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JANUARY 2011
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THE ONLINE BOUTIQUE

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double-digit growth and
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Bob Willcutt of
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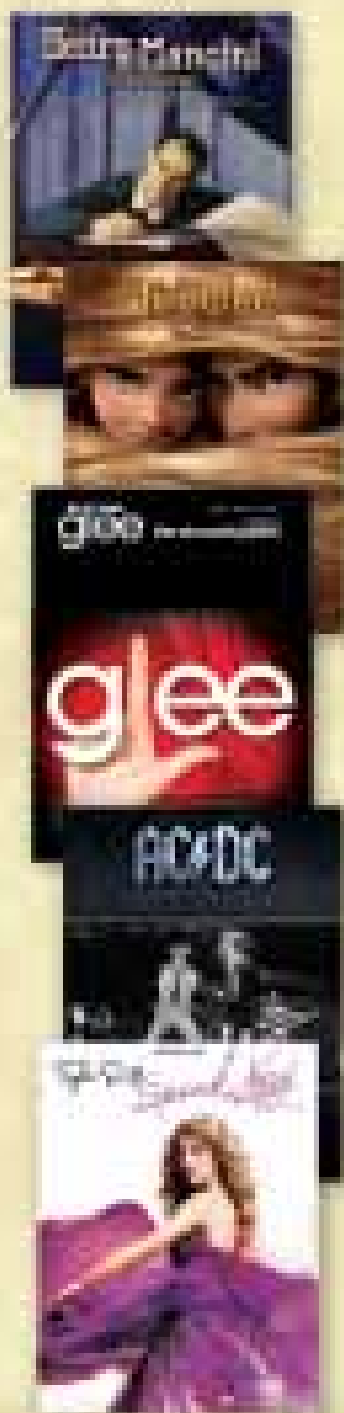
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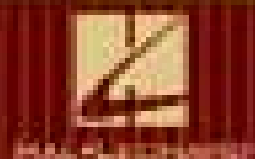


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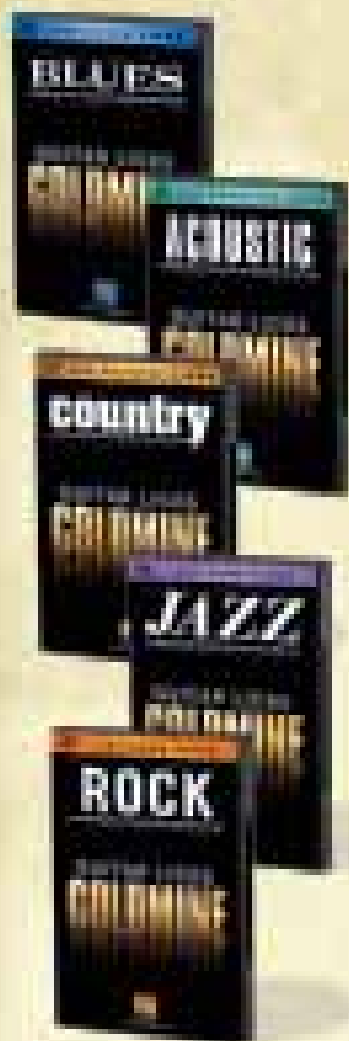
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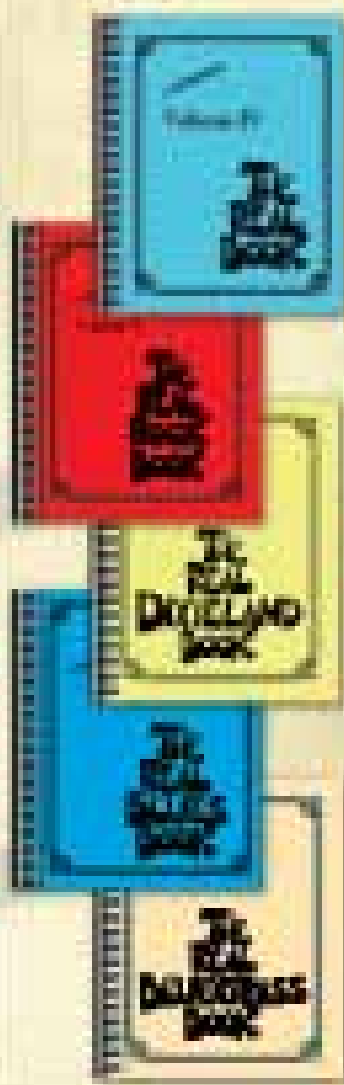
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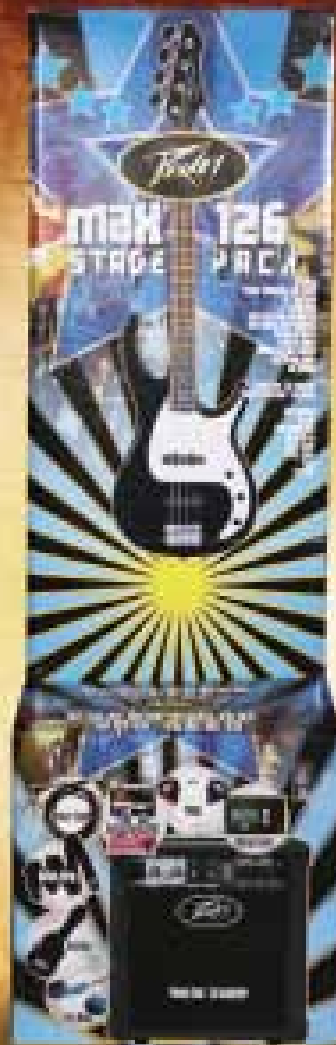
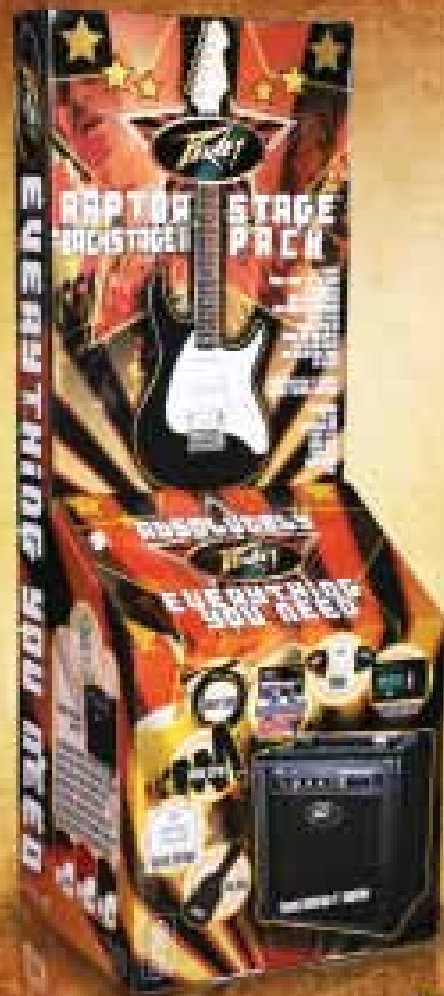
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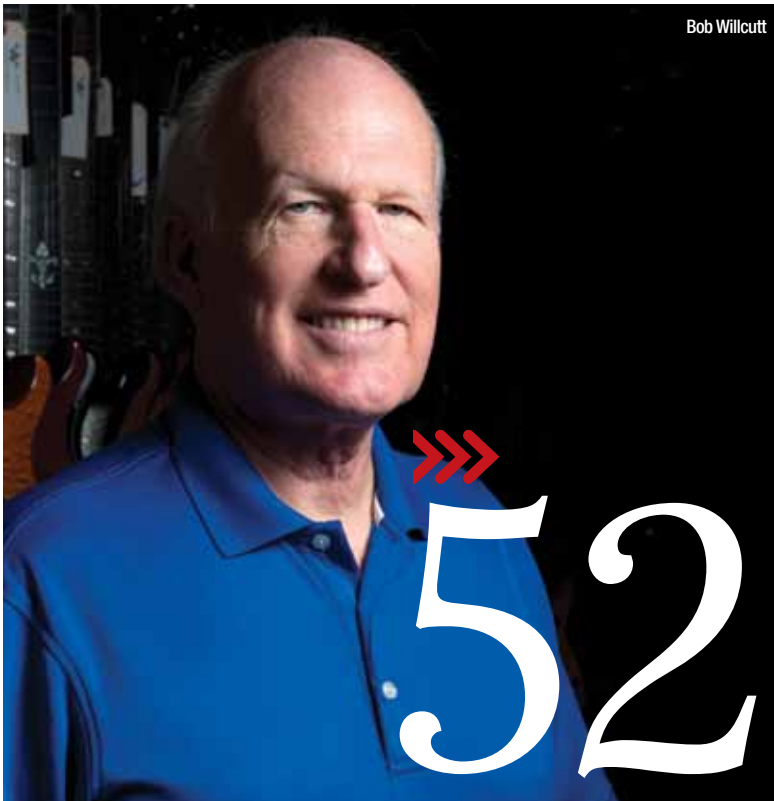


Photo by Jeff Cagle

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PERSPECTIVE

PERSPECTIVE | BY ZACH PHILLIPS

NEW OWNERS SURF THE UNEXPECTED

Not surprisingly, the recession unleashed a flurry of hardship upon music retailers — closures, cutbacks, sales declines. Turns out it also produced a less-expected outcome: new music stores. Lots of them.

Music Inc. profiled a sample of these dealers during the past two years. They're the entrepreneurs who found a steal on a lease, bought a floundering company or just decided that there was no right time to open shop.

Recently, I asked a half-dozen of the best and brightest newcomers about the state of business, and whether owning a store is what they'd expected it would be. Their responses were remarkably similar — and a telling sign of the times.

Nearly all agreed running a music dealership has been much more difficult than they'd anticipated, especially those who picked up an existing company. Anthony Mantova was among this group. He purchased Two Street Music in September 2009 and has since brought the Eureka, Calif., retailer back from near-bankruptcy. Still, this required rebuilding his inventory from scratch and performing a complete store renovation.

Joe Summa purchased Greenwich Music of Riverside, Conn., in October 2008, a month after the Fannie Mae/Freddie Mac debacle. As he put it, “sales fell off the face of the earth” the day after he closed the deal, and he immediately had to cut staff and product lines.

Likewise, most of these new retailers said they've had to perform drastic alterations to their original business models — and quickly. Summa's model, for instance, had been full-line retail first, lessons and instrument rentals second. He's since flipped that around.

“This past year, I think lessons and rentals are going to account for more than retail for the first time,” he said. “And I'm ecstatic about that.”

The Laboratory of Deptford, N.J., which opened in 2007, didn't feel a downturn until this past spring. To combat it, co-owner Steve Delaney, like Summa, said he's refocused on expanding his rental business by reaching out to more school music educators. Plus, he's cut staff and scaled back the store's square footage to nearly half its original size.

Most of the retailers also agreed to being pleasantly surprised by how much customers value good service.

“I'm really starting to see where being an independent dealer, spending time with people and sort of befriending them can go a long way,” Summa said. He even mentioned that customers will regularly thank him for being around after they've shopped at chain music stores.

Phillip Jordan, who runs four-year-old Wilson, N.C.-based RedPhish Music (profiled on page 15), was ahead of the curve. “I did expect service and attention to customer wants and needs to be a key to success,” he said. “I thought there was a market for that, and it's turned out to be the case.” **MI**

Gustavo Farias

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LETTERS

Music and the Arts Matter

As I write this, brand-name manufacturers continue allowing Woodwind & Brasswind and no doubt other large multi-state sellers to offer mailing-list customers and anyone who calls their toll-free lines the advantage of “special sale” pricing. In one example, Woodwind & Brasswind mailers periodically advertised an extra 15-percent off “everyday low prices” with free shipping and usually no state tax collection. Their vague disclaimer appears to be an obvious smoke screen.

Multistate chains always find a way because manufacturers look the other way, even as name brands now have the Supreme Court’s blessing to dictate pricing if they so choose. But consumers have many choices, so desperate and nearsighted manufacturers are selling out their brand names into common commodities that favor and reward multistate sellers.

In another anti-competitive policy, manufacturers force small brick-and-mortar dealers to meet the same impossible minimum stocking requirements as the national Internet and multistore sellers. For example, a \$5,000 yearly band instrument accessory requirement minimum for all dealers to qualify for max discounts averages out to be only a \$500 investment per location for a 10-store chain. Fewer single-location music stores are willing or able to display and demonstrate products with such low sales and profit potentials. As a protest in 2011, I will not be participating or purchasing from any manufacturer with such anti-competitive policies.

On a related sour note, with other forms of arts already gone, many school managements are

chipping away at music in academics. In many public and charter schools, especially through the 8th grade, whole child education is already dead and will be for many years unless we step in to help stop it.

My positive message is that, if you are not already doing so, you may want to reach out and give back beyond your cocoon, no matter how seemingly small.

If we do nothing but open our doors to serve ourselves and hope for a business turnaround, that makes us part of the problem instead of the solution. Pick your battle. There are many ways to get involved to make a difference. You will never have the time if you wait for the right time. Readers may wish to forward their ideas to this magazine. Ultimately, we reap what we sow, as many Americans are coming to realize.

Personally, I have chosen to actively advocate for legal and constitutional intervention for K–12 equal access to a well-balanced education that by definition includes music and other arts, which are considered core-academic subjects by federal and many state laws.

My “Parents for Music and Arts” poster and petitions are available on the “All Arts All Kids” website, allartsallkids.org. I invite readers to use the petition and poster, which is adaptable to any business. My business has solicited more than 700 petitions so far.

We aim to help stop the U.S. Department of Education’s abusive No Child Left Behind selective high-stakes testing scheme, as well as the Obama-Duncan so-called “blueprint.” Here we come, and we are not alone.

Johnny Thompson
Johnny Thompson Music
Monterey Park, Calif.

Musical Innovations

Thank you so much for the mention in the December 2010 article “No Doomsday for School Rentals.” We, Musical Innovations, are a new company but are grateful for our success thus far, which has been in part due to the strategies mentioned in your article. However, I did want to clarify how we use some of these strategies.

We do have lower monthly rental rates than some of our competition, but we do not get involved in the \$5-, \$6-, \$7-per-month “price wars” that tend to encourage parents to focus primarily on spending the minimum amount possible, rather than on the quality of the instruments and accessories offered or the importance of music in their child’s education. Many of my successful friends in school music retail set their monthly rental rates so that the cost of the instrument can be recouped in one school year, and we endeavor to do this in most cases, as well.

While some parents do still look for the company that will offer them the lowest monthly rates, we are blessed with many customers who understand the value of top-notch service, timely repair service and the other benefits of dealing with us that they feel are worth just a few more dollars per month.

There is a balance here, as there is a balance in inventory control — good inventory control specialists strive to keep margins high but not too high that the turn drops below a certain mark. Similarly, we want our rental rates low enough to attract more customers but not so low that we are sustaining a dangerous level of financed growth.

Rentals are no doubt the meat and potatoes of the school music dealers’ existence. I have learned a lot from my friends in the music industry and look forward to learning more as our new company continues to grow. Thank you for providing a forum for sharing and learning for all of us.

Tracy Leenman
Musical Innovations
Greenville, S.C.

Praise for the Whisperer

The title “Customer Whisperer” caught my eye, leading me into an article by Greg Billings in your magazine.

As a sales and marketing professional most of my adult life, I have experienced sales training in the trenches, so to speak — both as a trainer and as a trainee.

Billings’ article was a counter to the old saw, “You can’t teach an old dog new tricks.” I learned some innovative, new ways to view the customer and the salesperson in this article. Billings obviously has an uncanny knack for understanding the motivations of a buyer and how to best approach the buyer from a salesperson’s perspective in order to close the sale in a non-threatening manner.

I am reading more articles by him from here on, as I find his style of writing and informative content to be something to look forward to. Thank you for including him among your “experts,” and please keep him there.

Ray Asper
Big Ticket Depot
San Antonio

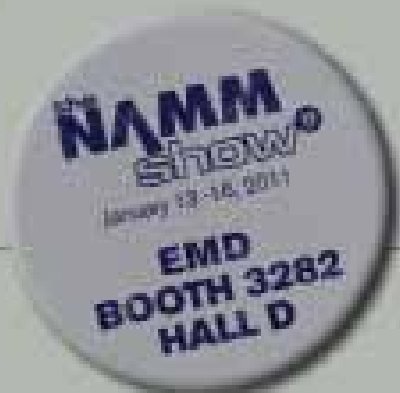
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Appoints new executives
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RETAIL

REDPHISH MUSIC | BY SARA FARR

NO RED INK

Phillip Jordan hasn't only made it through the recession unscathed; he's grown his business, RedPhish Music.

Jordan, 46, got his start in music retail working at a pawn shop in Wilson, N.C. In 2006, he bought the store after running it for almost 30 years, and a few months later, he opened a retail store in nearby Rocky Mount with all-new merchandise.

Business at the original RedPhish store — named after a combination of Jordan's daughters' nicknames — was so strong that he opened another location in Wilson in 2007, followed by stores in Smithville and Goldsboro — all within a 25- to 30-mile radius. Jordan attributed his success since then to knowing his market, keeping his overhead low and relying on a small stable of long-term, trusted employees.

PAY-AS-YOU-GROW STRATEGY

Each RedPhish store is a full-line 1,200- to 1,500-square-foot operation, aimed at the novice to intermediate player. Most have only two employees. Jordan carries some higher-end gear, but he said that instead of having four of the same \$1,000 keyboard, he



might have four different \$1,000 keyboards — one at each location. This lets him diversify without putting all his inventory eggs in one basket. It also helps mitigate the effect of nearby chain competitors, as does RedPhish's price-matching guarantee.

"I know I can't have the inventory that those guys have, but I try and listen to the local people and stock what they need and want, so they don't have to hit the road and go anywhere else," Jordan said.

That doesn't mean RedPhish hasn't made purchasing mistakes. "We've been wrong several times,

and you just have to cut your losses and move on," he said. "I think knowing our market — and more than that, learning our market — is key."

Jordan warehouses all of his inventory at one location and distributes it among his stores by truck. Before an aging item gets marked down, it makes the rounds and gets exposed to as many as four different customer bases.

His pay-as-you-grow strategy has also helped keep stock under control. "I was raised on a farm, and I watched what happened back in the '80s, so I'm not a big credit

person," Jordan said. "We've grown the company and added brands as we could afford to do so without going into debt to do it. When I started this business, I didn't want my employees or myself to be in a situation where slow days could have disastrous effects."

NEVER CRY THE BLUES

As the business has grown, Jordan said he has "shared the bounty" with staff, who he credited for much of RedPhish's success.

"I didn't have to hire just anyone off the street, and many of these people have been with me for more than 20 years, back from the pawn shop. Everyone who works here is a musician — a local musician — and that makes a big difference."

And, he added, some things never change, recession or not. "I don't think there are fewer musicians because of the economy," Jordan said. "[A musician] just has a little less money to spend. He may spend as often, but the price of the high-ticket item may come down.

"Nobody wants to come in somewhere where you're crying the blues — if you're playing the blues, maybe — so you've gotta be able to stay upbeat when you don't have that big sales day." **MI**

BLACK INK

Black Friday promotions from across the United States

- **Bill's Music** of Baltimore gave free T-shirts to the first 100 people who came through its doors, and the first 50 were entered to win a Fender Strat Pack. The company also offered Adagio digital pianos for \$499.
- **Mantova's Two Street Music** in Eureka, Calif., strayed from traditional one-day promotions and instead paid sales tax on all customer purchases through the end of the year.
- **Music Matters** of Roswell, Ga., offered 50-percent off select amplifiers, 40-percent off select Boss pedals, and 30-percent off band and orchestra instruments. The dealership also offered a free Godin guitar to new students in its Rock U music performance school.
- **The Music Room** in Palatine, Ill., began its Black Friday sale at midnight, advertising two hours of deals from \$99 Fender Squiers to a heavily discounted bargain basement. The company also offered a free Line 6 amp with the purchase of a Fender Road Worn or Highway One bass.
- **Prima Music** in Brooks, Ga., discounted all purchases by 30 percent from Nov. 25–29, 2010. Site members that mentioned an online promotional code received an additional 5-percent off.
- **Rick's Music World** in Raynham, Mass., advertised numerous discounts for its 10 a.m. sale, including \$55 ukuleles, \$40 wireless systems and prewrapped gift packages.
- **West L.A. Music** promoted Black Friday events at both of its Los Angeles locations. Discounted merchandise included \$399 Gretsch drum kits, \$79 Blue Snowball USB microphones and \$5 Audio-Technica instrument cables.



Percussion Center in Houston was one of 15 participants in The Big Beat. From left: Mapex's Steve Jacobs, Percussion Center's Mike Henry, Big Beat participant Joshua Mack and Percussion Center's Donna Fisher

FIVE-STAR DRUM SHOPS | OUTREACH

Big Beat Drums Up Charity Dollars

On Nov. 7, 2010, 15 Five-Star Drum Shops across the United States hosted The Big Beat 2010 and raised nearly \$54,000 for local charities.

The world's largest multicity drum event drew nearly 6,000 spectators. At the center of the spectacle was a drum-off where, at 5:45 p.m. EST, 1,653 drummers — 1,454 drum set players and 199 hand percussionists — from all 15 cities played the same groove in unison. Each location's director followed the lead conductor in Seattle.

Donn Bennett, owner of Bennett Drum Studio in Bellevue, Wash., said he drew 402 drummers to his store's event and raised more than \$11,000 for local charities.

"It just keeps getting better," Bennett said. "I don't think any marketing plan in the world could have done this as well as The Big Beat."

In total, The Big Beat raised \$36,125 for Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation, a non-profit organization that donates musical instruments to young musicians. The event also garnered \$17,839 for local charities, including children's organizations and food pantries, as well as 6,000 pounds of food for local food drives in three cities.

The Big Beat featured guest appearances by such major drummers as Kenny Aronoff and Jason Bittner.

Twenty top drum and percussion manufacturers also kicked in \$15,000 worth of drum gear for each location to give away.

Among the prizes, a Dream Theater replica tour bass drumhead signed by the members of the band was raffled off. As part of Mapex Drums' annual sponsorship, a limited number of commemorative Big Beat snare drums were available at each participating location. The snare is a 14- by 8-inch walnut and maple model with a custom psychedelic covering.

"Our customers are proud to be involved in this event," said Mat Donaldson, owner of Drum World in Tulsa, Okla. "As people leave, they joyously exclaim, 'See ya' next year,' and then they ask about it all year long. It also shows people what it's like to help their community, and for some, it's their only opportunity to do that and the only way they can."

Along with Donn Bennett Drum Studio and Drum World, participating drum shops included: Buffalo Drum Outlet, Colorado Drum & Percussion, Columbus Percussion, Drum Headquarters, Ellis Drum Shop, Just Drums, Lemmon Percussion, Original Long Island Drum Center, Percussion Center, Resurrection Drums, Rhythm Traders, Skins-n-Tins and Stebal Drums.



Discount Music customer Bill Haltiwanger restrings a Strat for the cause

TRIBUTE

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

Mark MacLeod

Mark MacLeod, co-owner of Family Piano and Joplin's Java & Ragtime Café in Waukegan, Ill., died suddenly during an outpatient medical procedure on Nov. 23, 2010. He was 48.

MacLeod opened his dealership with business partner Alice Alviani in 2007. According to the company's website, the store will remain open.

A classically trained pianist, MacLeod graduated from Antioch College and studied at Chicago's American Conservatory of Music. He worked as a piano technician for more than 25 years and served as a member of the Piano Technicians Guild.

INDEPENDENT RETAILERS | CHARITY

IMSO FEEDS THE HUNGRY

On Nov. 13, 2010, Independent Music Store Owners (iMSO) members from around the United States hosted Strings for Food, an annual event that lets indie music store owners and their customers feed the hungry.

Customers that donated non-perishable food items to participating dealerships received a complimentary guitar restringing — free strings included. The stores covered promotional expenses, installation labor and presented donated food to local food banks. The 25 participating retailers changed 1,150 sets of strings and raised more than 6,650 pounds of food.

“[Strings for Food] is a great event that brings customers, store owners and vendors together for a common cause,” said Lisa Kirkwood, co-owner of Discount Music of Jacksonville in Jacksonville, Fla. “I am humbled by the generosity of our sponsoring vendors and the musicians who brought in over 3 tons of food.”

Such vendors as D’Addario, SIT and Curt Mangan Strings donated accessories to the event. The Musical Instrument Reclamation Corp. also donated guitars that were raffled off at the event.

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PROMOTION

MF, Gibson Pay Tribute to the King

Musician's Friend has partnered with Gibson Custom Shop to honor blues legend B.B. King. The companies designed five gem-inspired colors of King's Custom Lucille electric guitar. They were pictured with King on Musician's Friend's December catalog cover.



TRIBUTE

Jersey Retailer Retires

Michael Diehl (pictured), founder of Freehold Music Center in Freehold, N.J., recently retired after nearly 60 years in the music retail business. Diehl indirectly altered rock music, selling a guitar to a woman named Mrs. Springsteen for her son, Bruce. Diehl's son John, a fellow music retailer, assumed his father's duties and will attempt to keep the music store in business while running his own store in Toms River, N.J.

CLOSING

Mollet Shuts Doors After 40 Years

Mollet Music, a full-line music retailer in Yankton, S.D., will close in early 2011. The company was founded in 1969 by Lanning Mollet. According to an Associated Press article, Mollet Music employed about a dozen people at its peak and supplied instruments to roughly 80 schools.

RECOVERY

Studio E Reopens

Last September, a tornado destroyed Studio E Music & Sound in Athens, Ohio. After closing for a month, the combo dealership reopened at a new location, 1002 E. State St. The store currently stocks about 180 different guitars and offers drum, piano and guitar lessons.



Inside Loud and Clear Audio Visual's new showroom; inset: Loud and Clear's Neville Hormuz

LOUD AND CLEAR AUDIO VISUAL | OPENING

Loud and Clear Rises From Zone's Ashes

Neville Hormuz, business manager for Zone Music of Cotati, Calif., hadn't planned on opening his own music store. But when the Bay Area combo dealership closed its doors last August, the 14-year employee decided to lease a portion of the space. He opened Loud and Clear Audio Visual two months later, with the help of a few longtime Zone employees.

"I had the customer base right here, years of experience, and with a smaller store focusing on commercial installation and what Zone did best with — guitars and musical instrument accessories — I felt like we could have a good business plan," Hormuz said.

The store focuses on commercial audio-visual installation, as well as used

and consignment equipment. According to Hormuz, it already boasts more than 80 used guitars. It also stocks a variety of new gear, including Korg, Vox, Roland, Shure, QSC, EV, Zoom and Yamaha products.

Following its GHS- and EMG-sponsored grand opening on Oct. 1, Loud and Clear hosted a social media marketing clinic, as well as a restringing benefit for the Humane Society. Hormuz said he plans on holding more clinics and fundraisers in the future.

Zone Music's owner Frank Hayhurst left the music retail business after 30 years. "I learned a lot from Frank," Hormuz said. "I wish him the best with his new ventures."

AUDIOLINES | LEGAL

Fryman Opens Up About Lawsuit

Last October, Sweetwater of Fort Wayne, Ind., won a trademark infringement lawsuit against Audiolines, a part of Chicago-based J2 Electronics Group. Sweetwater had alleged that Audiolines illegally copied online content — certain audiolines.com pages even stated that customers should contact their Sweetwater sales engineer for more information. Audiolines was ordered to pay \$75,000 in damages.

But with the suit behind him now, Bernie Fryman, J2's president, said the story isn't that simple.

In September 2008, Fryman purchased Audiolines from its former owners, Yosi and Sharone Lavi. At the

closing, Fryman's attorney, the seller's attorney and the seller all guaranteed in a signed contract that they transferred the J2 business and website free and clear of encumbrances.

"We felt that we were diligent and were protected," Fryman said.

He added that the audiolines.com website at closing "had over 9,500 items," and it was "unrealistic to police the reading of each entry."

"Audiolines.com and my personal reputation is very important to me," Fryman said. "No J2 Electronics Group Ltd. or current audiolines.com employee ever lifted content from Sweetwater's website, therefore infringing on their trademark."

LONG & MCQUADE | FINANCIAL

PHONE BILL DISASTER

Long & McQuade has been battling its telephone company, Telus, for 18 months.

Steve Long, president of the Pickering, Ontario, dealership, said he's been charged for long-distance calls, originally adding up to \$83,000, that his company didn't make.

According to an article in *Toronto Sun*, more than 25 consecutive phone calls, each at least a

half-hour long, were made to a pay-per-use service in Germany from Long & McQuade's Pickering office in June 2009. Still, Long said the phone system only allows 12 lines to make calls at once. Telus claimed no responsibility because the telephone equipment was compromised. The original bill has been cut down, but Long said he wants it cleared for time spent dealing with the problem.



Cascio GuitarFest performer Greg Koch

CASCIO INTERSTATE MUSIC | EVENT

GUITARFEST BRINGS IN RECORD NUMBERS

Cascio Interstate Music drew in record attendance for its sixth annual GuitarFest on Nov. 20, 2010.

The New Berlin, Wis., dealership hosted the clinic and musical showcase event on its in-store soundstage, which featured performances and seminars by a diverse artist lineup.

Cascio CEO Michael Houser said this year's GuitarFest focused on everything from individual instruction to social media networking.

"We had great and inspirational instruction from our clinicians and crowd interactivity — greater than any other GuitarFest we have had," Houser said.

Highlights included performances and storytelling by Milwaukee native Greg Koch and bassist Billy Sheehan. Sheehan, who has played with Steve Vai and David Lee Roth, discussed the importance of practice.

Cascio instructors Keith Pulvermacher and Josh Tovar also demonstrated various techniques, from open-string leads to inversions. Tovar included tips from his upcoming Hal Leonard DVD series, *Guitar Licks Goldmine*. Neoclassical metal player Rob Marcello also entertained the crowd with his knowledge of classic riffs.



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»» ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ RETAIL



Inside the remodeled Sam Ash
Music Miami Lakes, Fla., location

SAM ASH MUSIC | BY HILARY BROWN

SAM ASH MIAMI GETS 21ST CENTURY MAKEOVER

Mike Aurigemma has unveiled his Mona Lisa. Sam Ash Music's director of merchandising and special projects recently headed an eight-month renovation of the chain's Miami Lakes, Fla., location. The grand reopening was held Dec. 4, 2010.

Located in Miami Gardens, the 35,000-square-foot facility completes a trinity of remodeled Sam Ash megastores. The other two are located in Cerritos, Calif., and Las Vegas.

Among the improvements, the store's balcony was removed to make the inside more visible to passers-by. Aurigemma said that he believes the more spacious interior will let customers engage more openly with salespeople.

Other highlights include an overhauled acoustic room, which now boasts rows of pristine showcases. Decorative red trim lines the chain's white slatwall. The drum department is fronted by a professional stage, which will be used for live clinics, performances and additional merchandising. The remodel also creates space for more stock, and Aurigemma said the store will boost its guitar, pro audio and lighting selection.

"This store redefines what a megastore is," Aurigemma said. "It's essentially a new store within the old store."

He added that he hopes the project will serve as a catalyst to revamp Sam Ash stores throughout the country.



Cristin Livezey

FULL COMPASS | APPOINTMENTS

FC Names New Veeps

Madison, Wis.-based audio retailer Full Compass Systems has promoted Roxanne Wenzel to vice president of sales and marketing and Cristin Livezey to vice president of finance.

Wenzel joined the company in early 2008. According to a statement from Full Compass, her knowledge of successful sales and marketing strategies from previous high-level positions has helped push the company to record sales growth.

"I am very excited to accept this position and will do my best to keep Full Compass moving on its upward climb," Wenzel said. "I am very fortunate to have such highly motivated, professional sales and support teams, which are critical components to our future success."

Livezey, who joined the company as a corporate controller in 2008, has also helped drive initiatives resulting in record sales for the company. She previously worked in accounting at Madison-based audio and video distributor Intelix.

"Our entire accounting department and I will remain dedicated to deepening outside financial relationships, optimizing internal processes and controls, and managing cash flow to achieve profitable growth for Full Compass," Livezey said.

GUITAR CENTER | OUTREACH

GC AIDS STRUGGLING MUSICIANS

This holiday season, Guitar Center gave shoppers a chance to make a difference in the lives of fellow musicians.

The combo chain accepted contributions to MusiCares Foundation at all of its North American stores. MusiCares provides struggling musicians support and guidance with everything from addiction recovery to personal or medical crisis. Shoppers contributing as little as a dollar were given an ornament

to display in the store, either to decorate its holiday tree or a dedicated MusiCares wall on the premises.

"We focus on giving back to musicians, creating opportunity for them where there wasn't any before," said Gene Joly, GC's executive vice president of stores. "This holiday season, we want to help our customers make a meaningful impact in the lives of people who are struggling personally and have nowhere else to go."

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Note from Joe

A New Year's Resolution for the Industry

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the NAMM staff, I would like to extend our best wishes for 2011 to the 9,000 Member companies of NAMM and their employees.

This New Year arrives with cautious optimism, as the global economy begins to shake off the effects of three years of turbulence. I've heard from a wide range of Members, and a common theme is that business seems to have stabilized but is still "off" from pre-recession numbers. If there is any silver lining, it's that these Members have done everything imaginable to trim costs and become more efficient so that any level of recovery will be a good thing.

And while a consensus for the future is hard to come by, everyone appears to agree on one thing: the economic recovery is going to be a long and drawn-out affair—no quick snap back to "good times." How does an industry adapt to this new reality? We either accept the fact that growth will be flat in the years ahead, or we can make an industry-wide resolution to create new music makers and increase the size of the market.

Creating new music makers—you know, showing a kid in your store his first three chords so he can strum "Telet and Shout," or committing to start a Recreational Music Making program such as drum circles, group keyboard classes or Weekend Warriors. You could also volunteer to support your local school

music program or start an afterschool music class at your neighborhood Boys and Girls Club. There are dozens of fun-key programs from NAMM and our partners—or you can invent your own. There is no secret to this; all it takes is the willpower to begin and the understanding of why it is so important.

There are some great examples of NAMM retailers who take this responsibility very seriously, but all too often we hear: It's too difficult, I don't have time, there's no space in the store, we don't have enough staff, etc. I'm guessing you've heard or possibly even used those excuses yourself. Many retailers I speak with tell me that parents need to get their kids started, the government needs to support the arts more, the schools need to have great music teachers, the manufacturers should support programs and NAMM needs to do a national "Get MiK" campaign. It's easy to point fingers about how others should do more, and I personally agree that all these aspects could contribute to growing the industry. But the bottom line is we need more customers, and we can achieve that if we all work together to create programs that make it easy and fun for people to make music throughout their lives.

Business has changed, markets have changed and customer expectations have changed. What hasn't changed? The almost universal dream to play a musical instrument. We're grateful for our current customers who shop our stores and keep pushing us to create better and better products each year. But the model for industry growth will only come from recognizing that the vast majority of those who don't play wish they did. Millions share the dream of being able to pick up a guitar or sit down at a keyboard. They see themselves playing in a band or orchestra, or picture a family gathering where they can enjoy making music with their kids. I call on the global industry and all NAMM Members to make the commitment this year to do something—anything—to help make these non-players' dreams come true!

Joe Lamond • NAMM President/CEO

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Acquires Breedlove Guitars
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Distributes Suzuki in the States
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- > **Roland**
Hosts dealers in Hillsboro, Ore.
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- > **Diamond Amplification**
Gives troops the gift of music
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SUPPLY

MANUFACTURING | BY ZACH PHILLIPS & FRANK ALKYER

TRADEMARK NIGHTMARE

C.F. Martin executives got an unwelcome surprise when they arrived in Shanghai for Music China this past October: Another C.F. Martin had set up shop in the trade show hall.

The exhibit bore the Martin & Co. logo, down to the tag line “Est. 1833,” and featured dead ringers of several best-selling Martin guitars. And yet the company had no relation to C.F. Martin.

“Like many other American companies, C.F. Martin & Co. Inc. has become the victim of unauthorized registration of its traditional trademark and of counterfeiting of its products in the People’s Republic of China,” said a statement C.F. Martin released after the international trade show.

But according to Ron Bienstock, a leading music industry attorney and partner with Bienstock & Michael, the Martin double was within its legal rights — at least in China.

BRAND HIJACKING

Unlike the United States, which has a priority trademark filing system, China has a first-to-file trademark system (i.e. first come, first served). In this case, another company acquired the Martin trademark in China by



C.F. Martin deals with legal ‘corporate identity theft’ in China

filing for it before the Nazareth, Pa.-based guitar maker.

Attendees at Music China claimed the alternate Martin

booth was run by Gomans Ltd. of Hong Kong. That said, a Gomans representative denied having registered the Martin Guitar trademark in question. It’s still unclear who the principles are that filed it.

Bienstock stressed that this wasn’t counterfeiting. He called it “five steps more destructive, potentially” and likened it to a company’s brand being hijacked.

“I want to be clear that this is bigger than [counterfeiting],” Bienstock said. “Counterfeit is a company making exact copied product. This is corporate identity theft at the highest level in the music instrument business.

“Some might say, ‘Knockoffs? We’ve always had that problem.’ No. That’s not exactly the issue now. This issue is we’re going to have other brands being registered in China in this method. That’s not the way it was. Some companies were counterfeiting before, but these are not counterfeits in China because they’re made under the Chinese registration.”

C.F. Martin’s statement added that the company’s legal counsel has filed a petition with the China Patent & Trademark Office to cancel the other trademark. Still, Bienstock said that China’s trademark process is “pro-indigenous, protective from outside companies.”

“On our national level, this is really very difficult,” Bienstock explained. “We have a very reluctant set of legislators who don’t want to press China too hard, considering that we’ve just borrowed trillions of dollars from them.

“So, they don’t want to press them for [intellectual property] recognition. But in a world where we make products there and all we have is our brand, if they already have the manufacturing, then if they register the brand in China, they own the brand, too.”

GET AN IP PORTFOLIO

Bienstock said he believes this trend could ultimately cost companies with half domestic, half foreign business as much as a 30-percent drop in sales.

The bottom line: U.S. manufacturers and suppliers, if they haven’t already, need to get their trademarks filed in foreign countries with first-to-file systems as soon as possible.

“An intellectual property portfolio is essential for a branding world,” Bienstock said. “We need to own these marks. We need to protect these marks. If this is not accomplished in a cohesive plan, music instrument companies have to find new brands and marks and looks.” **MI**

TECHNOLOGY

Gibson Hits 2 Million

The Gibson Guitar iPhone App recently became one of the most popular free apps via the Apple iTunes store with more than 2 million downloads to date. In October, it was named the “Best Branded Music App” at the Billboard Music App Awards. The app was created in conjunction with Legacy Learning Systems and will soon be available at the Android and Intel app stores. gibson.com



OUTREACH

Fight for the Right to Rock

The Little Kids Rock “Right to Rock” benefit was held at the B.B. King Blues Club & Grill in New York on Oct. 27, 2010. There, New York Yankees icon Bernie Williams, season eight “American Idol” winner Kris Allen and Vanilla Fudge drummer Carmine Appice shared the stage with Little Kids Rock students. The event, which included a concert and live auction featuring celebrity-painted, one-of-a-kind Fender Stratocaster guitars, raised more than \$175,000. The money will give about 9,000 low-income children free instruments and music education. fender.com

CONTEST

Winner Takes All



DBZ Guitars has announced its “Win It All” guitar giveaway. The contest is open to everyone who joins DBZ Guitars’ official Facebook

group. The winner will receive one of every body style in the DBZ Premier series electric guitar collection. The prize package has a retail value of more than \$10,000, and the drawing will be held March 29, 2011. dbzguitars.com

TWO OLD HIPPIES, BREEDLOVE | MERGER

Breedlove Joins Two Hippies

Two Old Hippies has purchased Breedlove Guitars, a Bend, Ore.-based guitar maker. Breedlove will continue operations in its current facility and will expand to create the Bedell USA Custom Shop. Kim Breedlove, founder and designer of Breedlove, will continue to drive Breedlove’s product development, and Tom Bedell, founder of Two Old Hippies, will have another workshop to further advance his Bedell and Great Divide guitar brands.

“It’s an amazing fit,” Breedlove said. “Tom and I only met a few short months ago, but the level of convergence of passion, experiences and commitment to the values we learned growing up in the ’60s is amazing. Breedlove is just a natural fit for the culture at Two Old Hippies.”



From left: Kim Breedlove, Pete Newport and Tom Bedell

“We’ve always admired Breedlove’s spark, quality and innovations,” Bedell said. “The Breedlove Co. team is also very versatile and full of potential.”

Operations will continue with little to no change in the Breedlove distribution network, programs or product lines in the near future.

twooldhippies.com



Tube-Tech founder John Petersen

TUBE-TECH | ANNIVERSARY

Tube-Tech Savvy for 25 Years

Tube-Tech celebrated 25 years of analog warmth in 2010. Since the design of the first Program Equalizer PE 1A in 1985, more than 15,000 Tube-Tech units have been shipped. tube-tech.com

THE GUITAR HANGER | PATENT

Guitar Hanger Hangs High

The United States Patent and Trademark Office recently granted a utility patent to Chris Samu of The Guitar Hanger.

The patent comes in addition to the design patents issued last February for

ornamental design of the product.

The Guitar Hanger lets musicians store their instruments anywhere with a closet rod or hook. The non-mechanical locking yoke securely holds the guitar in place. theguitarhanger.com

Jim Eaton



ST. LOUIS MUSIC | PARTNERSHIP

ST. LOUIS DISTRIBUTES SUZUKI

St. Louis Music (SLM) is now the exclusive U.S. distributor of the Nagoya Suzuki violin line.

“To have world-renowned Suzuki instruments in our catalog is an honor and a great benefit to our dealers,” said Jim Eaton, SLM’s vice president. “Today, St. Louis Music is among the strongest and fastest-growing wholesale music distributors in the country, and we are looking forward to re-establishing the Suzuki string instruments.”

SLM will exhibit Suzuki’s instruments at the upcoming NAMM show and will be prepared to ship the instruments from its inventory in January. stlouismusic.com

‘To have Suzuki in our catalog is an honor and a benefit to our dealers.’

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CONTEST

Big Lottery Win

Barry Peters of York, Pa., recently won a Martin Performing Artist Series GPCPA1 guitar from the Pennsylvania Lottery's Win For Life Martin Guitar promotional drawing. Peters also received a VIP tour of C.F. Martin's facility. The headquarters and factory are both located in Nazareth, Pa. martinguitar.com

AGREEMENT

Kendor Music to Distribute Nestico

Kendor Music recently took on distribution of jazz ensemble charts from Sammy Nestico Music. Best known for his classic arrangements for the Count Basie Orchestra, Nestico has been in the music industry for more than 50 years and is credited with producing more than 600 publications. The Sammy Nestico Music catalog features 60 charts for middle school through professional groups. kendormusic.com



DISTRIBUTION

Alfred, Naxos Join Forces

Alfred Music Publishing has partnered with Naxos on a comprehensive, multi-tier distribution agreement that includes physical and digital distribution, as well as future licensing and publishing projects. The Naxos catalog includes more than 6,000 recordings that range from classical favorites to new music. In addition to the physical and digital distribution, the companies will offer Alfred's audio recordings to educational institutions for classroom use through the Naxos library. alfred.com/naxos



Roland executives with attendees at the company's dealer meeting

ROLAND | EVENT

MEETING OF THE MINDS

In conjunction with the Rodgers International Dealer Meeting, Roland Corp. U.S. gathered with key Roland piano dealers at Rodgers in Hillsboro, Ore., on Oct. 20, 2010. The meeting coincided with the public announcement that Roland's HP series SuperNATURAL pianos are now assembled at the Rodgers factory in Hillsboro.

Piano dealers got a look at the manufacturing process of the HP series SuperNATURAL pianos and Rodgers organs, seeing each stage from assembly to finishing.

"There are some key reasons why we are now assembling our HP series of digital pianos at the Rodgers factory in Hillsboro," said Roland U.S. President

and CEO Chris Bristol. "Not only will it contribute to price stability, but it will allow us to deliver digital pianos to our customers more quickly."

The two-day event also gave dealers a chance to meet with top executives, including Bristol, Roland Corp. Japan President Kaz Tanaka and Roland U.S. Vice President of Sales Brian Alli.

As attendees of the Rodgers International Dealer Meeting, Roland piano dealers learned about the direction of the organ and classical musical instrument markets. They also witnessed demonstrations of the Roland C-380 digital organ, C-30 classical harpsichord and Roland SuperNATURAL piano technology. rolandus.com

DBZ GUITARS | OUTREACH

DBZ Donates to Cancer Fund

DBZ Guitars donated a custom-built Dean B. Zelinsky guitar auctioned off for the Ronnie James Dio "Stand Up and Shout" cancer fund, held in August 2010. The fundraiser was hosted by the Las Vegas-based Aces & Ales Pub. The guitar received the largest purse of the event, with 100 percent of the proceeds going directly to the fund.

The auctioned guitar features an engraved body with a portrait of Ronnie James Dio, the Dio logo, ornate leaf work and an "In Loving Memory of Ronnie James Dio" inscription. All the proceeds benefitted the "Stand Up and Shout" cancer fund, which supports research, screenings and programs. dbzguitars.com

WEBNEWS

STANDING OVATION

Ovation Guitars has debuted a new website that's designed around an interactive, user-friendly platform. Visitors can easily search the entire website, ovationguitars.com, by keyword or filter products by series and body depth. All of Ovation's social media can be accessed from the new site, which also offers a "Buy it Now" feature, "Get Live" with artist events and tour dates, an interactive "Soundroom" blog, and a comprehensive video lessons library. ovationguitars.com

VATER'S SITE OVERHAUL

Vater has rebuilt its website, vater.com, to be easier to navigate and accessible from any mobile device. New features include Vater artist videos, video and print lessons, and product features and reviews. vater.com



APHEX REDESIGNED

Aphex's completely redesigned website, aphex.com, incorporates modern graphics and streamlined navigation to create a more informative, accessible user experience. The updated site provides quick, easy access to product information and specifications; support resources; U.S. and international dealer listings; and information on the company and its expanding partners network. aphex.com

SOUNDCRAFT, STUDER LAUNCH NEW U.S. SITES

Soundcraft and Studer have introduced two new U.S. websites that will include product information, an expanded range of videos and user guides. Visitors can also locate local dealers and find information about hands-on training in their region. usa.soundcraft.com; usa.studer.ch

GRETSCH'S SITE GETS GROOVY

Gretsch Guitars recently launched its updated website, gretschguitars.com, to include a new, easy-to-navigate product section with up-to-date product information and specifications. The site also has a revamped artist page, a blog featuring instant access to Gretsch happenings, and a forum where Gretsch enthusiasts can discuss their favorite instruments and artists. gretschguitars.com

MEL BAY | EXPANSION

Mel Bay Adds Licensing Division

Mel Bay has launched a new division dedicated to licensing its catalog. The division is anchored by a Web-based platform designed for music supervisors. The new site, melbay.com/licensing, is formatted to let users search by genre, instrument, tempo and mood. Users will also be able to

access the licensing process and get assistance from the licensing staff easily.

"The new website provides music supervisors and all music users easy access to search Mel Bay's untapped catalog of quality recordings and original music," said Julie Price, Mel Bay's director of music licensing. melbay.com

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ALBION | PARTNERSHIP

ONORI DISTRIBUTES ALBION INSTRUMENTS

Albion Musical Instruments has appointed Onori as its new distributor and plans to launch a new line of guitar and bass amplifiers in the United States. The line will debut at The NAMM Show in Anaheim, Calif., this January and will feature TCT

hand-wired, tube guitar amplifiers; the AG hybrid guitar amplifiers; and the ABH bass amplification with tube-based pre-amps and solid-state power amps. The lines feature birch ply cabinet construction on select models and FR4 printed circuit board. albionmi.co.uk

DIAMOND | CHARITY

DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH

Diamond Amplification recently kicked off its 2010 Support Your Troops benefit. CEO Jeff Diamant and his business partner, Terry Martin, put together the program, which gives 10 percent of all proceeds from Diamond sales between Nov. 1 and Dec. 31, 2010, to musical equipment that will ship overseas for military troops.

“We have always offered discounts for active-duty military personnel, as well as war veterans,” Diamant said. “Terry and I both want to do something more for our troops. We get lots of requests for gear from military personnel overseas, and we just want to give them a little taste of home.”

The campaign will provide guitar amps to troops serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. diamondamplification.com

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APPOINTMENTS

Music Group Names CFO

The Music Group has appointed John Farina as chief financial officer. He has more than 25 years of experience in financial management and corporate development.



“[Farina’s] strong financial and manufacturing background plus extraordinary breadth in global executive management stemming from companies like IBM and Celestica are exceptional are very relevant to The Music Group,” said Uli Behringer, CEO of The Music Group.

Aphex recently hired Kent Dimon as the director of licensing.

Tornavoz has hired two new sales managers. Christina Hudson is the new regional sales manager for the Western United States, and Jon Bingham is the new regional sales manager for the Midwest and Canada.

Casio has tapped Mark Amentt as the director of sales for the Eastern U.S. division and Jim Presley as the director of sales for the Western U.S. division. Casio has also named Josh Charles the new spokesperson for its Privia keyboards.

Jim Haler has been appointed to **Yamaha’s** newly created position of acoustic drum manager in the sales department. Yamaha has also hired Bonnie Barrett as director of Yamaha Artist Services.

American DJ has appointed Edgar Bernal as product/sales specialist for American Audio.

D’Addario recently named Peter Cerrone Web merchandising specialist.

Eric Sands has joined **Orange USA’s** sales team to lead sales efforts in the United States.

Gator Cases has appointed Patrick Schleit as vice president of international sales.

Sam Eberwein and Tony Dellacroce have been named regional sales managers for **Rodgers Instruments**.

APHEX | PARTNERSHIP

Aphex Partners With Techrep

Aphex has appointed Techrep Marketing as its sales representative for Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Kentucky and West Virginia.

“We’re excited to welcome Techrep as an Aphex representative,” said Rick

McClendon, Aphex general manager. “They’re a company we know we can trust to understand and take care of the legendary Aphex brand.”

Techrep has offices in 13 eastern states. aphex.com

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A photograph of an acoustic guitar lying on a bed with white, fluffy bedding. In the background, a city skyline is visible through a window with light-colored curtains. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

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ZOOM

InsideSHOWS

> An estimated 5,000 attendees visited PASIC 2010, compared to 5,300 at last year's show.

> One hundred twenty companies exhibited, up from last year's 116.

SHOWS



PASIC 2010 | BY KATIE KAILUS

BOUNCING BACK

Traffic took a hit at this year's Percussive Arts Society International Convention (PASIC), but numbers can lie. Optimism filled the halls of the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis from Nov. 10–13, as drum suppliers reported up sales and high expectations for their new gear.

“Everyone seems more optimis-

PASIC exhibitors optimistic about sales, especially accessories and digital kits

tic,” said Brian LeVan, national sales manager for Remo. “There’s a lot of good product releases now.

The velocity has picked up.”

Shawn Lafrenz, senior marketing manager for Pearl Drums, agreed. “It seems like people are focusing more on buying, especially quality instruments,” he said. “We are very pleased with how everything is going for us.”

Print music publisher Hal Leonard has also seen a continuous rise in sales, especially in its drums segment.

“There has been a steady increase with the drum books,” said Marilyn Fleenor, manager of workshops and clinics for Hal Leonard. “Depending on the segment, we

1. From left: Roland's Mike Snyder, David Garza, Drew Armentrout and Steven Fisher; 2. Hal Leonard's Marilyn Fleenor; 3. Meinl's Adam Anderson; 4. Yamaha's Tom Griffin; 5. From left: Mapex's Jeff Ivester, Chris Hanks and Will Gordillo; 6. Latin Percussion's Ray Enhoffer, Jim Rockwell and Andy Krol; 7. From left: Ludwig's Jim Catalano, Gary Devore, Robert Henry, Rick Hanby and Grant Henry

have been doing very well.”

Chris Hankes, marching and concert percussion product manager for Mapex, said school music boosters have helped propel band percussion sales this past year.

“School budgets are under siege, and what we have seen are

‘It seems like people are focusing more on buying, especially quality instruments.’

— Shawn Lafrenz

music boosters helping to come up with the money for instruments,” Hankes said. “We’ve sold twice as many marching and band instruments because of the boosters programs.”

ACCESSORY BOOM

Despite tight pocket books, drummers have not been holding back on accessories.

“People are really buying sticks and heads,” LeVan said. “Accessories keep moving and seem to be very strong right now.”

At PASIC, Remo highlighted its Tattoo Skyns drumheads, designed by “LA Ink” television star Corey Miller. The heads offer full-color designs that replicate the designs featured on Miller’s show. Also showcased were Remo’s NSL (Not So Loud) heads, which eliminate high overtones and midrange tones, letting drummers play in a quiet setting.

Ian Shepherd of Evans Drumheads also reported strong sales.

“Everything is selling really well,” he said. “Our Hybrid Soft heads are doing well for younger players, and the Puresound snares have been very popular, as well.”

1. Alesis’ Felix Pacheco; 2. DW’s Jordan Barth; 3. Gator Cases’ Ken Fuente (left) and Bruce Schneider; 4. From left: Alfred’s Michael Finkelstein, Rich Lackowski, Karissa Read and Dave Black; 5. Toca’s Victor Filonovich; 6. Paiste’s Tim Shahady (left) and the University of North Dakota at Grand Forks’ Mike Blake; 7. Sabian’s Robert Mason (left) and Nick Petrella; 8. From left: Pearl’s Aaron Hunt, Steve Armstrong, Shawn Lafrenz, Frans Swinkels and Sho Inatomi; 9. Vic Firth’s Vic Firth; 10. Evans Drumheads’ Ian Shepherd; 11. Zildjian’s Paul Francis

Evans debuted its Hybrid-S marching snare head, as well as the System Blue Tenor Head. The Hybrid-S, or Hybrid-Soft, Marching Snare Batter features a Kevlar-Mylar blend that offers a soft, sensitive feel. According to Shepherd, the drumheads received a lot of attention from showgoers.

Peterson Tuners displayed its BodyBeat Sync, a metronome that can transmit a beat through visual, aural and tactile means. Units can be set up as the “master” to set the beat or in “sync” mode to follow the beat.

“These have been creating quite the buzz, literally,” said John Norris, Peterson’s sales manager. “People can also feel the beat, which is unique. They have been very popular at the show.”

DIGITAL DOMINATION

hundreds of percussionists and students pounded away at Roland’s digital drum setups, showing the growing popularity of the electronic segment.

Roland Product Specialist David Garza said digital drums are a strong seller because of their versatility.

“Electronic drums are such a great solution for practice, as well as the recording studio. They are so popular right now.”

Roland rolled out its Octapad SPD-30, which features 30 types of multi-effects and four dual-trigger inputs. The pad also has a hi-hat controller for adding pads to create a mini kit or for connecting triggers from acoustic drums.

“There’s almost not one top





1. From left: Remo's Brian LeVan, Chris Hart and Bob Yerby; 2. EMD's Buzz King (left) and Dan Barker; 3. Bosphorus' Kevin Vosbein; 4. Pro-Mark's Mark Petrocelli (left) and Pat Brown; 5. Gretsch's John Palmer; 6. Peterson's Chris Labriola (left) and John Norris; 7. From left: Dynasty's Mark Schafer, Steve Crouch and Dave Clark; 8. Yamaha's Greg Crane; 9. Meredith Music's Garwood Whaley

drummer that does not have an electronic component as a part of their set," Garza said. "Electronic drums will not replace acoustic drums, but they show drummers the capabilities that they have."

Felix Pacheco, product specialist for Alesis, echoed Garza's sentiments.

"Everyone can use [digital drums]," he said. "Kids love them because they involve the computer, players who live in apartments like them because they can practice in their homes. Everyone likes them."

Alesis, which displayed the new DM7 USB, has seen significant growth with its digital sets.

"They are selling really, really well," Pacheco said.

Alesis' new DM7 USB is a five-drum, three-cymbal kit with a USB-enabled drum module. The kit offers more than 400 stereo sounds in 80 kits.

Yamaha has shared in the digital success, as well.

"Drummers love them," said Yamaha's DTX product specialist, Tom Griffin. "And they are now in an affordable price range."

Its DTX series features five setups at multiple price points, which increases the line's popularity.

"Our top-end [digital sets] have actually been very popular and have done extremely well," Griffin said. **MI**

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AES CONVENTION | BY DAN DALEY

PRO AUDIO'S CULTURE SHIFT

The 2010 Audio Engineering Society (AES) Convention could be parsed several ways. Held Nov. 4–7, it was smaller — continuing a trend that began when 2001's New York show was postponed due to 9/11. Average booth sizes were also down, and there were fewer of them. But most exhibitors were satisfied with the amount and quality of traffic passing through the 13 rows at San Francisco's Moscone Center.

"The number of people that we're seeing attending the show this year looks and feels great," said Audio-Technica's Marketing Director Gary Boss, surveying the crowds from A-T's booth at the show's entrance. "It also feels like the business is picking up in general in a very natural and organic way."

AES highlights everything from Pro Tools 9 to an analog resurgence

Then there was the metaphorical topography of the show, which saw Avid's booth at the center of the floor — and at the center of the pro audio universe, which has become as comfortable in guitar-strewn bedrooms as in commercial studios. That is to say, this year's AES show had an MI feel, from the generally noisier ambience of the hall to the fact that this was the first show in 25 years that didn't feature the TEC Awards on Saturday night. The 26th edition of the awards

— pro audio's equivalent of the Oscars — will take place instead at the winter NAMM show in Anaheim, Calif., this January.

Several pro audio execs speculated that, thanks to the increasing software-driven overlap between MI and pro audio, AES could become a good fit to collocate with NAMM in the future.

Joe Lamond, NAMM's president and CEO, attributed the NAMM-TEC pairing to pure serendipity. "The TEC Foundation was looking to attract a larger audience to the TEC Awards, and NAMM was looking to increase the value of NAMM show participation with its pro audio and lighting exhibitors," he said. "Professional audio companies have been a part of the NAMM community since the days of Edison, so when the opportunity arose for NAMM

to host the TEC Awards, it was a natural for us." (AES didn't reply to a request for comment.)

A KINDER, GENTLER AVID

The AES Convention had a number of significant new-product announcements. One of the bigger ones was the drop of Avid's Pro Tools 9 iteration. (The MSRP starts at \$599.) It lets users choose to work with Avid audio interfaces, third-party audio interfaces or no hardware at all when using the built-in audio capabilities of a Mac or PC. And pursuant to Avid's acquisition of Euphonix last April, the company

1. Endless Analog's Chris Estes (left) and Vintage King's Jeff Ehrenberg; 2. Audio-Technica's Mike Edwards (left) and Gary Boss; 3. Auralex's Jeff Lantz; 4. Genelec's Will Eggleston; 5. TC Electronic's Steve Strassberg (left) and Thomas Lund; 6. SSL's Piers Plaskitt; 7. Producer and Hal Leonard author Bobby Owsinski

announced new support for the Eucon open Ethernet protocol. It lets Pro Tools users expand control surface options to include Avid's Artist series and Pro series audio consoles and controllers.

Avid buried both the Euphonix and Digidesign brands without fanfare, as the company looks to consolidate the success and goodwill of those monikers under the rubric that it goes by on Wall Street. But credit Avid with making feature changes and additions to Pro Tools 9 in direct response to customer input. Notably, it includes automatic delay compensation, which gives users the ability to create mixes faster and with increased alignment and phase accuracy, without the need to compensate manually for latencies from hardware I/Os, internal and external routing, and plug-in algorithm processing.

Rupert Neve, who gave his name to the company he founded and later sold, was also at AES, showing off Rupert Neve Designs' new Portico 5024 Quad Mic Amp. Based around custom transformers and class-A topologies, the 5024 features four channels of Portico series pre-amplification, independent Silk controls, two channels of DI inputs and an M-S decoder.

ANALOG ICEBERG

The 5024 was the tip of an emerging analog iceberg, which is likely a backlash against file-based music production and distribution. Endless Analog's CLASP (Closed Loop Analog Signal Processor) was a star at the show. Its hybrid interface lets Pro Tools and other DAWs interface with analog tape machines. For less than \$10,000, CLASP provides sample-accurate tape synchronization with zero latency analog monitoring and delivers a true analog front-end

recording solution.

Analog's resurgence was welcomed by industry veterans, who miss the format's warmth, and by indie 20-somethings. "They've never been exposed to it before, and when they hear it for the first time, they immediately realize how much better than digital analog sounds," said Mike Spitz, owner of ATR Services and ATR Magnetics.

Analog 2.0 may never become more than a niche, but combined with a resurgence in vinyl sales, it looks like a niche with legs.

That said, the digital domain isn't looking over its shoulder, as there was plenty of new stuff in that area. iZotope's Nectar Vocal Suite plug-in is a complete vocal processing tool kit that includes pitch correction, breath control, compressors, de-esser, doubler, saturation, EQ, gate, limiter, delay and reverb modules. And if you can't imagine vocal processing drilling down any further, check out Nectar's breath control target mode, which lets users specify the desired level of breaths detected in the track.

It wouldn't be pro audio without new iPad apps. Neyrinck came out with a pair: V-Control and V-Control Pro, both multi-touch controllers that provide access to transport, editing and mixing functions of any Pro Tools system connected to a Wi-Fi network. Both apps use the iPad surface and the iOS operating system to provide such features as a counter overlay, swipe gesturing to bank channels and a popover plug-in editor.

THE MIC SEGMENT

Pro audio's most robust link to the past, though, is in the industrial design of microphones,

which, despite some manufacturers moving the A/D converter ever further into the mic housing, remain inherently analog. And the show had some nice new ones. Telefunken's CU-29 Copperhead condenser mic with vintage New Old Stock (NOS) tube is part of the R-F-T line and was designed by the company's in-house engineering team. It's based around a circuit that features an NOS Telefunken vacuum tube, custom audio transformer and fixed cardioid large-diaphragm capsule.

D.W. Fearn launched the 70dB VT-12 Vacuum Tube mic pre, designed to accommodate the low output level of ribbon and dynamic microphones. The VT-12

can also be used with condenser mics and includes a provision for phantom powering.

All in all, the 129th AES Convention showed the resilience of an industry sector that's been hammered by declining music sales and the departure of record labels — whose largesse funded four decades of madness, money and some very good music. Some other pro audio channels, especially broadcast and installed systems, remain robust, as do their trade shows — NAB and InfoComm, respectively. But combined with its strong conference agenda this year, AES got through 2010 on its own two feet, and these days, that's saying a lot. **MI**



1. JBL's Peter Chaikin; 2. Line 6's Simon Jones (left) and Gary Coker; 3. Beyerdynamic's Paul Froula; 4. Tascam's Jeff Laity; 5. The Avid booth; 6. An example of AES's growing resemblance to a NAMM show

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- Jensen P12Q Alnico Magnet Speaker • Illinois Metallized Polypropylene Capacitors
- Switchcraft Jacks & B Supply Caps • Hand Selected Electro-Harmonix 12AX7 Preamp Tubes
- 6JF6 Output Tubes • Vintage Amplitude Bias Tremolo Circuit • Accutronics™ Long Spring Reverb Tank
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IDEAS

Inside **IDEAS** > Customer Whisperer Page 42 > Lesson Room Page 44 > Customer Care Page 46 > Streetwise Selling Page 48 > Lessons Learned Page 50

INDEPENDENT RETAIL | BY TED ESCHLIMAN

NEVER ASSESS ATTITUDE

Jerry forever badgered customers. He didn't know when to quit upselling. What customers wanted was never good enough for him. The goading got out of hand, and folks started walking out empty-handed. Complaints mounted about his relentlessness, and his manager got sick of his belligerent attitude.

Delores loved to help out. She received constant praise for her work ethic and was always the first to volunteer for menial chores, such like taking out the trash, moving cartons to the dumpster or counting the drawer at the end of the day.

Beatrice was the model of efficiency. Her typing could be heard from across the room, and she never seemed to take her eyes off the computer screen. *Tap, tap, tap* — everyone marveled at her cheerful attitude when she attacked the company's books.

What's interesting is the story behind each of these music store employees.

Jerry was the consummate professional. He believed everyone ought to have the highest-quality equipment he or she could afford. Ironically, he cared too much. Delores was recognized for her honesty — that is, until the



Judge staff on behavior, not on how you think they feel

manager found out her friends picked up much of the store's merchandise, which she'd hid in the dumpster. And Beatrice was revered for her attitude until, three months after she resigned, a routine scan of her computer revealed months of online gaming — and during work hours.

BEHAVIOR DOESN'T LIE

The common thread in each of these scenarios? The employ-

ees' attitudes had been misjudged. You can never tell what's in an employee's (or customer's) heart or head. You can judge behavior but not what people think or feel.

It's incredible how often this happens, even among seasoned managers. How many times have you heard the proclamation, "He's got a bad attitude"? This is a huge misstep, and if your formal employee evaluations are laced with this language, you can put your company in serious legal trouble, too.

We can never really know what motivates people. We think we know and often have a hunch, but you're much safer living in the realm of documentable actions.

For example, if a person's perpetually late, it could be because he doesn't understand the significance of timeliness and its impact on fellow employees. Maybe he's dealing with a child care conflict or car problems. None is necessarily excusable, but you should be able to address these issues and correct them with minimal dialogue. It's a huge mistake to accuse someone of having a bad attitude. Such confrontations invite defensiveness and rarely solve the problem.

You could never prove an emotion in court. Anger, disrespect

and laziness are immeasurable. Yelling, name-calling, not picking up after one's self are undeniable actions. Tardiness is a result, not an emotional state of mind. You need to work in this realm when calling someone on the carpet for problem behaviors.

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

Attacking Jerry's integrity and accusing him of not caring would be a huge mistake. Discussing listening strategies and explaining that customers need to make their own purchasing decisions, based on their own tastes, would be much more effective in correcting the problem. Again, this is about what one does, not what one thinks.

Delores and Beatrice are examples of character misperception. Like a charming street pick-pocket, they seem harmless and deceive others with pleasantries and good manners. Warm fuzzies about people can be just as fatal as writing off a gruff soul for mean-spiritedness.

You may be able to assess deeds, but you can never accurately measure character. **MI**

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

THE CUSTOMER WHISPERER | BY GREG BILLINGS

Raised by Beatniks

Most people are surprised when I tell them I was raised by beatniks. Well, maybe not real New York or San Francisco beatniks but the best provincial version you could have in 1960s Milwaukee. We lived in the postwar suburbs (think AMC's "Mad Men"), but my parents aspired to the East Coast hipster scene in the same way our generation embraced Haight-Ashbury and Woodstock a decade later.

They wore black turtleneck sweaters, and for a short time, Dad had a

beard. Their friends moonlighted as artists, musicians, writers and actors. We had a set of bongo drums in the basement rec room. By the time my sister and I were born, our parents had changed their names from Gary and Dolores to the much cooler Zeb and Dodo. They were the Real Bohemians of the Milwaukee Shore. (Ironically, we really were Bohemian — my grandmother's sisters were born outside Prague.)

The art on our walls was painted by their friends or by my grandmother. It wasn't museum-quality, but it was real and clearly different from the sofa-matching seascapes J.C. Penney sold to our neighbors. When "The Music Man" came to Chicago, our parents drove us 100 miles to see it, even though we were just 11 and 12 years old.

Mom was the blond ingénue of the local community theater. Many evenings, while the kids watched Lucy and Ricky, she and her friends sat around the kitchen table, reading scripts and consuming copious amounts of black coffee. Dad practiced his saxophone and wrote four-part vocal arrangements he and his buddies would sing in the basement. He always had his sax in the car trunk in case he had a chance to sit in with the pianist at a restaurant. It was only years later I finally understood why my schoolmates' working class parents thought we were weird.

This unconventional upbringing had its share of problems. But it also had unanticipated yet wonderful consequences. My weirdo parents raised four kids with an appreciation of art, theater, literature and music. They raised kids who read books and played instruments. They raised kids who could appreciate a community theater production as much as a Broadway show and a local jazz combo as much as a major rock concert.

Because we saw people actually creating things, as opposed to just consum-

ing them, we assumed we could accomplish anything if we worked hard enough. We became adults who write, paint and play music. Adults who watch a good movie rather than cable news or a reality TV show. Adults for whom art isn't just real but really important and for whom artistic expression isn't only rewarding but essential.

LASTING IMPRESSIONS

When our president encouraged parents to turn off the TV and read with their kids, he implied something important. Kids are lousy at doing what we tell them to do, but they're really good at copying our behavior. This is precisely what we see in music students from homes where the parents play instruments. And this is the essence of the message we need to communicate to other parents.

When a soccer mom says she wants her 2- or 3-year-old to play the piano, we should seize the opportunity and tell Mom that it's not enough to simply enroll her child in Kindermusik or Suzuki. The kid needs to see her playing the piano (or guitar or flute or zither) — and she needs to start playing today. Anyone who has ever tried to practice with a toddler in the room knows kids are fascinated by live sound and can't get enough of it. Playing the piano with a 4-year-old hanging on your left arm may be inconvenient, but it's a defining



'We must let parents know that the most important thing they can do is let their kids see them playing music.'

experience. That little girl will be begging for lessons when she's 6.

Parental involvement is more than just paying for lessons, attending recitals or being a band booster. Parents who play spawn kids who play, and parents who play music with their kids bond in ways that are profound and permanent. These kids also become active in theater, band, graphic arts, dance and debate. They are hard-working, good kids. They look you in the eye when they say "hello," and as adults, they will have enough poise to stand in front of an audience without

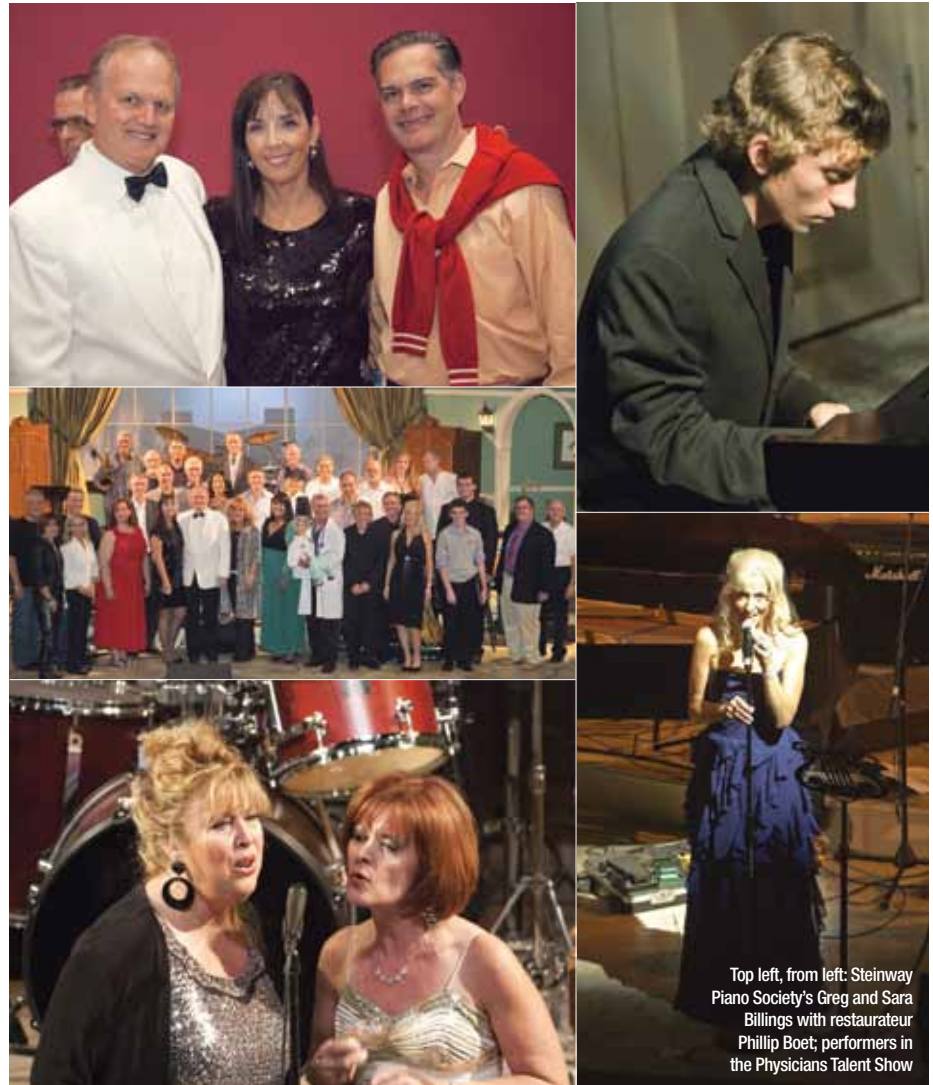
'Playing piano with a 4-year-old is a defining experience. That girl will be begging for lessons when she's 6.'

fear. They're usually excellent students and rarely get into trouble.

NAMM has driven home the message that music makes you smarter. As retailers and music advocates, we must take the next step and let parents know that the single most important thing they can do to encourage their kids is to let their kids see them playing and enjoying music.

These days, I'm spending as much time as I can with my grandson Dylan. And some of that time is spent with him on my lap at the piano. He really likes it. Just wait and see. It's gonna make a difference in his life. **MI**

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



Top left, from left: Steinway Piano Society's Greg and Sara Billings with restaurateur Phillip Boet; performers in the Physicians Talent Show

STEINWAY PIANO GALLERY | OUTREACH

MUSIC & MEDICINE

Nineteen doctors make music for local charities

A record 19 physicians recently took the stage at the Sugden Community Theatre in Naples, Fla., for the 6th Annual Physicians Talent Show. The charity event was hosted by the Steinway Piano Society, the nonprofit branch of Greg Billings' Steinway Piano Gallery of Bonita Springs, Fla.

"Everyone had a great time, and we raised almost \$40,000 for the Neighborhood Health Clinic and the Steinway Piano Society's Piano Bank," said Sara Billings,

the event chair and a registered nurse. "Having outgrown Sugden, next year we are taking the show to the Naples Philharmonic Center for the Arts. Our little show has become a part of the social fabric of our local medical community."

The Neighborhood Health Clinic gives medical care to low-income Collier County adults, and the Steinway Piano Society's Piano Bank gives pianos and music lessons to economically disadvantaged children.

THE LESSON ROOM | BY PETE GAMBER

Lessons Resolutions 2.0

made nine New Year's resolutions for my lessons program last January. Looking back at goals and hopes can be discouraging after a tough business year, but it's necessary for navigating through the future. Let's take a look at my resolutions and see what happened with each one.

1. Use YouTube to promote the lessons program. I feel good about my progress with this goal. We posted a lot of video and used it to market to new students through our website and Facebook. We also ran the videos in-store to advertise the program. And we got sign-ups. This will stay for 2011.



2. Increase communication with students via e-mail. We did so-so with this one. We collected a higher percentage of e-mail addresses than we did in 2008, and we discovered that parents use e-mail more than students. Still, we got limited results, so we revamped this goal by rolling it into our Facebook efforts. That said, we're still sending targeted e-mails to parents.

3. Improve outreach in the community to promote music lessons. This year, we handed out lessons literature at school events and were active at local jazz festivals. We maintained results similar to 2009, which I feel was good when evaluated against the business climate of 2010. We're keeping this goal for 2011.

4. Revamp piano lessons to better retain teens. Getting piano teachers to change their old-school ways of thinking was a challenge, and music publishers, not having any new-school books for piano, made it almost impossible. I tried using guitar books with cool songs that were compatible with adult piano books to accomplish this. However, the title "guitar" discouraged piano teachers from buying into the format change. I'm not giving up on this for 2011, and I will keep you posted.

5. Find new, exciting music books for lessons. This goal is ongoing. We had some

great results with drum books that feature jam tracks. However, band instruments and vocal books proved to be a challenge.

6. Recruit new music teachers who fit the store's vibe. With high U.S. unemployment, we thought we would see an increase in new teacher prospects. That didn't happen, so we changed this goal to improving the vibe of our existing teachers. And we got some great results, especially in our reten-

tion goals. For 2011, we'll work on training younger musicians who are a product of our lessons program to become teachers here at the store.

7. Decrease the dropout rate by 20 percent. We saw great results in this area, too. We actually decreased our dropout rate by 30 percent. Our Student Showcase Program and summer music programs really helped. We are now aiming for 30-percent reduction of dropouts in 2011.

8. Increase new lesson sign-ups by 20 percent. This came up way short. In fact, we struggled to maintain 2009 sign-up levels. I hate to blame it on the economy, but I think the 20-percent goal was unrealistic considering 2010 business trends.

9. Improve sales staff training on selling lessons to clients. This past year, I still had too many "vending machines" in my store when it came to selling music lessons, as well as other products. We'll be working on that for 2011.

I hope you take a look at your goals for 2010 and find that you had some great things happening with your lessons program. Sit down, revamp these and add some more for the upcoming year. I wish you and your store the best of luck in 2011. **MI**

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

Re-evaluate last year's New Year's resolutions to see where you still need improvement



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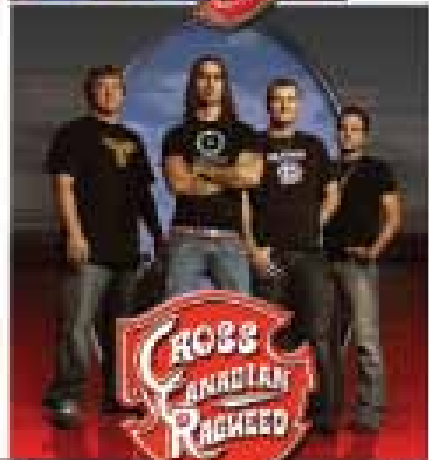
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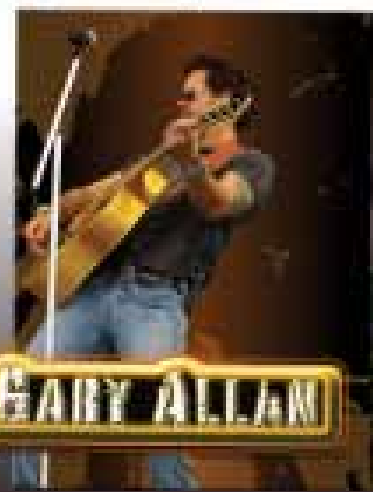


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CUSTOMER CARE | BY BILLY CUTHRELL

Why the Lights Went Out

A few months ago, I stopped by a friend's lighting fixture shop. It had been in the area for more than 20 years and enjoyed a reputation as the go-to place among builders and interior designers. My friend purchased the shop about eight years ago from the original owner and had a relatively thriving business until the housing meltdown.

During my visit, he bemoaned bad sales. The interior designer market had dried up, and many of the builders he'd relied on for steady sales went bankrupt,

leaving him holding the bag for thousands of dollars in unpaid bills. I proposed that he start looking into the residential remodeling market, calling on local government for contracts backed by stimulus money, and add a repair business. I also suggested he find alternate streams of revenue that his competitors had overlooked or weren't prepared for. And I explained he could start by positioning himself in areas he could grow when the economy rebounded completely. My point was he shouldn't put all his eggs in one basket and diversifying could have a big impact on his bottom line.



LOSING A LUCRATIVE CUSTOMER

As we talked, an old farmer in worn-out overalls came in carrying a switch with wires hanging from it. He asked, "You carry this part? It's for a floor lamp in my house." My friend said, "Nope. Have you tried Lowe's or Home Depot?" I about fell over. He'd just been talking about down sales but told this gentleman to go to big-box competitors! The farmer said he'd come from the big-boxes, and they'd referred him to my friend's shop.

I knew where the farmer could find the part because I had an antique lamp repaired a few years ago at another store across town, before I knew my friend. The other shop was a competitor, but I couldn't let the farmer leave after such terrible service. I told the farmer, in front of my buddy, about the other store and even

wrote directions on the back of my business card. I thought my friend would be upset, but to my surprise, he didn't act fazed. The farmer thanked me and drove away in his beat up Ford truck. My friend went on talking about the good old days, when those pretty interior designers brought in customers who spent thousands for one house and turned around and spent thousands more on beach homes and other properties. It was obvious he'd never worked for them and

probably didn't know how to start attracting new customers.

THE BETTER BUSINESS

About three weeks later, a salesperson with the other shop left me a voice mail. He thanked me for sending business his way and offered me a 30-percent discount for the referral. (He got my contact info from the business card I gave the farmer.) He'd not only ordered the part for the farmer but also installed it and cleaned the lamp. But the biggest surprise came when the salesperson said the farmer was building a new house and purchased all of his light fixtures, ceiling fans, exterior lights and lamps from the store — in cash.

While my friend was busy expanding his inventory, he was relying solely on builders and interior designers for sales. He never had a contingency plan and failed to see that poor service would be his downfall if the bubble burst.

A few weeks ago, I helped him move what was left of his merchandise into a small storage unit after he filed for bankruptcy. When I asked him what he was going to do next, he said he had a job lined up. Two weeks later, I saw him. This time, he helped me pick out a new ceiling fan when I went to use that 30-percent discount I got for referring his customer to his competitor. **MI**

Billy Cuthrell operates Progressive Music Center and askourmusicians.com. Contact him at billy@ppdsonline.com.

A cautionary tale about diversification, customer service and lighting shops

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STREETWISE SELLING | BY KENNY SMITH

The \$100,000 Customer

used to manage a branch store for a successful keyboard chain in Los Angeles. One day, another branch manager called and said, “There’s a guy here who bought a keyboard yesterday for a steal of a deal, and now he’s demanding that we help him learn how to use it. On top of that, he wants me to drop everything and do it now. What should I do?” My answer was simple and to the point. I said, “I treat every customer like they’re worth 100K, no matter what.”

It wasn’t what he wanted to hear, but he ended up doing the right thing and helped the man.



You never know when a \$100,000 customer will walk into your store. So, make sure you treat every customer as if he’s going to spend \$100,000, regardless of his car, his attitude or his howling children in tow.

Remember: There’s no better advertising than word-of-mouth. Customer referrals are essential to your success. But giving customers cut-rate deals doesn’t mean they’ll be satisfied or happy. And just saying “thank you” when people buy something isn’t enough to make them remember you. A great salesperson knows his job starts *after* the purchase. So, if you want to be a sales ninja, use a follow-up plan with every deal you make.

Make a check-up call. Many salespeople don’t follow up because they think it might open a can of worms. My recommendation: Wait two days, then call the customer. Occasionally, customers have buyer’s remorse the day after a purchase, but unless there’s a real problem, it wears off quickly. And if they’re struggling, they’ll be extra glad to hear from you. When you call, say, “I’m checking to see how you’re doing,” and wait for them to tell you.

Face the music. If they’re happy, set up a time they can come back in for adjustments or instruction. If they’re unhappy, let them explain why. Don’t interrupt or get frustrated. Roughly 90 percent of customers’ problems are caused by them not understanding their products. Get

the customer back in the store to address their concerns, and offer solutions. As salespeople, we can’t let our egos get in the way of a customer’s happiness. Make things right, and customers will remember you.

Network with those customers. The best use for your business cards is giving a handful of them to clients. If you’re not enlisting your best customers for help, you’re missing deals. Use Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn

to stay connected.

Add a personal touch. I’m always looking for ways to build stronger, long-lasting relationships. Currently, I use and recommend sending out personalized cards with the customer’s picture on it, taken when they buy. Even in today’s digital world of e-cards and e-mails, customers will typically keep these cards and even put them on display.

The \$100,000 customer will choose you. Once, a well-dressed young man approached me. He explained that he’d met me at another music store I used to work at. He’d been a kid at the time and rode his bike there. It turned out I was the only salesperson who’d helped him. “I’m a doctor now and have my own practice, which is going well for me,” he said. “I tracked you down because I want to buy one of those.” He pointed to an expensive workstation. “And I’m going to buy it from you. Just write it up. You don’t even have to give me a deal.”

In other words, never ignore or underestimate the nerdy kid on the bike. The best products, sales skills and prices will never replace showing customers you care about them.

It works. Go ahead, try it. Even if you don’t get the \$100,000 deal, you and your store will be richer in the long run. **MI**

Kenny Smith is an industry veteran and consults both retailers and suppliers. Find him at kennysmithsalesguru.com.

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LESSONS LEARNED | BY GERSON ROSENBLUM

Surviving the Downturn

What I'm about to share has become painfully clear as I call on retailers all over the country. I see an alarming number of you making mistakes similar to those that contributed to the demise of my dealership. The precipitating factor is usually a fall-off of business caused by a weakened economy. But the economy is just a reality. What you do with this new reality — how you decide to cope with it — largely dictates how you will fare as we come through this period.



There are countless strategies — some better than others. Cutting needless costs works. Marketing smarter is a good one. Watching your inventory is more important than ever. But contained in this last item is a perilous temptation that's almost sure to take a downward trend and turn it into an out-of-control spiral.

When the financial pressures of declining business grew, I fell into the trap of stopping almost all purchasing. The dreaded buying freeze usually starts with this line of thinking: "We don't have enough money to buy inventory, so we'll sell what we've got." Selling what you've got always makes sense. Not replacing it is a formula for trouble. Replacing it with the same stuff that got you into trouble is insanity.

The decision to stop all but essential purchases is natural enough under dire circumstances. But in reality, it's a knee-jerk reaction that has the potential to become a self-fulfilling prophecy. If your mindset is to do only what it takes to pay your bills this month, as if there's no tomorrow, you may just find that you "fish your wish" — and there will be no tomorrow.

Job No. 1 is to pay your current bills. But doing so cannot become your sole focus. While creating a strategy for meeting current expenses, you need to determine how to overcome what created the problems in the first place. The economy accentuates weaknesses in your business, but eliminating those weaknesses helps you to

transcend the challenges over which you have no control.

If I could do it over again, I would follow this three-step process with inventory in order to create a fresh, exciting atmosphere where local clientele would flock to see the next great thing.

First, I'd evaluate every department, every product category, every brand and every product within those brands. Nothing would be sacred.

I'd get rid of any lines or products within a line that weren't tangibly contributing to my success. If an entire department in my organization wasn't carrying its weight, it would get the chopping block. I'd purge myself of the notion that some products need to be around to draw traffic. I had those lines, and I had no traffic. Duh!

Second, having identified the dead weight, I'd do whatever it took to turn the chaff into cash.

Forget costs, forget preconceived notions of market value. Everything has a price, and you need to find it quickly. Use eBay, if not to sell your stuff then to find out what it's worth in the real world. If product isn't contributing to the ongoing success of your business, at least let it generate ready cash.

Finally, I'd commit to resolving the inventory issues that had turned my business stagnant.

Carrying the tried-and-true lines was turning my business black and blue. So, I'd shake things up and bring in fresh, new, exciting lines, while continuing to work with those original lines that were still contributing to my bottom line in a meaningful way.

Combining this approach to inventory management with sound marketing and financial management is a formula for surviving the economic downturn. **MI**

Gerson Rosenbloom is managing director of Wechter Guitars. He's former president of Medley Music and a past NAMM chairman. E-mail him at gersonmusicinc@gmail.com.

Three steps for managing inventory when business slows down

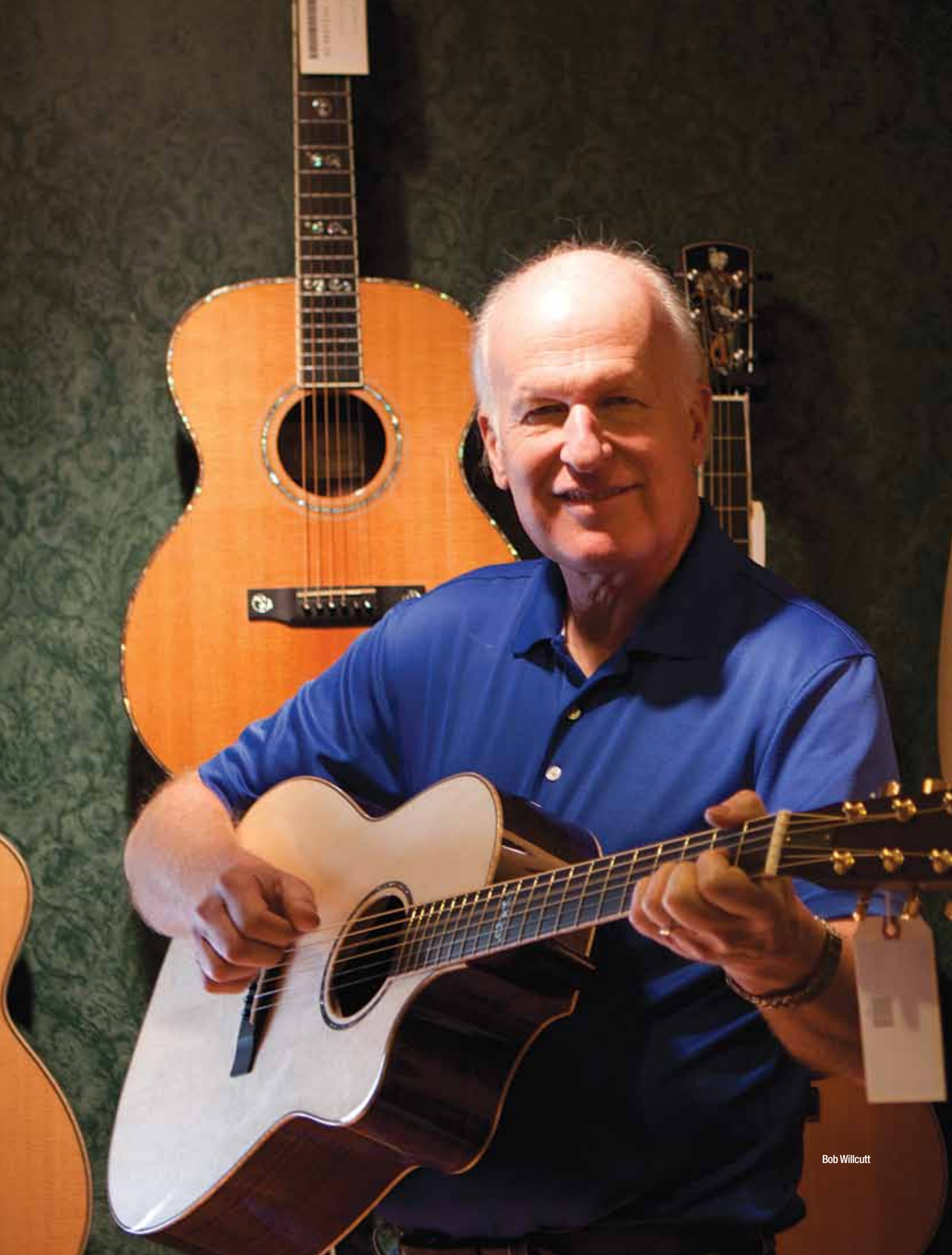


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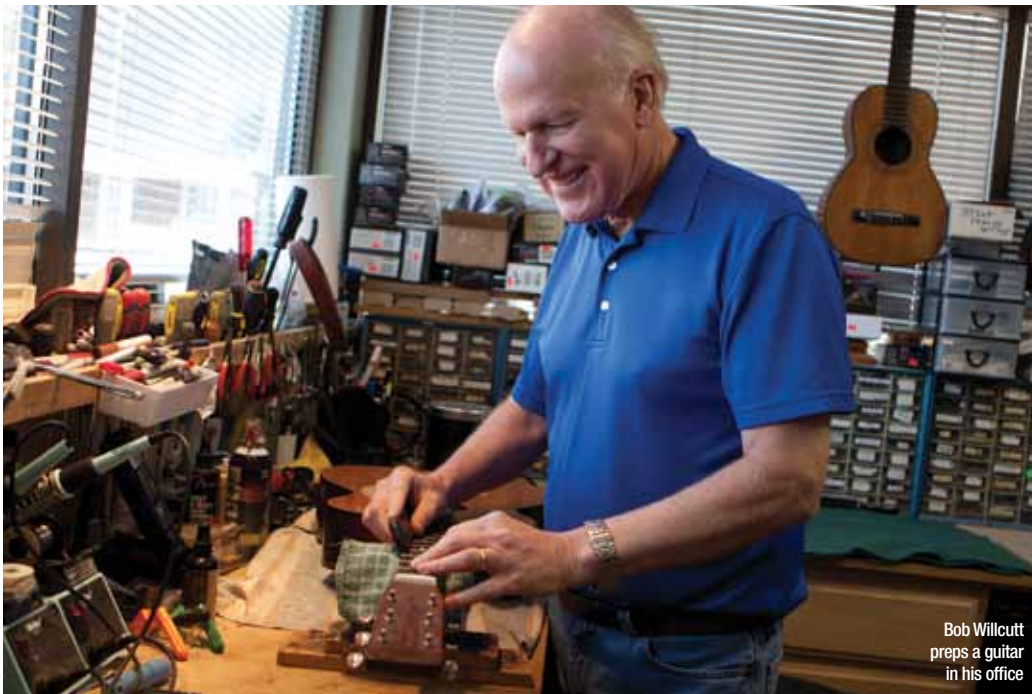
WORDS & PHOTOS BY JEFF CAGLE

Bricks to **CLICKS**

Willcutt Guitar achieves
20-percent-plus
growth for six years
straight by carving
out an online identity

When Bob Willcutt was a child, his father used to recite a portion of Maltbie D. Babcock's poem "Be Strong" every night before bedtime: "We are not here to play, to dream, to drift. We have work to do and loads to lift."

Willcutt didn't drift. He went on to earn a bachelor's degree in sociology and a master's in social work. He did play, though, spending lots of time noodling around on guitars. He also repaired things on the side. In his 20s, "having the desire and extra energy to do something significant," as he put it, he started building guitars and dulcimers — by hand.



Bob Willcutt
preps a guitar
in his office

“That quote was one of the things that drove me,” Willcutt said of starting his business, Willcutt Guitar Shoppe. “[My father] also said, ‘A craftsman wrought with greatest care each unknown and unseen part, for God sees everywhere.’ So if I would reset a bridge on a guitar and there were clamp marks on the inside, I would go in and sand out the marks. Nobody would see it, but God sees everywhere.”

Customers have noticed, too. In the course of 42 years, Willcutt has built his Lexington, Ky.-based dealership from a local guitar shop into a premier online retailer. Willcutt Guitar is now a three-building campus — a 5,000-square-foot retail facility, an Internet sales center and corporate offices, all of which offer ample warehousing space — but Willcutt still considers it a mom-and-pop operation.

“I owe a lot of my success to my dear wife, Penny, who besides bearing me three wonderful children has used her accounting skills and insight to keep me focused.”

He empties the trash himself and spends most of his day at the repair bench, which also doubles as his office, complete with an iMac within arm’s reach and a simple barstool.

“Ninety-nine percent of the stuff that goes out I put my hands on and verify, and I still do a lot of the setups,” Willcutt said. “Nothing goes out the door — whether it’s new, used or on consignment — unless it’s perfectly clean, restrung and in perfect shape, even if I don’t make any money on it. A \$99 Squier Mini will run through the shop and get a \$100 setup. People might ask why you’d do that on a cheap guitar. I want the kid to be able to play it!

“On a consignment piece, where you might only make \$50 or \$100 on the deal, I’ll still do the whole treatment on it to make sure it’s right. It builds trust and a reputation.”

‘THEN THE INTERNET HAPPENED’

Building that reputation has taken time, effort and patience. After 42 years in business,

**‘You pay your suppliers, employees and business first. You pay yourself last.’
— Bob Willcutt**

Willcutt’s reputation for offering quality products and exceptional service is well-known around Lexington. A customer recently walked into the shop with two guitars he was considering buying from another dealer and wanted a second opinion. (He offered to pay Willcutt for his advice, but Willcutt refused to accept the man’s money.)

In the 1980s, when Willcutt decided to expand his store’s reach beyond the local market, he’d head to nearby Rupp Arena. There, Van Halen, Heart, Prince, The Rolling Stones and Kiss

would roll through. He’d make sure to bring his own version of an all-access pass: a rare guitar, such as a ’52 Tele.

“At that time, you could find vintage instruments at really low prices, and a lot of the rock musicians would buy those as investments,” Willcutt said. “Security was not as tight as it is now. You could go backstage and talk to the roadies and sometimes the musicians. That was your chance to reach out when they came to you. And then the Internet happened.”

Willcutt launched a website in 1998 and has been active with it ever since. Eighty percent of his business comes from the Internet, and everything is handled in-house. He has two full-time online sales employees, Brandon Bowlds and Eric Cummins, and his operations manager, Tom Jones, has a degree in computer science.

Jones helped integrate a POS system with the store’s website and inventory charts. He also helped with organic search terms — a Google search of PRS Guitars yields Willcutt’s website at the top of dealer results. For a number of its smaller, boutique brands, Willcutt comes up first after the manufacturer.

Jones also helps turn a lot of Willcutt’s ideas into reality. “Bob fancies himself as not being terribly tech-savvy, but he is really progressively minded,” Jones said. “He’s always coming in saying, ‘I don’t know how you do this or how they did this, but this is on X site and it’s cool.’ He is way out front on technology. And guitars are his passion, so he stays on top of it. He’s pushed really hard to get the site where it is today.”

Willcutt’s site stands apart from most with its focus on photography and art, which integrates into the site’s overall

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navigation. The company has invested thousands of dollars into multiple digital SLR cameras and two onsite photo studios.

"I was the photo editor of my high school newspaper and on the board of the University of Kentucky Art Museum, so I appreciate photography and art," Willcutt said.

"We want easy navigation, so that anyone can find what they want, but keep a certain level of artistic vision. It's always a battle. If you get too avant-garde, you can lose the navigation and stuff people can relate to — maybe they're more into music than they are into art. A lot of our customers enjoy the colors and shapes, as well as the playability of an instrument, so we have to find a balance."

But at the end of the day, the guitars are merchandise, not art, and a knowledgeable staff is Willcutt's most powerful sales generator.

"Brandon and Eric have a real knack for getting to know a person and talking [guitar] tone," Jones said. "Sometimes, it takes a lot of time. Customers want to talk tone and what a certain guitar sounds like. You can watch a video online, but with the sound that comes through a PC speaker, you can tell that it's making noise and has a decent tone, but you're not getting the real nuances. Our guys are really great at interpreting it and communicating that back and forth with people.

"They develop these great friendships with all of these people. Whether it's Experience PRS, The NAMM Show or any other event, they get to meet up with these people that they are in e-mail or telephone communication with all year long, and they talk about their genuine, common interests."

BRICK-AND-MORTAR STRATEGY

With the majority of his business online, Willcutt said he keeps the old retail store around mostly for nostalgia. Still, he believes a brick-and-mortar model can be profitable as part of a bigger picture. And Willcutt's customers, unlike others, often check price on the Internet, then head into his store — instead of the other way around.

"Every week or so, we will get someone who comes into the shop who is not from anywhere close but is a Web customer who happens to be in town," Jones said. "We are doing things here locally to promote this shop and this location as a destination for guitar players.

"Bob has invested huge amounts of money in making this shop accessible to people where they can actually see and play these guitars. You can't walk into Guitar Center down the road and pull down an \$8,000 Martin and enjoy its nuances. [That's how] we try to reach out to these boutique customers, as well as every other customer."

At the primary retail facility, customers are free to explore the main level, which is filled floor-to-ceiling with electric guitars and a few acoustics. Or, they can follow the strums wafting from above and climb the stairs to the second floor to check out the multiple acoustic rooms. The retail facility was built in the 1920s, and Willcutt said the plaster walls and wood floors create a great resonance, especially for acoustic guitars. Every room is climate-controlled to an optimal 40- to 45-percent humidity to preserve the instruments.

The Internet sales center also features a large tryout room with a comfortable couch surrounded by rare guitars and vintage amps.

"Our thing is to have a sam-

Willcutt's website stands apart with its focus on photography and art, which integrates into the site's overall navigation

pling," Willcutt said. "If someone calls up and says they have seen something on the Internet, they can give us a serial number, and we can pull it out. They can sit on the couch and try it out."

NO DOWNTURN HERE

Despite the down economy, Willcutt Guitar has grown 20-25 percent annually during the past six years. And Willcutt said there's no secret to his success.

"I've been doing this for 42 years and have seen a lot of ups and downs in the economy, trends, competitors come and go. What I've always tried to do is put money back into the business. You pay your suppliers, employees and business first. You pay yourself last. It's like an inverted pyramid, where it starts growing and gets bigger because it's being fed every year. You have to keep coming up with new ideas in order for it to keep growing like that. That's why it really doesn't matter if there's a downturn or not. It's going to keep growing."

Willcutt said he makes sure his prices are competitive but not necessarily bottom-dollar, as he needs to pay his staff well. He

takes advantage of specials as much as he can but cautioned other music retailers of buying closeouts and alienating customers — not to mention devaluing their guitars with blowout prices.

"If a manufacturer offers something at a close-out price, it's probably because it's not selling," he said. "So you might buy an extra 20 percent, but you're not going to make that 20 percent plus your normal profit margin because it's not desirable. We don't push product that people don't want. If we are overstocked on something, we might try to present it better, but we're not going to tell someone they should buy something just because I have too many of them.

"A guitar is unique in that, as it gets older and harder to find, it sometimes becomes more valuable. I think it's crazy when something gets to be the old model and dealers blow it out at or below cost. You put it back for a few years, and all of a sudden, people want it. And you get your price out of it, and the value is protected."

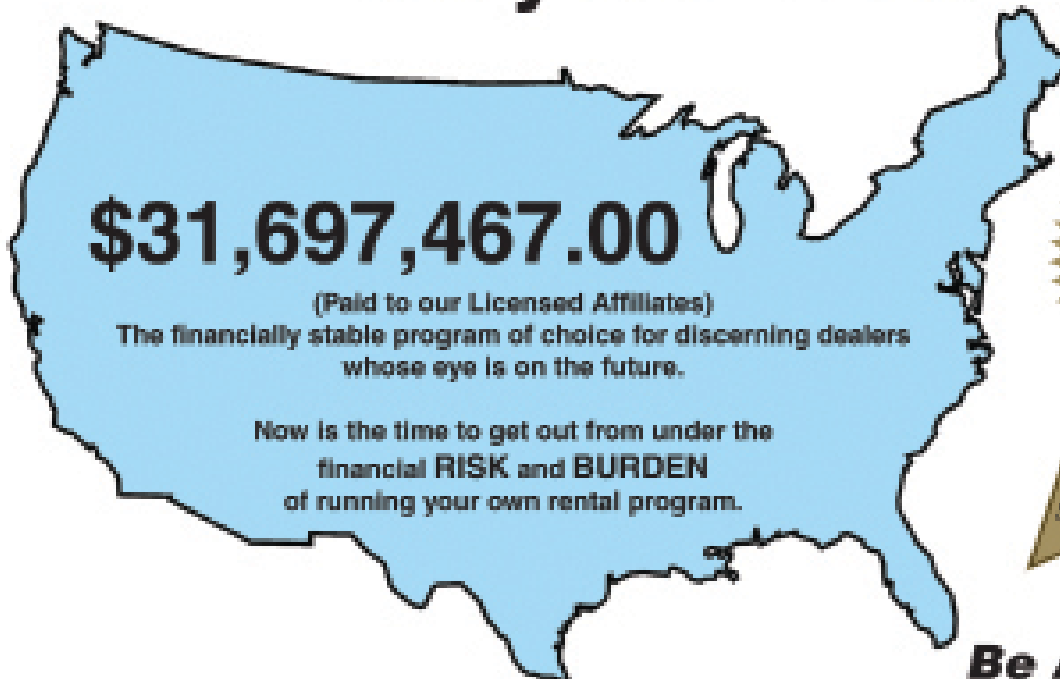
"Nobody has to have these guitars — people want these things," Jones added. "We're in a great industry in that we can provide people with something that is creative and is not bad for them."

It's ironic that Willcutt's selling dreams, considering his father's bedtime quote. He has reflected on that quote over the years and believes he has figured out its meaning, in relation to his business.

"About 10 years ago, I realized that to play, to dream, to drift is what we're enabling the customer to do," he said. "And that became our motto on some of our advertising. We work hard, so the customer can play — to dream, to drift." **MI**

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- ♪ Business is promoted **into the Affiliate's retail store**, not onto the Internet. NEMC does not compete against its own Affiliates by renting 'On-Line'.
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THE GUIDE

THE NAMM SHOW 2011



THE NAMM SHOW 2011 | BY KATIE KAILUS

NAMM TAKES IT TO 11

If you notice more visitor badges at this year's NAMM show, it's not your imagination.

Themed "Take It to 11," the convention will be held Jan. 13–16 in Anaheim, Calif., and on Sunday, it will welcome more of the public. The move aims to make the show's last day as vibrant as the others, according to Joe Lamond, NAMM president and CEO. And NAMM's taking precautions to make sure those visitors don't get in the way of business.

"The new Sunday-only badge, introduced this year, provides another option," he said. "We're asking members to review their yellow-badge lists carefully, decide who needs to be there all four days and give them the traditional yellow badges. For all the others, give them the Sunday-only badge.

The goal is to relieve some of the aisle congestion for business on Thursday, Friday and Saturday and make Sunday as vibrant as the other days of the show."

Plus, there will be about 200 new exhibitors at the convention, along with 150 exhibitors that haven't taken out booths in recent years. Also new is The NAMM Show Pavilion areas for luthiers, app and gaming companies, and Native American instrument exhibitors.

JAM-PACKED SESSIONS

This year's H.O.T. Zone, which supports professionals in the live audio, house of worship, and stage and lighting industries, will offer attendees one-hour classes on more than 85 topics, including "Basic Live Mixing Techniques," "Pro Tools 101," "Social Market-

ing for Your Music Business" and "DJ Equipment Integration."

On Thursday, the H.O.T. Zone will be offering "Boot Camp Day," which will feature basic courses designed to provide foundation-level instruction in music technology and business.

Friday's NAMM University Breakfast Session will feature occasional *Music Inc.* columnist Danny Rocks presenting "Lessons Learned: How Doing Business Now Has Changed for the Better." The session is based on fellow *Music Inc.* writer Gerson Rosenbloom's monthly column. A panel of four leading music retailers will discuss how they have reshaped their businesses by taking advantage of the opportunity to change.

On Saturday afternoon at the NAMM Idea Center (located at

booth 5501 in the Anaheim Convention Center), industry veteran and *Music Inc.* columnist Kenny Smith will host "Your Customers Prefer 'High-Touch' Not 'Hi-Tech.'" The session will highlight specific tips for blending high-tech contact management systems with high-touch service techniques.

"The Idea Center offers lots of new topics this year, including 'Right & Wrong Retail' — an interactive session delving into the right and wrong ways of offering customer service," Lamond said. "We're also offering a four-part 'Guerrilla Tactics' series on how independent retailers can hone in on public relations and marketing tactics in their local communities. We're sure that retailers will find the sessions to be a valuable use of their time." **MI**



2011 NAMM SHOW EVENTS

THURSDAY, JAN. 13

BREAKFAST SESSION

8:30 A.M.

Breakfast of Champions
Moderator: Joe Lamond, NAMM President and CEO
Hilton Anaheim Hotel, Pacific Ballrooms

Joe Lamond welcomes a group of industry champions for a series of up-close-and-personal discussions. Listen to their thoughts and views on present changes in and future possibilities for the industry. (Free breakfast served from 8–8:30 a.m.)

10:30 A.M.

Right & Wrong Retail

Billy Cuthrell, owner of Progressive Music Center, takes participants through right and wrong customer service with videos, followed by presenter and audience dialogue.

11:00 A.M.

Tough Times Require Tough Decisions

Alan Friedman and Daniel Jobe of Friedman, Kannenberg & Co. talk about the things music retailers can do — and still feel good about — to help get through these tough times to brighter days of positive cash flow.

11:30 A.M.

Selling Yourself to the Bank

Friedman and Jobe are back to teach you how to make a sure-fire presentation that will win over your banker.

NOON

Tapping Into the SBA's Resources

Jill Andrews and Paul Smith of the Small Business Administration (SBA) give an overview of SBA's services. SBA is a federal agency that helps small busi-

nesses with financing, growth, disaster recovery and providing small-business advocacy.

12:30 P.M.

E-mail Strategies: Tips for Targeting Your Customers to Increase Sales

Ben Blakesley of George's Music shares some of his best ideas to use e-mail effectively in targeting customers, as well as some basic e-mail do's and don'ts to increase sales.

1:00 P.M.

Steal This Model: Stand Out With a Unique Destination, Simplicity & Products

Billy Cuthrell shows how other retailers, such as Apple and Trader Joe's, have succeeded with their unique business models and then shares the ideas that have worked at his own store.

1:30 P.M.

Guerilla Tactics Series: Play to Your Strength: Know Your Local Market (Part 1)

Menzie Pittman of Contemporary Music Center shares his experiences with integrating his music store into the fabric of the local community. He'll also give examples of how he was able to respond quickly to local opportunities.

2:00 P.M.

Guerilla Tactics Series: Never Give Up: How Community Support Reinstated a Music Program (Part 2)

Liz Reisman of Creative Music Center details exactly how a combination of school officials, music teachers and concerned parents crafted a plan to reinstate the local 5th-grade music program. Participants can learn from Reisman's plan and rally support for music programs in their communities.

2:30 P.M.

Guerilla Tactics Series: How to Advertise Your Music Store Programs in the Local Media Without Spending a Dime

Raegan Medeiros of John Michael's Music and Sound discusses how she worked with her local newspapers and radio stations to get her music store's stories told and retold. She'll also share secrets for getting quarter-page coverage in the local paper without spending a dime.

3:00 P.M.

Guerilla Tactics Series: Guerilla Marketing on a Chimp's Budget

Cris Behrens of Summerhays Music explains how to use guerilla marketing techniques in a music store.

3:30 P.M.

Proven Systems for Selling Instruments and Accessories to Your In-Store Students

Systems and strategies are necessary for creating sales opportunities with the families and students who are in your store week after week. Matt and Debra Perez of The Piano Gallery and Valley Keyboards provide practical ways to empower sales teams through teacher awareness, communication meetings, store design and special student events.

4:00 P.M.

Successful Lessons Series: Improving Your Business Cash Flow Through Your Music Lessons Program
Music Inc. columnist and *Alta Loma Music's* Pete Gamber walks retailers through practical ideas and tips to increase rentals and repairs, along with sales of small goods, print music and large-tag items — all through the music lessons program.

4:30 P.M.

Successful Lessons Series: Offer Group Instruction to Grow Your Music Program
 Beacock Music's Gayle Beacock teaches how to launch and manage a successful in-store group lessons program.

5:00 P.M.

Successful Lessons Series: Create In-Store Events & New Customers
 Mozingo Music's Jeff Mozingo shows participants how to promote their lessons and in-store events by arming their websites with teacher bios, student testimonials and forums to discuss their programs and the events that students can do beyond private instruction.

**FRIDAY, JAN. 14
 BREAKFAST SESSION**

8:30 A.M.

Lessons Learned: How Doing Business Now Has Changed for the Better

Moderator: Danny Rocks

Hilton Anaheim Hotel, Pacific Ballrooms

Join Danny Rocks and his panel of music retail all-stars, including Alan Rosen, Mark Goff, Gayle Beacock and George Hines, as they share lessons learned and ways they've managed implementing change. (Free breakfast served from 8–8:30 a.m.)

10:30 A.M.

How to Use Facebook to Market Your Business: The Do's and Don'ts

Father-and-son team Greg and Grant Billings discuss the many ways they use Facebook to market their business and detail the technical aspects of how to make Facebook work for retailers.

11:00 A.M.

Adding Up: Five Ways to Increase Every Sale

Bentley-Hall's Bob Popyk offers some simple ways to maximize each customer interaction to increase the dollar amount of each individual sale substantially.

11:30 A.M.

No More Slow Days! (How to Get a Crowd in Your Store Every Day)

Popyk is back with tips on how to keep store traffic constant and the cash register ringing every day without draining the checkbook.

NOON

Take Your Music Lesson Program Beyond '11'

Pete Gamber gives retailers easy, low-cost ways to be the loudest player on the music lesson program "stage" in any area.

1:00 P.M.

Now Hiring: Positive Attitude, Strong Character and High Motivation Required

Billy Cuthrell walks participants through ideas for finding staff with character to boost their store's sales and success.

1:30 P.M.

My Experience With SCORE: A Real-Life Success Story

Willis Music's and NAMM's Kevin Cranley took advantage of SCORE services, and his company started getting expert advice on marketing, financial reporting and analysis, and strategic planning. Cranley discusses SCORE's impact on business in the music industry.

2:00 P.M.

How SCORE Can Work for You!

SCORE's Mark Dobosz and Bill Di-Grezo, along with Cranley, talk about SCORE services and resources that can help retailers boost their marketing and identify new capital opportunities.

2:30 P.M.

The Key to Buying Music Product Inventory

Alan Friedman, a CPA with several music retail clients, explains the secrets of making smart inventory buys.

3:00 P.M.

If We Can Do It, You Can Do It Too!

The Percussion Marketing Council, with Billy Cuthrell as moderator, teaches how to create events that generate new customers and sales and build alliances with school districts. Panelists include: Karl Dustman, PMC co-executive director; Brad Smith, PMC co-executive director, Hal Leonard Corp.; and Chad Smith, international drummer celebrity.

3:30 P.M.

The Hidden Secrets of Open Mics: A Fresh Look at a Proven Model

David Craver, founder of OpenMic.US, shares his secrets on how to run an effective open mic and looks at why it's important to choose the right host. Additionally, participants will learn how to partner with community businesses to drive more traffic.

4:00 P.M.

Lessons Learned: Best Practices for Success-Minded Retailers

George's Music's George Hines and the AIMM panel discuss their best ideas to make money, save money and reduce costs.

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7:00 P.M.

26th Annual TEC Awards

Hilton Anaheim Hotel, Pacific Ballrooms

Held for the first time at winter NAMM, the TEC Awards are presented in 17 categories with this year's Les Paul Award going to Lindsey Buckingham of Fleetwood Mac fame.

7:00 P.M.

Sabian Live

Sheridan Park Hotel, Park Ballroom

The annual event features performances from Chad Smith's Bombastic Meatbats, Mark Guiliana's Beat Music with special guest Jojo Mayer and Sinvergüenza featuring Wally Reyes Jr., Ray Yslas and their all-star band.

SATURDAY, JAN. 15

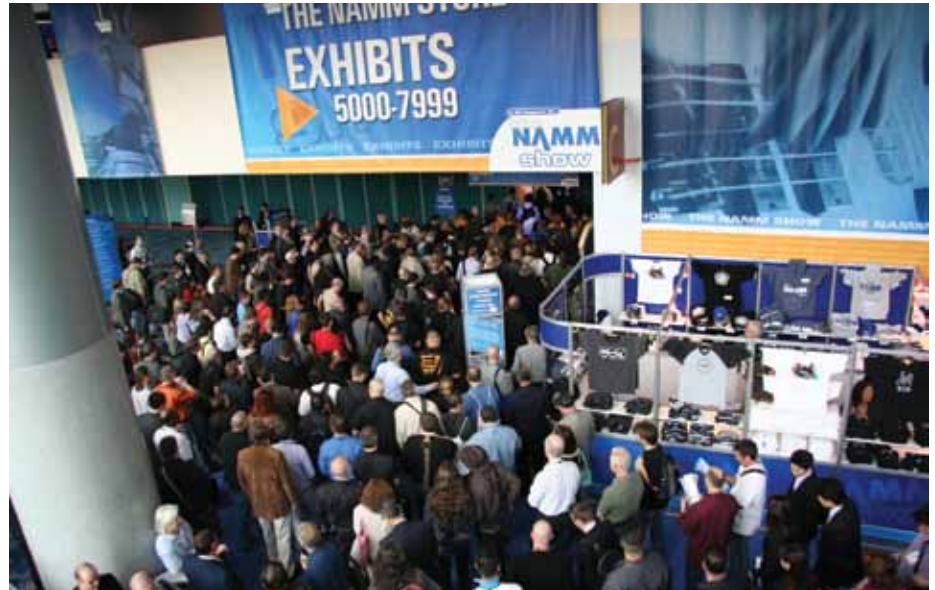
BREAKFAST SESSION

8:30 A.M.

The Retail Doctor's Guide to Growing Your Business

Hilton Anaheim Hotel, Pacific Ballrooms

Deemed "The Retail Doctor," Bob Pibbbs teaches secrets of turning store merchandise twice as fast, elements of hir-



ing only the best staff, tried-and-true tips for converting people looking for product into loyal customers and more. (Free breakfast served from 8-8:30 a.m.)

10:30 A.M.

Reaching Out With the Right Technology

Danny Rocks moderates while actor and musician Greg Grunberg and NAMM's Scott Robertson discuss advanced social media and mobile marketing techniques that let retailers personalize their special offers and take customer service to a higher level.

11:00 A.M.

How to Establish a Successful Web Presence for Your Store

Rocks is back to provide participants with a checklist of the "must-haves" for achieving success while shaping their Web presence.

11:30 A.M.

How to 'Socialize' in the World of Social Media

Social marketer Jen Lowe and her fellow retailer panelists present their tricks for being social, knowledgeable and accessible within the industry.

NOON

Google's Online Power Tools That You Need Now

Mike Nessen takes listeners through five awesome applications that they can use today, at low or no cost.

12:30 P.M.

Get Connected! Online Business Strategies

Nessen is back and giving tips on how to be found in the crowded electronic marketplace. He also explains how to reach out and identify with the customer base online and apply strategies to appeal to

the new generation of online consumers.

1:00 P.M.

Technology and the Music Retailer: What You Need to Implement Social Media

Danny Rocks and his panel discuss their best examples of how music retailers have made money, saved time and reduced costs through technology. Panelists include: Scott Robertson, Greg Grunberg, Mike Nessen and Jen Lowe.

1:30 P.M.

Hire Us to Fire Us: How We are Keeping Music Programs Alive

Quinlan and Fabish's George Quinlan Jr. shares the details of how working with school administrators, music teachers and parents has let children continue to study and play music in his community.

2:00 P.M.

The New Face of the Community Music Store

Dan Vedda presents the new music consumer profile and discusses ways for retailers to position their stores as a nexus for community music.

2:30 P.M.

The Key to Managing Music Product Inventory

Alan Friedman presents his "one-page solution" to managing an entire inventory and fixing buying blunders.

3:00 P.M.

Your Customers Prefer 'High-Touch' Not 'Hi-Tech'

Music Inc. columnist Kenny Smith shares tips for blending "high-tech" contact management systems with "high-touch" service techniques to help retailers gain more satisfied customers without spending a lot.

**Hal Leonard
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Check out this book at the NAMM show, booth #4618!

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3:30 P.M.

The New Face of Music Lessons: Teach the Entire Family

Middle C Music's Myrna Sislen explains how to translate dreams into reality by offering adults the opportunity to learn and play alongside their younger-generation relatives.

4:00 P.M.

Mobile Marketing: How to Use It and Profit

Angelo Biasi of intunepartners.com and Pete Gamber show participants how to find and keep new customers, integrate with social media, and manage revenue. Participants will walk away with the confidence to start engaging their customers and continue developing their mobile marketing program.

5:45 P.M.

Inaugural All-Star Celebrity Jam Concert

Band From TV hosts and performs at NAMM's first annual All-Star Celebrity Jam, which will be held at the convention center's main lobby stage. Band From TV includes "House" stars Hugh Laurie and Jesse Spencer, "Heroes" stars Greg Grunberg and Adrian Pasdar, Bob Guiney from "GSN," and Scott Grimes from "ER."

SUNDAY, JAN. 16

BREAKFAST SESSION

8:30 A.M.

Best in Show

Moderator: Frank Alkyer, Music Inc. Publisher

Hilton Anaheim Hotel, Pacific Ballrooms

Join Music Inc. Publisher Frank Alkyer and his panel of retail buyers and gearheads as they discuss the best products, ideas and trends at the convention. (Free breakfast served from 8-8:30 a.m.)

10:30 A.M.

DOUBLE SESSION

Best in Show: What's New in My Store and My Plan to Sell It

Join Danny Rocks for this special double session where a panel of four "Best in Show" alumni give their solid tips for turning purchases into sales, as well as their personal do's and don'ts for determining how to sell products before committing to purchasing them.

11:30 A.M.

Songwriting Boosts Your Business? Believe It!

Jen Lowe moderates as panelists discuss how the marketing model songwriters use to distribute and spread the word about their independent music applies to retail businesses. These panelists have successfully combined their musical and business talents to connect marketing music and marketing music products.

12:30 P.M.

Create a High-Impact Website Home Page

NAMM's Kate Blom talks about the power of testimonials and other essential content that will leave a positive impression on everyone visiting retailers' websites.

1:00 P.M.

Creating New Customers and Musicians With the Mighty Ukulele

Moderated by ukulele virtuoso and educator James Hill, participants learn creative tips from dealers who share their insights on how to profit from the ukulele wave and have fun doing it.



Middle C Music's Myrna Sislen sells the crowd on her pick during "Best in Show"

2:00 P.M.

2011 Best Tools for Schools Awards

Symphony Publishing editors and guests announce the winning products in the first annual Best Tools for Schools Awards. Come see what students and leaders in music education and business have chosen as the most relevant and innovative products at the show.

3:00 P.M.

Luthieri Landscape: Shaping the Look and Sound of Guitars

Moderated by the Museum of Making Music staff, guitar makers explore the traditions of luthiery and the paths that have led to the richness of today's guitar landscape.

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WHAT to SEE



Fun-Sized Mic

CAD will introduce the U9 MiniMic, which plugs directly into computers with a headphone out for playback monitoring and Skype. Its omnidirectional condenser capsule swivels 180 degrees for convenient positioning while delivering crisp, articulate audio. An LED indicates when the mic is active. **{cadaudio.com}**

Bad to the Bone

LM will release its newest lineup of guitar straps, the Outlaw series. These models feature unique shapes and have an ideal blend of leather, studs, chains, conchos and snakeskin. Outlaw straps also include padded backing for comfort and are made in the United States. **{lmproducts.com}**



White Pages for Guitar

Hal Leonard has combined two of its most popular brands — White Pages and Guitar Play-Along — into one new book for guitarists: *Guitar Tab White Pages Play-Along*. This package contains note-for-note tab transcriptions of 100 of the greatest rock songs ever and includes six CDs featuring high-quality, full-band backing tracks that coordinate with the transcriptions. Songs include "All Right Now," "Baracuda," "I Love Rock 'N' Roll" and "Mony, Mony." MSRP: \$39.99. **{halleonard.com}**



Phenomenal Phaeton

PJLA will introduce its latest Phaeton trumpet. The PHT-4077Bb/A piccolo is a professional four-piston model and is available in bright silver plate with optional 18-karat gold-plated finger buttons, top or bottom caps, and bell. A custom all-leather case comes standard with the outfit. MSRP: starts at \$2,975. **{pjlamusic.com}**



Vito's Ax

Designed in collaboration with Grammy-nominated rock and blues artist Rick Vito, Reverend's new Rick Vito Signature guitar features Korina construction, an ebony fretboard, a pickup pan knob, stairstep tuner buttons, a Reverend P90 neck pickup and the new Reverend Dual-Pro bridge pickup. The guitar is available in black and Oceanside Green and includes a two-tone tapered case. **{reverendguitars.com}**

South of the Border

KickPort will launch its CajonPort, a sound-enhancing device that significantly expands the presence and sonic range of virtually any cajon. This unit adds bottom and a fuller frequency spectrum, while also providing greater separation between the cajon's bass and snare sounds, making the bass tone significantly deeper and more like a bass drum. **{kickport.com}**



10-32 Guitars	1219	Alto Professional	6400
3RD POWER Amplification	2984	AMA Verlag	3032
65Amps	3392	Amati USA Inc	4610
A & S Case Company, Inc.	6288	Amedia Cymbals USA	2865
A+D Gitarrentechnologie GmbH	1359	Amer. String Teachers Assoc.	2004
A-Designs	6280	American Audio	6330
Abbatron	2493	American DJ	5774

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Access Music Electronics GmbH	6900	American Recorder Technologies	1677
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Ace Products	5979	Amis Co., Ltd (Guangzhou)	1530
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Aerial7	7108	Antigua Fabrica de Guitarras	4853
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Aguilar Amplification LLC	5956		
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AHEAD Drumsticks	3564		
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ALGAM S.A.S.	6440		
Allegro Acceptance	817		
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Allen Organ Company LLC	509		
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Alliance Rubber Company	3202		

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Antonio Hermosa	5476
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Audio Innovate	5477	Beechler Mouthpieces.....	4410
Audio Media	5307	Behringer USA, Inc.	6756
Audio Plus Services	6998	Beijing 797 Audio Co., Ltd.	6805
Audio-Technica U.S., Inc.	6740	Beijing Dual Joy.....	2821
Audio2000'S.....	6390	Beijing FuYun International.....	3320
Audiobro	4907	Beijing Hsinghai Piano Group	620
Audionova Inc	4143	Beijing Huadong.....	2903
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AV-Leader Corporation.....	1865	Beijing Yiyuan.....	3524
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Avedis Zildjian	2940, 3050, AG1-C	Benchmark Media Systems, Inc.....	6928
Avian Guitars	2383	Benchworld	415
Avid	6700	Bends Instrumentos Musicais	1780
Aviom, Inc.	7119	Berklee Press	5301
Avlex Corporation	6810	Berkley Integrated Audio Software....	6424
Axis Percussion.....	3478	Berndt Woods	3447
AXL Guitars	5476	BES Audio LLC	1642
AXL Musical Instruments.....	5476	Besson.....	4300
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B & S GmbH.....	4614	Better Audio Technologies, Inc.	3398
B-52 Professional.....	5952	beyerdynamic.....	6464
		Beyond (Tianjin)	2349
		BG Franck Bichon	4305
		BI Technologies.....	1659
		Big Bang Distribution.....	3564
		Big City Music	6735
		Big Dipper Laser Science and Tech.	5598
		Big Dog Hardware	3564
		Big Fish Audio, Inc.....	6514

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B.C. Rich.....	4884	BIG ISLAND	
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Bad Cat Amplifier Co., Inc.....	2991	BIGISLANDUKULELE.COM	
BAE - Brent Averill Enterprises.....	1872	Big River Enterprises Inc.	2996
Baer Amplification.....	3283	BigHeart Slide Company.....	4176
Bag End Loudspeakers.....	5995	Bigsby.....	3540
Bam France.....	3100	Black Crow Arts	1801
Barcus-Berry	5420		
Bari Woodwind Supplies, LLC.....	3515	BLACKSTAR AMPS	
Bartolini Pickups & Electronics	5872	BOOTH 2890	
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Battlefield Drums	2352	Black Diamond Strings LLC.....	3513
Bazhou Basix Musical Inst. Co. Ltd...4468		Black Tusq XL.....	5920
Bazhou Luan Yu.....	3329		

WHAT to SEE



The New Gold

Zaolla Silverline will introduce a new microphone cable that includes the company's unique silver-core conductors with Neutrik XX-14 series XLR connectors. The result is a model in which sonic transparency combines with durability to deliver a superior-sounding, rugged cable, which is designed around two solid-silver center conductors. zaolla.com



High Roller

SKB will expand its console rack options with the 1SKB-R106 10x6 rack console. The roto-molded 1SKB-R106 features a 10U slanted top and six-U front that includes steel threaded rails, an injection-molded lid and doors, side access ports, and enough space to mount the AV8 shelf with the lid closed. SKB will also introduce its new 1SKB-R1906 Roto Roller that adds six rack units and wheels to the 1SKB-R106 Roto Rack, making the console portable and at working height. skbcases.com

Retailer's Best Friend

Tri-Technical Systems will exhibit the v9.0 AIMsi. AIMsi is a complete POS and business software application for music retailers. The v9.0 includes PCI compliance; long- and short-term rentals; repair and service; inventory control; full accounting; sales and customer management; and lessons scheduling. Also, Tri-Tech will present Active-e, a powerful e-commerce package that interfaces with AIMsi and offers B2B and C2B solutions. technology4retailers.com

Signature Sterling

Sterling by Music Man will introduce the John Petrucci Signature guitar, the JP100. The new model features a basswood body with quilt maple top, 24 jumbo frets, rosewood fingerboard, maple neck, slightly larger body, JP shield inlays, sterling modern trem and locking tuners. sterlingbymusicman.com



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WHAT to SEE



Performance- or Practice-Ready

Blackstar will launch the HT-1, an ideal studio and practice amp that packs all the great tone and innovative features of the award-winning HT-5 valve amp into a 1-watt format. The patent-applied-for ISF (Infinite Shape Feature) circuit gives users infinite adjustment over the characteristics of the tone control network. Add an MP3/line input, eight-speaker output and speaker-emulated output and musicians have everything they need for recording or practicing. **{blackstaramps.com}**



Albion Debuts Three

Albion will host the American debut of guitar and bass amps by legendary designer Steve Grindrod. Grindrod, of Marshall and Vox fame, will be unveiling three lines. The flagship TCT range of all-tube guitar amps are supported by the ABH hybrid bass and AG hybrid tube guitar amps. **{albionamps.com}**

Sounds Abound

Roland will launch the Juno-Gi mobile synthesizer with digital recorder. This synth, ideal for performers, songwriters and producers, has a top-of-the-line sound engine with more than 1,300 new sounds. The on-board digital recorder lets users record and develop songs with dedicated faders and acclaimed Boss effects for guitar and vocals. With USB MIDI capabilities and its instant MIDI controller mode, the Juno-Gi also fits

nicely into any computer-based studio. **{rolandus.com}**



Outside the Box

RapcoHorizon's new i-BLOX smart phone interface serves as an audio interface that connects an instrument to iPhone amplifiers and recording applications using the headphone/microphone jack. The interface features a music player start/stop switch, a headphone jack, a belt/strap clip and a pre-terminated lead with right-angle connector. **{rapcohorizon.com}**



Fully Functional

CyberStep will launch its new KDJ-ONE, which includes the functionality of a modern DAW in a compact, multitouch screen smartbook. Features include an advanced synthesizer, sequencer, multitrack audio editing and high-precision rhythmic force feedback. ACIDized WAV support and remote VST control ensure that users' on-the-go creations will mesh perfectly with their existing production setup back home. **{cyberstep.com}**

Amped-up UkEs

B-Band will release the U-Series ukulele pickup systems. The U1.0, the first model in the series, is a single-input pre-amp in an all-in-one matchbox size assembly with a pre-amp, output jack and disc battery holder. The U1.3T is a sidemount single-input pre-amp with fully chromatic tuner and has small dimensions to fit at the side of most ukuleles. The U1.5T is the smallest of B-Band's sidemount pre-amps. It includes a disc battery holder and low-battery LED at the faceplate. **{b-band.com}**

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WHAT to SEE



Psychedelic Ukes

Kala will launch its Ukadelic line, which takes the ukulele into another dimension. The line features audacious new graphics that include paisley, tie-dye, tattoo, flag and reggae designs. All models are available in soprano size, with the reggae model also available in tenor size. The Ukadelic models feature all-wood construction, geared tuners and Aquila strings. **{kalaukulele.com}**

Multifunctional Grand Piano

USY1 will host the world premier of its Sculptorra grand pianos at The NAMM Show. The lead Sculptorra model is the X2. A contemporary dining table, the front portion of the unit unfolds and features a slide-out full 88-key piano. Another 10 models, including a 9-foot concert grand and a limited-edition 6-foot designer grand, will be showcased. MSRP: starts at \$2,495. **{sculptorra.com}**

Best Bet for Sweat

Fitness Audio will announce an upgrade to its sweat-resistant microphone series, the Aeromic and Cyclemic. The upgrade includes a new AM-11 super mesh capsule design. Considered to be a 50-percent durability improvement over the previous capsule design, it's the perfect headset for heavy-use fitness classes. The Aeromic and Cyclemic both have warranties to 50 classes per week for two years against sweat death, unmatched by any other fitness microphone. **{fitaud.com}**

Tune In

Cherub Technology will expand its line of Metro-tuners at The NAMM Show with four new

models, including the WMT-800, WMT-810, WMT-820 and WMT-830. The new, sleek design has both form and function. The WMT-800 and WMT-810 feature solar panels to keep the batteries charged, and the WMT-830 features a color LCD to make tuning and reading tempos more accurate. All units have extended the tuning range from A2-A6 and can be used with an optional wireless mic pickup. **{cherubtechnology.com}**



All-Natural

Los Cabos Drumsticks has re-designed and expanded its line of practice pads and will feature it at NAMM. The all-natural, Canadian-made practice pads feature a quarter-inch gum rubber playing surface and a Baltic birch wood base. The pads are available in 6-, 8- and 10-inch models and feature an 8-mm brass thread for easy mounting. MSRP: 6-inch, \$25.99; 8-inch, \$29.99; 10-inch, \$39.99. **{loscabosdrumsticks.com}**

Starter Pack for Dummies

The Violin For Dummies Starter Pack features a full-size violin in an antique satin finish, extra E strings, fine tuners, a hardshell case, a stand with carrying bag, rosin and a bow. A clip-on digital tuner with 360-degree rotation comes with the kit. *The Violin Basics For Dummies* book and CD also accompanies the pack. **{emediamusic.com}**

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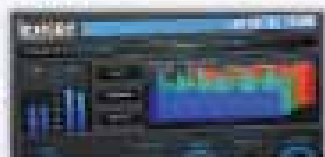
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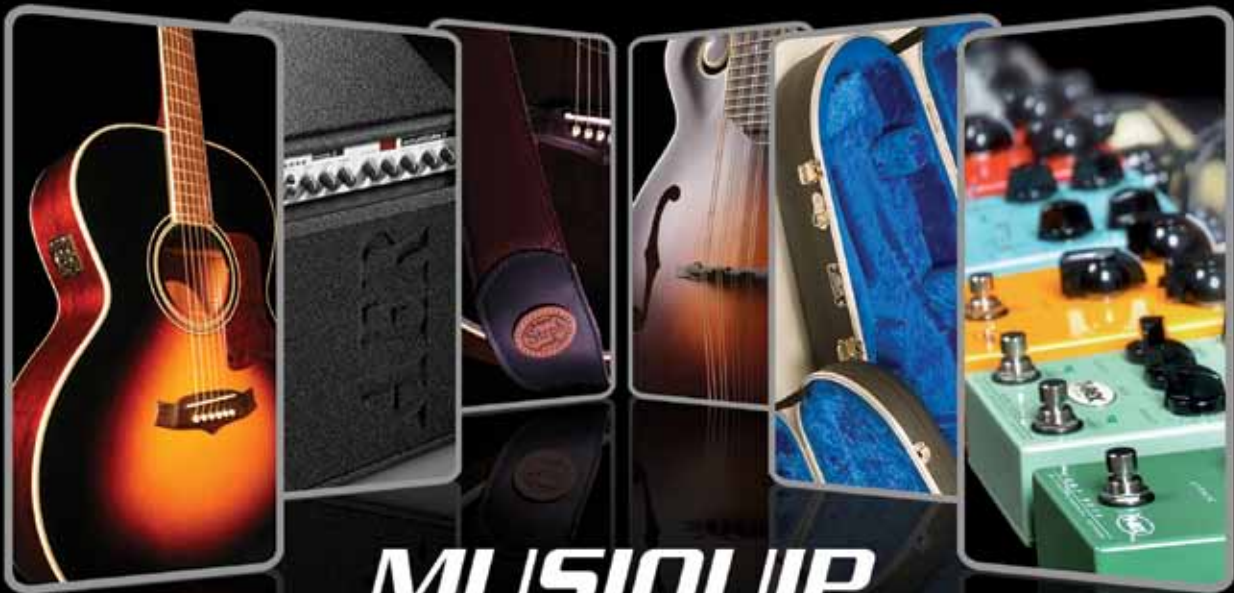
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 Vinnie Vincent Model Guitar 1680



BY ZACH PHILLIPS

SoundTo-Go

The portable P.A. market gets a push from new customers and niche products

Step into a small club these days, and you might notice something missing: a sound system.

“Many venues offering live entertainment no longer supply a house P.A.,” said Scott Lombardo, Fishman’s vice president of retail sales. “As well, a lot of smaller venues are now offering live entertainment as larger clubs slowly disappear.”

That’s bad news for bands, who bear the burden of schlepping a P.A. from gig to gig. But it’s good news for music retailers, who get a growing customer base in need of portable sound gear.

“The beauty of P.A. gear is that all the customers who come in the store, whether keyboardists, drummers or guitar players, are all customers for a sound system,” said John Schauer, Yamaha’s product manager for live sound.

THE SIZE FACTOR

And luckily, for musicians on the go, these systems keep getting smaller and easier to haul. For instance, Yamaha’s Stagepas 300 and 500 (MSRP: roughly \$800 and \$1,250, respectively) include a mixer that can slip in the back of two speakers. It’s enough to power a small band, whereas Fishman’s SA200 Solo Performance System — a single tower-like speaker with built-in mixer — is aimed mainly at solo singer-songwriters. Both can be hauled via their own travel bags.

These products speak to the diversity of P.A. customers, a clientele that also includes non-musicians. Roland’s BA-330, for example, is a battery-powered, all-in-one single-speaker solution. Listing for \$830, it’s designed to amplify everything from patio party playlists to dance studio instructors, along with musicians.

“There are a great many customers who want sound for casual events, not just concert-type music performances where a more traditional component-type P.A. would be used,” said Peter Swiadon, Roland’s product and marketing specialist of guitar products. “These customers usually are not sophisticated sound people. They want something that is portable, reliable and simple. Price is important in this category.”

NICHE OPPORTUNITIES

Price is so important that some chain electronic stores now carry cherry-picked P.A. selections. Still, there’s plenty of opportunity for MI stores. Dennis Shepherd, manager of Alto Music’s Middletown, N.Y., location, pointed out that “it seems everyone needs a specific type of setup or has a vision in their mind of what would work best for them.” Likewise, Micky Patten of Grandma’s Music & Sound in Albuquerque, N.M., said he sells mini P.A.s to a range of customers, from coffee house performers to public speakers to

jazz musicians. This means an even moderate selection could set an MI dealership apart in the sound system market.

Plus, music dealers are often better positioned to sell into niches. Obviously, mini P.A.s are a good category for dealers with a strong live sound business, but Lombardo said guitar stores also have a potential market.

“At some point, even a repeat guitar buyer slows down [his or her] chosen instrument category purchases and requires other tools to fulfill the need for live sound support,” he said.

School music dealers with strong educator relationships have plenty of opportunities for P.A. sales. Combo and audio retailers can also cash in on this customer.

“We sell to a number of businesses and schools, and small portable P.A.s are just the ticket for some of their needs,” said John Vitale, sales manager for Full Compass, a Madison, Wis., audio and recording dealer.

“Offering low-cost sound systems that can be purchased without going through a lengthy bid process or that a booster club can afford is a real service to music teachers,” Schauer said.

And any dealer with a music lessons program has a built-in market, especially retailers offering ensemble classes, such as rock camps.

“There are often bands formed out of the various students in recitals who learn how to play together or even just for fun,” Swiadon said. “They need a P.A. that can be moved from place to place, especially if they are younger students.”

ASSUME NOTHING

On the sales floor, P.A. customers require careful qualification, especially those who plan on using the product for non-musical

applications. As Swiadon put it, “Don’t assume they know much about sound gear.”

“Suggestive selling helps, as this category of products is less familiar to the consumer and often requires more communication of features and benefits than do more traditional MI products,” added Paul Herring, vice president of Fender’s mass merchant division.

And for musician customers, Lombardo offered a single piece of sales advice: Ask if they play out. This inquiry shows that you think clients are talented enough to perform live. It also shows that you’re interested in their activities outside the store and you’ve thought beyond their immediate needs.

“Whether it be immediate or down the road, you’ve planted a seed,” he said.

But Lombardo stressed that salespeople need to have a P.A. system displayed nearby. He advised retailers to cross-market by peppering a small P.A. into the guitar department, keyboard area or acoustic room, in addition to having a sound system display. This gives P.A.s four to five times the exposure they’d usually get.

“When all P.A. products are grouped together, they can become overwhelming to the first-time P.A. customer,” Lombardo said.

Alto Music, for example, keeps several different systems set up for side-by-side comparisons. According to Shepherd, the company’s salespeople often swap out microphones and instrument configurations to help customers make informed purchases.

And when closing sales, Schauer said packaging systems with accessories — stands, cables and microphones — is a must.

“Dealers can’t assume that the customer knows to ask for these items to complete the sale,” he said. “Customers depend on the dealer for this.” **MI**

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FISHMAN SA220 SOLO PERFORMANCE SYSTEM

“With its high-quality drivers in a line array configuration, it offers wide room coverage and improved feedback rejection, making it an all-in-one P.A. and monitor system,” said Fishman’s Scott Lombardo. MSRP: \$1,539.95. fishman.com

ROLAND BA-330 STEREO PORTABLE AMPLIFIER

“It is a self-contained, six-input, battery-powered P.A. system,” said Roland’s Peter Swiadon. “This unit can put out 109 dB for up to 10 continuous hours on one set of AA batteries.” MSRP: \$829.50. rolandus.com



NADY ENSEMBLE PA-4180

This P.A. features a four-channel, 180-watt RMS stereo powered mixer with input gain, high, mid, low, effects, pan and channel level controls. Plus, it has a handle and wheels for easy transport. MSRP: \$439.99. nady.com



SAMSON EXPEDITION 308I & 510I PORTABLE P.A.S

“They have a few advantages over other systems, including integrated iPod docks and a unique, all-in-one design that makes setup and breakdown a breeze,” said Samson’s Mark Wilder. MSRP: 308i, \$679.99; 510i, \$949.99. samsontech.com



YAMAHA STAGEPAS 300 & 500

“They both add higher fidelity and cover larger audiences, while offering a professional look, functionality and light weight at a reasonable price,” said Yamaha’s John Schauer. MSRP: 300, \$798; 500, \$1,249. yamaha.com



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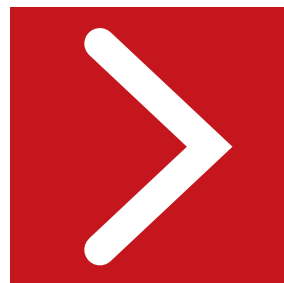
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PRODUCT OF THE MONTH >

AVID | PRO TOOLS 9

Musicians' Cloud Nine

Avid's new Pro Tools Version 9 offers users the choice of working with Avid audio interfaces, third-party audio interfaces or no hardware at all when using the built-in audio capabilities of a Mac or PC. New support for the Avid Eucon open Ethernet protocol enables musicians to expand control surface options to include Avid's Artist series and Pro series audio consoles and controllers. avid.com

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Jupiter pockets new trumpet
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NADY | HEADWORN MICS

Use Your Head

Nady has added the HM-35 and HM-45U to its Headmic series. These models are both wide-bandwidth, electret condenser mics. The HM-35 is omnidirectional, and the HM-45U is unidirectional. Both mics are designed to ensure clean, transparent audio and enhanced vocal pickup with improved gain before feedback. **{nady.com}**



AUDIO-TECHNICA | BP893

Lend an Ear

Audio-Technica has unveiled its BP893 MicroEarset omnidirectional condenser headphone microphone.

It's positioned over either ear and boasts an ergonomically molded earpiece and unobtrusive 1-inch boom. The microphone is ideal for use in theatrical performances, houses of worship and broadcast studios. MSRP: BP893 and BP893-TH, \$479. **{audio-technica.com}**



DIGITECH | LIVE 5

Live From DigiTech

DigiTech's Live 5 processor is the latest addition to the Vocalist line. Live 5 provides guitarists with an intuitive, user-friendly vocal effects and harmony processor. The pedal gives artists the ability to create full, natural-sounding five-part vocal harmonies. It also has a gender control that gives each harmonizing voice a masculine or feminine sound. Users can customize the natural sound of the harmonizing voices from loose to tight by adjusting the humanize setting. MSRP: \$649.95. **{harman.com}**



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RECORD DRUM TAKES

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Propellerhead Software's new Record Drum Takes builds a steady foundation for any rock or pop creation. The three new Drum Take ReFills include Alt Rock, Folk Rock and Dry Indie. The differently styled tracks in the ReFills come as multitrack recordings, letting users freely shape the drum sound by adjusting the levels of the independent kick, snare, hi-hat, room, ambient and other microphones. propellerheads.se



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GEAR >

AUDIO & RECORDING

MARSHALL | MAJOR HEADPHONES

Major Sound

Marshall's new Major headphones feature a headband that's not only made from the same vinyl used in the company's amps but has the original Marshall texture. The coil cord refers to vintage-style guitar cables, and the plug is a 3.5-mm replica of a classic Tele plug, which can be used with the included 6.3-mm adapter for plugging into a guitar amp or stereo. marshallheadphones.com



KRK | KNS SERIES

Feature 'Phones

KRK's new headphone series includes the KNS-6400 and KNS-8400. These models let users monitor audio without compromising their tracks. Features include a detachable and replaceable locking cable, rotating ear cups, and replaceable ear and head cushions. MSRP: 6400 model, \$99; 8400 model, \$149. krksys.com

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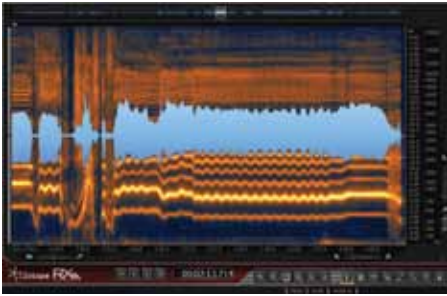
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Auralex has released the Sustain Bamboo Sound Diffusor series, a line of acoustical products made from 100-percent eco-friendly bamboo. They feature the longevity and acoustical qualities, as well as the green properties, of natural bamboo. auralex.com





IZOTOPE | RX 2

Recording Repair Tech

iZotope recently released RX 2 and RX 2 Advanced updates to its audio repair software suites. With a range of new features, the scope of RX has been expanded into any field where audio is recorded or restored. RX 2 and RX 2 Advanced are designed to repair such audio problems as tonal and broadband noise, buzz, hum, distortion from clipping, and interfering sounds. izotope.com

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monster.cable.com



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AUDIO & RECORDING

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DENON | DN-F650R

Multi-functional Recorder

Denon has introduced the DN-F650R solid-state audio recorder. The new recorder implements stable, reliable solid-state media technology as the source medium. The unit can record and read MP3 files and uncompressed WAV files to and from SD or SDHC cards. It's ideal for any type of recording, including studio, broadcast, house of worship, government, meeting and conference. denon.com

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SOLID STATE LOGIC | AWS 900 CONSOLE

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Solid State Logic has updated its AWS 900 console. Maintaining the same 24-fader footprint, the new AWS is now available in 24- and 48-input variants and introduces new features, including dual path channels with stereo EQ and insert, eight fader bay Digital Scribble Strips, and A-FADA (Analog Fader Accesses DAW Automation), where motorized analog faders follow DAW automation data. solid-state-logic.com

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CAD | DH100

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{cadaudio.com}



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FENDER | ROGER WATERS
PRECISION BASS

Signature Waters

Fender has introduced the Roger Waters Precision Bass featuring a black-on-black color scheme, Seymour Duncan Basslines SPB-3 Quarter-Pound Basslines SPB-3 Quarter-Pound split-coil Precision Bass pickup, knurled black control knob, brass nut and black bridge. The bass boasts vintage 1970s-style Fender-stamped open-gear chrome tuners and a gasketed F-stamped neck plate. MSRP: \$1,199.99. fender.com

TANGLEWOOD | TMX MANDOLINS

Here Comes the Sun

Tanglewood has rolled out the TMX F-style mandolin. The instrument features a solid spruce top with maple back and sides in a vintage sunburst gloss finish. The TMX also has a rosewood fingerboard, ebony bridge and ivory-style machine heads. MSRP: \$239-\$529. tanglewoodguitars.com



CORDOBA | C3M CADETE

Full Sound, Quarter Size

The three-quarter-sized, handmade C3M Cadete is the latest edition to Cordoba's Iberia series. The guitar, ideal for students, is built with the same details as the full-size C3M guitar. It features a solid cedar top, mahogany back and sides, and a satin matte finish. MSRP: \$230. cordobaguitars.com





EPIPHONE | LES PAUL
STANDARD LIMITEDS

Les Limiteds

Epiphone has released the Limited Edition 50th Anniversary 1960 Les Paul Standard guitar in two versions. Version 1 depicts the early-1960 Les Paul Standard and features a 1950s rounded D neck profile and a heritage cherry sunburst finish. Version 3 has the SlimTaper D profile that Gibson adopted in the early 1960s. The guitar is available in two finishes. Both versions are made with period-correct details down to the tone-woods and hardware. MSRP: \$1,499. epiphone.com



AGUILAR | SL 112

Lightweight Luxury

Aguilar's new SL 112 bass cabinet weighs only 25 pounds and features a neodymium driver with a custom-designed crossover. The SL 112 boasts a phenolic tweeter with variable level control.

The cabinet handles 250 watts, 500 watts peak, and includes one Neutrik Speakon and two inputs. MSRP: \$674.95.

aguilaramp.com



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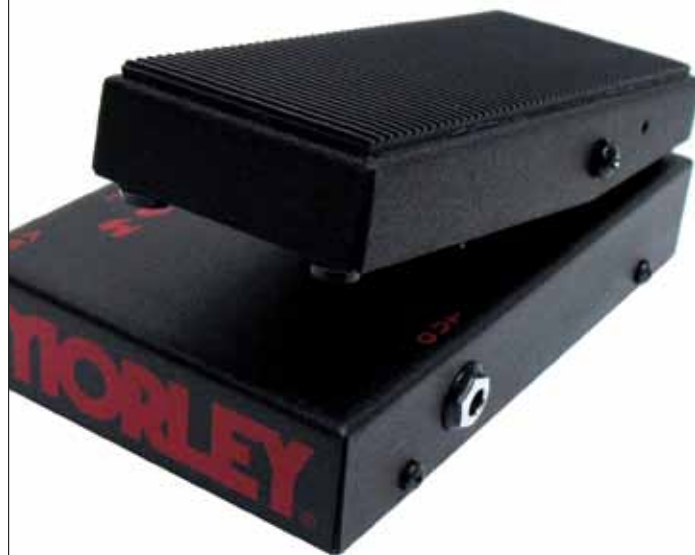


GIG-FX | PETER FRAMPTON
SIGNATURE MEGAWAH

Mega Frampton

Gig-fx has released the Peter Frampton Signature Megawah. The unit boasts the Megawah sound with a slightly warmer high end and more defined low-end response. The all-analog pedal features four settings actuated by a selector switch.

{gig-fx.com}



MORLEY | MINI WAH VOLUME, MAVERICK

Pedal Pushers

Morley recently launched the Mini Wah Volume and Maverick (pictured) pedals. The Mini Wah Volume is a combination of the Mini Wah and Mini Volume. The pedal has a traditional wah tone combined with an audio taper volume. The Maverick is a switchless wah with a hybrid vintage-modern tone. Both the Mini Wah Volume and Maverick are equipped with electro-optical circuitry, so there are no pots to wear out. MSRP: Mini Wah Volume, \$139; Mini Wah, \$149. {morleypedals.com}

MOD KIT | MOD102

Mod Squad

Wanna build your own amp? The new MOD102 is based on a classic American tube circuit design combined with a British style class-A output tube section. At low volumes, it produces a clean, chiming tone that moves into smooth overdrive at higher volumes. All parts are included, along with a pre-drilled aluminum chassis.

{modkitsdiy.com}



LEVY'S LEATHERS | PLATINUM COLLECTION

Silver & Gold

Levy's Leathers has expanded its Platinum Collection guitar strap line. One model features a premium metallic leather, Regal, and boasts foam padding with a soft leather backing. Pictured is model PC17R — available in silver, gold and platinum. levysleathers.com



ONORI | NEW STRAPS

Stylish Threads

Onori International recently launched a new strap line. It includes a wide variety of material and pattern combinations, such as top grain leather, suede, woven fabrics, embroidered materials and metals, as well as a special artist line by lowbrow icon Kalynn Campbell. MSRP: \$8.95-\$49.95. onoriintl.com



SHEPTONE | P-BASS

Quality-Controlled

Sheptone's P-Bass is part of the company's new line of bass guitar pickups. P-Bass offers vintage specs using alnico 5 magnets and #42 plain enamel wire. The pickups feature high-quality, authentic components, which are essential to production, as small changes to the raw materials can have an affect on how the finished product sounds. MSRP: set with black covers, \$120. sheptone.com

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DRUMS & PERCUSSION

EVANS | INKED GIFT CARD

Get Inked

Evans Drumheads is now offering the Inked by Evans gift card — an easy way to give a drummer a custom bass drumhead. It's good for one bass drum head (size 20-inch, 22-inch or 24-inch) with custom, gallery or showcase graphics applied directly to the head. An optional microphone port with an EMAD resonant ring is also covered by the card. inkedbyevans.com



MUSICORP | DDRUM D1

Got the Blues

Musicorp has added the DDrum D1 entry-level drum set to its product line. The entry-level kit comes complete with cymbals, throne and hardware. It's ready to play right out of the box and is the ideal size for kids under 12. The D1 comes in standard player configuration and is available in Police Blue (pictured) and Midnight Black finishes. musicorp.com

VATER | STICK BAGS

Pink Power

Vater's new pink stick bags feature an all-over "rocker girl"-style print. The bags offer two large outside pockets that contain multiple other pockets and pouches inside. Stick storage space is divided into two large sections and includes Velcro straps to hang on floor toms. MSRP: \$44.95. vater.com





SABIAN | AAX

Shimmering Sustain

In response to demand for a darker tone from AA-series cymbals, Sabian has debuted the AAX with "Dynamic Focus." The cymbals are handcrafted and feature a bright attack. sabian.com



LOS CABOS | PINK STICKS

Think Pink

Los Cabos Drumsticks is now offering its Hickory 5A sticks in pink to benefit breast cancer research. The company's campaign, Think Pink, is a six-month drive to raise money for breast cancer research charities across Canada. Through April 30, 2011, Los Cabos will make a 25-cent donation for every pair of pink sticks sold. loscabosdrumsticks.com

REMO | X SERIES

Under Control

Remo has expanded the X series with the Controlled Sound X. The drumhead is constructed of a coated 12-mil film with a 5-mil reverse dot. Featuring 20-percent more durability and tone control, drummers can experience more controlled midrange tones, which are ideal for higher-frequency snare drums. remo.com



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DENON DJ | DN-X1600

Traktor-Certified

Denon DJ's DN-X1600 digital DJ mixer now features Native Instruments Traktor Scratch Pro certification. This lets Traktor Scratch Pro users connect their computers, analog turntables or Denon DN-S3700 digital media turntables directly to the mixer and use time-code control instead of the external Audio 8 DJ interface. MSRP: \$1,299.99. denondj.com



CHAUVET | SLIMPAPRO

Slim & Sleek

Chauvet's new SlimPARPRO features three high-power LED flicker-free wash lights, making it a video-friendly choice. The fixtures fill a small footprint — just over 11 inches high, less than 10 inches wide and only 3.5 inches deep — and they have hanging brackets that double as floor stands. The cast-aluminum housing protects them from the rigors of the road and helps dissipate heat. chauvetlighting.com

MBT | LEDROTOSTARW

Shining Star

MBT Lighting has released the LEDROTOSTARW, a rotating dome that projects 34 tight, white beams for a high-tech mirror ball effect. The effect light has freestanding and DMX control modes. It's linkable through XLR inputs and outputs for master/slave operation with two-channel DMX control for brightness, strobe speed, motor rotation speed and direction. MSRP: \$199.

mbtlighting.com



ANTARI | IP-1500

Foggy Situation

Antari's new IP-1500 indoor/outdoor fog machine features a 1,500-watt heater and can deliver 20,000 cubic feet of fog per minute. Whether used indoors or out, the IP-1500 consumes 13-percent less electricity than typical fog machines in its size class. The IP-1500 also has a very efficient on-board heat conservation system. elationlighting.com

ALLEN & HEATH | IDR-64

Channel-Packed

Allen & Heath has launched the iDR-64 large-format fixed I/O MixRack. The new iDR-64 comprises 64 mic/line inputs and 32 XLR outputs in a 9U frame. It features the iLive 64x32 RackExtra DSP mix engine, providing full processing for all 64 channels and 32 mixes. The unit also has a built-in network switch and MIDI ports for remote control with laptops, touch tablets and MIDI devices. ilive-digital.com



ELATION | TVL2000

TV Star

Elation has debuted its new TVL2000, a light panel equipped with 450 white and 450 warm white LEDs. The unit provides a 30-degree beam angle and produces up to 98-foot candles at a 10-foot throw. Using on-board controls or a standard DMX-512 controller, operators can blend the LEDs to create any shade of white, from cool, natural daylight to soft, warm tungsten. MSRP: \$799.95.

elationlighting.com

A stylized, high-contrast illustration of a jazz band performing. The band members are silhouetted against a background of swirling lines, suggesting movement and sound. The text 'Exciting Career in music retailing!' is written across the illustration in a bold, sans-serif font.

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ALESIS | Q49 CONTROLLER

Ultra-Versatile
Control

Alesis has released the Q49 USB/MIDI keyboard controller. The Q49 is a 49-note model that works with virtually all music software and MIDI hardware devices. The compact controller features USB-MIDI and traditional MIDI jacks. It includes pitch and modulation wheels, octave up and down buttons, and an assignable data slider. MSRP: \$199. alesis.com



MUSIC COMPUTING | IKEYDOCK

Sharp Station

Music Computing's new StudioBLADE series music production workstations are powered by Intel processors and 64-bit Windows 7. Each model includes a total studio package with DAW, virtual instruments, mastering effects and utilities to customize the exclusive ControlDAW MIDI control surface. Support for two additional monitors allows for total workspace customization. The keyboard features 61-key synth action or 88-key weighted piano action keyboard and formidable ControlDAW interactive knobs, buttons and sliders. musiccomputing.com



YAMAHA | TYROS4

Multifunctional Master

Yamaha's new Tyros4 Arranger Workstation keyboard offers elite, professional-level features, including the new Vocal Harmony 2 engine and exclusive built-in vocal style and voice content. The content is created with advanced sampling techniques to introduce control over gospel, pop and classical choirs. The Super Articulation 2 voice library has been upgraded to bring a new level of realism to non-keyboard instruments. This unit can reproduce instruments and arrangements from more than 500 different styles of music. yamaha.com

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for whole life. You give us something
that will define us, make ourselves
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never learned to play guitar. So
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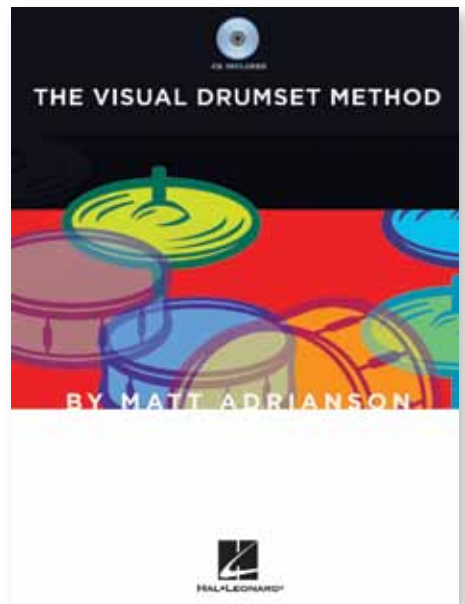
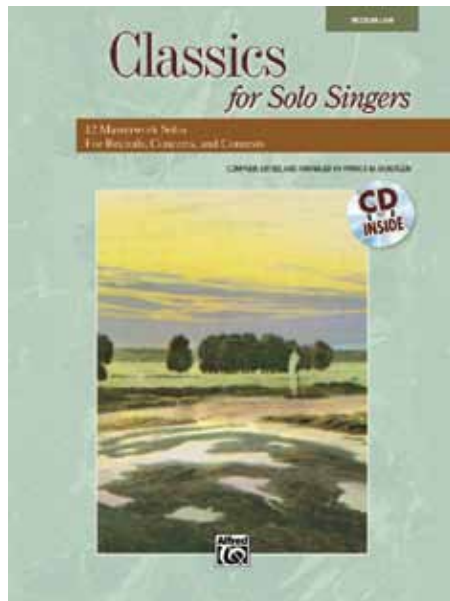
Music education is a gift that can last a lifetime. It sets the stage for greater creative expression.
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Alfred's new *Classics For Solo Singers* by Patrick Liebergen is an anthology of 12 masterwork solos for recitals, concerts and contests. The collection features a diverse selection of vocal masterworks from the Renaissance through Romantic eras, with titles appropriate for any performance venue. MSRP: book alone, \$13.99; CD alone, \$15.99; book and CD, \$24.99. alfred.com



HAL LEONARD | 'THE VISUAL DRUMSET METHOD'

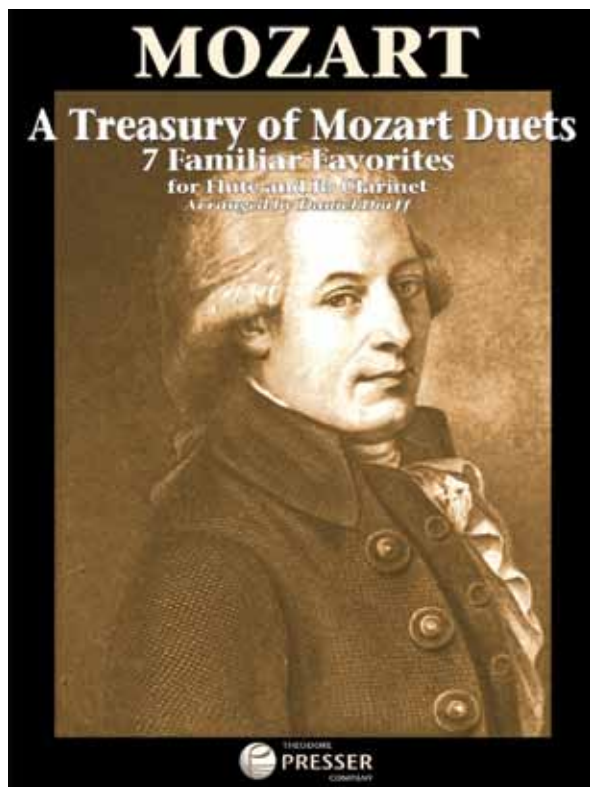
Visual Ace

Hal Leonard has released *The Visual Drumset Method*, a book-and-CD pack in which author Matt Adrianson outlines a simple pictorial method for learning how to play basic drum beats. *The Visual Drumset Method* is ideal for beginners who may be intimidated by the idea of learning to read music. The publication uses pictures instead of standard music notation to illustrate how to play basic drum beats. MSRP: \$9.99. halleonard.com

THEODORE PRESSER | 'A TREASURY OF MOZART DUETS: 7 FAMILIAR FAVORITES'

Seven Wonders

Theodore Presser has released *A Treasury Of Mozart Duets: 7 Familiar Favorites*. In this book, composer and clarinetist Daniel Dorff has further expanded the repertoire for flute and clarinet duo. Featuring Mozart's best-loved arias and instrumental themes, this collection has been transcribed into complete-sounding idiomatic adaptations, ideal for recitals or practice. MSRP: \$14.95. theodorepresser.com



CARL FISCHER | REPERTOIRE CLASSICS

Back to Classics

Carl Fischer has launched the Repertoire Classics series, which consists of comprehensive, progressively graded collections of classic solos with piano accompaniment. Each book comes with an accompaniment/data CD. The



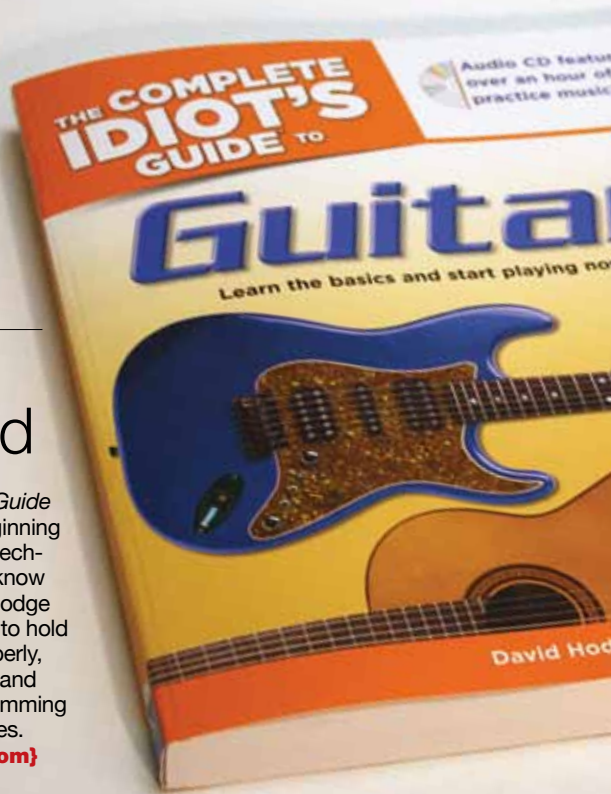
series contains a mix of familiar classic transcriptions along with solos written specifically for the instrument. Books are available for flute, oboe, clarinet, saxophone and trumpet. carlfischer.com



ALPHA BOOKS | 'THE COMPLETE IDIOT'S GUIDE TO GUITAR'

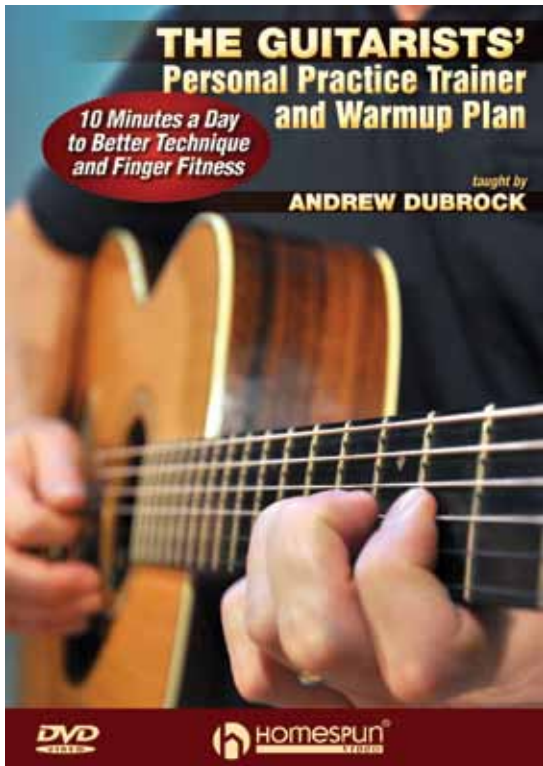
Idiot-Approved

Alpha Books' new *Complete Idiot's Guide To Guitar* teaches beginning guitarists one or two techniques on a need-to-know basis. Author David Hodge instructs players how to find and tune a guitar properly, play and read chords and rhythms, and use strumming and fingerpicking styles. us.penguin.com

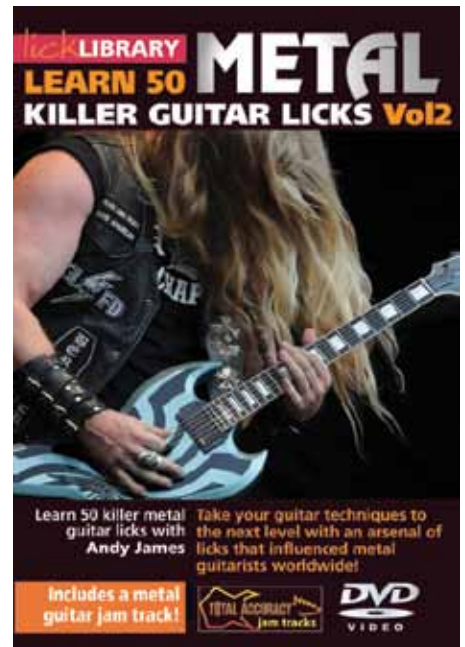


HOMESPUN | 'GUITARIST'S PERSONAL TRAINER AND WARM-UP PLAN'

Personal Guitar Trainer



HomeSpun has introduced *The Guitarist's Personal Trainer And Warm-Up Plan* DVD, a technique-builder for players of all levels from Andrew DuBrock. He uses exercises, etudes, chord study and other practice devices that promise results when applied for just 10 minutes a day. homespuntaapes.com



LICK LIBRARY | 'LEARN 50 KILLER METAL GUITAR LICKS VOL. 2'

Metal Mania

Lick Library's new *Learn 50 Killer Metal Guitar Licks Vol. 2* teaches musicians to play guitar licks by Zakk Wyld, Eddie Van Halen, Dimebag Darrell and Steve Vai. The DVD takes players to the next level with a new collection of metal licks and techniques, including minor pentatonic positions, two-string sequences, speed-building licks, alternate and economy picking licks, and tapping and legato licks. licklibrary.com



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MEISEL | VS-10

Serious Lightweight

Meisel's new VS-10 instrument stand has a backbone made of lightweight alloy, causing it to weigh only 16 ounces. The stand's height is adjustable to fit a range of instruments, including the violin, viola, mandolin and even standard and baritone ukuleles. The neck support is fully padded and features a flexible security strap. The VS-10 folds compactly for storage and transport and includes a nylon carry bag. MSRP: \$34.95. anythingmusical.com



RS BERKELEY | THE STAN GETZ LEGEND SERIES

Legendary Piece

The new Stan Getz Legend series mouthpiece from RS Berkeley is an exact reproduction of the one Getz played on his last recordings. The Legend series mouthpieces are handmade in the United States and combine technology with hand finishing to create a precision reproduction of Getz's original mouthpiece. RS Berkeley uses ceramic material to enhance the acoustic properties.

rsberkeley.com



JUPITER | 516L POCKET TRUMPET

Pocket-Sized

Jupiter has introduced the 516L pocket trumpet, the company's latest edition to its pocket trumpet line. The instrument features a comfortable 4.8-inch bell and 0.460-inch bore and boasts greater power and projection than previous offerings. The Jupiter 516L also features a third valve slide bend, providing more comfortable playability, better balance and improved intonation. jupitermusic.com

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>>>

Brian Reardon

Monster Music
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Hopefully, we don't have too much post-holiday downtime. The music lessons schedule is a little haphazard for the week between Christmas and New Year's week, but we generally are fairly brisk business-wise.

We focus on our lesson program. The 30 days post-Christmas is second only to September for new students. This is a function of several simultaneous factors, including those who received new instruments from Santa and want to learn how to play them and those who received gift certificates for lessons and want to redeem them. I like it when my New Year's resolution, which is always to grow my lesson program, coincides with the New Year's resolutions of my customers: to learn to play an instrument.

>>>

Chris Basile

South Jersey Music
Sewell, N.J.

We usually run a promotion through January or February where we give away a free guitar for a three-month lesson sign-up.

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>>>

Jeff Lee

Resurrection Drums
Hollywood, Fla.

We are located in South Florida, so anybody with any money who wants to kiss the grandchildren goodbye and happy New Year is on a plane to South Florida. [The holiday downtime] is totally different for us.

So when I order, I'm not ordering just for Christmas. Sometimes, we run into issues where if we don't preorder, we'll find the manufacturers are out of stuff into January, and we just rock right on through.



>>>

Donovan Bankhead

Springfield Music
Springfield, Mo.

What do you do to **combat** the post-holiday downtime?

We have a very strong educational department. It's a full-profit department, and we actually make money off of it, not just rely on it for traffic. During the holiday season, we promote it to combat post-holiday downtime.

Right now, we're running a promotion where, if a customer buys an instrument for a first-time student, [the student] gets lessons half-off for the first month. It doesn't matter what instrument — it's anything that we teach lessons on. If someone wants to buy a kazoo and he was going to take kazoo lessons,

we would honor that.

The idea behind it, of course, is that it's going to give us traffic for the first quarter, and if we do a good job of making the lessons exciting and successful, [students] will hopefully want to stay involved.

We do a bunch of summer music camps and things like that, so we hope that once we get them in, we can keep them in.

We will also start promoting our programs right now because one of the things that we want to do is hold a band and orchestra camp. So in order to promote that well, we need

to start on that now with promotional materials, fliers, posters, handouts and e-mail blasts. We have to get that information ready as quickly as possible.

Promoting the lesson program is the No. 1 thing we do to get people in here during the first quarter because it is pretty slow and the lesson program is a profit center for us. It's now one of our largest departments in-store.

We will also hold tax promotions to get people to spend their tax refunds at our store, and sometimes, we'll do a tax-free holiday during the tax rebate time.



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Happy new year, man.



Wishing you love, peace and happiness throughout the new year.

SAMSON