the street turn your shop into a destination?

I remember when I was a wee lad and this one store had a Gibson Barney Kessel in a glass showcase. Wow! It was beautiful. I remember going back there a few times just to have a look. I still dream of the day I'll get one. For me, a music store was the coolest place on earth. And if you are like me, what gets me excited is seeing something cool and unique.

Now don't get me wrong: I am a huge believer in buying and selling "bible products," such as black Fender

Strats and Shure SM58s. They are industry standards. But I also believe that unique products can create excitement and buzz in the local community, and this is important to make your store stand out. Over the past 34 years, I have always pioneered new lines — both at retail and wholesale — and continue to do so as a manufacturer. New and different is exciting. And in my mind, the unique gear is the stuff that turns a store into a destination.

**Peter Janis**  
President  
Radial Engineering

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- > **Sheet Music Service**  
Closes doors after 93 years  
**PAGE 16**
- > **Gand Music**  
Enters the distribution business  
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- > **Dowling Music**  
Opens print store in Steinway Hall  
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- > **Sweetwater**  
Named authorized Avid reseller  
**PAGE 19**



# RETAIL

TOBIAS MUSIC | BY KATIE KAILUS

## LITTLE GUYS PREVAIL

When you walk into Tobias Music in Downers Grove, Ill., you feel as if you are walking into a homey guitar shop in Wisconsin's northern forests. Wood paneling lines the walls, and acoustic guitars hang in neat rows through the middle of the shop.

The store is small, roughly 400 square feet, but customers get a big welcome. Father-and-son team Ken and Paul Tobias own and operate the 32-year-old family business, along with help from Paul's mother, Margaret.

And despite its size, Tobias Music holds a surprisingly big status as the No. 1 Taylor Guitars dealer in Illinois. (It's No. 6 in the nation.) On top of that, the store just came off its best year ever, powering successfully through the recent economic slump.

### LEAN RETAIL

So how has this little shop, which sold its first guitar out of the family living room, made such a big impact?

"We have good inventory control," Paul said. "By having a limited amount of product and a limited amount of lines offered, we can get very good at it. There's no one in the



Paul (left) and Ken Tobias

### Tiny Tobias Music sells high-end guitars in a down economy

state of Illinois that is more knowledgeable about the Martin line than Dad."

Plus, Tobias Music has

always managed low overhead. This lets it sell below minimum advertised price, proving that low pricing is possible, even for small shops.

"Because of our little business formula and our low overhead — Dad pays me minimum wage, of course — we can quote a little lower," Paul said with a laugh.

Tobias also uses the Internet to attract a national customer base. "We use Google

AdWords," Paul said. "Since we've started that, the hits to our Web site have just skyrocketed. We ship out-of-state fairly regularly."

Constant Web site updates help, too. "Being a small shop, we have a lot of time to update our Web site," Ken said. "When a new guitar comes in, I go over to the computer and type it in."

The shop sells about 400 guitars a year, about a third of



Tobias Music's newly remodeled lesson studios



those being premium labels, including Martin, Santa Cruz and Taylor. And the past two years have yielded Tobias Music's best sales ever for top-of-the-line guitars.

"The really high-end guitars have been doing really well," Paul said. "The last two years were our best years yet for guitars \$25,000 and up."

#### SCHOOL'S IN SESSION

While Paul and Ken may be the only two employees in the shop, 10 guitar teachers work at Tobias Music's growing music school, located two doors down. The school is about three times the size of the store and provides lessons for guitar, bass, mandolin and banjo. It has expanded during the past two years from 100 to

250 students.

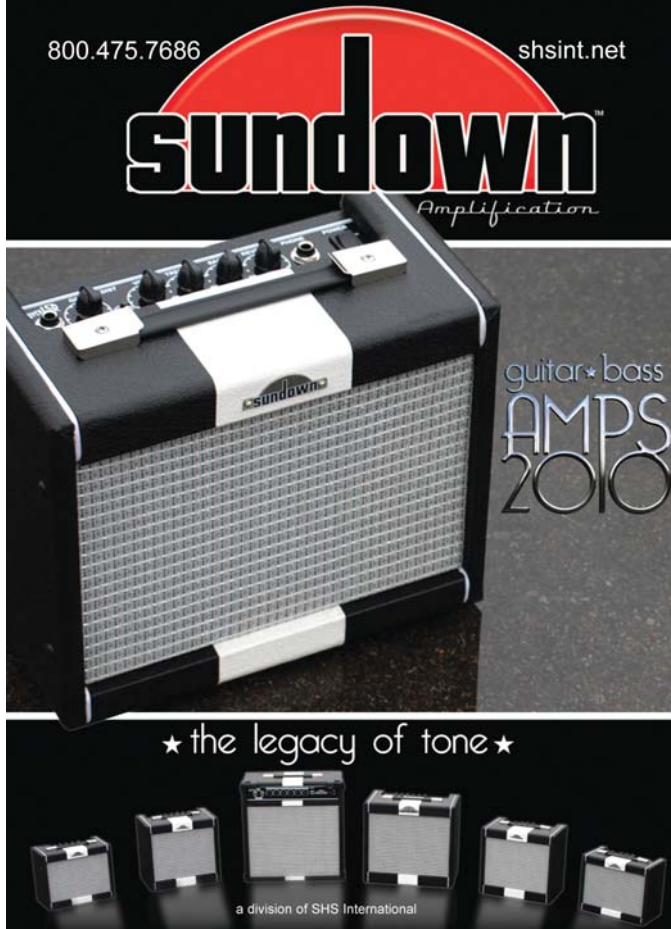
Paul credited some of the lesson program's recent success to the popular *Guitar Hero* video game.

"Because of the clientele in our store, we have always had more adults than kids," Paul said. "But *Guitar Hero* has changed everything. Every kid in the western suburbs wants guitar lessons, and it was perfect timing because the economy was starting to tank as kids were starting to get involved in guitar playing. We have even started selling electric guitars."

With the influx of students, Tobias recently remodeled the school, which has eight lesson rooms, a waiting area and a group lesson studio. The facelift gave the classrooms a funky

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vibe, which customers have since praised. “The lesson studios were remodeled using Ikea furniture and feature cool lighting,” Paul said. “We have a nice vibe going on down there. We’ve even got the lava lamp going. I think that has really paid off.”



The new music school waiting room

**‘We were a little concerned about Best Buy. That was 2008, and we ended up with our best year ever with Taylor.’**  
**— Paul Tobias**

The vibe extends to the waiting room, which Paul said is critical. “If little Johnny’s taking guitar lessons and Mom’s sitting in a halfway decent waiting room and likes the vibe and the feel, she is going to tell little Susie’s mom across the street,” he said. “And little Susie is going to sign up for lessons. That is very noticeable. We’ve got almost the whole local grade school here.”

**ROAD SUCCESS**

Tobias Music has hosted Taylor Guitar’s annual Road Show for the past four years. As one of 20 participating dealers nationwide, it welcomed 550 attendees to last year’s event at the Tivoli Theatre in Downers Grove, which featured three-time Grammy-award winner Wayne Johnson.

“The Road Show was big for us,” Ken

said. “We sold somewhere around 16 or 17 guitars due to the show.” Tobias plans to host it again this fall.

**TAKING ON THE BIG BOYS**

For a small dealer not far from the large Chicago market, it would seem easy for Tobias Music to be pushed out by mega-chains, such as Guitar Center and

Best Buy — which opened three miles down the road in 2008. But the Tobias family won’t back down.

“We were a little concerned about Best Buy,” Paul said. “But we can’t do anything about [Best Buy]. We just have to concentrate on our own business. That was 2008, and we ended up with our best year ever with Taylor.” **MI**

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**Idea Clearing House**

Music retail veteran and ex-NAMM Chairman Chip Averwater recently launched a virtual clearing house of retail wisdom, [retailtruths.com](http://retailtruths.com).

This Web site offers up golden nuggets on everything from sales, profit, hiring and compensation to retail systems, accounting and strategic management. Averwater, who also serves as chairman of Amro Music in Memphis, Tenn., rounds out many of these ideas with real-life examples from his own dealership. The site is set up so other retailers can also comment.



2009 Big Beat in Tulsa, Okla.

EVENT

**Big Beat Gets Bigger**

The Big Beat has added four more locations for a total of 15 Five-Star Drum Shops that will participate in the Nov. 7 charity fundraiser. Billed as the world's largest multicity drum set event, Big Beat drew 1,202 drummers and about 3,500 spectators in 11 cities and raised more than \$62,000 for charity last year.

At 5:45 p.m. EST, all of the drummers in each of the 15 cities will play the same groove in unison via the Internet.

ANNIVERSARY

**Leitz Music's 40 Days and Nights Promo**

April 1 marked the 40th anniversary of Leitz Music in Panama City, Fla. To celebrate, the dealership held a 40 days and 40 nights promotion, where the company's top 40 vendors were each highlighted on a designated day and invited to offer product giveaways to Leitz Music customers.

Zildjian even designed a cymbal plaque, which was presented by Allen Kaylor, Zildjian's regional sales manager, to honor the store.

"It's been quite a ride," said Philip Leitz, owner of Leitz Music. "The key to our longevity is our passion, along with our loyal relationships both from our vendors and customers."



Students compete in American "Band" Idol contest

AMERICAN BAND INSTRUMENT SERVICE | PROMOTION

# American Band Goes Idol Crazy

American Band Instrument Service in Tyler, Texas, celebrated its 20th anniversary on April 10 with an outdoor party, which included the eighth annual American "Band" Idol competition.

Thirty-four middle school and high school musicians took the stage during the competition. This included Mike Graham and Chris

Smith of the winning band Mike and Chris.

American Band Instrument Service owner Mac Miller said the celebration generated a 22-percent increase in sales over last year's event. According to Miller, several professional wind instruments were sold during and soon after the event, and accessory sales also rose.

PENDER'S MUSIC | CLOSING

# 93-Year-Old Sheet Music Dealership Closes Doors

Believed to be the oldest sheet music store in Oregon, 93-year-old Sheet Music Service closed its doors as of May 21.

Denton, Texas-based Pender's Music purchased the Portland, Ore., sheet music dealer in 2005. According to Pender's Music President Richard Gore, decreased sales due to school budget cuts and greater online competition led to the store's closure.

"School music programs in Oregon have less money each year to pur-

chase needed supplies, such as sheet music," Gore said. "Many resort to borrowing music from other schools, which encourages further cuts down the road by administrators."

Gore added that Pender's operations in Texas and Oklahoma remain strong due to greater support for music education in the region.

"School programs are supported by the local school districts, and the culture of creating active music makers is encouraged," Gore said.



GC, SWEETWATER | OUTREACH

# RETAILERS AID NASHVILLE

In response to the spring floods in Nashville, Tenn., Guitar Center launched Operation High Ground. Among its many initiatives, GC partnered with local Nashville FM radio station 104.5 The Zone to help musicians rebuild their communities. For a six-week period, starting in May, 104.5 held live broadcasts from storm-damaged areas. GC representatives were on-site to evaluate damaged gear and provide advice and assistance.

The company also mobilized its distribution network to use its Indianapolis warehouse. This ensured that replacement instruments and recording and audio gear that were out of stock in Nashville would be expedited to arrive as quickly as possible.



GC tech Ron Matthews works on a Fender Strat damaged by flooding in Nashville, Tenn.

### SWEET DONATION

Sweetwater in Fort Wayne, Ind., has also made an effort to help Nashville's recovery with a \$10,000 donation toward flood relief efforts. Plus, Sweetwater is hosting links to organizations, such as MusiCares, on its Web site, so its customers can easily contribute to the relief effort.

GAND MUSIC & SOUND | DISTRIBUTION

# Gand Adds Distribution

Full-line retailer Gand Music & Sound of Northfield, Ill., has expanded into the distribution business with the formation of Grand Music Distribution (GMD).

Gand co-owner Joan Gand, who plays the organ with rhythm and blues band Blue Road, was in search of a portable B3 sound when she discovered the German-made Neo Ventilator pedal. She started GMD to rep the Neo Ventilator for the United States and Canada. The pedal simulates a rotating organ speaker sound without the need to haul a Leslie speaker and pre-amp around.

Interested dealers can contact Gand at [jgand@gand.com](mailto:jgand@gand.com). The Neo Ventilator is back-ordered into July.



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RECOVERY

**Flooding at Fork's**

Fork's Drum Closet in Nashville, Tenn., reported water damage to its floors from the flooding in early May. According to owner Gary Forkum, the non-stop rain had "nowhere to go," despite his store's distance from the Cumberland River. None of Fork's inventory was damaged, but Forkum said taking out the soaked carpets and replacing the flooring was costly without flood insurance.

"We are trying to take this negative and turn it into a positive," Forkum said. "We've finished our main drum set display room, and it looks much nicer than it did. We've taken the opportunity to improve things. I think this will be a blessing in disguise in the long term."

Forkum said the store would be back to full operation by the end of May.



Guitar toss contestants; below: Ray Shipman's winning toss

CHARITY

**Throwing Guitars for Music Education**

Gerry's Music Shop in South Hadley, Mass., hosted its first annual Dick Rivest Charity Guitar Toss on May 8.

More than 150 people attended the event, and 40 people registered to toss a guitar in an effort to win an acoustic-electric donated by Takamine. Each contestant paid a \$15 registration fee, which went directly to the South Hadley High School music program.

Nearly \$800 was raised at the event. Each registrant also received a \$50 gift certificate for the purchase of a new guitar and a gift bag provided by the event sponsors. Ray Shipman won the underhanded guitar toss with a throw that measured 80 feet and 11 1/2 inches.



Leon 'Ndugu' Chancler performs during Cymbal Summit

MEMPHIS DRUM SHOP | EVENT

**CYMBAL SUMMIT PREMIERE**

On May 7 and 8, Memphis Drum Shop in Memphis, Tenn., hosted its first international Cymbal Summit. The event included exhibitions, workshops, clinics and concerts. All major cymbal suppliers attended the celebration. Several

artists, including Ron Tutt, Leon "Ndugu" Chancler, Nicko McBrain, Jack DeJohnette, Jeff Hamilton and Peter Erskine, made appearances. An expert craftsman was also on hand to demonstrate traditional hand-hammering methods.

DOWLING MUSIC | OPENING

**STEINWAY HALL ADDS SHEET MUSIC**

Dowling Music held its grand opening inside New York's Steinway Hall on May 22. Located on West 57th, diagonally across the street from Carnegie Hall, the second-floor print music store is Steinway Hall's first and only tenant.

"With the opening of Dowling Music, musicians and music lovers in New York will have a new opportunity to see, feel and discover all of the wonderful music that's available in print," said concert pianist, Steinway artist and Dowling Music co-owner Richard Dowling.

"We want to make music accessible to everyone," said James Li, president of Dowling Music. "We're



From left: Dowling's James Li, Robin Caffrey and Richard Dowling

committed to creating a positive experience for our customers."

Dowling Music will host pedagogues, editors and composers for workshops and demonstrations in the adjacent Henry Z. Steinway Room.

## ««« TRIBUTE

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

### ⊕ Michael Baker

Michael Baker, owner of Graner Music in Colorado Springs, Colo., passed away on May 17 from cancer. He was 49. Baker played trombone and was involved in the music ministry of Bear Valley Church in Lakewood, Colo. He's survived by his wife, Charlotte; daughter, Kendra; son, Kyle; mother, Norma Baker; and his four brothers, Mark, Rod, Randy and Ronnie.

### ⊕ J.W. "Bill" Barras Jr.

Longtime piano and organ dealer J.W. "Bill" Barras Jr. passed away of heart failure on April 8, two days after his 70th birthday. He owned and operated Baldwin Piano and Organ Center in Herrin, Ill. The store has operated continuously since 1937.



Barras was also a church organist and played for several local Catholic parishes. During his 45-year career as a piano and organ dealer, he installed hundreds of organs and pianos in churches in his territory. Barras is survived by his business and life partner, Bruce Steh, who will continue to operate the store.

### ⊕ Gil Ellman

Music retailer Gil Ellman passed away on April 30 at the age of 84. He was a former professional saxophonist and apprenticed for several years with repair technician Leo Cooper.



Ellman opened Ellman's Music Center in 1958 in downtown Chicago, and he began creating his own brand of instruments, including bongos. In 1963, the store moved to Naperville, Ill., where space was created for lesson programs. Gil and his wife, Joan, were both present at The NAMM Show 2008 where they were awarded the milestone plaque for 50 years in business.

#### SWEETWATER | SALES

## Sweetwater, Avid Authorized

Avid has named Sweetwater in Fort Wayne, Ind., the first nationally authorized reseller for Avid Pro Tools HD Icon and other products and systems.

"Sweetwater is well-known nationwide for their customer service, and they have made great strides to

become a leading Pro Tools dealer," said Jim Atkinson, Avid's vice president of sales for the Americas.

"We've enjoyed a close relationship with Avid through the years, and we're very pleased to have our relationship move up to the next level," said Chuck Surack, Sweetwater's president.



## A Sure Cure for Island Fever



Nicole Fox  
Miss Hawaii 2008

When you've been in the Islands too long, a **Mahalo Ukulele** is just the thing to snap you out of the doldrums. Fifteen models and a full palette of color choices will suit your every mood.

It is so easy to get started and Mahalo Ukes won't pile your budget onto a reef either. Just follow Miss Hawaii into your local music store ...surf's up!

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## Note from Joe

### NAMM U Grows While Nurturing New Ideas

Over the past seven years, NAMM U has experienced phenomenal growth—the attendance numbers are a powerful reminder of the value our Members place on the sessions and their information- and idea-filled discussions. Attendance at both shows has increased by 147 percent since 2003. Personally, it has been an honor to welcome everyone to the NAMM Show during the opening morning “Breakfast of Champions” session in Anaheim and the “State of the Industry Address” in Nashville—what a great way to start the show!

*So what's different? Why such a big increase in attendance?* I believe there were a couple of key factors. NAMM Members recognized the world was changing and that proactive businesspeople would be best prepared to thrive—we had a motivated group! Second, our Members told us that peer-to-peer sharing was important to them. They wanted to hear from real business owners who had “walked in their shoes” while feeling the pressure to pay the bills and make payroll. These conversations gave them solutions to big challenges and

empowered them to make changes in their own businesses. The experience resembled a friend putting an arm around their shoulders and saying, “I know you can do it!”

I believe we also solved a major question as to why people didn't attend—lack of time—and addressed this need by serving breakfast each morning! (Never underestimate the power of a free meal!) In doing so, we added an hour to everyone's day, perfect for taking in a NAMM U session. We also placed the Idea Center right on the show floor and scheduled shorter, more focused sessions, helping to make the most of our Members' time between meetings with exhibitors.

In addition, NAMM U Online now complements the educational offerings with modules focusing on sales, finance, management, lesson programs, technology and retail ideas. We also included video of many of the top Breakfast Sessions and Idea Center presentations, as well as posting dozens of quick tips from the most famous names in the business.

In our annual survey, Members told us that NAMM U is a major reason they attend NAMM trade shows. Elsewhere, it would cost thousands of dollars to attend similar professional development sessions. We've assembled the best and brightest to share their proven strategies so you can return home ready to take on the world! Our promise to you is to continue offering sessions that provide value and will help increase your chance of success.

Joe Lamond • NAMM President/CEO

## NAMM® University

“This definitely expanded my knowledge of the business. It has opened my eyes and helped me improve in selling.”

**CHERYL SMOOT**

BERTRAND'S MUSIC • ASSISTANT MANAGER

“It's a whole new world out there and time for us to get with it. Classes like this help us build our first web page and avoid old mistakes! Thank you.”

**ED HILBERT**

HILBERT PIANOS • PRESIDENT

“Great to see success stories of people who came to NAMM, listened and then did.”

**JIM FAREY**

MUSIC LEARNING CURVE • TEACHER

“Good ideas for our regional stores. The instructor was right that the market is there; we just need to work hard to tap into those new students.”

**JUDY PINE**

WEST MUSIC • VICE PRESIDENT

NAME NAMM News July 2010

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

# Get Connected with NAMM U Online



NAMM U Live



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Retail Ideas



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Courses

When you leave Summer NAMM, you'll bring back NAMM U tips and tactics for improving your business... but what about the rest of the year?

That's where NAMM U Online comes in. Supplement your knowledge base by tuning in to a variety of videos, articles, interviews and training courses—from the comfort of your home or office.

NAMM U Online is designed to provide you with the support and help you need year-round. From quick tips and NAMM U Breakfast Session videos to online courses—NAMM U Online provides the resources you need to advance your business in the areas of:

- Finance
- Lesson Programs
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- Retail Ideas
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Plug into this valuable Member resource at [www.namm.org](http://www.namm.org) today!

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- > **NAMM**  
Takes Capitol Hill, grants \$585K  
**PAGE 28**
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Sues NSI Audio  
**PAGE 29**
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Opens new factory to the public  
**PAGE 31**
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Fritz Sennheiser  
**PAGE 33**

# SUPPLY

SIERRA GUITARS | BY JENNY DOMINE

## THE SIERRA LIFESTYLE

Sierra Guitars endorser Mark Bryan, guitar player for Hootie and the Blowfish, was playing his Northstar 12-string at a gig when he loaned it to a fellow singer-songwriter. The newcomer to Sierra immediately wanted one of his own.

According to Catherine Polk, director of marketing for Musicorp, it's that kind of word-of-mouth marketing that's grown the Sierra brand since Musicorp debuted it at The NAMM Show 2007.

"When we first started, we knew we were an unheard-of brand name," Polk said. "The target we went after was the up-and-coming singer-songwriter."

In July, Sierra's homegrown vibe will go virtual with a revamped Web site in conjunction with a redesigned catalog and new pre-amps for its acoustic-electric guitar line.

### WORD-OF-MOUTH GOES ONLINE

Sierra has established a back-to-basics, organic lifestyle image to distinguish its brand in the competitive acoustic guitar market.

It's an image built by grass-roots promotions, such as sponsoring the High Sierra and Forecastle music festivals, supporting the National Guitar



From left: Musicorp's Catherine Polk, Laura Pilcher, Craig Toporek and Daniel Roberts

### Sierra Guitars builds community with grass-roots promos, a Web site redesign

Workshop, and touting eco-friendly packaging and promotional products made of

recycled materials.

"We are trying to do the little things we can, even though we are a guitar line, to support causes," said Polk of the brand's environmental efforts. Another essential part of Sierra's brand-building is creating a sense of community.

The new Web site will further Sierra's grass-root following with a forum for customer comments and product reviews. Fans of the brand can also dialogue with one another

via social networks, including Facebook and Twitter.

"People can comment, I can comment back, so they're getting more one-on-one customer service," said Laura Pilcher, Musicorp's marketing manager. "[The Web site's] going to be more interactive. It will have more video and wallpaper for smartphones. Our artists have also agreed to have free music downloads on our page."

The site will include a comprehensive dealer locator,

along with a password-protected dealer-only area.

“Dealers can go in and download any kind of Sierra catalog, price list and confidential information,” Polk said.

**SIERRA GETS AMPED**

The Web site launch will go hand in hand with the release of new Barcus-Berry pre-amps for all of Sierra’s acoustic-electric models. The Breeze II pre-amps will be installed in the laminate top models. All solid top models will have the Breeze IV system.

According to Craig Toporek, merchandising product manager for Musicorp, key pre-amp upgrades were made based on Sierra dealer feedback.

“All models come with a

built-in tuner,” he said. “That was one request that we had from dealers, to bring it across the line.

“The other is we have a design for a saddle, which has a built-in pickup with the saddle all as one unit that helps ensure even string-to-string output across the guitar.”

**ACOUSTIC ADVANTAGE**

Sierra’s marketing and product overhaul efforts have paid off as the acoustic guitar market has picked up steam in recent months.

“The Sierra line, in particular, has done pretty well for a lot of dealers,” said Daniel Roberts, Musicorp’s vice president of sales. “Acoustic guitars have fared a little better over the last 18 months in



retail sales. [Dealers] particularly appreciate the opportunity to sell a product and make a margin.”

Roberts also noted that Musicorp’s catalog of guitar accessories, such as cases, strings and picks, also boosted retailer sales in 2009.

The Sierra lineup retails from \$300–\$900 and is promoted as a step-up, mid-level acoustic that functions as a franchise line, separate from Musicorp’s 544-page catalog. This gives retailers the option to carry Sierras exclusively or take advantage of Musicorp’s entire catalog.

“We don’t have a large buy-in or extensive annual commitment,” Toporek said. “It’s very easy to get involved with the product line.” **MI**







# YORKVILLE SOUND

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DAISY ROCK GIRL GUITARS | BY JENNY DOMINE

# BEYOND PINK

Tish Ciravolo, Daisy Rock president and founder, has observed the same scene unfold at her company's NAMM show booth for the past 10 years.

A dealer takes a look around her booth and says, "I don't know if we'll sell guitars for girls in my store," and leaves. Before the end of the show, that same dealer is being pulled back by a wife, daughter or girlfriend, who says, "No, I am telling you, we've got to have these in the store."

"We have our strongest defense with women who see it and get it," said Ciravolo, who celebrated the 10th anniversary of her girl-centric guitar company with a prom-themed NAMM booth this year. (She even wore a tiara.) At this milestone, Ciravolo said she's seen a lot of progress in the girl-guitar market. Its percentage base has grown from approximately 4 percent in 2000 to almost 20 percent, according to Ciravolo. Daisy Rock also boasts an artist roster of more than 600 female artists and bands.

"But then, we still get e-mails from girls who are still encountering the kind of discrimination I dealt with," she said.

## GIRL GUITARS, NOT GIRLY GUITARS

Ciravolo, a rock bass player herself, experienced endless frustration playing large, heavy guitars during her own career. Inspired by a daisy drawing made by her daughter, Ciravolo set out to make not



Tish Ciravolo

## Daisy Rock celebrates 10 years of girl guitar rock

another stereotypical pink guitar but a good-quality instrument that would be physically slimmer, lighter and easier for girls and women to play. Today, there's a Daisy Rock guitar in

every shape, style and color to meet a wide variety of tastes, from punk rock to country.

## EXTRA SPARKLE FOR RETAILERS

Retailers who've taken on Daisy Rock guitars said they immediately get a positive reaction from customers.

"They will say, 'That's so cute. I've always wanted to play guitar,' or 'Oh, my niece would love this,'" said Jon Paul Escobedo, owner of The Music Store in Mesa, Ariz. "Daisy

Rock has become one of our top-selling guitar brands."

Aaron Weems, owner of ZoZo Music in San Antonio, said he has seen plenty of discouraged girls who think they can't play after learning on a standard guitar. Daisy Rock's slim, narrow neck profile and lighter weight often solves the problem.

"And it is not just girls," Weems said. "I've had a couple of guitar tech guys who have bought Daisy Rock guitars just because they have smaller hands, and it's just a comfortable guitar to play."

## DAISY'S NEXT DECADE

From June 28–July 2, Daisy Rock will sponsor Girls Rock! at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind. Unlike the thousands of girl rock camps Daisy Rock has sponsored in the past, Girls Rock! adds a new twist by providing high school girls the opportunity to design and build their own solid body electric guitars.

For Ciravolo, it's a full-circle event. What started as a campaign to welcome girls into the guitar market has become a mission to empower them in all areas of business.

"We are not just promoting players here," she said. "We are talking about women who are running other companies or working their way up the ladder."

Ciravolo has already set her sights on 2020 and the future of the Daisy Rock brand.

"We are still not the household name, and that's what I want to be," she said. **MI**

# POWER-ALL®

## PROGRESSIONS OF POWER

The Power-All® System provides you with a compact, affordable solution for powering your effect pedals and accessories. Using only one outlet space, our advanced digital circuitry delivers clean, quiet, energy-efficient power anywhere in the world. Save money on batteries while using less energy!

The Power-All® is available in a variety of configurations designed to meet every player's power demands, whether it's a single stompbox or a multi-voltage pedalboard monstrosity!



### PA-9S Power-All® Digital Power Supply

Our 9 volt DC supply offers 2000 milliamps of current to power more pedals more consistently! Specially designed low-noise circuit delivers clean, quiet power. Includes 10 foot power cord with ferrite noise filter and locking jack. Auto-sensing circuitry runs off 100-240 volts, use it anywhere in the world. (Available in US, UK, European, and Australian plug types).

### PA-9B Power-All® Basic Kit

Everything you need to power 5 pedals out of the box. Includes:

- ⊙ PA-9 Power-All® Digital Power Supply.
- ⊙ Cable-5/R Daisy Chain Connector with spring-loaded right-angle jacks.
- ⊙ Cable-Red/R reverse polarity (tip positive) cable with spring-loaded right-angle jack.
- ⊙ Cable-Blue 1/8" (3.5mm) phone plug cable.
- ⊙ Cable-Green reverse polarity cable with 2.5 internal diameter spring-loaded jack.
- ⊙ Cable-Grey battery clip cable.
- ⊙ Insulator Caps (3) for unused male barrel connectors on the Daisy Chain.

### PA-9D Power-All® Deluxe Kit

Everything you need to power 11 pedals out of the box. Includes:

- ⊙ PA-9 Power-All® Digital Power Supply.
- ⊙ Cable-11/R Daisy Chain Connector with spring-loaded right-angle jacks.
- ⊙ Cable-Red/R reverse polarity (tip positive) cable with spring-loaded right-angle jack.
- ⊙ Cable-Blue/R 1/8" (3.5mm) phone plug cable with right-angle jack.
- ⊙ Cable-Green reverse polarity cable with 2.5 internal diameter spring-loaded jack.
- ⊙ Cable-Green/R reverse polarity cable with spring-loaded right-angle jack.
- ⊙ Cable-Grey battery clip cable.
- ⊙ Cable-Black/R extension cable with spring-loaded right-angle jack.
- ⊙ Insulator Caps (5) for unused male barrel connectors on the Daisy Chain.

## POWER-ALL® ACCESSORIES

Sold separately.

### Power-All® Jumper Cables

28AWG gauge cable with oil-resistant vinyl sheaths and spring-loaded jacks to assure secure, trouble-free connections. Available with straight and right-angle connectors in a variety of configurations to fit every pedalboard.



### IP-1 Iso-Pump™ Voltage Converter

Use with the Power-All® to power pedals that require 12, 18, or 24 volts DC! Isolated output allows for operation of pedals with opposing grounds.



### GH-1 Ground Hound™ Ground Isolator

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



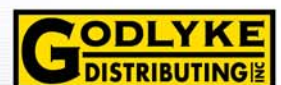
### UTA-1 Universal Travel Adaptor

Plug in your Power-All® or other electronic devices anywhere in the world! Modular design features 9 different plug types.



All of our products feature professional-grade construction designed to withstand the rigors of the road. We are so confident that the Power-All® is superior to any other switching power supply on the market that it comes with a lifetime warranty.

Complies with these national and international safety and environmental directives.



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ANNIVERSARY

**Korg's Tuner Giveaway**

As part of its 25th anniversary celebration, Korg is giving away a free Korg tuner every Monday from May 3–Dec. 27. U.S. consumers can visit [free-guitartuner.com](http://free-guitartuner.com) each day and enter their e-mail addresses and zip codes to register to win the weekly drawing for one of Korg's tuner offerings. **{korg.com}**

ARTIST APPROVED

**Antigua Adds Ponzol**

International recording artist Peter Ponzol and Antigua Winds have partnered to develop a new series of professional saxophones. The Pro One saxophones will debut at The NAMM Show 2011 and Frankfurt Musikmesse. Ponzol is known for his state-of-the-art saxophone mouthpieces and custom necks. **{antiguawinds.com}**



Peter Ponzol

OPENINGS

**Music Museum Opens**

The Musical Instrument Museum (MIM) opened to the public on April 24 in Phoenix with more than 3,000 instruments and musical artifacts from around the world on display. A \$250 million project, MIM opened its 190,000-square-foot building with two floors of galleries, a music theater, classroom, garden courtyard, performance hall, recording studio, cafe and store. **{themim.org}**

AWARDS

**Vater's Memorial Award**

Vater Percussion presented the first annual Jeffrey Phillips Memorial Scholarship to James Callahan on April 13. A 2010 graduating senior of Weymouth High School in Weymouth, Mass., Callahan was



From left: Jane Phillips, James Callahan and Vater's Alan Vater

awarded the scholarship for his leadership in the school's band. The scholarship was set up by Vater Percussion in memory of Phillips, a Vater employee who died last year. Phillips, who was a musician himself, graduated from the school in 1996. **{vater.com}**



From left: Former U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley, Journey's Jonathan Cain, singer Taylor Dayne and NAMM's Joe Lamond

NAMM | ADVOCACY

# MUSIC-SAVING EFFORTS

Grammy-nominated artist Taylor Dayne and Journey keyboardist Jonathan Cain joined NAMM, along with partners VH1 Save the Music Foundation and dosomething.org, at a reception in Washington, D.C., on May 13. The event concluded the final day of lobbying to support music education during the 2010 NAMM Advocacy Fly-In, held May 10–13.

"Ms. Kyzowski, Mr. Dagan, Ms. Edwards — 30 years later, I can still remember their names because these people were three of the most influential people in my life," Dayne said at the reception. "They

were my music teachers, and they helped me find my own voice."

GRANTS FOR MUSIC

NAMM also recently announced the 25 recipients of the NAMM Foundation's 2010–2011 program grants. NAMM allocated \$585,000 in funding to support community-based music learning programs that give people access to the benefits of active music making. Guitars in the Classroom, Jazz Arts Group of Columbus, Little Kids Rock and Women's Audio Mission were among the organizations to receive funding. **{namm.org}**

STEINWAY | FINANCIAL

# Steinway Q1 Piano Boost

Steinway recently reported the results of this year's first quarter, which ended March 31. The company's sales dropped 2 percent, and gross margins increased from 27 to 31 percent. Net income jumped 79 percent.

Piano revenues increased due to strong sales in the Asian market with sales up 5 percent and a gross margin increase from 31.6 to 32.8 percent.

The band segment saw a 10-percent sales decline in the first quarter as customers delayed delivery schedules. Gross margins improved from 21 to 29 percent due to improved manufacturing efficiencies and reduced sales incentives.

**{steinway.com}**

AMERICAN DJ | LEGAL

# ADJ SUES NSI AUDIO

On May 13, American DJ filed suit in the U.S. District Court Central District of California against NSI Audio, a California-based company that sells and distributes products under several brand names. The legal action is centered on two trademarks recently adopted by NSI: Vertigo for lighting products and American Vocal for audio products. The suit alleges that NSI used product and brand names that were the same or very similar to those used by American DJ and used copyrighted images belonging to the company. [americandj.com](http://americandj.com)



MOOG | VENUES

## Moog Moves HQ Downtown

Moog Music, in conjunction with Asheville, N.C., and the Economic Development Coalition for Asheville Buncombe County, has announced a \$2.5 million investment in a new Moog headquarters in downtown Asheville. On May 18, Moog Music finalized the purchase of four vacant 1920s-era buildings.

"This location is ideal for Moog and our employees," said Michael Adams, president of Moog Music. "We will bring commerce, economic vitality and livability to this once-neglected entrance to the city. Creativity drives Moog, and this old building, once transformed, will inspire our entire team to continue this mission."

Moog Music had been selected by the city to receive \$50,000 Community Development Block Grant funds. As part of this expansion and expected company growth, Moog plans to add an additional 10–15 employees over the next three years. [moogmusic.com](http://moogmusic.com)

**STANDING OVATION**

Precision German engineered premium quality stands by K&M are the trusted choice for unparalleled quality, durability and design.

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Model 17550

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GIBSON | CHARITY

## GIBSON AIDS MUSIC RECOVERY

Music Rising, a campaign launched in 2005 to aid musicians after hurricanes Katrina and Rita, has recently pledged \$250,000 to MusiCares to help musicians in Nashville, Tenn., with the repair and replacement of instruments damaged or destroyed in the recent flood.

Music Rising, co-founded by U2's The Edge, producer Bob Ezrin and Gibson Guitar CEO Henry Juszkiewicz, announced the partnership with MusiCares in cooperation with the Gibson Foundation.

"We will see Nashville rise again, and it will be better than ever," Juszkiewicz said.

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



**VENUES**

**Musicorp Office Relocation**

Musicorp has relocated its Effingham, Ill., sales call office to a new address. Starting May 7, the new address is 1901 South Fourth St., Suite 224, Effingham, IL 62401. [musicorp.com](http://musicorp.com)

**BRANDING**

**Chauvet Construction**

Chauvet was featured on the Discovery Channel's "Construction Intervention" series on May 14 and 15. Chauvet donated a lighting pack to the construction show to help a new lounge on the outskirts of New York. The show features businesses that its host, Charlie Frattini, rescues from botched, delayed or impossible construction jobs. [chauvetlighting.com](http://chauvetlighting.com)



Charlie Frattini

**EVENT**

**Next-Gen NAMM**

NAMM Young Professionals (NAMM YP) will kick off Summer NAMM 2010 in Nashville, Tenn., with its first annual networking reception from 6:30–9:30 p.m. on June 17 in the Renaissance Ballroom at the Renaissance Hotel. The event will bring NAMM members under 40 years old together who want to further their involvement in the music industry. [namm.org](http://namm.org)



The Gipsy Kings

**CULTURE**

**Disney Adds Córdoba's Flamenco Flare**

Flamenco-pop group Gipsy Kings recently recorded a new version of Randy Newman's song "You've Got A Friend In Me" for "Toy Story 3" using signature Córdoba guitar models. "You've Got A Friend In Me (Para Buzz Español)" will be featured in the film and on the soundtrack. [cordobaguitars.com](http://cordobaguitars.com)

**YAMAHA | EVENT**

# Yamaha CFX Goes Public

The Yamaha CFX 9-foot concert grand piano made its first public debut at Faust Harrison Pianos in New York on May 13 and 14 as part of the grand piano's North American tour.

The two-night event included invitation-only concerts featuring classical pianists Abbey Simon and Frederic Chiu. Both artists were part of Yamaha's top-secret evaluation sessions before the release of the final product.

According to Mark Anderson, marketing manager for Yamaha pianos, this event provided both customers and artists with a more intimate space to experience the CFX than at NAMM or in competition settings.

"People really get to put their ear to it and get in touch with the piano," he said. "It was great exposure right at the front lines."

The CFX grand piano will roll out for sale this fall. [yamaha.com](http://yamaha.com)

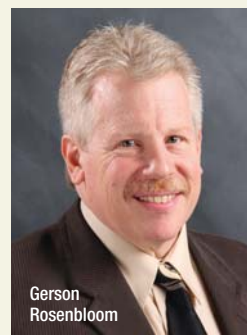
**Yamaha generates public buzz about CFX 9-foot grand**

## APPOINTMENTS

### Rosenbloom Joins Wechter

Wechter Guitars has appointed Gerson Rosenbloom as its managing director. Rosenbloom was the president and CEO of Medley Music in Bryn Mawr, Pa., and most recently served as the president and sales adviser for Spectrum Strategies, a music industry consulting firm based in Medford, N.J. From 1989–1999, he was a member of the NAMM board and served in several executive board positions, including chairman of the board.

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



Gerson Rosenbloom

**KMC Music** has promoted Mike Oken to the merchandising and product manager position.

**GCI Technologies** has named Ed Alstrom marketing manager.

**Pearl** has appointed Jerry Goldenson as vice president of sales and Bob Sabellico as electronic percussion product manager.

**Vic Firth** has named Joe Testa as director of artist relations.

**Young Chang/Kurzweil** has appointed Dan Yuter as national sales and marketing manager for Kurzweil home products. Young Chang North America has added Larry Fresch as West Coast district sales manager.



>>> Jerry Goldenson

Sound Driver's Chad Marriott sings with Shure on Mount Kilimanjaro



SHURE | ANNIVERSARY

## SHURE'S NEW HEIGHTS

Producing microphones used by Elvis Presley, Martin Luther King Jr. and U.S. presidents since Lyndon Johnson, Shure is celebrating its 85th anniversary in professional audio.

Earlier this year, Shure reached new heights providing PSM600 receivers and transmitters and a UHF-R series wireless system to Sound Driver, a five-piece indie-rock band, during its charity performance on Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa. The charity, The Smile Train, provides free surgeries for children. [shure.com](http://shure.com)

SUPPLY



GUILD GUITARS | EVENT

## Meet Guild Tour

Guild Guitars opened its doors to the public for the first time on May 10 with a behind-the-scenes "Let's Meet Guild" tour of its new factory in New Hartford, Conn. More than 45 members of the "Let's Talk Guild" online forum attended the exclusive event, which featured a tour, Q&A sessions and a look at Guild's guitar-making processes. A raffle was held for Guild merchandise, and one forum member walked away with a new F-512 12-string guitar. [guildguitars.com](http://guildguitars.com)

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St. Louis Music is a Division of U.S. Band & Orchestra Supplies, Inc.

WAVES AUDIO | LEGAL

# WAVES WINS SUITS

Waves Audio recently won a lawsuit against New York-based Reckless Music d.b.a. Skyline Recording Studios NYC for intellectual property infringements, and Quad Recording Studios admitted liability in a second lawsuit regarding illegal use of Waves software.

“The judgments obtained in these two court cases should send a targeted message to all users of illegal software that Waves is very serious about defending its rights and will continue to fight against the use of cracked software,” said Gilad Keren, CEO of Waves. [www.waves.com](http://www.waves.com)

## WEBNEWS

# DUNCAN FORUM SPOTLIGHTED

Seymour Duncan was recently spotlighted in the *Inc.* magazine feature story, “How to Use Online Forums.”

In the article, Bill Pflieger, co-author of the book *Geek Gap*, cited [seymourduncan.com/forum](http://seymourduncan.com/forum) as an example “of a business that has created a community using its online forum.”

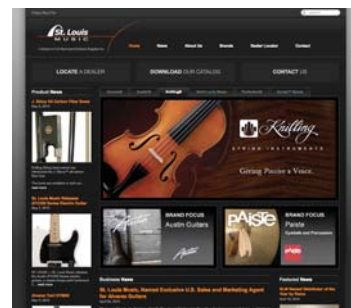
The Seymour Duncan forum has more than 22,000 members. It offers 24-hour real-time tech support, including advice on which pickup models to purchase and how to wire them into guitars.

### avid.com

In an effort to bring Digidesign closer to the Avid brand, Avid launched a new Web site on April 12, which includes all of the [digidesign.com](http://digidesign.com) pages, plus a number of enhancements to make navigation faster and easier. To help the public get acclimated, Avid will be posting an interim page at [digidesign.com](http://digidesign.com) offering links straight to the pages that are most important to customers.

### stlouismusic.com

St. Louis Music has created a new dealer-friendly Web site and a 236-page full-color catalog. The company's dealers will have access to a password-protected dealer section where they can download catalogs, product images and marketing materials, plus see new promotions and learn about product launches. The site also directs consumers to their local stores with an advanced dealer locator.



### fargenampls.com

Fargen Amplification has launched [fargenampls.com](http://fargenampls.com), featuring its three main product lines: production tube amplifiers, custom-made tube amplifiers and amplifier modifications.

Fargen is kicking off the new Web site with its “Me and My Fargen” contest. Customers can submit photos of themselves and their amps. Three entries will be selected at random to receive a Sonic Edge J&J Overdrive pedal.



≪≪ **TRIBUTE**

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

⊕ **Fritz Sennheiser**

Fritz Sennheiser, founder of Sennheiser, passed away on May 17, just a few days after his 98th birthday.



Beginning in 1945, his company grew to develop a wide range of products, including microphones, speakers and headphones. Under Sennheiser's guidance, the first shotgun mics and open headphones were created, and he oversaw developments in wireless radio and infrared transmission. He continued to teach and lecture on electronics well past his retirement in 1982.

⊕ **Irwin Rabinowitz**

Irwin Rabinowitz, one of the last music engravers from the era of metal plates and chisels, passed away on May 4 while volunteering in Israel. He was 81.

Rabinowitz was hired by Irving Berlin to create the lead plates for the songwriter's sheet music. He worked for a time for the Elvis Presley Music Group and several other publishers before his retirement.

⊕ **Jeffrey Lyon**

Jeffrey Lyon, Fender's district sales manager for the Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama territory, was killed in a May 11 auto accident in Ridgeland, Miss. He was 58.

Lyon arrived at Fender in 2007 after a decade at Gibson Guitar and stints at Kaman and Loud Technologies.

⊕ **John Moss**

John Moss, an exclusive arranger and composer for Hal Leonard, passed away at his home in Beulah, Mich., on April 22. He was 62.

For more than two decades, Moss wrote a range of music, from band and orchestra works to back-up orchestrations, choral accompaniments and supplementary music for Hal Leonard's educational series, Essential Elements.

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1. From left: Music Mart's Joe Keith and Lorenz's Kris Kropff and Geoff Lorenz; 2. FJH's Kyle (left) and Kevin Hackinson; 3. Schott Music's Bernhard Mueller; 4. The Alfred Music Publishing team. Back row, from left: Bryan Bradley, Dan Smolenski, Pam Hendricks, Elisa Palladino, Holly Anzalone-McGinnis, Gwen Bailey-Harbour and Bob Durkee; front row, from left: Morty, Iris and Ron Manus; 5. Bookmark Music's Marcia Stearns (left) indulges in the convention's Western theme. She's pictured with Alfred Music Publishing's Ron Manus. Stearns also won the 2010 RPMDA/Sandy Feldstein Service Award; 6. West Music's Valerie Johnson (left) and Hal Leonard's Doug Lady; 7. Breitkopf & Hartel's Annekathrin Mascus; 8. Stage Stars Records' Stephen Pearl (left) and Natalie Perr; 9. From left: Mayfair Music's Carol Simpanen, Jenny DuHaimie and Steven Loweth with Long & McQuade's Christie Smith and Kidder Music's Adam Ways; 10. RPMDA's Madeleine Crouch; 11. From left: Carl Fischer's Diana Macedonio, Chris Scialfa, Hayden Connor and Anne Sobel; 12. Denny Senseney discusses ways people can save school music programs; 13. Pender's Music's Richard Gore (left) accepts the 2010 RPMDA Dorothy Award from Joe Keith; 14. Hal Leonard's Bruce Bush (left) and Senseney Music's Lori Supinie; 15. Frederick Harris' Darlene Dunn (left) and Beacock Music's Gayle Beacock jam at the Frederick Harris booth; 16. Alphonse Leduc's Anna Letiec; 17. Universal Edition's Florian Hruschka; 18. Composer Randall Faber; 19. Pender's Music's Richard Rejino discusses his new photography book, *What Music Means To Me*

**BY ZACH  
PHILLIPS**

# NEW FRONTIERS

RPMDA  
meets in  
Oklahoma  
City to seek  
unexplored  
business  
territory

This year's Retail Print Music Dealers Association (RPMDA) convention was all about mining for untapped opportunities.

Music retailers and publishers gathered in Oklahoma City from April 14–17 with a pioneering spirit befitting the show's Western theme, "Get Your Business Fix on Route 66." While walking the exhibit floor and checking out educational seminars, dealers found new ways to capitalize on emerging markets, new product categories and one another's best practices.

"This year's RPMDA was definitely about finding new ways to grow your business," said Lori Supinie, president of RPMDA and Senseney Music in Wichita, Kan. "Whether through social networking, the percussion and Christian markets, or expanding lesson programs, the focus for print music dealers was on seeking opportunities to set [themselves] apart."

That focus couldn't be better-timed. Exemplifying changes in the print music market, Bernhard Mueller, international sales manager for Schott Music, explained that his company's overall sales have increased a notch during the past few years, but his distribution network has narrowed, with online retailers now making up a larger percentage of his dealer base. This shift has forced many independent, brick-and-mortar print retailers to diversify into unfamiliar product categories.

Publishing giants Hal Leonard and Alfred Music Publishing got the memo. They used RPMDA to promote their distribution partnerships with audio and recording companies Avid and Tascam, respectively. Savvy retailers can benefit from the development.

"For Tascam to open up a dealer, the dealer would need to buy several pieces," said Bryan Bradley, COO of Alfred. "But many of those dealers are already doing business with us. We can sell them any quantity they want of Tascam products. They can try the business. They just add it to a shipment from us that's already coming, so there's no increase in freight for them."

That was one of many ideas from this year's RPMDA show. See the following spread for more strategies and untapped opportunities to grow your business.



Mark Cabaniss

## GO TO CHURCH

**W**hile budget cuts have decimated the school music business, the church market continues holding steady. Mark Cabaniss, senior vice president and manager of Word Music, said it's a ripe market for retailers to capitalize on, assuming they do their homework. "It's a good thing, but it's a bit of a double-edged sword," said Cabaniss, adding that it's become a broader category than ever before and difficult to market to directly.

During "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition," he mentioned the first step in courting churches is knowing the kind of music they embrace. (Church music now includes such diverse genres as pop, rock, praise and worship, gospel, R&B, hip-hop, and Southern gospel.) Dealers should stock choral music, praise band and praise team music, and consumer print folios to accommodate these different customers.

In terms of promotions, Cabaniss stressed aiming for "the bull's-eye," as opposed to a "ready-shoot-aim" approach. To do so, obtain carefully rented, clean lists that look at church sizes, denominations and geographics; offer co-op promotions; and promote to consumers, as well.

He encouraged all dealers to offer digital sheet music downloads because "that's where you can get praise team music [business]." Putting store coupons into choral books can also help drive traffic to a retailer. "And if it works with the choir, give them to the whole church," he said.

## NO-NONSENSE RETAIL

**S**ales guru Kenny Smith distilled his streetwise wisdom for closing deals and managing people into three sessions. Highlights:

- > **The telephone.** "The No. 1 reason a music store has a telephone is to get customers in the store. The No. 2 reason is to reach out and call your old customers. Also, sandwich voicemails with an e-mail to that customer."
- > **First-time customers.** "Tell them, 'Let me show you around the store.' What this does is it breaks down the barriers that people have. If the owner's around, take the customer to meet the owner."
- > **Carrying the essentials.** "I've seen people lose a \$6,000 guitar sale because they didn't have a cable."
- > **Consistency.** "One thing that made me a successful salesperson was consistency. To stay consistent, one, watch your numbers. Two, don't overreact when something goes wrong with a deal. And third, learn to bunt. Everybody tries to knock it out of the park every day. [Bunting] will get you back in the game quickly."
- > **Added value.** "Are you worth more? Explain to your staff and customers why you are. And start saying 'no.'"
- > **Meetings.** "Meetings are irreplaceable. Get the whole staff together. One-on-one meetings aren't the same. People don't even hear the same when you talk to them one-on-one — they think you're talking about someone else. "Always have a plan and a goal. Plans usually don't work very well without a goal. Communicating your plans with people is not a one-time thing. Say your plan so they can say it back."
- > **Motivating staff.** "How do you motivate employees? Always change things. People can fall into a routine very easily. Always have a project."



Kenny Smith

Sheilah Craven



Michele Dwiggins



## BEST IDEAS

At the “Best Ideas” session, RPMDA attendees paid \$10 for a two-minute spot at the podium. There, they pitched their winning concepts, competing for the title of best idea-generator. Highlights:

> **Let customers choose the cause.**

“We gave 10 percent of a month’s sales back to an organization chosen by our customers,” said The Leading Note Manager Sheilah Craven, who won the “Best Ideas” session.

> **Shave heads for charity.** “Our stores collect \$1 on purchases at Christmastime, and we’ll give them to different organizations,” said Christie Smith of Long & McQuade. “One came up with ‘Who Can Shave a Rock Star?’ [The rock star] was well-known in the community. And they won the competition hands down.”

> **Leverage lenders.** “When we bought our new store in 2002, we needed to borrow money,” said Ruby Beeston, owner of Best In Music. “We went to the SBA [Small Business Administration] for a loan, but they wouldn’t let us pay it off early. We then went back to our bank, and they said ‘yes’ because we were already preapproved. And they would let us pay it off early. We still had to pay the SBA a penalty, but we saved a quarter of a million dollars by paying it off early.”

> **Celebrate famous artists.** “Being Chopin’s 200th anniversary, I’m playing all Chopin this year,” said Richard Dowling, owner of Dowling Music. “You could do this with all the composers.”

## LESSONS GOLD MINE

Group learning may be one of music retail’s last untapped gold mines. And as Michelle Webb and Michele Dwiggins showed, even dealers with music classes could be taking better advantage of them.

The Beacock Music education center directors, who co-hosted “The Art of Creating Group Classes,” run a program in Vancouver, Wash., that hit \$1 million in revenue last year, largely due to tireless promotion.

“The biggest promoter of our lessons is our sales staff,” Dwiggins said. “We let them know they need to be promoting lessons all the time.” This is accomplished via weekly meetings.

To publicize lessons in-store, they couple chalkboards with displays throughout the showroom — a children’s musical instrument table, for instance, might include a chalkboard that reads “Children’s Lessons Upstairs.” Staff wear buttons reminding customers that Beacock Music has music lessons. Students who advance from group classes to private lessons get a coupon waiving the company’s \$25 registration fee. Recitals and concerts are also held on site whenever possible.

“We like having concerts in the store because it creates a buzz,” Dwiggins said.

Beacock’s employees have also found a lucrative way to fill empty lesson studios in the morning: classes for the home school crowd. “[We] had very little morning lesson traffic,” Webb said. Not only does this get more potential customers in the store but, according to Webb, “it also sells product.”

Gayle Beacock, vice president of Beacock Music, added that offering home school classes helps teachers bring in more revenue.

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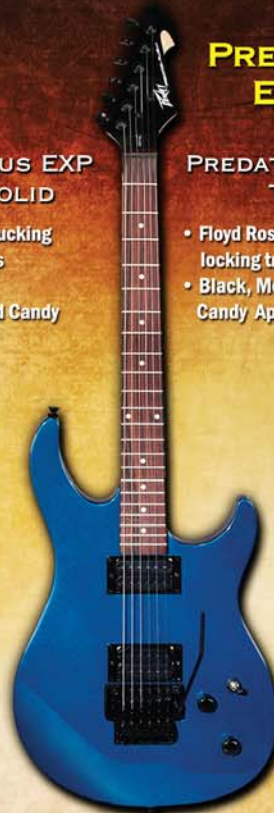
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# THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE



## LESSONS **LEARNED**

**M**usic retail is full of painful mistakes, eureka moments and all-out mysteries. (A surge in ukulele interest? Huh?) To celebrate *Music Inc.*'s 20th anniversary, 20 of the industry's leading retail voices reflect on their biggest business lessons. There are no philosophical musings here. In this special section, you'll find hard-learned, hard-hitting business advice. Some of it is painful, much of it's enlightened, all of it's essential. May it guide you to success over the next 20 years.

# GOOD PEOPLE ARE A BARGAIN

“GOOD PEOPLE DON’T PRODUCE 10- TO 20-PERCENT MORE. THEY PRODUCE 200- TO 300-PERCENT MORE.”

**CHIP AVERWATER CHAIRMAN**  
**AMRO MUSIC, MEMPHIS, TENN.**

..... Profit isn't cash flow and is often its opposite.

Most of us in this business have more than once asked, “If I’m doing so well, where the hell’s the money?” One of retailing’s great disappointments is the realization that making a profit doesn’t mean having cash in the bank. Profits require sales, and sales require investments in inventory, leasehold improvements and equipment. Accounts receivable compound the problem exponentially. Profits do improve the balance sheet, but the enhancement is seldom to cash in the bank. Ironically, it’s only when the cycle slows and investment is reduced that cash becomes available.

**+ Low wages aren’t a bargain. Good people are.** At one time, I thought almost anyone could guide customers to the accessories and ring up the sale. Too bad it took me so long to figure out a really good person could turn an accessory sale into an instrument sale. Low payroll is virtually always more than offset by poor performance, low production, mistakes, inefficiencies, lack of motivation and poor retention.

Musical instrument retailing has no jobs for which the quality of the employee is unimportant. Top salespeople sell multiples of those at the bottom. Buyers stock items that sell. Even a parking lot guard must be dependable, vigilant and honest — hardly universal traits. The bargain isn’t in paying less-than-competitive wages but in employing better people.

**+ Two stores don’t make twice as much.** Opening more stores is apparently in the DNA of music retailers. It’s irresistibly logical that a successful store — a proven retail concept — can be easily replicated. The same products, methods and operating systems should yield similar results in another location, only with improved economies of scale. It makes so much apparent sense that asking a dealer how many stores he has is almost the equivalent of asking if he’s successful or profitable. Ironically, they often have the opposite meaning. Added stores are seldom as profitable as the original, and often, they’re losers. Some of my friends jokingly advise others in their sharing group: “You’re making too much money. You need to open another store.”





**+ The most profitable store is the first. The least profitable is the second.** Second stores usually do a fraction of the volume of the original store, and profitability is even less proportionate — often negative. Apparently, no academic study has established the reasons for this, so we can guess with impunity that it's caused by less experience and dedication in store management, inadequate systems for multiple locations, diminished access to information, less decision and reaction power, and so on.

We often make these challenges even more formidable by designing second stores as smaller versions of the original. Stocking only the top sellers seems logical for increasing efficiency, but it backfires when customers bypass the small stores for larger selections.

**+ Good people don't produce 10- to 20-percent more. They produce 200- to 300-percent more.**

A dedicated employee doesn't just get his work done — he finds ways to do it faster and better. A disinterested employee doesn't just do a little less — he often doesn't get started. This is true for all employees, but it's most noticeable with salespeople because their sales are easily and commonly tracked. The best salespeople often sell two to three times the average — and even higher multiples of the low producers. Even after being given significantly higher pay, better employees are virtually always more profitable.

**+ A good salesperson is the high expense you want.**

A high-paid, high-selling salesperson is usually much more profitable than an average salesperson if for no other reason than his payroll is a smaller percentage of his sales and gross margins. But a good salesperson brings other advantages, too. He often talks with the same number of customers as the average salesperson but converts more of them. His efficiency saves the expenses of attracting more customers. His sales are usually cleaner — fewer returns and better customer satisfaction. And he provides a good example to the other salespeople. A top salesperson's pay shouldn't be a concern as long as it's within an acceptable percentage of his sales and gross margins.

**+ Managers don't create motivation — employees bring it.**

New employees are excited about their jobs. They're eager to learn their parts, hone their knowledge and skills, make their contributions, and become valuable team members. We don't create that motivation — employees have it on their first day. Our role is simply to explain the objectives to them, assure they get the necessary training and tools, provide ongoing information and feedback, and recognize and respect their efforts and contributions. When we do that well, their enthusiasm and commitment build with their abilities, and they're able to play increasingly important roles.

**+ Good people management is an attitude, not a technique.**

There's a wide gulf between good and bad managers, and it really comes down to one simple perception: Good managers understand that people are not only willing to work but want to be on the team and contribute to the company's goals. That attitude, more than any other characteristic or ability, defines the most inspirational and effective managers in our industry. They treat their people like willing, capable and valuable team members, and they help them get involved and contribute.

Bill McCormick of Jordan Kitt's Music used to say, "A company's most important assets walk out the door every evening. The manager's job is to make sure they come back the next day." When the manager has the right attitude, they will.

**+ A banking crisis is always just a personnel change away.**

Despite their ratios and rules, bankers find ways to rationalize almost any loans that strike their fancies — or walk away from the most conservative loans because "it just doesn't feel right" or because "last year we got burned by those."

A new banker means new and different preferences, memories, biases and decisions. In the most radical case, he can, seemingly on a whim, abandon an entire field of established lending. And finding a new banking relationship is far more challenging when it's not by choice. Every potential banker wonders what the previous banker knew.

**+ A satisfaction guarantee is an insurance policy on your reputation.**

A dissatisfied customer is costly to a store, as he will influence many other potential customers. Making sure your customers are happy isn't just good ethics, it's good economics. Satisfaction guarantees help head off the hard feelings and encourage unhappy customers to let you resolve the problem.

**+ Doing a lot of things makes you busy. Doing the right things makes you profitable.**

We have an irresistible tendency to assume our profits are proportionate to our sales of each product and activity. In truth, a few things we do make large profits while most other things make only losses. It's almost always more profitable to choose our products, activities, segments and customers thoughtfully and to narrow our focus and dominate carefully selected (profitable) markets.

**+ Trust takes years to build and minutes to destroy.**

We have to demonstrate consistent fairness over many individual situations for our employees to have confidence in how we'll treat them in the future. One instance of unpredictability or perceived unfairness forever haunts a relationship. This means we have to not only be fair but go overboard to be perceived as fair.

When we promise an employee something for the future, we should write it on our calendars or to-do lists. Forgetting is simply not an acceptable excuse, and renegeing is a sure way to destroy trust. If we lie to a customer or vendor, those who witness it will assume that's standard operating procedure with everyone. Once we've given our word, we must either meet or exceed it. Changing our minds, forgetting, falling short, renegeing or deceiving are simply not viable options.

# CHALLENGE YOUR TEAM

**“I ISSUED A CHALLENGE: WE WOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE RECESSION.”**

**CHUCK SURACK** PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER  
SWEETWATER SOUND, FORT WAYNE, IND.

At the end of 2008, it was clear that we were headed toward a major recession, and it was equally clear that we couldn't just sit back and let it happen without taking action.

So, we gathered the entire company together in January 2009. We discussed the situation, and I issued a challenge: We would not participate in the recession. I told the company that we were concerned about the economy but that I felt we were a team that could rise above and excel, even during a tough period.

We took a multipronged approach to meeting the recession head-on.

First, as a company, we did everything we could to get back to the core ideals that had brought us success.

Next, I held a meeting where I challenged the management staff to look for new strategies we could employ to save money, increase efficiency and build sales momentum. Every manager in every department was asked to participate, and I'm proud to say that everyone did participate. We came up with a lot of great ideas.

Then, the managers were asked to challenge the employees in their departments to come up with ideas. It was amazing to see how many great things came from this — literally everyone in the company made contributions.

As a result, we improved the company across the board, from our Web site to our business processes, from shipping to service and from new publications for our customers to new social marketing efforts. We even added new product lines that enhanced and expanded on our core products.

I'm proud to report that, due to the efforts of everyone here, we made it through a tough year — and with a record-breaking fourth quarter to top it off. The positive results have continued into 2010, as we've enjoyed even more record-breaking months so far this year.



## + The Recession Recovery Plan

Here are the key principles we stuck by to handle the challenge:

- 1. Require total company participation.** Everyone in every department contributed.
- 2. Return to core values.** We know what got us where we are, and we reinforced those ideals.
- 3. Think outside the box.** We looked for new ways to build, to diversify and to refresh.
- 4. Expand as well as contract.** It's as much of an attitude thing as anything, but my approach is always to look for ways to grow when faced with a challenge.
- 5. Have the right attitude.** The recession could have easily demoralized us. But I'm fortunate to have what I call my “Super Bowl” team — wonderful employees who embrace challenges, look for opportunities, don't complain about difficulties and are committed to the company's ideals. Not only am I proud of my employees but I'm also truly amazed by how their efforts produced stellar results that have exceeded even the highest expectations.

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# OPINIONS CAN BE COSTLY

“WHEN OFFERING YOUR OPINION, BE CAREFUL TO NOT MAKE IT APPEAR OR SOUND AS A STATEMENT OF FACT.”

**BILL EVERITT** PRESIDENT  
BROOK MAYS MUSIC, DALLAS

..... I have learned over time that, no matter how hard you try, some days you're the bug, and some days you're the windshield.

Is experience something you don't get until just after you need it? Why does it seem that no one listens to you until you have made a mistake? There is an old saying: Before you criticize someone or something, you should walk a mile in their shoes. Is it because when you criticize them you are a mile away and you have their shoes?

**+** Those of us in the music products industry should take pride in making and selling quality instruments because, when we produce and advocate higher quality, we are promoting the enjoyment of making music.

I have always believed that the quality of a musical instrument impacts the student's musical education. I believe that a good, quality instrument has a strong, positive effect on the beginner's ability to learn to play. Based on my experience, if the instrument does not play properly, the student becomes frustrated and often loses interest and quits prematurely — no matter how hard he or she tried to practice with a poor-quality instrument. Rather than experiencing the enjoyment of music making, the student endures the stigma of failure.

**+** Do you ever feel that your sole purpose in life is to serve as a warning to others? I have learned from experience that the definition of what is acceptable quality is determined not just by the salesperson, manufacturer's rep, musician, player, student and/or the teacher but also by the jury of non-musicians within our legal system (not system of justice). A statement regarding



Photo by Mark Orsiano

quality that your heart and mind know to be true can be found to be a malicious statement disparaging a person's property that can cause harm for which special damages may be awarded. I have learned that when offering your opinion, you must be careful to not make it appear or sound as a statement of fact.

“Is experience something you don't get until just after you need it?”

**+** Everyone is entitled to an opinion, but stating that opinion in a commercial environment without making it clear that it is an opinion can result in costly damages. Phrases such as “in my opinion” or “based upon my beliefs” or “based on my experience” will help make it clear that you are expressing an opinion, as opposed to a statement of fact.



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# DON'T FEAR PAIN

**“YOU MIGHT SAY IT WAS A CORPORATE ENEMA — FIVE MONTHS OF BUYING NEXT TO NOTHING AND SERIOUS INVENTORY REDUCTIONS.”**

**TED ESCHLIMAN CO-OWNER  
DIETZE MUSIC, LINCOLN, NEB.**

..... We've all experienced being on the other side of exclusivity at some point. Walking past the Executive Club in an airport terminal, witnessing a celebrity get front-of-the-line treatment or hearing from neighbors who wrangled premium seating at a sporting event. These can be irritating to those of us on the outside of that door — until the day comes when we get to go inside.

I'm coming up on my 30th anniversary with our store, and never in its 83-year history have we stiffed a creditor. We've never been guilty of no-pay, but for most of my tenure, we've endured perpetual slumps of slow-pay — and way more than I'd like to remember. But something happened in 2007 that changed the course of our company's history. What I thought would be the darkest months of my professional career turned into a financial cleansing that put us on the track to prosperity.

**+ We had a multidecade relationship with our local bank end abruptly, at their choice.** Their auditors became convinced that, due to the way we ran our business, we'd be unlikely to fulfill our multimillion-dollar commitment to them anytime soon, and they called the loan.

My fellow stockholders dropped into an emotional — not to mention financial — tailspin that had us clamoring for help, and after a gut-wrenching six months, we were able to find a local banker that would back us. Of course, they made it conditional, including a major change in our accountant and the close scrutiny of regular monthly reports, including inventory and cash flow. They also made us separate our school rental business accounting from the rest of our operation, a move fellow columnist Alan Friedman has been advocating in our industry for years.

**+ We made the changes and cleaned house, so to speak.** We tightened up on old-school philosophies about margins and turns, as well as better purchasing. We took a closer look at our labor, expenses and product mixes. You might say it was a corporate enema — five months of buying next to nothing and serious inventory reductions. Improvement was not immediate, but with these changes, we ate the elephant one bite at a time.



We made hard decisions. We dropped unprofitable lines we were fond of. We ordered less than what our reps demanded — go figure — and, most importantly, focused on paying our vendors on time. We passed on tempting volume discounts when the turn-to-cash ratio didn't make sense, and we purged, purged, purged inventory. (Today, our guitar department inventory is 15-percent lower, yet we still maintain sales volume.) We looked at the numbers, including relentless reports of “date last sold,” becoming ruthless about how complete we needed to be in our breadth of SKUs. We became less tolerant of product birthdays.

**+ Move the calendar forward four years,** and let me tell you about the Secret Club. A funny thing happens when you are current with your vendors. All of a sudden, off-the-card deals appear. Vendors have situations where they need to move slow stock at low pricing, but cash is king, and these are offered only to dealers with spotless payables. With this product, key dealers have exclusive profit opportunities. Throw in a prepay discount of 2–7 percent, and you're talking pure, unadulterated bottom-line profit.

**+ A word about finance charges.** In the past, we looked at them as a cost of doing business when, in reality, they're nothing short of negative profit. The difference between paying interest and getting prepay discounts is exponential gain — simply, more money to make more money. We could never have accomplished this without good accounting advice and a heaping dose of humility. But today, we sure are enjoying being part of the Secret Club.

# PROFIT FROM SERVICES

“LOOK AT OTHER INDUSTRIES, AND SEE HOW THEY ARE BUNDLING SERVICES.”

**DONOVAN BANKHEAD** GENERAL MANAGER, SPRINGFIELD MUSIC, SPRINGFIELD, MO.

.....**+** **If you offer a music lessons program, don't just do it for traffic and a little bit of money.** Create and build a lesson program that's a profit center. There are plenty of businesses that provide education for profit, so it's easy to find business models to steal. Look at other successful music store lesson programs outside of your market. Also, check out your local gymnastics, karate and ballet schools. They operate on a for-profit model, and you'll be shocked how much they charge for group lessons.



**+ Set repair prices so that you make money.** But more importantly, look at other industries, and see how they are bundling services. Who gets just an oil change anymore? The place I go to changes my oil, does a 17-point inspection on the rest of my car, replaces my air filter every other time, washes and vacuums my car, and even provides a loaner vehicle — all for a little bit more than your average national oil and lube place.

# GET NUMBERS HELP

“WE HAD ENJOYED 20 YEARS OF STEADY GROWTH, AND ALL OF SUDDEN, THAT STOPPED.”

**JIM RUPP** OWNER, COLUMBUS PERCUSSION, COLUMBUS, OHIO

.....**+** **You have to focus on the numbers.** That is not my natural strength. Like most musicians, I like dealing with people, and I love the gear, but you are running a business. You've got to focus on the numbers. When the economy contracted, we had enjoyed 20 years of steady growth, and all of sudden, that stopped. We shrank a little bit, and then I was determined that marketing would keep us growing. It didn't keep us growing. We have a consultant that helps us look over things. We have new software, which has really helped us analyze our inventory numbers and our margin numbers, and that has helped.

**+ We became more determined than ever to stock heavier on those products that were really turning quickly** and not letting anything celebrate an anniversary, if you will. Focus on never being out of key products, and never let anything sit too long. It's classic inventory management. The fun thing, for me, is my son is involved now. He's 24, he's really bright, and he's really good at the numbers. We have fun working together, too.

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# THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A WHITE LIE

**“MY LIE WASN'T INTENTIONAL. THAT DIDN'T CHANGE THE FACT THAT, AFTER THIS INCIDENT, I LEARNED TO NEVER B.S. CUSTOMERS.”**

**KENNY SMITH** FORMER MANAGER

GOODMAN MUSIC, COVINA, CALIF. (NOW A CONSULTANT)

..... During my sales training seminars, I've often said, “I'm not up here because I've done everything right. I've made more mistakes than anyone in the room.” I'm not proud of it, but hopefully, sharing some of my crash-and-burn stories will spare others from doing the same stupid things I've done.

**+ Lying, even unintentionally, can ruin a relationship with a customer.** I was 18, working behind the counter in a music store, and a customer asked me which harmonica was better, a Hohner Marine Band or a Blues Harp. I'd just started working there and didn't know anything about harmonicas. I was familiar with the Marine Band name, though, so I said, “This one,” and the customer bought it.

A few months later, the same customer came back and asked me the same question. By this time, I'd changed my opinion and recommended the Blues Harp. He said, “You don't remember me, but the last time I was here, I asked you the same question and you said the Marine Band, so you're just a big liar and I'm not going to shop here anymore.” My lie wasn't intentional. That didn't change the fact that, after this incident, I learned to never B.S. customers and to be more careful with how I answered questions.

**+ Don't talk about sex, politics or religion.** During my first day selling on the floor, three ladies came in together. They were on the organ committee at a church. I was a long-haired high school student, and early on in the conversation, they asked me, “Where do you go to church?” Let's just say I gave the wrong answer, and the demo ended there.

You can and should avoid getting into conversations that easily spell disaster. If you get asked one of these questions, say, “There's an old rule in sales: Never talk about sex, politics or religion.” Then, continue on as if nothing happened. I've never had a customer continue to drill me on these topics after I've given this response. And most of the time, I've still gotten the sale.



**+ Don't be insensitive.** One lady accused me of being the worst salesman she'd ever met. Back in the 1970s, when the movie “Deliverance” came out, everyone wanted a five-string banjo. They were back-ordered and hard to find. A lady brought in her daughter to get one as a graduation present, and we had two in stock: a \$99 model and a \$449 model. I went on and on about the more expensive banjo and pointed out that the cheaper one had a plastic resonator. They ended up buying the \$99 model.

About an hour later, I got a call from the lady, and she was livid. She said her daughter had pooled all of her graduation money to get the banjo, and I made her feel as if she got a really cheap instrument. Furthermore, she explained the only reason they bought it from me was because no one else had one. This impacted me quite a bit. It taught me to shut up, listen harder and never belittle products.

**+ A few months ago, I blew a big deal by being cocky.** I told the customer he was wrong about how he was planning to install some ceiling speakers in a classy lobby. He wanted surface-mount speakers so he could save money, and I told him they would look ugly. Nevertheless, he went the cheaper route, and someone else got his business. I should have been more humble, less opinionated and not such an expert when I went on the call.





## PREJUDGE AT YOUR OWN PERIL

**JEFF MOZINGO PRESIDENT**  
**MOZINGO MUSIC, ST. LOUIS**

..... There have been times when customers have entered our store with messy hair and dirty clothes, looking as if they hadn't showered in weeks. A salesman's first instinct might be to think it would be a waste of time helping a customer like this. He assumes the customer won't be able to afford anything.

I remember a time when an individual matching that description came into our store. He smelled terrible and looked as though the only thing he came to do was cause trouble. Instead of helping him, we watched him closely to make sure he didn't steal anything. He looked around the store for a while and walked out the front door.

We came to find out later that he was the son of a local real estate tycoon. The day he walked into Mzingo Music, he had several thousand dollars in his wallet ready to spend on a keyboard for his home studio. Since we failed to help him, he went to one of our competitors and spent his money on one of their keyboards.

Through that scenario, I learned that customer service should never be based upon a customer's appearance. Everyone who walks through our doors should receive the Mzingo Music experience. They should walk out of our store with their product, feeling great and wanting to tell their friends and family about the positive experience they had in our store.

# SELLING IS LIKE MARRIAGE

**“RELATIONSHIPS WORK WHEN PEOPLE FEEL SAFE. IF YOUR CUSTOMER DOES NOT FEEL SAFE, YOUR SALE IS NOT SAFE.”**

**JOHN PEDERSEN OWNER**

**PEDERSEN'S BAND & ORCHESTRA, BURBANK, CALIF.**

..... I've always been fascinated by the psychology of sales. But when I've taken sales training courses and studied different techniques, I often came away feeling there was something missing from the underlying approach. If you've been selling for a while, you'll agree that the basic techniques of opening, discovery and closing can feel cold and mechanical. The psychoanalytic sales approach — trying to figure out your customers' personality types and modifying your language to help them feel comfortable — is a good start, but again, something is still missing from it.

One day it hit me that I've known what it was for some time: I've learned more about sales from marriage counseling than any professional development course.

### + Safety First

Making a sale begins with making a relationship. Relationships work when people feel safe. If your customer does not feel safe, your sale is not safe. When your customer does feel safe, your position in the process changes dramatically.

Establishing a sense of safety requires complete honesty on your part. This means selling only quality products. If you fail to put the customer's best interests as your priority, the safety net is gone. However, once a sense of safety becomes your prime directive, all of the common sales techniques work a lot better.

### + Get Permission

People feel respected, empowered and, most of all, safe when asked for permission. Say something like, “May I ask you a few questions about your son's involvement in the music program at his school?” This is the very best opening. It automatically leads to the discovery you need to close the sale. It happens because your customer is no longer afraid, and trust is starting to form the basis of a relationship.

Your job is still not finished. You must continue to deserve that trust, but in your new trusted position, you don't need to be afraid to sell. You can finally let loose with all the product knowledge you have worked so hard to learn and do it with a clean heart. I sincerely believe most people can intuitively feel whether they are safe or not.



# DON'T BE AFRAID TO SAY YOU'RE SORRY

**“SOME MIGHT SAY THERE'S NO ROAD BACK FROM THE DEAD, BUT EVEN IN THE MOST DIRE CASES, THERE CAN BE.”**

**LIZ REISMAN PRESIDENT**

**CREATIVE MUSIC CENTER, MONROE, CONN.**

..... The first spring I was in business, I was out visiting band directors for the first time. I had never done this before, as I had come from outside the music industry with a background in journalism. I certainly had experience meeting and talking with people I didn't know — and powerful ones at that. As a sports writer, I had interviewed such famous athletes as Mike Tyson, Michael Jordan, David Robinson and Don Mattingly. Then came my first meeting with my local band director. I still have the bruises. She darn near threw me out of her office, yelling and screaming that she wasn't going to do business with me because the prior owner had treated her badly. I was shocked.

A few days later, I stumbled into another band director's office. This time, my heart was racing, and I was visibly sweating. I could barely get any words out. However, his arms were wide open. At the end of the meeting, he smiled and said he would gladly put my contracts out for his band kids. As the saying goes, “That was easy.”

With my confidence restored, I headed back to the office — and promptly did nothing. Months went by, until one day in August, I stopped in to drop off the contracts. A week later, a friend of mine whose daughter was joining his band stopped by the store. She had just been at an informational meeting for new band kids.

“I saw all your contracts in the garbage,” she said.

What? Outrage! How could this be? He'd promised.

I wrote him a scathing e-mail. I think I even used the phrase, “But you promised!” And then, I CC'd a few people, including the principal. I may have even CC'd the superintendent. It's been so long, I can't remember — or maybe it's memory loss from BDSS (Band Director Stress Syndrome).

He promptly replied with a scathing e-mail, which began, “I have never met anyone from any music store or anywhere who is as pushy and obnoxious as you,” and “I will never do business with you.”

I was done with him. I was done with that district. Cooked.



Some might say there's no road back from the dead, but even in the most dire cases, there can be. Two long years after this debacle, I decided to write him a letter. I owed him an apology. In it, I confessed my ignorance over “how things are done” and my stupidity CC'ing everyone in the district. I also mentioned that he wasn't the first to label me “pushy” — I had been a journalist, after all — but his words had stuck with me. I closed by telling him I had learned my lesson and changed my ways. I had.

## ⊕ He never wrote back.

However, today, we are back in the school district. We were invited back the year after my letter went out. I have no evidence that the letter was *the* factor or *a* factor, but I do think a sincere apology and explanation goes a long way in life — and in business.

*Kevin, Frank And The Entire Music Inc. Team...*

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# BUILD THE PROGRAM, NOT THE TEACHER

**“DON’T GET IN A SITUATION WHERE YOU LOSE YOUR ROCK BAND CLASS BECAUSE THE TEACHER LEFT.”**

**PETE GAMBER** OWNER

**ALTA LOMA MUSIC, RANCHO CUCAMONGA, CALIF.**

When I started Alta Loma Music, I had lots of creative music teachers with great ideas and activities in the lessons program. But as time progressed, teachers left, and no one knew what they did or how they did it. Suddenly, there was no bluegrass class or jazz project, and we didn’t have a good explanation for our customers as to why the program disappeared. Not a great way to develop more lessons or retain students.

I was relying on people, not programs. Music lessons became a roller coaster, and we never knew when the next dip would happen. And I soon discovered that this approach to lessons was the norm at most music stores.

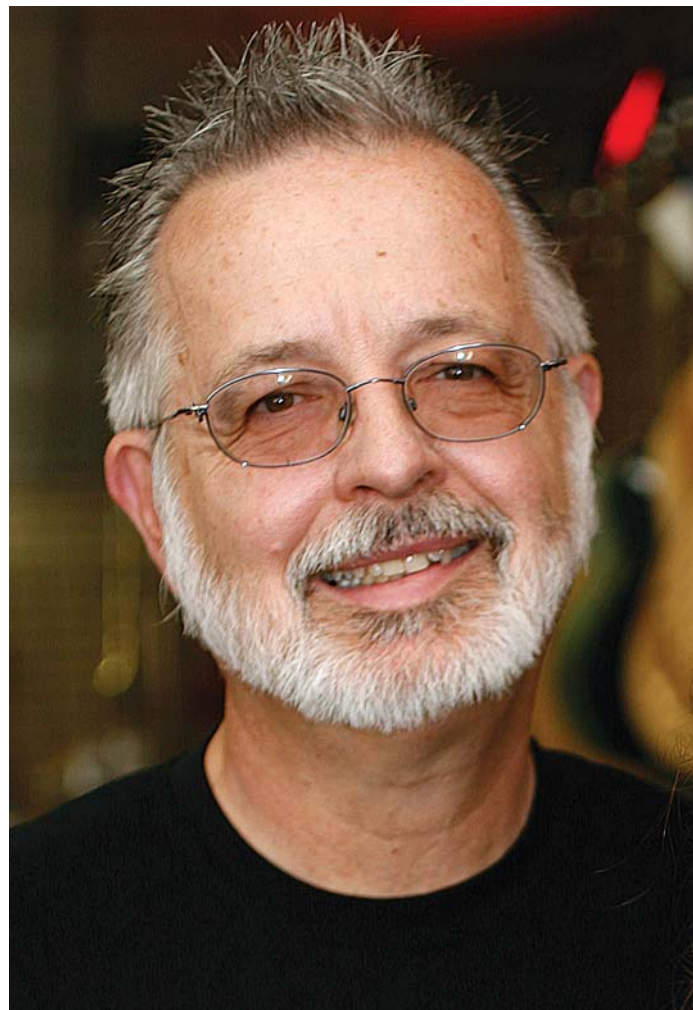
Music teachers and staff move on, but music lessons programs stay. If you base your lessons and reputation on certain teachers and they go to your competition, your competitors essentially have your program. Your program needs to exist no matter who comes or goes. The activities, events and vibe of your program need to be viable and consistent no matter who’s on your teaching staff.

## **+ Get All Teachers Involved**

Don’t get in a situation where you lose your rock band class because the teacher left. Develop classes, programs and events as multiple-teacher activities. Involve all related instructors. Drum contests need to include all drum teachers. Student showcases need to involve every teacher in your lessons program. This will guarantee the program’s survival no matter who’s there. So if Jimmy The Drum Teacher leaves, the other two drum teachers know how to host the drum contest.

By doing this, I created a program that I could integrate music teachers into. Events also became accessible to all students, not just Jimmy’s drum students. Plus, we recommended teachers use the same books. This way, all the students in our program, regardless of instrument, were often learning the same 10 songs. Student showcases became much more fun!

Don’t get me wrong: Your music lessons program needs every teacher’s different ideas and approaches. But these need to be integrated into a sustainable format — something you can



**“Student showcases need to involve every teacher in your lessons program.”**

integrate present music teachers and future teachers into. And as time progresses, improvements will refine what you have going on and add new dimensions to your program.

To quote a lesson learned from John DeFoor, a jazz educator and mentor of mine who recently passed away, “If everyone quit Maynard Ferguson’s band tonight, he’d have a new band tomorrow — and it would still be Maynard! You dig?” The same should be true of your lessons program.

# THOSE WHO CAN, TEACH

“HAVING THE CONFIDENCE TO MOVE FORWARD WITH LESSONS HAD A HUGE IMPACT.”

## MYRNA SISLEN OWNER

MIDDLE C MUSIC, WASHINGTON, D.C.

At Summer NAMM five or six years ago, there was a panel of independent retail business owners, and the question was: If you could expand, what would you do? And every single one of them said exactly the same thing — lessons, lessons, lessons, lessons. Because of that, I had the confidence when the opportunity arose to double my space and add four lesson rooms. I now have eight lesson rooms.

When I came into this, I had zero retail experience. Zero. Somehow, it seemed to me that the best way to succeed was to not depend on only one thing. In my mind, it was three things: One was retail, which was print, accessories and instruments. The other was lessons, and the third was rentals. Having the confidence from listening to those other retailers to move forward with lessons had a huge impact. If there was any hesitation, it was gone. I credit everybody else with whatever success I have because everybody else was telling me what they did and what worked for them. I'd just do the same thing.

⊕ **I hate to say this, but my biggest mistake was starting out with a partner.** I didn't know it was going to be a mistake, having to deal with dissolving the partnership and dealing with the lawsuit that came after it. What seemed to be perfect was not. I've heard, in business, it's not unusual for partnerships not to work. Even though it was the biggest mistake, it turned out to be the very best thing because I don't think there is any way I could have the success that I am having right now without doing it on my own.

⊕ **Integrate your store into your community.** If I had not done that as part of the natural course I'd chosen to do business, when Best Buy decided to put that music store within their store 100 feet from my door, I would've been gone. If you make yourself part of your community, your community, for the most part, will support you. If you make yourself into a place where people want to come and that they value, they will protect you in ways you'd never anticipate.

Once you have lessons, you've got moms coming in. You've got families that come in. Parents start taking lessons, and they are happy with it. They start talking, and it becomes a place where everybody know everyone else. It's a neighborhood that values these kinds of services I am making accessible.

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# THE RETAIL EXPERIENCE IS EVERYTHING

**“I DID COUNTLESS RENOVATIONS THROUGH THE YEARS, BUT I NEVER HAD THE GUTS TO SCRAP EVERYTHING.”**

**GERSON ROSENBLUM FORMER OWNER**

**MEDLEY MUSIC, BRYN MAWR, PA. (CURRENT MANAGING DIRECTOR OF WECHTER GUITARS)**

..... A few months ago, smack dab in the middle of the Great Recession, I had my Mac laptop in for service at the local Apple store. When they called to tell me it was complete, I asked what time they opened the next day. They told me retail hours began at 10 a.m. but I could feel free to drop by any time after 8.

The next morning, I arrived two hours prior to the official opening to find the place buzzing with activity. Apparently, Apple and all of its customers had elected to not participate in the recession. There was an unmistakable feeling of electricity in the air, as clients thirsty for knowledge and a technology fix interacted with pimple-faced, T-shirt-donning geeks. People were engaged in group classes and one-on-one instruction. They were shopping, playing and completely engulfed in a sea of technological bliss. What’s more, they were spending money. By the time I left with my newly fixed computer — and the handful of accessories I couldn’t resist — I was completely energized.

## + Music Store Monotony

By contrast, the next day I found myself in a typical music store. Since closing my own retail store, I’ve been doing a good bit of consulting for a large cross section of music stores — chains and independents. I’ve visited some of the largest and some of the smallest dealers. I’ve seen stores from every segment and in a lot of different markets. And the similarities are incredibly obvious. There’s the slatwall, the showcases full of accessories, the same basic display fixtures. There’s a focus on product and little emphasis on the lifestyle implications of those products. Most stores even smell the same. And then there are the sales associates, those dear folks whose days are interrupted by the occasional customer.

Before I go any further, understand that I’m keenly aware of some wonderful stores, some talented people working in them and some creative presentations that exist around the country. That said, I feel confident in my assertion that they are the minority.

Back at the Apple store, any resemblance to retail-as-usual is nonexistent. In 2001, Steve Jobs set out to reinvent retail, starting from scratch to create an experience as unique as his company’s computers. He focused less on the products and much more on how people use them. He realized that specs don’t sell computers.



People want to know what’s in it for them, and he gave them the opportunity to use the products and visualize how much better their lives could be with these tools at their disposal. And he did all this in an atmosphere that’s at once visually inviting and completely devoid of external distractions. Think about it. Have you ever heard a telephone ring in an Apple store?

## + The Courage to Stand Out

Think of any time you’ve upgraded your retail space. How much time did you spend figuring out how to fit in the products? Then, how much time did you invest in addressing the needs and desires of your customers? Did you give any thought to what motivates your typical customer to frequent your store or any store? Are they really coming in for that new guitar? On the surface, maybe so, but I contend that it’s the passion for playing music that’s our customers’ deepest motivator. And we routinely overlook that basic driving force in how we present ourselves. What we do is like showing a computer with no software installed.

It takes courage to do things differently than they’ve been done before. And because we tend to stick to the accepted, our stores often look much like other stores. I did countless renovations through the years, but I never had the guts to scrap everything and start over from an entirely fresh perspective. We dress our stores up a little differently, but they’re still the same at their core. Well, in an experiment in Tysons Corner, Va., Steve Jobs took retail, broke all the rules and the rest is history. Isn’t it time to learn from a great example and take that leap?

“SALES ARE UP MORE THAN TWO AND A HALF TIMES WHAT THEY WERE AT OUR PREVIOUS STORE.”



## DON'T UNDERESTIMATE RETAIL STORE DESIGN

**JON HABER** PRESIDENT

ALTO MUSIC, MIDDLETOWN, N.Y.

..... The way a store is merchandised is so much more important than most people realize. We moved into our new store three weeks ago, and the design is beautiful. We're a mile and a half up the road from the original Alto Music location, but I might as well have moved the store to another planet. The difference is night and day. We put up an announcement on Facebook that we're open. Other than that, we've done no advertising, and sales are up more than two and a half times what they were at our previous store — and it was instantaneous. I knew sales would be up, but it happened much faster than I thought it would.

Location is a big part of it, but it's also display. People are walking in, and they're new people — not just return customers. When they're in, they're spending more time here, saying, “I didn't know I needed this.” There were some guitars that had been hanging up in the previous store for years. I put them in this new store, and they sold in three days. I sold them for full price, too — out the door. And it was the same guitar!

And since the economy stinks right now, I'm paying roughly the same in rent for the new, larger space as I was in the previous location. It was a no-brainer. And rent would've been *double* two years ago.

We've hired Paul Hirsch to design our stores. He comes from outside the music industry. He has proved to me time and time again what a difference store design makes.

If business is tough, look in the mirror. You can't blame it all on the economy, and you can't blame it on people not walking in. You have to give them a reason to walk in.

“I might as well have moved the store to another planet.”

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# LEARN FROM OTHERS' MISTAKES, SUCCESSES

**"I REGULARLY SEEK THE COUNCIL OF MY TECHNICIANS, EMPLOYEES AND FAMILY ABOUT HOW TO IMPROVE MY STORE."**

**GRANT BILLINGS OWNER**

**STEINWAY PIANO GALLERY, MADISON, WIS.**

Those who are wise often come across as being funny, and those who are funny often appear wise. I'm not sure which my father was trying to be when he taught me one of the greatest lessons I've ever learned about the music business — and about life.

"If you can manage to learn from my mistakes and your grandfather's mistakes, you'll do just fine," he said one day. It was a passing comment, said more at me than to me since I was probably 10 or 11 years old at the time. I was hanging around the store, and he said it as he walked out of his office to blow off steam. My dad had just learned something the hard way, and the best outlet he could think of for his frustration was to toss a quip my way.

I have no idea exactly what happened that day. I didn't ask and doubt he'd remember if I asked him now. In that moment of frustration, he had managed to remind himself that every mistake is a learning opportunity. This simple idea would eventually become the compass for my career.

**+** **When my family decided to open a second store**, Dad announced quite certainly that I would be making the decisions — about everything. From the color of the carpet to the shape of the ceiling tiles, he'd offer advice if I asked for it, but the final decision would be mine. "It's going to be your store. You're the one who's going to have to live there."

There are two fascinating things about business owners in the music industry. First, they are incredibly generous with their time and ideas. It's as if they all recognize a personal benefit in helping others avoid making the same mistakes they've made. Second, they own their mistakes. They chisel them into granite. They erect monuments to them.

So I took advantage. I not only asked Dad for advice but called dozens of music dealers who had recently built, remodeled or closed a store. The informal interviews focused on what people believed they had done wrong. "If you were doing it again, what would you change?" was my opener. Those who'd



built typically said they would have built smaller. Those who'd remodeled said they would have stuck to their original budget. Everyone who'd closed a satellite store said they would have done it a lot sooner.

**+** **While I take tremendous pride in the design, flow and operation of my store**, I see it as a testament to the generosity of those who helped me develop the concept. In that tradition, I regularly seek the council of my technicians, employees, family and others about how to improve it. My staff is now prepared at our biweekly meetings for the question I always ask at the end, "So how does the store look? What's not working?" They never fail to offer valuable insight or suggestions, and nearly all of these have been implemented.

While I have certainly made my share of mistakes, I continue to find a lesson in each of them. Still, I consider myself fortunate to have dodged some costly ones along the way, thanks to my dad and grandfather.



# EXPAND WITH CAUTION

**“I HAD PEOPLE WARN ME, BUT I DID IT ANYWAY.”**

**GARY FORKUM OWNER**

**FORK'S DRUM CLOSET, NASHVILLE, TENN.**

**+ Right now, I might say opening a second store was a big mistake.** I am three years into it, and I am about to get out of it. With the economy and downward trend in sales, it was a drain on the main store. I think it was a good idea initially — it was just bad timing with the economy. The first year, it did well, but then the recession hit. It's in a smaller town that's not as diverse as Nashville, and they don't have the dollars that we have in this area. Expansion is something I warn people about doing. I had people warn me, but I did it anyway.

**+ Keep open communication with credit managers when you can't pay your bills.** That is one of the biggest complaints I hear from suppliers in the industry — retailers not communicating with credit managers and not doing what they say they are going to do. Most of them will be lenient with you. They will work with you. They want your business, and they want to help you, but if you don't



communicate with them, then you are never going to make it. Just be true to your word. If you can't pay right away, you call and say, “I'll send you half of what I told you.” They hate when you dodge them.

**+ I've been doing this 28 years, and my wife has been helping me maybe for half of that.** I was a drummer who started a business. I wasn't a businessman who started a business. I had to learn to become a businessman after the fact. So, having my wife come to work for me and help me with the books and with paying bills was a huge asset. Have a good bookkeeper to watch every invoice to make sure you pay your bills on time. That is the biggest thing.



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## WORK ON, NOT IN, YOUR BUSINESS

PETER DODS OWNER, EASY MUSIC CENTER, HONOLULU

.....+ I went to Summer NAMM for the first time two years ago because of my new membership with the Alliance of Independent Music Merchants group. There, I had a conversation with George Hines of George’s Music about how I was worried about the store — this was the longest I’d ever been away from it. He smiled and asked if I’d ever read *The E-Myth Revisited*.

+ The central theme of this book is that you have to work on your business rather than in your business. Great things happen when you begin to approach your business this way. After reading the book, I quickly realized that I was way too bogged down in the day-to-day details of running my business. And the most important things I should’ve been doing for the business were the things I was doing the least.

+ For the first time in four years, I realized that it was time to let go and stop micromanaging. I took one of my youngest salespeople out of sales and put him in the role of the “ordering guy.” I didn’t just pass off my ordering to him. I showed him a systematic and quantitative way that I wanted it done. It was difficult at first. It required extra time to show him

how to run the process, and it was very hard to let go. I found myself jumping in to help too often in the beginning, but as time went on, this very capable young man was able to do it by himself. All of a sudden, I found myself with time to start working on my business again.

+ I began to take a look at where my business was doing well and where it wasn’t. I realized that we had a big problem with fixtures and storage. Our customer base had grown too fast, and our facilities hadn’t kept up with the foot traffic. I’ve since renovated my acoustic guitar room; built lessons studios; renovated my ukulele wall and bass wall; installed security cameras; overhauled a few of my storage rooms; greatly expanded my music lessons program with new teachers and students; worked on new protocol, systems and guidelines for my employees; developed training and operations manuals; gotten my finances in better order; and worked on doing a better job interviewing new employees — all of the things I needed to be doing to make my business stronger. In the first years of doing this, we tripled in size. It was too much for me to manage by myself. Delegating responsibly, hiring responsibly and trusting in the people I work with is the biggest lesson I’ve learned so far.



## REACH EVERY PERSON DIFFERENTLY

**PETE SIDES** OWNER

**ROBERT M. SIDES FAMILY MUSIC CENTER, WILLIAMSPORT, PA.**

### ..... + My biggest mistake was not having a better human

**resources skill set** to complement my strengths as a salesman and sales manager. My management style of “my way or the highway” burned a lot of good people out of our business. I’ve come to discover that, while I was often correct in my evaluations and goals for them, I failed to communicate their successes and failures in a way that benefitted them and the company.

In 1996, Samuel Music introduced me to the Predictive Index personality profile software, which applies a scientific approach to determining how best to communicate with various types of employee profiles. Since then, we’ve found that we’re not putting as many square pegs in round holes, and I’ve learned to be able to relate better to those who process information differently than I do.

### ..... + My exposure to NAMM and the early Scull groups really changed the direction of our business.

That broader perspective led to much of our growth and success. I quickly discovered that you can’t expect to get better by being the best in your town, county or region. There were better benchmarks out there, but you had to make the effort to discover them.

# TRUST YOUR GUT — AND ACT

“IF YOU FIND YOURSELF SAYING, ‘THEY’RE JUST GETTING THEIR FOOTING,’ MAYBE YOU’RE AVOIDING THE INEVITABLE.”

**KEVIN CRANLEY** PRESIDENT

**WILLIS MUSIC, FLORENCE, KY.**

..... + **My biggest mistake is not trusting my gut.** When it comes to making important decisions, I find myself guilty of overthinking, hoping things will change or not wanting to make the difficult decision.

This is probably most costly and obvious when it involves personnel decisions. I certainly don’t like to prejudge people, but how long does it take before you have a very good idea about how well a new hire is going to work out? Unfortunately, it can be as little as your first shift with them. If you find yourself saying, “They’re just getting their footing,” or “Maybe they’re just nervous,” maybe you’re avoiding the inevitable. I cannot tell you the number of times I ended up firing or reassigning someone months after I knew that it wouldn’t work out.

The consequences aren’t just lost time and money. The biggest cost, by far, is the loss of respect and commitment from your best employees. I’m not saying we aren’t responsible to train, mentor and develop our people. I’m referring to those cases when you know in your gut very quickly that this is not a good fit. When you make a mistake, admit it quickly, and fix it.

..... + **My biggest lesson is to become involved.** For the early years of my career, my company and I kept to ourselves. What a big mistake that was! I since became involved with the Retail Print Music Dealers Association. Initially, I attended the convention, then presented during an educational session, then finally joined the board for several years. In time, each event or meeting allowed me to meet new people. Before long, we became part of the Alliance of Independent Music Merchants group, along with a sharing group. Each of these groups has been beneficial to Willis Music and to me personally, and I am confident that we have helped others along the way. Sure, it takes work and time, which is so limited, but the benefits are great. With each encounter comes additional opportunities. On top of all this, some of our very best friends are people we’ve met through the industry, and that will last a lifetime.



# BUILD A SERVANT LEADERSHIP MENTALITY

**“I HAVE LEARNED THAT CONFIDENCE IS IMPORTANT, BUT ARROGANCE IS DEADLY.”**

**GEORGE HINES** PRESIDENT

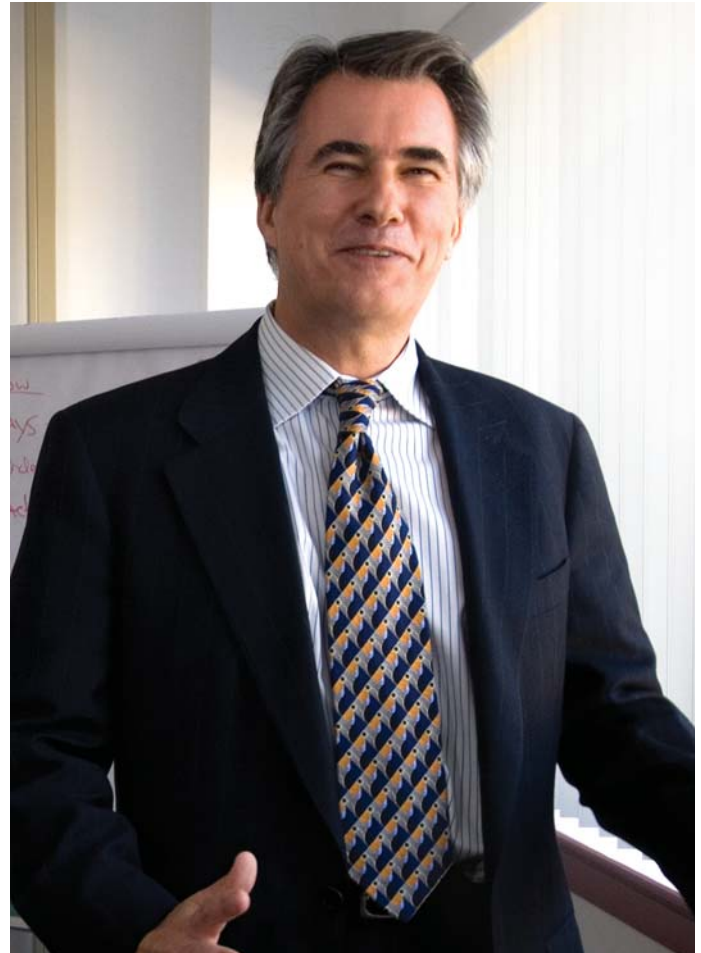
GEORGE'S MUSIC, BERWYN, PA.

**+ Honesty and integrity really do matter.** In business, you meet many types of people. You don't need to have many bad experiences to learn the importance of honesty and integrity. I decided early on that I was only interested in working with people, either on our own staff or outside the company, who agreed with this principle. It has become a non-negotiable for me.

**+ Don't waste resources.** I've been known to watch every dollar and have always looked for the cost-effective way to get things done. Part of this was most likely inspired by a lack of money and resources as a startup business. There's a saying: Scarcity creates value. That scarcity made me value every resource as my business grew, and I never forgot that lesson. Getting more done with less has allowed us to remain financially healthy during good times and more challenging times.

**+ Deal with problems quickly and decisively.** Most issues don't resolve themselves. I have found through the years that failing to deal with problems as soon as possible creates bigger problems in the future. I now believe that it's better to confront the problem quickly, have that uncomfortable conversation and begin the dialogue that will bring the situation to resolution. Spoiled milk never smells better a day later.

**+ Give your employees some “skin in the game.”** I have learned that people want to be actively engaged when there's something in it for them. George's Music has been a success financially, and I believe it's because of our performance-driven mentality. With no family members involved in George's Music, we were free to look at the existing staff as the future leaders and potential owners of our company. Several years ago, we instituted an employee stock ownership plan that shares the stock and profits with our existing employees. If our employees take great care of our customers and continue to help grow the business, they will share in the financial rewards. It's now part of our culture. You don't need to give away your company stock to achieve this. You can also put a profit sharing plan or something similar in place. The idea is to engage your people by having them get rewarded for the financial success of the company.



**+ Keep your ego in check.** I have learned that confidence is important, but arrogance is deadly. Every time I started believing my own press, something would go wrong. To help me keep this in check, I built a servant leadership mentality into our company culture. This means that I work for our customers through and with our sales and management teams. I am fortunate to possess what I believe is a healthy degree of confidence and was blessed to be raised by parents who reminded me that being fortunate doesn't mean you are better than others. In my business life, that has translated to an understanding that success is earned and not owed to anyone, and that there are no guarantees. Our success is tied directly to the actions of many people, and our leadership can influence those actions. I remind myself daily that my personal success is a result of blessings and the hard work of the many people in our company who take great care of our customers on a daily basis and that we need to earn that business every day. A dose of humility has served me well.



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Bob Willcutt of Willcutt Guitars

BY ZACH PHILLIPS



# TONE POWERHOUSES

Lunchbox-style amp heads deliver tube tone in pint-sized formats

Mesa Boogie's booth rang with all-tube glory at this January's NAMM show, only the sound didn't come from a 100-watt amp. It came from the TransAtlantic TA-15 — a 12-pound, 25-watt powerhouse small enough to fit in someone's briefcase.

With a \$900 price tag, the TransAtlantic represents the apex of tube-based lunchbox guitar amp heads. Still, it's just one model in a growing product category.

"The format has an extremely broad range of appeal, starting with hobbyists playing for their own enjoyment, especially those in smaller living environments, but then it can also be the preferred choice of a professional for a specific performance application," said Steve Mueller, sales general manager for Mesa Boogie.

"Players are discovering that they can get a great cranked tube power amp tone at a much lower level using a smaller, lower-wattage tube power amp," said Bruce Egnater, chief designer at Egnater, which produces the award-winning Rebel-20 and -30 heads.

Lunchbox-style amps have found a niche among live musicians who crave portability, rich feature sets and lower stage volumes, as well as among home studio hobbyists who seek ideal tube tone without ear-

splitting volume levels. And at retail, the amps have gained traction for their broad customer base and impulse-purchase appeal.

"People see the price, and they just sell themselves," said Bob Willcutt, owner of Willcutt Guitars in Lexington, Ky. "It's more of an impulse [item]."

#### TINY SALES TURBINE

The lunchbox amp category found legs in 2007 after Orange launched the Tiny Terror. To give a sense of this amp's popularity, Orange dealer Jake Langston, who owns Humbucker Music in Oglethorpe, Ga., said that, as of a few months back, he'd sold roughly 460 units of the 15-watt head.

"For the money, it's really good," he added.

"I would say it took over a year until the supply caught up with demand," said Ken Daniels, owner of Truetone Music in Santa Monica, Calif., of the Tiny Terror. "It was a testament to the concept, design and engineering of that amp. We've sold hundreds of them probably."

"I think people are looking for something compact yet powerful, and this need has helped the lunchbox category overall," said Bret Leon, senior product manager for ProMusicGroup of Los Angeles. "My personal favorite has got to be the Orange Tiny Terror."

gear trends

# + LUNCHBOX AMP HEADS



**BLACKHEART BH5H LITTLE GIANT** This 5-watt model boasts a switchable pentode/triode selector and three-band EQ for a range of tones and precise control over output volume. It's powered by an EL84 and voiced through a 12AX7 pre-amp tube. Under the exterior is a 16-gauge steel chassis, 1/2-inch corner radiuses and painstaking Tolex work. MSRP: \$303. {blackhearteng.com}

**BURRIS ROYAL BLUESMAN** The 14-pound, U.S.-made amp includes myriad features, such as reverb, vibrato and a line level input. "That's a high-quality piece," said Bob Willcutt, owner of Willcutt Guitars. "It's really sturdy." MSRP: \$995. {burrissamps.com}



**EGNATER REBEL SERIES** The Rebel-20 (pictured) features a blend of 6V6 and EL84 power tubes, Egnater's tight and bright voicing switches for fine-tuning sounds, and a wide-range gain control. The Rebel-30 features two channels and Egnater's tube mix knob, which lets players access a range of tones. MSRP: Rebel-20, \$549.99; Rebel-30, \$749.99. {egnatersamps.com}

**MARSHALL HAZE 15** This mini Marshall features driving blues tone, an iconic look and two channels that share a three-band EQ. "They look great, sound cool and are relatively inexpensive," said Michael Gabriel, Marshall brand manager. MSRP: \$840. {marshallamps.com}



**MESA BOOGIE TRANSATLANTIC TA-15** This 12-pound, 25-watt unit delivers British and American tones — hence the name — in one package. It has two fully independent, footswitchable channels with five pre-amp voicings, and Mesa's Multi-Watt power provides three wattage options. Street price: roughly \$899. {mesaboogie.com}

**ORANGE TINY TERROR** The amp that kicked off the current lunchbox trend — a versatile 15-watt unit. "Many publications have attributed the Tiny Terror as a leader, using it as a standard against which they judge other mini amps," said Luke Zollinger, general manager and COO of Orange. MSRP: \$729. {orangeamps.com}



Several retailers mentioned the Tiny Terror's initial sales surge is beginning to drop off, but new models, such as Mesa's TransAtlantic, are bringing new blood to the segment. ("I think people are looking at it as the first time they've been able to afford Mesa quality," Willcutt said.) And other manufacturers, including Burriss, Vox, Marshall, Blackheart, The Music Link and Bad Cat, to name a few, have also chimed in with lunchbox amp offerings. Prices tend to range between \$400 and \$800, although The Music Link recently released the under-\$200 VHT Special 6.

"I encourage all of our dealers to give these amplifiers a try," said Brad Hochstetler, Vox brand manager. "Not only do they address functional needs for players, but they do so at an entry-level price point. Don't be afraid to plug a beginner into these amps."

### TUBE TONE FOR EVERYONE

As Hochstetler suggested, first-timers represent a consumer subcategory for lunchbox amps. Bruce Egnater said he has also seen his company's models reach younger players who "appreciate the wide range of authentic tube tones, as well as the lower costs."

And then there's the intermediate market. "These amps offer a great stepping stone between introductory solid-state amplifiers and larger-frame, higher-output tube amps," said Luke Zollinger, general manager and COO of Orange.

At the professional and semi-professional levels, Willcutt mentioned selling lunchbox amps to guitarists in worship bands. "We sell to a

lot of churches," he said. "Sometimes, [guitarists] will leave the cabinets there, but they'll want to take their heads with them. You want something lightweight, so you have a guitar in one hand and a head in the other."

## Lunchbox-style amp heads appeal to beginners for their lower price tags and portability

Amp builder Bob Burriss of Burriss Amps also cited the praise and worship market as a major customer segment. And he half-joked that the amps' portability opens up the category to aging adults. "Boomers are getting older and like the idea of a lighter-weight amp that won't cause a slipped disk."

Langston added that the amps' small size makes them viable for free shipping to customers who buy them via his company's Web site.

### TRADING ON 'WOW' FACTOR

Successful retailers in the lunchbox amp market often trade on the products' wow factor, displaying them atop cabinets and letting them rip. The visual alone draws consumers in. The sound seals the deal.

"Proper merchandising and demonstration to show the true capabilities of these little amps is key," Bruce Egnater



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## {LUNCHBOXAMPS}



**THD UNIVALVE** This 15-watt amp is made so users can switch out the output tube with nearly any octal-based power tube. The two pre-amp tubes can also be switched for any combination of 12AX7, 12AT7, 12AU7, 12AY7 or 12AZ7 tubes. Plus, it features the built-in Hot Plate output attenuator. MSRP: \$1,195. [thdelectronics.com](http://thdelectronics.com)

**VHT SPECIAL 6** Priced at less than \$200, the Special 6 is a handwired, mod-friendly 6-watt unit that gets its sound from a 12AX7 pre-amp tube and 6V6 output tube. The high/low power switch enhances low-volume tones. "The VHT Special 6 is perfect for independent mom-and-pop stores who want to get involved with a great-sounding boutique amp they know will have a good sell-through," said Steve Patrinio, president of The Music Link. MAP: \$179. [vhtamp.com](http://vhtamp.com)



**VOX NT15H NIGHT TRAIN** The 15-watt amp boasts classic and contemporary Vox tones in a package weighing less than 17 pounds. Note the "armored box" design. "It's simple and has a really versatile palette of tones that range from the classic Vox clean to a more modern overdriven tube tone," said Brad Hochstetler, Vox brand manager. MSRP: \$700. [voxamps.com](http://voxamps.com)

said. "While our heads, combos and small cabs sound great at bedroom volume, the most impressive demo is to plug a little Egnater into a great-sounding Tourmaster 2x12 or 4x12 cabinet. This usually blows the customer away."

For beginner players, Hochstetler stressed offering a little education. "Be sure to share the feature set with the customer to ensure they understand the basics of tube amplification," he said.

"Be fully knowledgeable about all the features of the product, as well as how it compares to competing products in both features and price," Mueller said. "Be prepared to explain and justify any differences in the features and price, and help point out

the value of the product you are representing."

The category may be starting to hit a saturation point, but Langston pointed to a telling indicator that it's not waning. "I know the Mesa [TransAtlantic] is doing really well because we have another 12 on order, and we're having to wait for them."

"To this day, there is still no more-expressive, better-feeling, more-soulful-sounding device to deliver the pure tone of an electric guitar than a vacuum tube," Mueller said. "They simply produce a unique, magical character that no solid-state or digital modeling device can match, no matter how much some companies may try to spin the marketing to the contrary." **MI**

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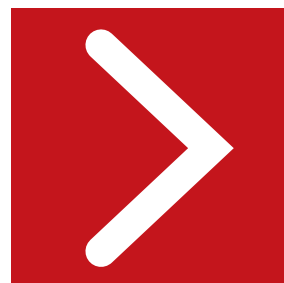
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MSRP: \$4,728.

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

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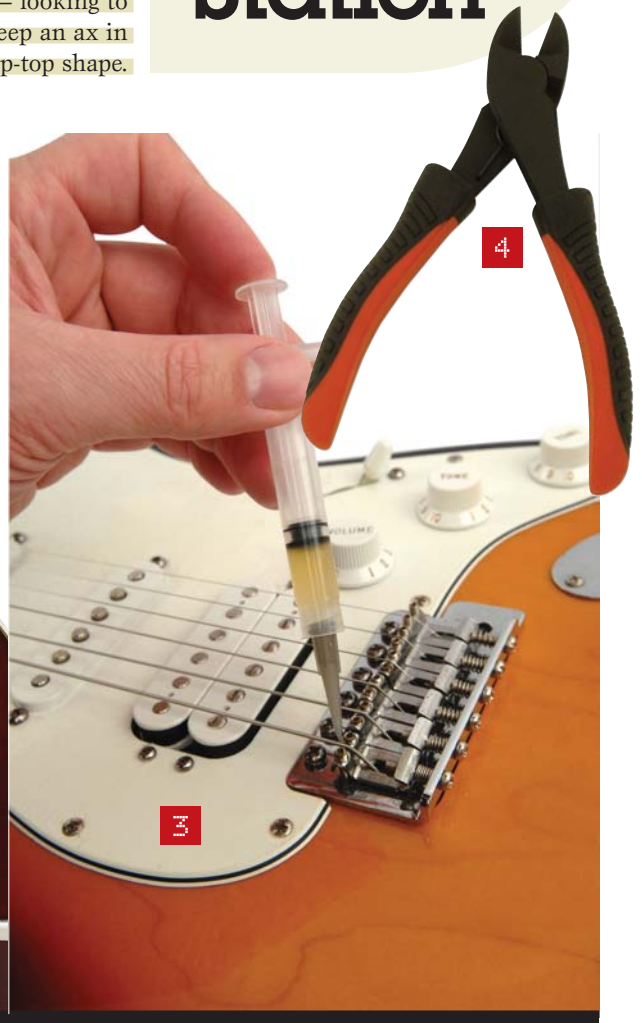
# GEAR >

GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES



These tools make ideal add-ons for any guitarist — beginner, weekend warrior or pro — looking to keep an ax in tip-top shape.

## Tech Station



**1 HOSA GOBY LABS** New Goby Labs instrument care products, distributed by Hosa Technology, include a water-based guitar polish and fingerboard conditioner. Made with biodegradable materials, the polish is safe for use on nitro-cellulose lacquers. The orange-powered fingerboard conditioner cleans and conditions unfinished wood surfaces. MSRP: \$10 each. [hosatech.com](http://hosatech.com)

**2 STRING SWING INSTALLATION TOOLS** The String Swing CC31 pickup jack installation tool (pictured) is fed up through the jack installation hole and out through the soundhole. The jack is then secured to the tool and pulled back through to be brought into place. The CC18 guitar jack and ferrule tool holds a 1/4-inch receiver during installation or removal. Street price: roughly \$18.99 each. [stringswing.com](http://stringswing.com)

**3 PLANET WAVES LUBRIKIT** Field tested by industry techs and luthiers, Lubrikit from Planet Waves provides tuning stability by removing friction. Apply a drop of Lubrikit to the nut and tremolo/bridge to optimize tuning stability, combat string breakage and prevent premature wear of the instrument's bridge and nut. Lubrikit comes with one syringe of lubricant and two application swabs. MSRP: \$17.99. [planetwaves.com](http://planetwaves.com)

**4 CRUZTOOLS STRING CUTTERS** CruzTools' latest GrooveTech string cutters are designed specifically for guitar and bass. By using an induction heat treatment process, the blades will slice through guitar and bass strings without damaging cutting edges. A high-leverage handle design provides cutting power with minimal effort, and vinyl grips provide a comfortable feel. MSRP: \$13.95. [cruztools.com](http://cruztools.com)



HAMILTON STANDS | UNI-STAND

## Instant Amp Stand

Hamilton Stands' latest amplifier and speaker stand, the Uni-Stand, is lightweight, portable and fits in most gig bags. The product is adjustable for different size cabinets and works well with either open- or closed-back cabinet construction. 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)}



KALA | UKE AMP

## Uke Booster

Kala Brand Music's new portable ukulele amplifier, The Round About, measures 10 inches high and from side to side. The amp has a power output of 10 watts and is equipped with a 5-inch speaker. It includes master volume, treble and bass tone controls, as well as a headphone jack. The Round About provides an extra boost to ukes when volume is needed. It comes in tweed, pink and black.

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



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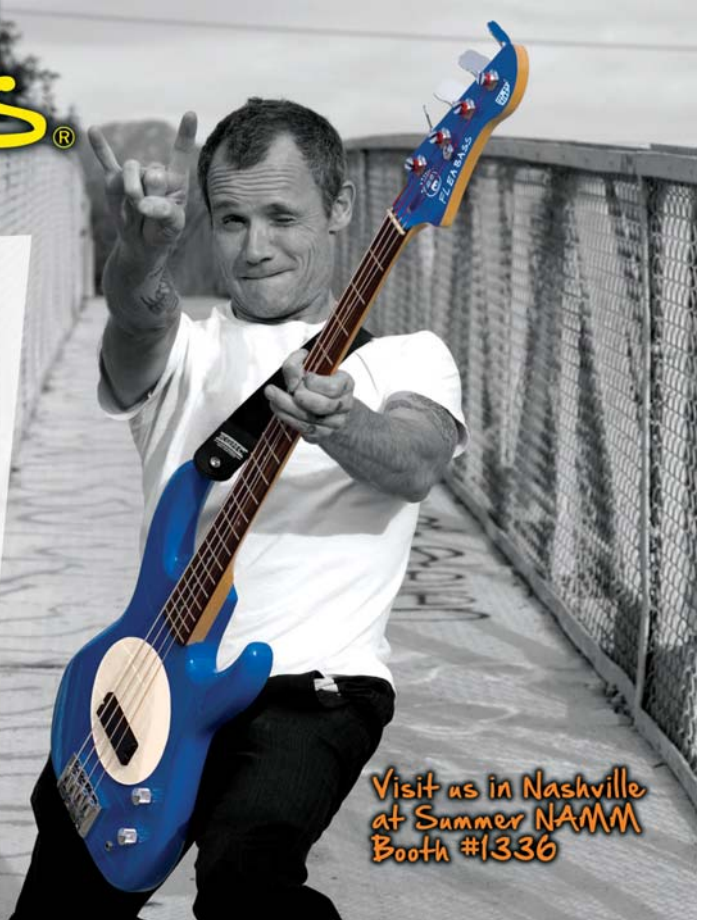
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# GEAR >

GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

SUNDOWN | COLOR OPTIONS

## Colorful Sounds

Sundown Amplifiers has added new colors to two of its amp lines. Each 15-watt amp is available in one of four color choices: red, blue, black and orange. The designs include the Sundown signature vintage look with white piping and racing stripes. The color options come at no extra cost.

{[shsint.net](http://shsint.net)}



LEVY'S LEATHERS | URBAN PRINTS

## Sugar and Spice

Levy's Leathers has added new designs to its Urban Print guitar straps for 2010. The six original art nouveau prints are brought to life on a satin canvas. Model M15SP (pictured) features a quick-release end-piece strap construction.

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

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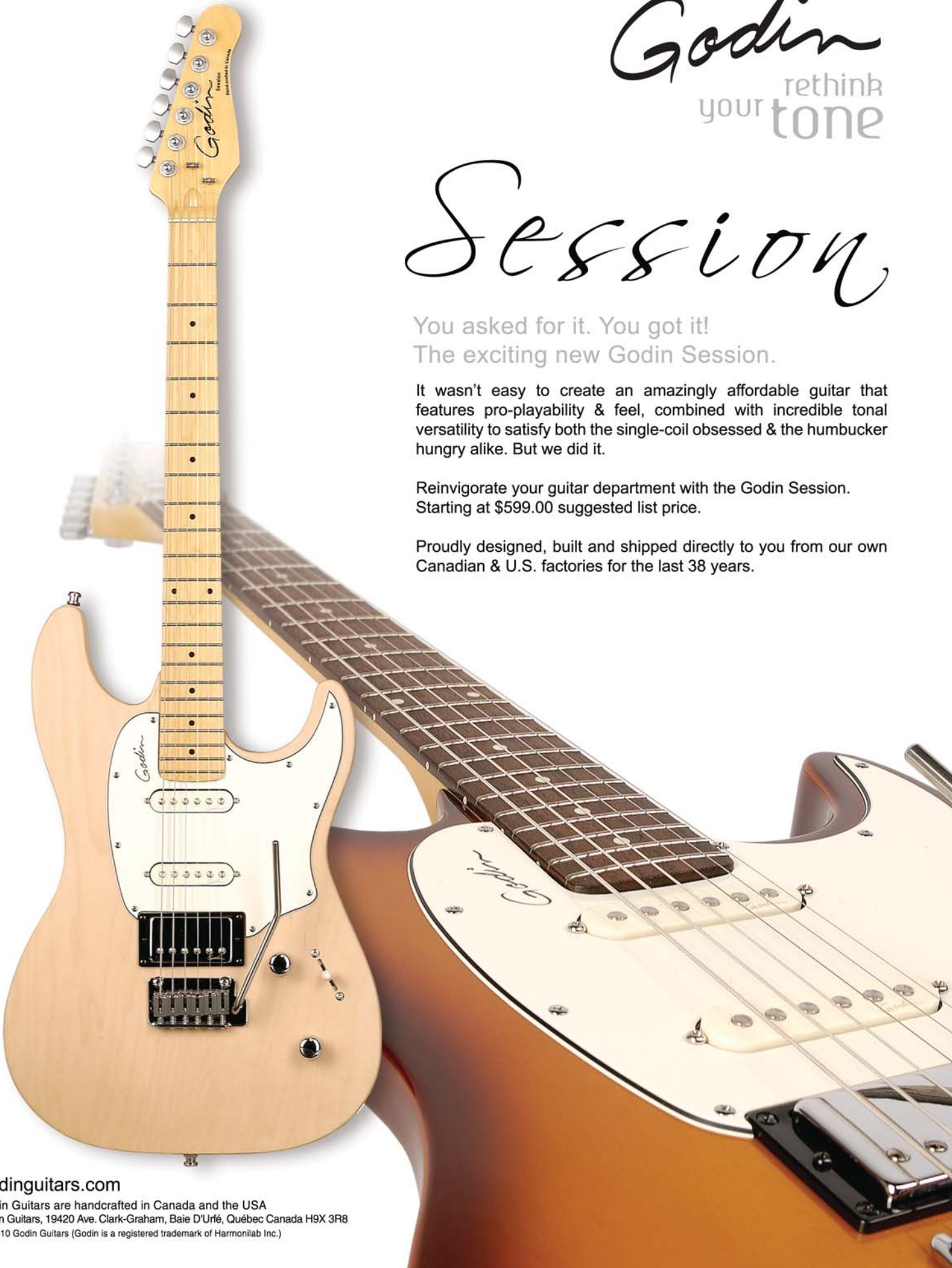
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MOD KITS DIY | NEW MODELS

### Build Your Tone

Mod Kits are designed to give musicians the opportunity to build their own amps and effects pedals. All kits come with easy-to-follow instructions and use point-to-point wiring. A pre-drilled enclosure and all parts are included. Assembly requires hand tools, a soldering iron and solder. All effect pedals operate on a 9-volt battery. The kits include the Mod 101 guitar amp kit, Rattler pedal kit, Piledriver pedal kit, Verb pedal kit and Persuader pedal kit. [modkitsdiy.com](http://modkitsdiy.com)



GODLYKE | OD-16

### The Omega Pedal

Godlyke's new HAO Omega Drive Sixteen overdrive pedal takes an incoming power supply of 9 volts DC and converts it to 16 volts DC, improving headroom and dynamic responsiveness. The OD-16 reacts very fast to picking dynamics, offering a touch-responsive overdrive that complements advanced playing techniques. MSRP: \$260-\$349. [godlyke.com](http://godlyke.com)



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T-REX | ROOM-MATE

### Rex Springs Back

T-Rex Engineering has released the next generation of its Room-Mate reverb pedal. It offers the same rich warmth as the original but with the addition of a revamped Spring mode. When the decay is set low in Spring mode, Room-Mate emulates a short-spring reverb. Turn the decay up, and players get a unique long-spring reverb effect. [musiquip.com](http://musiquip.com)

# The *Real* Most Innovative Product of the Year

*“One of the most useful products I’ve seen in a really long time!” says customer Alan Bibey.*

FLORIDA—ToneRite Inc. has released the third generation of the world’s premier automatic play-in device for guitar. One of the secrets of great, vintage instruments is the more they are played, the better they sound. The ToneRite<sup>®</sup> accelerates the opening-up process of acoustic instruments by using a set of sub-sonic frequencies to simulate the same physics as long-term playing. Simply attach the ToneRite<sup>®</sup> whenever you are not playing and expect to hear moderate to dramatic increases in resonance, balance and dynamic range after only a single week’s worth of use. The ToneRite<sup>®</sup> is available for guitar, mandolin, ukulele, violin, viola, cello and double bass. Already, customers are raving about it. Eric Schoenberg



of Schoenberg Guitars says, **“The ToneRite<sup>®</sup> has made a dramatic difference in the tone of new instruments and has helped to ‘wake up’ vintage instruments that haven’t been played in years.”** Alan Bibey, member of Grass-towne and two-time SPBGMA Mandolin Player of the Year had similar compliments: **“The ToneRite<sup>®</sup> supercharged my instruments to their max in volume and tone! One of the most useful new products I’ve seen in a really long time!”** Grammy Award winner John Sherba of the Kronos Quartet said, **“The more I used the ToneRite<sup>®</sup> the better my instruments got, not just a little bit, but creates a definite, noticeable, positive audible difference.”** The third generation ToneRite<sup>®</sup> is now available for resale to select stores.

Achieve vintage tone for your stringed instrument now, only at [www.tonerite.com](http://www.tonerite.com) or call toll-free at 1-(866)-688-3772.

# GEAR >

GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES



FERNANDES | MONTEREY ELITE

## Finite Finish

The Monterey Elite from Fernandes guitars is now available in a black gloss finish for a limited time with the same specs as the Elite model. The guitar offers a mahogany body and tapered set neck, Seymour Duncan JB humbucker in bridge position, locking tuners, Graph Tech trem nut, and Tune-O-Matic bridge. The Elite model boasts abalone binding and diamond-shape inlays in an ebony 22-fret fingerboard with gold hardware. MSRP: \$1,449. [fernandesguitars.com](http://fernandesguitars.com)



REVEREND | LIMITED EDITION SIX GUN

## Six-Gun Salute

Reverend's Limited Edition Six Gun guitar has new modifications, including a reverse headstock, Wilkinson V50 tremolo, white pickguard with white neck/middle pickups and a limited-edition logo on the back of the headstock. The solid korina body guarantees a resonant, light instrument. The Six Gun model also features Reverend's T-style single-coil at the bridge and custom S-style single-coils at the middle and neck, all wound for classic shimmer and twang but with more body. [reverendguitars.com](http://reverendguitars.com)

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DBZ GUITARS | VENOM SNAKE SKIN

## Snake Bite

DBZ Guitars' Venom Snake Skin guitar features a new textured snakeskin finish brought to life by artisans who airbrush and hand-finish each guitar. The instrument is made of a mahogany body with an etched hard rock maple top, mahogany neck and ebony fingerboard. It includes Dean B. Zelinsky Signature USA pickups, gold hardware, an original Floyd Rose tremolo system and optional string-thru-body fixed bridge. MSRP: \$4,599. [dbzguitars.com](http://dbzguitars.com)



EASTWOOD | AIRLINE ELECTRIC UKE

## Electrified Ukes

Eastwood Guitars' new Airline electric ukulele combines a solid koa top with a controlled piezo pickup, which lets players get authentic ukulele tones but also provides unique effects when played with an amp and effects pedals. The piezo pickup in the bridge is controlled by a single volume and single tone control. [eastwoodguitars.com](http://eastwoodguitars.com)

IK MULTIMEDIA | IRIG ADAPTER

## Virtual Hookup

The new iRig interface adapter from IK Multimedia gets a player's guitar signal into an iPhone, iPod Touch or iPad. Plug iRig into a mobile device, plug the guitar into the iRig and plug an amplifier to the output. The iRig is a companion product to the mobile AmpliTube app and works with any other recording, processing or tuning app. MSRP: \$39.99. [ikmultimedia.com](http://ikmultimedia.com)



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BLACKBIRD GUITARS | SUPER OM

### Blackbird Adds Elixir

**B**lackbird Guitars, maker of carbon fiber acoustic guitars, has teamed up with Elixir Strings to outfit the latest version of the company's Super OM guitar. Designed for players seeking unique guitars that can be used in a variety of extreme outdoor settings, the Blackbird has a 25.5-inch scale length, weighs 3.5 pounds and is easy to transport anywhere. [blackbirdguitar.com](http://blackbirdguitar.com)



SCHECTER | THE ORLEANS

### Schecter Unplugged

**S**checter Guitars has revealed its softer side with new solid spruce top acoustics. The Orleans features solid mahogany back and sides and a mahogany dovetail set neck. It offers Fishman Prefix Plus-T pickups, Grover tuners with hardware, and a rosewood bridge with Graphtech Tusq saddle and pins. MSRP: \$1,299. [schecterguitars.com](http://schecterguitars.com)

TONERITE | GUITAR MODEL

### Tone Fixer

**T**oneRite's third-generation automatic play-in device now offers a guitar model, which fits nylon and steel string acoustics, hollowbody archtops, thinlines and acoustic basses. ToneRite features new Elastone feet specifically formulated for greater energy transfer but is gentle enough for more valuable instruments. The ToneRite is available for guitar, mandolin, ukulele, violin, viola, cello and double bass. MSRP: \$185-\$300. [tonerite.com](http://tonerite.com)



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# GEAR >

AUDIO, RECORDING & LIGHTING

## LAMPIFIER | WIRED MICS

### Plug & Play Mic

The Lampifier Co. has introduced a new category of professional, wired microphones with a phantom-powered audio-enhancing processor located inside the mic handle. The programmable sound processor optimizes the microphone for various applications. No extra patch cables or out-board sound processors are required. It self-adjusts to the incoming sound, making program adjustments by the user unnecessary. The user can also reprogram the processor to use the microphone in other applications or customize the microphone to his or her personal style or preference. Reprogramming is done with the help of a free online programming tool.

{[lampifier.com/program](http://lampifier.com/program)}



## SHS AUDIO | G2 SERIES

### Solid Response

SHS International's three new G2 series P.A. cabinets feature rugged, lightweight ABS housing. A chambered inner air routing system delivers solid bass response and crisp high-frequency response. It features balanced line in and out; XLR and RCA inputs; vol, low, mid and high EQ; and independent line level and mic level controls. The new cabinets are available in 10, 12 and 15 two-way configurations ranging from 150-250 watts. MSRP: starts at \$229.95. {[shsaudio.com](http://shsaudio.com)}

## JBL | PRX600 SERIES

### Little Pros

JBL's new PRX600 series comprises four full-range cabinets and two subwoofers. Utilizing JBL Differential Drive speaker technology, dbx Type IV limiting circuitry and Crown class-D amplifiers, the PRX600 series delivers performance in a package that's small, lightweight and professional. At the core of the PRX line is a fully integrated DSP input section providing mic/line level input, selectable system EQ and an A/D converter for a maximum signal-to-noise ratio. MSRP: \$1,199-\$1,999.

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







KELLY CONCEPTS | COMPOSITE SERIES

## The Shu Fits

**K**elly Concepts has added the Composite series to the Kelly Shu line of suspended microphone shock mounts for kick drums. These mounts are made using high-density reinforced compounds that are injection molded under pressure. The Composite accepts a standard kick drum microphone with a threaded base or mic clip. MSRP: \$62.

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



PRIMACOUSTIC | KICKSTAND

## Noise Prevention

**T**he KickStand from Primacoustic is a new mic boom stand isolator that incorporates a heavy, stabilizing base with a high-density foam isolation pad to eliminate resonance from the stage, drum riser or studio floor from entering the mic. A laser-cut steel platform is shaped to eliminate standing waves while offering sufficient height to let a boom stand swing into the ideal position. MSRP: \$90. {[radialeng.com](http://radialeng.com)}



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



NADY | MGT-16

### Transmitted Mini

Nady Systems has introduced the MGT-16, a UHF wireless system, which includes 16 user-selectable PLL frequencies. The two miniature, lightweight transmitters plug directly into a guitar, bass or portable keyboard output jack with no cable or bodypack transmitter required. The stomp box-size receiver can be placed anywhere. The MGT-16 has a 300-foot operating range line-of-sight.

{nady.com}



CREST AUDIO | E-LITE SERIES

### Audio Elite

Crest Audio has debuted the E-Lite series of power amplifiers. It includes the E-Lite 1800, 3000, 1800 DSP and 3000 DSP. The series boasts a lightweight, efficient design with high power and stable performance down to 2-ohm loads. Crest Audio E-Lite series amps are built on a high-speed class D design with a switch-mode power supply that reduces weight while increasing reliability, thermal efficiency and output power. The E-Lite 1800 and 1800 DSP offer 900 watts per channel. The E-Lite 3000 and 3000 DSP provide 1,500 watts per channel, and both versions weigh less than 10 pounds.

{crestaudio.com}



FDW | ASP2802

### Analog Mix-up

FDW has unveiled Audient's sleek, eight-channel ASP2802 console, which fully integrates with a computer system, enabling the user to switch between the analog layer and the DAW layer within the computer session. The compact ASP2802 also provides a fully functioning master section based on the ASP8024 and shares the same mic pre-amp topology and bus compressor design.

It features 28 inputs at the mix stage — achieved using the alternate switch for an extra input per channel, eight summing inputs and two stereo FX returns.

{fdwcorp.com}

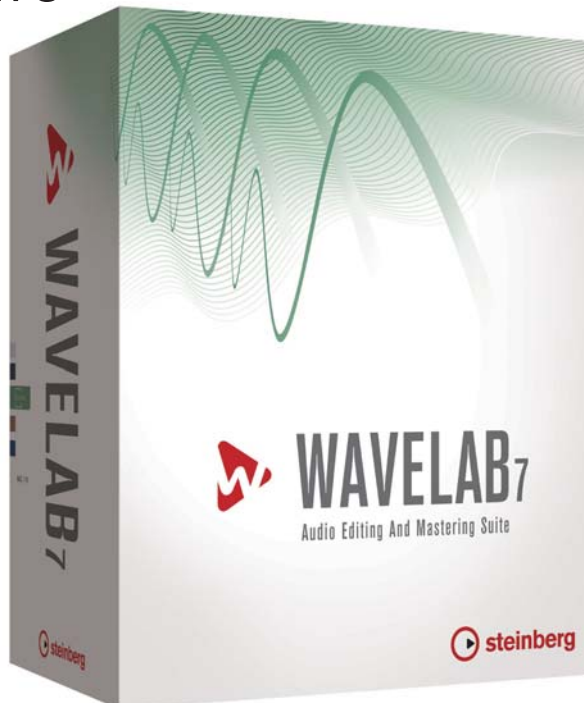
STEINBERG | WAVELAB 7

### Next Wave

Steinberg has updated its audio editing and mastering suite with WaveLab 7. The mastering suite features the new GUI concept for Mac OS X while adding new capabilities to its previous Windows incarnation. The GUI concept provides fluid handling of audio material across multiple windows, montages and podcasts with an intelligent docking and scaling system. It also has a new CD and DVD-A burning engine.

MSRP: \$599.99.

{steinberg.net}





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REMO | BLACK SUEDE SNARE

## Back in Black

Remo has added the black suede snare side to its Black Suede line. A suede texturing process has been applied to Remo's Ebony series drumheads for the new black suede look of the drumheads. The black suede snare side heads feature one ply of textured Ebony 4-mil film. This drumhead creates a focused warmth and enhanced tonal control for the snare drum. MSRP: 13-inch, \$31; 14-inch, \$32. [remo.com](http://remo.com)



MAPEX | HORIZON SERIES

## On the Horizon

Mapex's latest drum set series, Horizon, is made of basswood and features newly designed appointments, including lugs, mounts, badges and bass drum claws.

All Horizon drum sets include a padded throne and instructional DVD. They also offer Mapex 500 series hardware, which includes many features that were introduced with the 700 series hardware, such as memory locks and multisustain cymbal felts that let players use any combination of plastic or felt on their cymbal stands for more precise sustain. MSRP: \$929. [mapexdrums.com](http://mapexdrums.com)

MEINL | M SERIES

## Modernized Meinl

Meinl's new M series cymbals have been modernized to feature a traditional look and feel but offer a contemporary sound. The B20 bronze alloy cymbals are made in Germany. They're available in a 14-inch hi-hat, 16- and 18-inch crashes, and 20- and 22-inch rides.

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



KICKPORT | KP-1 WHITE

## White Out

KickPort has released a white version of the KickPort bass drum tone enhancer. Originally available only in black, the KP-1 ports the kick drum in the same way as a bass reflex speaker cabinet boosts low frequencies. This unit adds dampening directly to the resonant head, producing more lows, tone and definition. [kickport.com](http://kickport.com)





GROVER | THRASHER

## Thrasher Impact

Grover Pro Percussion has released the Thrasher SilverFox model. The Thrasher is a double-ended stick that's ideal for high-impact situations. The stick was designed in collaboration with Mark Castillo, drummer for up-and-coming group Bury Your Dead. It is manufactured from select grade-one straight-grained hickory and coated with SilverFox's Duracrylix finish, which enhances durability and provides a smooth, easy-to-grip surface. MSRP: \$15. [groverpro.com](http://groverpro.com)



TOCA | PLAYERS SERIES CAJON

## Beginner Beats

Toaca has launched the Players series cajon. This instrument is 11 inches wide by 17 inches tall and 11 inches deep. The hardwood shell is finished in a natural gloss and comes fitted with rubber feet to protect floor surfaces. The front striking plate is attached with adjustable screws, enabling a combination of deep bass tones and crisp slaps. A set of internal snare wires adds definition to the beat, helping to provide a strong overall cajon sound. The Player series cajon is ideal for beginner or student percussionists. MSRP: \$159. [tocapercussion.com](http://tocapercussion.com)



GIBRALTAR | FOUR-POST ROAD SERIES

## Road Racked

Gibraltar has introduced the Four-Post Road series rack, which features curved horizontal bars that wrap around the player to create ideal drum, cymbal and mounting accessory placements. This rack is designed for single or double bass kit configurations. It includes 30-inch straight vertical mini T-legs with cymbal mounts, 46-inch curved horizontal bars and chrome multiclamps with memory locks. MSRP: \$725. [gibraltarhardware.com](http://gibraltarhardware.com)

# 10 . 10 . 10



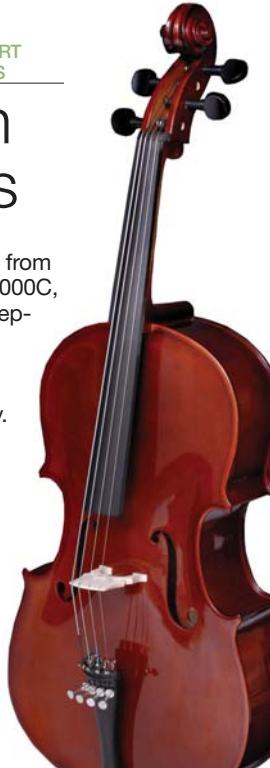
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RS BERKELEY | MOZART  
FROM MEISEL CELLOS

### Modern Mozarts

RS Berkeley has unveiled Mozart from Meisel cellos. The 3000C, 3100C and 3300C represent old-world craftsmanship and modern advancements in technology. All models include D'Addario Prelude strings, a padded bag and a wooden bow. The cellos are available in 4/4 to 1/10 sizes. [rsberkeley.com](http://rsberkeley.com)



PEARL | CARRIERS

### Groovin' on the Move

Pearl's latest carriers, the CX Airframe and MX T-Frame, combine a lightweight, simple design with rugged durability. The CX Airframe (pictured) features a solid rod and form-fitting upper shoulder frame attached to a thin aluminum belly plate with a greater range of motion. The MX T-Frame provides a comfortable fit, which can be modified to each player. Both carriers feature easy adjustments with minimal hardware. [pearldrums.com](http://pearldrums.com)



SKB | CELLO SOFT CASE

### Comfy Cases

SKB has expanded its soft case offering with the 1SKB-SC344 full-size cello soft case. It has a lined EPS shell that's custom-fit for the 4/4-sized cello. The outside is wrapped with ballistic nylon and has double-pull, heavy-duty zippers. The neck is secured with a vacuum-formed padded neck. MSRP: \$149.99. [skbcases.com](http://skbcases.com)



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JUPITER | 16001 TRUMPET

### Ingram's Innovation

The new Jupiter XO series 16001 lead trumpet was developed with the aid of trumpeter Roger Ingram. It features a 0.453-inch bore, silver-plated yellow brass body and 4.8-inch handcrafted B1 bell with heavy bead for additional mass and resonance. The trumpet offers a reverse leadpipe and professional two-piece valve casing with nickel-silver balusters. It boasts stainless steel valves and a vertical third-valve stop. [jupitermusic.com](http://jupitermusic.com)



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### CASIO | PRIVIA PX-3

## Tone Zone

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 keyboard's low and high registers. The PX-3 is programmable for a variety 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)



### WYMAN PIANO | KX10

## Accordion Keys

Wyman Piano has released the KX10 piano accordion. This unit lets a musician play his or her instrument without the weight of a traditional accordion. The KX10 has more than 480 sampled sounds in each orchestral section, including 128 general MIDI voices along with 350 extra sounds from the exclusive Orla Ultra XM sound library.

The accordion sound bank features 40 different accordion sounds that include Italian, German, French and American reed sets. The built-in USB disk port can be used to record musical data and act as an SMF player. [orlausea.com](http://orlausea.com)

### YAMAHA | PSR-E423

## Musical Manipulator

The new Yamaha PSR-E423 portable keyboard will replace the PSR-E413. The PSR-E423 includes more than 120 arpeggiator patterns that build around the chords played by the user. It features control knobs for altering sounds in real time and can change aspects of voice and arpeggiator sounds, such as filter cutoff, tempo and effects. The PSR-E423 includes six tracks of recording and a USB port, so data can be transferred between the keyboard and a computer. MSRP: \$399. [yamaha.com](http://yamaha.com)







YOUNG CHANG | Y 150, Y 157

## Changes for Chang

Young Chang has released the Y 150 and Y 157 grand piano models, which feature new manufacturing techniques and materials. These instruments offer a warmer sound coupled with a more dynamic tonal response. During manufacturing, steps were taken to ensure the pianos have greater tuning stability. [youngchang.com](http://youngchang.com)



HUNTER MUSIC | ACCORDION LINE

## Polka Pleaser

Hunter Music has added an accordion line to its range of products. From button accordions to piano accordions, there's an instrument for every player. The accordions come in both child and adult sizes. The new line also provides solid color and color combo options, plus an aluminum case. [huntermusical.com](http://huntermusical.com)



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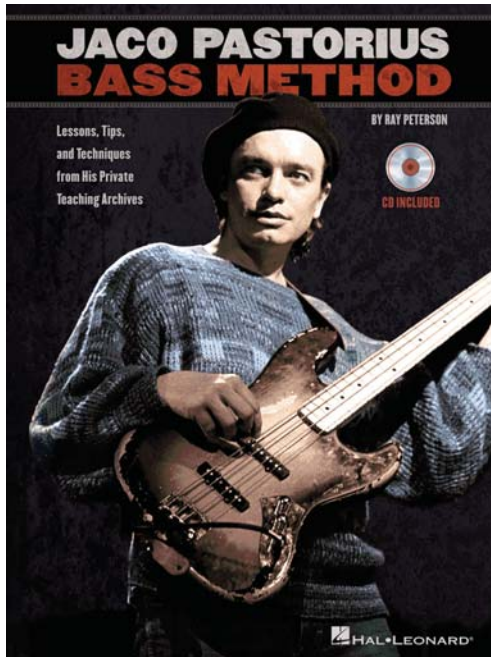


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HAL LEONARD | 'JACO PASTORIUS BASS METHOD'

### Pastorius Plays On

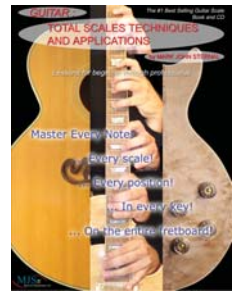
Hal Leonard has released the *Jaco Pastorius Bass Method*. This book/CD pack presents lessons, tips and techniques taken from Pastorius' private teaching archives. Author Ray Peterson was a former student of the bassist and offers insights from his one-on-one lessons with Pastorius. The method provides complete note-for-note transcriptions of songs and solos, as well as detailed explanations of techniques and theory. The book also includes handwritten pages from Pastorius' personal practice book. MSRP: \$19.99. [halleonard.com](http://halleonard.com)



MJS PUBLICATIONS | TSTA METHOD

### Total Techniques

MJS Publications has released *Total Scales Techniques And Applications*. This method teaches guitarists scales, tricks and techniques in every musical key across the entire fretboard. The 176-page instructional book also features a narration and performance audio CD designed for beginners through advanced players. MSRP: \$24.95.



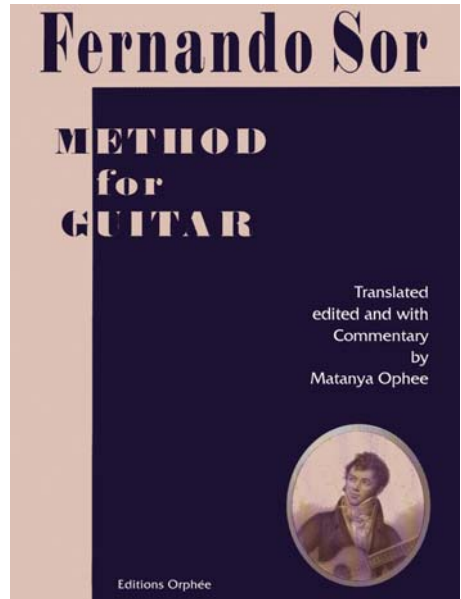
[mjspublications.com](http://mjspublications.com)

EMEDIA | GUITAR PRO 6

### Pro Editor

Media Music has partnered with Arobas Music to release Guitar Pro 6. This software is the latest version of the multitrack tablature editor for guitar, bass, banjo, ukulele and other instruments. It features an improved Real Sound Engine with realistic playback using more than 100 instrument sound samples and 50 real-time effect pedals. In addition to writing scores, the software can also be used as an education tool. It comes with a digital or MIDI tuner, speed trainer, fretboard and keyboard tools, a chord diagram generator, scales tool, and metronome.

[emedia music.com](http://emedia music.com)



THEODORE PRESSER | GUITAR METHOD

### Classic Method

Editor and guitarist Matanya Ophee has reworked the 1832 translation of Fernando Sor's *Method For Guitar* to reflect the pedagogical thought of the original text more accurately. Sor was a Spanish guitarist and composer best known for his guitar compositions, but he also composed music for operas and ballets. This edition discusses the parts of the guitar and proper position with original artwork. Sor's works for guitar range from pieces for beginning players to advanced pieces. MSRP: \$29.95. [presser.com](http://presser.com)



### RON GREENE | 'GUITAR SOLO SCALES'

## Chart Topper

The Ron Greene Music Charts series has released *The Guitar Solo Scales*, a visual reference guide for students. It contains 24 charts that help players understand which solo notes to play for songs in each major and minor key. *The Guitar Solo Scales* also includes lessons on melodic rock/blues and minor-sounding solos using the note patterns for pentatonic, major, minor and blues scales; soloing by ear; improvising; songwriting; and basic scale theory. MSRP: \$14.95.

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

### ROCK HOUSE | JAZZ GUITAR DVDS

## Not Dad's Jazz

Rock House has released *Jazz Guitar: Breaking The Traditional Barriers*, a three-DVD set. It features guitarist Alex Skolnick, who shares his secrets for conquering jazz guitar. Using basic blues progressions, he guides players through jazz concepts and shows how to follow progressions by targeting chord tones, triads, embellishments, modes and jazz patterns. MSRP: \$29.99.

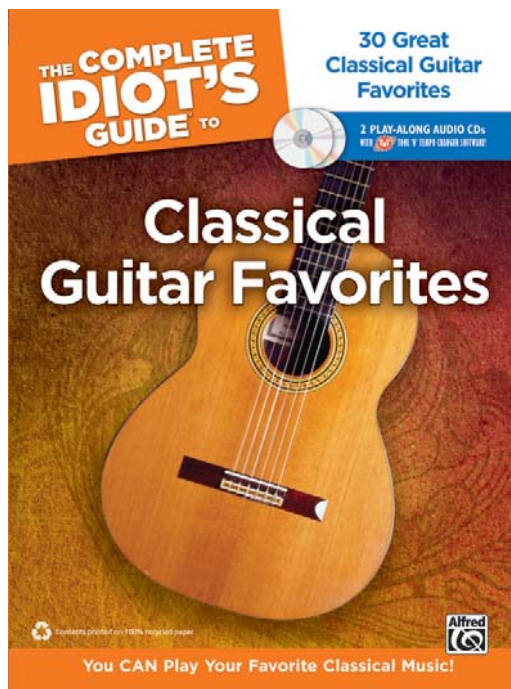
{[rockhousemethod.com](http://rockhousemethod.com)}



### ALFRED | 'IDIOT'S GUIDE TO PLAYING CLASSICAL GUITAR'

## Guitar for Idiots

Alfred's new *The Complete Idiot's Guide To Playing Classical Guitar Favorites* offers a short refresher course in the basics of music theory and simple arrangements of popular songs. Using Alfred's exclusive TNT software, these books provide customized learning, letting the user loop sections for practice, slow tracks down or speed them up without changing the pitch. Each song is presented with full music notation, tab and chord diagrams for easy play. MSRP: \$24.95. {[alfred.com](http://alfred.com)}



### LICK LIBRARY | 'SHRED GUITAR IN SIX WEEKS'

## Six Weeks to Shred



Lick Library's Andy James' *Shred Guitar In Six Weeks* is a new series of DVD guitar lessons. It walks students through techniques, concepts and licks, from the basic to the more advanced. The six-week program presents information in small increments to help students learn. Additionally, the licks taught on these guitar tuition DVDs correspond to the jam tracks, helping students get a feel for the licks they're learning. {[licklibrary.com](http://licklibrary.com)}

## MIXWARE | RELOOP JOCKEY 2

### Mix & Loop

Mixware has introduced Reloop, a full range of DJ equipment, to the U.S. market. Among Reloop's first products to be introduced to the United States this summer is the Digital Jockey 2 interface edition. It's a fully programmable MIDI control surface with touch-sensitive wheels, backlit buttons, push encoders, an integrated sound card, phono/line and mic inputs, and headphone outputs. It includes Traktor LE. MSRP: \$399.99. [mixware.net](http://mixware.net)



## DJ TECH | IBOOST 103

### iPod P.A.

DJ Tech has launched the iBoost 103, an all-in-one DJ/P.A. system for iPods. It lets users play and mix two iPods without the need for additional gear. The iBoost 103 features a powered speaker system with a two-channel mixer, seven-band graphic EQ, high-quality DSP effects and two iPod docks. The stereo 3,000-watt powered speaker system is comprised of three amplifiers and five speakers, including a 10-inch subwoofer. It has three microphone inputs and a record output. MSRP: \$599. [djtechpro.com](http://djtechpro.com)



## HERCULES | MK4

### Epic Console

Hercules' latest DJ Console line addition, the Mk4, is a mixing console with a compact design and analog audio source connectivity. This updated unit features a portable controller with two decks for mixing digital audio files. The Mk4 also offers two stereo inputs to let DJs connect external audio sources, two jog wheels for moving within tracks and four input levels. This lightweight unit has nonslip feet for stability while mixing. [hercules.com](http://hercules.com)



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**Rich Welker**  
Bronstein Music  
San Francisco

We belong to a couple of groups that get together all the time, and we are forever gleaning information from one another. One piece of advice that pays us back all the time was from one of the guys in our Norcal group. He said don't lower prices to whatever the lowest prices are on the Internet all the time. You'll go out of business selling at no profit. He makes a point of making money on every teeny thing that he can. We've done that, and over the last three or four years, we have actually raised our profitability considerably.

>>>

**Mike McAfee**  
Willis Music Superstore  
Louisville, Ky.



This advice came from Steve Cooley at Guitar Emporium. He said never forget that making music is an event for new and established players. It is something I think we sometimes took for granted, and that was a great reminder to us. We make sure we relate the excitement of

playing music when speaking with customers and have weekly events in our auditorium, so current or potential players get to see and take part in making music themselves.

>>>

**Jeremiah Wolf**  
Mid-Michigan Music  
Midland, Mich.

This store is located in a small downtown city district with about 60 shops. It's a tight-knit community, and we all know each other and bounce questions off each other. There has been a lot of talk about marketing. We did a promotion back in March, and we were debating about the best avenues to spend our dollars on. I honestly can't remember which retailer told me this, but he said, "Don't spend anything. Take advantage of all your customers using these social networking sites. It's absolutely free." Having a fan page cost us zero. When we promote an event on Facebook, we can even have the customers RSVP and include a little information about what they play.



>>>  
**Eddie Hancock**  
Alpha Music  
Virginia Beach, Va.

## What is the best advice you've received from a fellow retailer?

We belong to AIMM, which is the Alliance of Independent Music Merchants, and that is the best source of information that we have. There is a collection of great minds. It is refreshing to share with fellow retailers your best secrets and tips. It's just a win-win situation.

If everyone is going to do OK, we have to interact with each other and try to help each other out. We're all in it together, and every day, there is some crazy, new challenge.

The best advice [I've received] is to stay extremely proactive in cultivating new business in the way of service-oriented events, special

financing, clinics, seminars and anything to keep the pot stirred up.


Atmosphere is paramount. Music is a great escape for a lot of people. When they walk in our doors, it should be into what I call "The Oasis of Tone." It's a diversion from all the crazy stuff that is going on outside the doors. Our job is to make people very comfortable and introduce them to products that will be very beneficial. Music is something to be enjoyed your whole life. It's not a fad. To do that, we have to keep it fresh.

We are pretty wacky. I tell the people in AIMM, they brought us into the organization for the enter-

tainment value from the crazy stuff we do.

Morale is huge, which is why I have a noncommission atmosphere where customers get the best treatment from the best people. I feed off my employees' ideas, from the newest guy to the veterans. If they want to do a crazy T-shirt day, I say, "Hey, let's go for it." It keeps everything upbeat.

The real challenge is where we had 200 people in a day, maybe we'll have half of that now. We make sure to increase the ticket sale. We make sure to have an excellent accessory line to go along with the major pieces that we are selling, so we can make the whole experience complete.



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